

## **Changing Society, Changing Humanity: Freirian Goals of Education**

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### **Abstract**

In this paper, the author demonstrates how education is presented by Freire as the key both for changing society and leading people toward true humanity. The author's interest is not to further develop the method that Freire elaborated in the sixties and seventies, but, rather, to show the degree to which his theory is coherent with his vision of what it means to become truly human through social change. Specifically, this article explores whether or not education is the key element to build true humanity through social change. The author first explains how dialogue is a necessary starting point to understand the connection between education and change in the two aforementioned levels. The author presents how Freire considers the way myths in unequal societies play a damaging role due to their crystallization of unfair social structures. Consciousness and conscientization are the key tools to overcome these myths. This awareness at the same time is the essential component of an education for liberation. Finally, the author presents some obstacles to this new kind of liberation.

**Keywords:** Freire, consciousness, conscientization, dialogue, critical pedagogy, liberation

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## Introduction

Paulo Freire is one of the most important Latin American figures of all time. Certainly he made his mark as an educator and as an intellectual of education. Since the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, he has influenced the world with his thought and has changed the lives of millions of students and teachers up through today. His relentless work as teacher, professor, administrator, author, activist, and politician left a mark not only in his own Brazil, but in the many other places where he was: Chile, the United States, Geneva, and Guinea-Bissau.

He was an expert not only in terms of the contents and practices in education, but also in what it means to be human. The latter is most likely the reason why so many in the educational field and beyond find him an inspiration, why he received more than twenty *doctoris honoris causa* throughout the world, and why many felt he should win the Nobel Peace Prize.

Many scholars have highlighted this humanism of Paulo Freire. They have argued that Freire was looking for more than just a better educational system or for the improvement of teaching and learning techniques (Eryaman, 2009; Riedler & Eryaman, 2010). Freire was proposing a new kind of society rooted in the centrality of a better humankind; men and women who received a call, a vocation to attain true humanity (Eryaman, 2006, 2007).

Here, I will show how education is presented by Freire as the key both for changing society and leading people toward true humanity. My interest is not to further develop the method that Freire elaborated in the sixties and seventies, but, rather, to show the degree to which his theory is coherent with his vision of what it means to become truly human through social change. Specifically, this article explores whether or not education is the key element to build true humanity through social change. I will first explain how dialogue is a necessary starting point to understand the connection between education and change in the two aforementioned levels. I will present how Freire considers the way myths in unequal societies play a damaging role due to their crystallization of unfair social structures. Consciousness and conscientization, I will show, are the key tools to overcome these myths. This awareness at the same time is the essential component of an education for liberation. Finally, I will present some obstacles to this new kind of liberation.

## Dialogue as the Starting Point

While Freire was in Chile after his exile from Brazil in 1964, he dedicated his time to two tasks. The first one was the writing of his first two books, *Education as Practice of Freedom* and *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. The second one was to work in the Institute of Agriculture under the Ministry of Agriculture. Freire was asked to develop his literacy method in the rural areas of Chile. During his time in Chile, Freire saw how agrarian reform took place in this country. Assessing how the new technologies were incorporated among the rural population, he developed two concepts to explain two different ways of educating the population in a new way. The first concept is that of *extension* and the second *communication*. Freire (1973) writes,

... a fundamental task of the extension agent is 'to persuade the rural masses to accept our propaganda.' It is impossible to affirm that persuasion to accept propaganda is an educational activity. I am unable to see how persuasion to accept propaganda can be

squared with education: for true education incarnates the permanent search of people together with others for their becoming more fully human in the world in which they exist. (p.96)

The work of extension that representatives of the Chilean government were doing with the peasants was not education. “Extension cannot be squared with education if the latter is considered the practice of freedom” (p.97). Instead, it was just propaganda that was an actual obstacle to a real education; the one that has for its mission helping people to find their full humanity. “On the contrary, instead of being the transference of knowledge—which more or less ‘kills’ knowledge—education, is the gnosiological condition in its broadest sense” (p.139).

Due to Freire’s work in the state of Pernambuco, Brazil, as the director of the Department of Education and Culture of the Social Service of Industry (SESI), he understood that education is a process of communication where two or more human beings share their lives, not just their knowledge. That is the reason why dialogue plays a crucial role in his theory of education. Dialogue, as will be shown later, is both a necessary concept and a practice to better understand more complex concepts and practices as conscientization, banking education, and problem-posing education, among others.

For Freire, “Only dialogue truly communicates” (p.45). In addition, he believes that “Without dialogue there is no communication, and without communication there can be no true education” (pp.92-93). There is no communication when somebody just delivers a message to another person or group of people. Communication involves the actual presence and exchange between the two. Indeed, as was mentioned in the first chapter, no human being can define him or herself without reference to another social being. The social nature of human beings makes dialogue “an existential necessity” (Freire, 2012, p.88). Freire goes even beyond this crucial statement for his theory when he writes that dialogue “is an act of creation; it must not serve as a crafty instrument for the domination of one person by another... [dialogue] is not possible if it is not infused with love. Love is at the same time the foundation of dialogue and dialogue itself” (p.89).

The content of the dialogue is as important as the aforementioned conditions. Freire (1973) thinks that “Whoever enters into dialogue does so with someone about something; and that something ought to constitute the new content of our proposed education” (p.46). This conceptualization allows us to think about how essential dialogue is for the definition of a task either inside a classroom in a teacher-student relation or outside in the developing of a social process. Freire (1973) writes in relation to the former that,

Thus, the dialogical character of education as the practice of freedom does not begin when the teacher-student meets with the students-teachers in a pedagogical situation, but rather when the former first asks herself or himself what she or he will dialogue with the latter about. And preoccupation with the content of dialogue is really preoccupation with the program content of education. (p.93)

Related to the latter he thinks that “The only effective instrument is a *humanizing pedagogy* in which the revolutionary leadership establishes a permanent relationship of dialogue with the oppressed” (p.68). As was discussed in the previous chapter, a lack of leadership in these terms is an actual obstacle to social change and therefore, to attain fully humanity.

Freire writes,

In communication when the content is comprised of convictions, there is not only the question of the meaningful comprehension of the signs, but also the question of adhesion or non-adhesion to the conviction expressed by one of the communicating Subjects. For meaningful comprehension of the signs, the communicating Subjects must be able to reconstitute within themselves the dynamic process from which the conviction they express by means of the linguistic signs is developed. (p.142)

### **Overcoming Myths**

There will be no true humanity if there is no social change. There will be no social change without an educational philosophy and practice grounded in an actual dialogue. There will be no true dialogue if those involved in it do not overcome myths in society, which are never neutral. In this context Freire (1985) thinks that it is absolutely crucial to overcome myths created by the dominant class,

the myth of their superiority, of their purity of soul, of their virtues, their wisdom, the myth that they save the poor, the myth of the neutrality of the church, of theology, education, science, technology, the myth of their own impartiality. From these grow the other myths: of the inferiority of other people, of their spiritual and physical impurity, and of the absolute ignorance of the oppressed. (p.123)

The myth of absolute ignorance is probably the most dangerous myth in any society. When a group states the ignorance of another, and society organizes itself around that myth, a tacit permission is given to the so-called non-ignorant group to make the other group a part of them. “This myth implies the existence of someone who decrees the ignorance of someone else” (Freire, 2012, pp.133-134). Thus, this is a problematic doorway whereby someone is educated without taking into consideration what their dreams or actual needs are, but also to violate human rights in the name of an apparent truth.<sup>i</sup>

What Freire is seeking in his educational theory are the skills that the oppressed need to unveil those myths of superiority. He writes, “We wanted to offer the people the means by which they could supersede their magic or naïve perception of reality by one that was predominantly critical, so that they could assume positions appropriate to the dynamic climate of the transition” (Freire, 1973, p.45).<sup>ii</sup> This naïve perception, for instance about the neutrality of science, “is nothing more than a necessary myth of the ruling classes.” (Freire, 1985, p.157). Thus, the critical component is crucial in order to achieve the human vocation of every man and woman. Freire thinks that “the critical and dynamic view of the world, strives to unveil reality, unmask its mythicization, and achieve a full realization of the human task: the permanent transformation of reality in favor of the liberation of people” (Freire, 2012, p.102).

It is also crucial to overcome myths because they diminish the chances of the oppressed for thinking in a cohesive way. Freire (2012) thinks that “they must first cut the umbilical cord of magic and myth which binds them to the world of oppression; the unity which links them to each other must be of a different nature. To achieve this indispensable unity the revolutionary process must be, from the beginning, cultural action” (p.175). Otherwise, “at the moment when one is seduced by this falsification of reality, one ceases to be critical” (Freire, 1985, p.158).

Demythologization is a liberating experience that allows both oppressed and oppressors to walk closer to the truth and thus to contribute to the building up of a full humanity. Instead of the violence which imposes the truth of one group over another, Freire thinks that everyone has part of the truth. He writes, “I believe that those who are weak are those who think they possess the truth, and are thus intolerant; those who are strong are those who say: ‘Perhaps I have part of the truth, but I don’t have the whole truth. You have part of the truth. Let’s seek it together’” (Freire & Faundez, 1989, p.20). Again, dialogue and eventually the very process of education need the overcoming of myths in human and social relations.

### **Consciousness and Conscientization<sup>iii</sup>**

After having shown the centrality of the concepts and processes of dialogue and myth for Freire’s educational theory, a third pair of concepts will be shown: consciousness and conscientization. Both concepts are critical in Freire’s theory. He insists on how the process of having consciousness is what draws the dividing line between animals and human beings. Indeed, Personalism is again present in another stage of his thought; now united with Erich Fromm’s school of critical theory. Freire (2012) writes,

Fromm said of this consciousness that, without such possession, ‘it would lose contact with the world.’ The oppressor consciousness tends to transform everything surrounding it into an object of its domination. The earth, property, production, the creations of people, people themselves, time—everything is reduced to the status of objects at its disposal. (p.58)

Indeed “Consciousness does not arbitrarily create reality, as they thought in their old naïve days of subjectivist idealism” (Freire, 1989, p.123). It does not do so either for the oppressed or for the oppressors. Class consciousness, according to Marx’s definition, is useful for Freire and enables him to explain how reality is defined and sometimes mythicized. Freire himself rejects the presence of people from the dominant class in the struggles of the oppressed. He believes that in belonging to a certain class they are also informed and influenced by that certain class consciousness. Freire (2012) writes,

Certain members of the oppressor class join the oppressed in their struggle for liberation, thus moving from one pole of the contradiction to the other.... Our converts, on the other hand, truly desire to transform the unjust order; but because of their background they believe that they must be the executors of the transformation. They talk about the people, but they do not trust them; and trusting the people is the indispensable precondition for revolutionary change. (p.60)

The oppressors are not able to envision a process of change in society. They are neither able to overcome the power of myths, nor are they able to provide a model of full humanity. For this reason, the oppressed have to develop a consciousness that enables them to be aware and critical at the same time. In this sense, Freire (1973), thinking in Brazil during the sixties, writes,

Our traditional curriculum, disconnected from life, centered on words emptied of the reality they are meant to represent, lacking in concrete activity, could never develop a critical consciousness. Indeed, its own naïve dependence on high-sounding phrases, reliance on rote, and tendency toward abstractness actually intensified our naïveté. (p.37)

So often confused, conscientization is not the same as consciousness. Conscientization is not just realizing that one is part of one specific class. Freire (1989) says,

Conscientization, which is identified with cultural action for freedom, is the process by which in the subject-object relationship (already so often mentioned in this conversation) the subject finds the ability to grasp, in critical terms, the dialectical unity between self and object. That is why we reaffirm that there is no conscientization outside of praxis, outside of the theory-practice, reflection-action unity. (p.161)

Furthermore, Freire (1973) states that conscientization is not simply a socio-economic process that allows one to be more critical. He writes,

There are certain positions, attitudes, and gestures associated with the awakening of critical awareness, which occur naturally due to economic progress. These should not be confused with an authentically critical position, which a person must make his own by intervention in and integration with his own context. Conscientização represents the development of the awakening of critical awareness. It will not appear as a natural byproduct of even major economic changes, but must grow out of a critical educational effort based on favorable historical conditions. (p.19)

Nobody can impose onto other people their own conscientization. It is something personal. For instance, in the case of any process designed to generate social change, Freire states “Nor can the leadership merely ‘implant’ in the oppressed a belief in freedom, thus thinking to win their trust. The correct method lies in dialogue. The conviction of the oppressed that they must fight for their liberation is not a gift bestowed by the revolutionary leadership, but the result of their own [conscientização]” (Freire, 2012, p.67).

It is essential that the oppressed embrace a process of reflection, which is part of an authentic praxis. Freire writes,

The insistence that the oppressed engage in reflection on their concrete situation is not a call to armchair revolution. On the contrary, reflection—true reflection—leads to action. On the other hand, when the situation calls for action, that action will constitute an authentic praxis only if its consequences become the object of critical reflection. In this sense, the praxis is the new *raison d’être* of the oppressed; and the revolution, which inaugurates the historical moment of this *raison d’être*, is not viable apart from their concomitant conscious involvement. Otherwise, action is pure activism. To achieve this

praxis, however, it is necessary to trust in the oppressed and in their ability to reason. (p.66)

### **Education for Liberation**

An education for liberation is a formal educational process that gives to both the oppressed and the oppressors the necessary skills to unmask, by means of dialogue and a conscientization process, social oppression. Eventually, thanks to this kind of education, a change in society and a change in every human being will be attained. Freire thinks that, “It would be a contradiction in terms if the oppressors not only defended but actually implemented a liberating education. But if the implementation of a liberating education requires political power and the oppressed have none, how then is it possible to carry out the pedagogy of the oppressed prior to the revolution?” (p.54). One answer to this question is given by Freire in this form: “One aspect of the reply is to be found in the distinction between systematic education, which can only be changed by political power, and educational projects, which should be carried out with the oppressed in the process of organizing them” (p.54).

According to Freire, if the oppressed handle this process of education, the construction of the content of education has to be made in a dialogical way. Freire says that “It is to the reality which mediates men, and to the perception of that reality held by educators and people, that we must go to find the program content of education” (p.96). Once again, Freire observes “Because this view of education starts with the conviction that it cannot present its own program but must search for this program dialogically with the people, it serves to introduce the pedagogy of the oppressed, in the elaboration of which the oppressed must participate” (p.124). It is what Freire understands as liberating dialogue which is “not a technique, a mere technique...” but “a kind of necessary posture to the extent that humans have become more and more critically communicative beings” (Shor & Freire, 1987, p.98).

The fundamental insight is that education is not a process of memorization of contents that do not make any sense for anyone. Freire firmly affirms that “If our option is for man [sic], education is cultural action for freedom and therefore an act of knowing and not of memorization” (Freire, 2000, p.7). Reflecting on the literacy campaigns in Guinea-Bissau in the early seventies, Freire (1983) writes, “One of the most important aspects of the plan, as I remarked earlier, is that it does not reduce the educational system to a funnel between the different levels of instruction. One level is not simply ‘preparation’ for the other” (p.45). This idea of education against a funnel vision reminds us that the content, besides having been created dialogically, has to be rooted in “concrete historical and cultural reality” (Freire, 2000, p.7).

Freire believes that the liberation of the people, which leads them to attain a true humanity, has to include the perspectives of people who are subjects. He writes, “I am convinced that educational difficulties would diminish if the schools took into consideration the culture of the oppressed, their language, their efficient way of doing math, their knowledge of the world” (Freire, 1996, p.16). There are some trends in education, as much in current days as in Freire’s times, that advance the conviction that technical knowledge or high culture knowledge is the only content that belongs in a curriculum. Freire thinks that the “Union between knowledge and commonsense is essential for any understanding of political struggle, education and the

educational process” (Freire & Faundez, 1989, p.47). Indeed, the content of education has to be built with the help of everyone involved in the educational process.

The role of teachers in this model is a major point of reflection for Freire. Probably the best summary in one of his later works, is the following,

We must scream loudly that, in addition to the activism of unions, the scientific preparation of teachers, a preparation informed by political clarity, by the capacity of teachers, by the teachers’ desire to learn, and by their constant and open curiosity, represents the best political tool in the defense of their interests and their rights. (Freire, 1998, p.8)

The teacher is an educator with political skills, who is able to dream and to learn continually. Indeed, “Unhopeful educators contradict their practice. They are men and women without address, and without a destination. They are lost in history” (Freire, 1997, p.107). Besides that, a teacher who is not well prepared to educate in a liberating key, should not be teaching. She or he will eventually serve the interest of the oppressors.

### **Obstacles to an Education for Liberation**

There are four obstacles to an education for liberation:

1. The treatment of students as objects under the banking education model.
2. Bureaucracy and Standardization of banking education.
3. Neoliberalism as a developmental model.
4. The pedagogy of both hitting and permissiveness.

This vision of education as a collaborative process has to struggle against a model of education that emphasizes a vertical relation amongst the participants in the educational process. Freire (2012) interprets the former as the leading model in education. It represents a severe social problem and probably the main obstacle to his educational theory. He thinks that “Education is suffering from narration sickness” where a teacher has “to ‘fill’ the students with the contents of his narration—contents which are detached from reality, disconnected from the totality that engendered them and could give them significance” (p.71). Students are treated as objects when “it turns them into ‘containers,’ into ‘receptacles’ to be ‘filled’ by the teacher. The more completely she fills the receptacles, the better a teacher she is. The more meekly the receptacles permit themselves to be filled, the better students they are” (p.72). It is the promotion of an adaptive behavior instead of a critical one. It is the perfect recipe to maintain the status quo. This is what banking education is all about.

Such a model of education “reduces the practice of education to a complex of techniques, naively considered to be neutral, by means of which the educational process is standardized in a sterile and bureaucratic operation” (Freire, 2000, p.7). Besides that, in this model “the person is not a conscious being...; he or she is rather the possessor of a consciousness: an empty ‘mind’



passively opens to the reception of deposits of reality from the world outside” (Freire, 2012, p. 75). As has been repeated throughout this essay, if the oppressed cannot transform the world, they cannot attain true humanity either.

Banking education depicts “the profile of a man whose consciousness is ‘spatialized,’ and must be ‘filled’ or ‘fed’ in order to know.” This is why Freire, quoting Sartre exclaims: “‘O philosophia alimentaire!’” (Freire, 2000, p.15).<sup>iv</sup> Therefore a second large obstacle is not just the existence of a model of these characteristics, but also the hereditary cultural aspect of such a model which can be traced back to colonial times. Freire (1983) writes,

An education that envisages making concrete such values as solidarity, social responsibility, creativity, discipline in the service of the common good, vigilance and a critical spirit... would not be possible if, in that education, the learners continued to be what they were in the colonial educational system, mere recipients of packaged knowledge, transferred to them by their teachers. (p.43)<sup>v</sup>

The weight of the culture, both in the Brazilian northeast and in Lexington, MA, has a significant impact on educational practice, which can be a potential obstacle to the liberation of men and women.

Another obstacle to an education for liberation can be found in the bureaucracy of the banking education. Freire (1989) thinks that “Any educational practice based on standardization, on what is laid down in advance, on routine in which everything is predetermined, is bureaucratizing and thus anti-democratic” (p.41). Freire is not directly criticizing standardization, but the educational practices based on it. Alongside standardization, there are some who criticize the evaluation as an authoritarian practice as well. On this point, Freire (1998) is quite clear. He writes,

The evaluation of teachers’ practice is necessary for a number of reasons. The first is part of the very nature of practice: All practice presents to its subjects, on the one hand, a program of action and, on the other, a continuous evaluation of the program’s objectives. However, to program and to evaluate do not represent two separate activities, one preceding the other. They represent activities that are in a permanent relationship. (p.7)

The current socioeconomic model of development is also an obstacle for an education for liberation. For that reason Freire (1989) says “What I am concerned above all to do is to resist, theoretically and practically, two connections which are generally made. The first is the connection made between a democratic style and low academic standards; the second is that made between high academic standards and an authoritarian style” (p.33). Furthermore, he thinks banking education “is reproducing the authoritarianism of the capitalist mode of production. It is deplorable how progressive educators as they analyze and fight against the reproduction of the dominate ideology in the schools, actually reproduce the authoritarian ideology inherent in the capitalist mode of production” (p.42). In other words, schools and classrooms are not impervious to the capitalist model under a neoliberal philosophy. Freire (1998) thinks that the problem with neoliberals is that of “accept only technical and competent discourses. But there is no technical and competent discourse that is not naturally ideological as well” (p.11). In some sense they are blind and they transfer this blindness to the educational field. They also do not believe in the

political nature of education, and that is why Freire (1997) made the following statement as an answer to his neoliberal critics,

Paulo Freire no longer makes any sense. The education needed today has nothing to do with dreams, utopias, conscientiousness, but rather with the technical, scientific, and professional development of learners. 'Development,' here is understood as training. This is exactly what has always interested the dominant classes: the despolitization of education. In reality, education requires technical, scientific, and professional development as much as it does dreams and utopia. (p.43)

Indeed, this is exactly what the neoliberal philosophy promotes. And there is its great failure: the misunderstanding of human nature.

Finally, Freire also considers that further obstacles to an education for liberation are two kinds of education that do not help in any way to educate anyone. He asks rhetorically in one of his late books, *Pedagogy of Indignation*, "How can one learn democracy within permissiveness devoid of limits, where freedom acts at will, or within an authoritarianism devoid of space, where freedom is never exercised?" (Freire, 2004, p.9). Corporal punishment and laxity as strategies to educate are both counterproductive with the democratic ideal. Indeed, both, even though in different ways, are rooted in a neoliberal philosophy. Freire observes that "By denying both the pedagogy of hitting and of permissiveness, let us hope that a new democratic practice will take root, one where authority does not surpass its limits and drown freedom nor is nullified by hypertrophied freedom. Let us hope, instead, that by limiting freedom we will limit authority" (Freire, 1996, p.57). Otherwise, people will be miseducated instead of educated, in order finally to be domesticated (Freire, 2012, p.51).

All four obstacles represent not only a perfect path for impeding the implementation of an education for liberation, but also a process that leads to the dehumanization of humankind. It is for that reason that an education orientated to the liberation of the person through the change of oppressing structures in society has the duty to fight against these obstacles which are essential parts of the banking model of education. Freire (2012) suggests that,

Banking education (for obvious reasons) attempts, by mythicizing reality, to conceal certain facts which explain the way human beings exist in the world; problem-posing education sets itself the task of demythologizing. Banking education resists dialogue; problem-posing education regards dialogue as indispensable to the act of cognition which unveils reality. Banking education treats students as objects of assistance; problem-posing education makes them critical thinkers. Banking education inhibits creativity and domesticates (although it cannot completely destroy) the intentionality of consciousness by isolating consciousness from the world, thereby denying people their ontological and historical vocation of becoming more fully human. (pp.83-84)

## Notes

<sup>i</sup> It will not be a surprise to find this reflection on myths in the writings of Freire. As a Latin American, he surely was familiar with the book *Facundo* of the Argentinian author Domingo Faustino Sarmiento. In that work from 1845, Sarmiento tells the history of Latin America through two concepts: civilization and barbarism. The Spanish defined the native population under the label of barbarism, while defining themselves under the label of civilization. Of course, they assigned a positive value to the latter and a negative to the former. By doing so, they had the ideological power to oppress everything (culture, institutions, and so on) and everyone who was part of the life system under the label of barbarism.

<sup>ii</sup> Related with the magical perception of the world, it might be interesting to consider the interaction between literature and Freire's theory. At the same time that the Brazilian was developing his theory in the sixties, seventies, and eighties, the Latin American Literature Boom took place in Latin America and beyond. This movement was a literary group of authors who developed Magic Realism. Well-known names are the Colombian Gabriel Garcia Marquez, the Mexican Carlos Fuentes, the Peruvian Mario Vargas Llosa, and the Chilean José Donoso.

<sup>iii</sup> Conscientização is a concept which has been widely attributed to Freire. However it was a concept created by faculties in the Higher Institute of Brazilian Studies, mainly by the philosopher Alvaro Pinto and Alberto Guerreiro. Cf. Ana Cruz, "Paulo Freire's Concept of Conscientização," in *Paulo Freire's Intellectual Roots: Toward Historicity in Praxis* (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), 172. Freire also writes, "In 1965 I wrote an article for the review *Civilisation et Developpement* entitled "Education and Conscientization." But it was Hélder Câmara who, as I have said, in his wanderings about the world, popularized the word so that it is a commonplace today in the United States, where a great number of articles are being written about conscientization." Paulo Freire, "Conscientizing as a Way of Liberating," in *Liberation Theology: A Documentary History*, ed. Alfred Hennelly (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1990), 6.

<sup>iv</sup> This interpretation led Freire to think about the nature of the literacy campaigns in Latin America, which in terms of philosophy, were similar to humanitarian hunger relief campaigns. If the latter campaigns were designed to fill empty stomachs, the literacy campaigns were designed to fill empty heads. Cf. Freire, *Cultural Action for Freedom*, 16.

<sup>v</sup> Nevertheless, Freire had a perspective and critique influenced by the very experience of Brazil's history of education. He writes, "... in Brazil during the first two hundred years of colonial life, the Jesuits were the only educators, engaged in catechizing the natives. Their activities were aimed mainly at 'conquering souls' for the Catholic faith, to which they added the teaching of Latin. Nevertheless, we must acknowledge the great effort made by these first educators in Brazil and the fact that some, like Nobrega and Anchieta, were the forerunners of valuable pedagogical methods." Cf. Paulo Freire, "Cultural Freedom in Latin America," in *Human Rights and the Liberation of Man in the Americas*, ed. Louis M. Colonnese (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1970), 170.

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