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## **Decolonization of Knowledge: Paulo Freire and Brazilian indigenous thought**

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**ABSTRACT – Decolonization of Knowledge: Paulo Freire and Brazilian indigenous thought.** This work starts from the *ontology of the oppressed* (Chabalgoity, 2015) underlying the intercultural education (Oliveira, 2015) proposed by Paulo Freire in an attempt to verify the Brazilian indigenous situation through Freire's thought. It verifies that the indigenous peoples, impeded from the condition of *being* by the oppressive structures of Western civilization, break out against them and fulfill their vocation *to be more* through an insurgent thinking. It seeks, then, to verify the possible contributions in articulation of both philosophical currents, Freirean and Brazilian indigenous, for the current educational and epistemic contexts in a decolonial perspective.

**Keywords: Paulo Freire. Indigenous Peoples. Decoloniality. Educational Thought.**

**RESUMO – Descolonização do Saber: Paulo Freire e o pensamento indígena brasileiro.** Este trabalho parte da *ontologia do oprimido* (Chabalgoity, 2015) subjacente à educação intercultural (Oliveira, 2015) proposta por Paulo Freire na busca por vislumbrar o olhar freireano a respeito da situação indígena brasileira. Constata que os povos originários, impedidos da condição de *ser* pelas estruturas de opressão da civilização ocidental, irrompem contra elas e realizam sua vocação para *ser mais* através de um pensamento insurgente. Procura-se, então, verificar as possíveis contribuições em articulação de ambas as correntes filosóficas, freireana e indígena brasileira, para os contextos educacional e epistêmico atuais em uma perspectiva decolonial.

**Palavras-chave: Paulo Freire. Povos Indígenas. Decolonialidade. Pensamento Educacional.**

## Introduction

The critical thought outlined by Paulo Freire has been studied as a vehicle responsible for promoting the expansion of the understanding of various issues related to educational thought. The relevance of the proposals of the Brazilian popular educator is reflected in the references he exerts on social and popular movements, as well as in epistemic discussions in different fields of knowledge. However, the understanding of his work and decolonial militancy still lacks studies that establish theoretical ways between critical pedagogy and the context of Brazilian indigenous movements.

According to Chabalgoity (2015, p. 236), one of Paulo Freire's most important contributions to Latin American ideology is what he calls the *ontology of the oppressed*: "[...] while modern philosophy traditionally conceives ontology as the study of being, Freire seeks a human ontology from the perspective of the oppressed - precisely the one who has been prevented from being". In the meantime, the struggle for liberation of the Brazilian and Latin American populations must integrate the transformation of the structures of oppression and the assumption of their own history.

For Freire (1987), education is responsible for maintaining the colonization of minds inherited from the European cultural invasion, while making the cultural knowledge of the other invisible. In his conception, education is not restricted to the formal and institutional dimension, but extends to the social, political, epistemic, and existential contexts. It is in this context that Freire is concerned about the objective and subjective problems of oppression, structurally-institutionalized in Brazilian society and internalized in the oppressed subjects (Walsh, 2009). He proposes, then, that a liberating praxis includes the task of "decolonizing minds" through the recognition and legitimation of the knowledge of native cultures (Freire, 1978).

Thus, the philosophical foundations of Freire's critical pedagogy converge with the need to recognize the condition of being indigenous people, which has been denied to them by Western modernity. To this end, it is necessary to undertake an intercultural and decolonial epistemological exercise, through which the knowledge and history of these people are made evident, starting from themselves.

It is up to us to ask: how can the thought of indigenous people help us rethink education? Is it possible to establish a critical and decolonial intercultural<sup>1</sup> dialogue between indigenous philosophies and Freirean philosophical thought?

In this article, we try to outline the theoretical and methodological assumptions of Paulo Freire's critical pedagogy, as well as his ethical-political principles that demonstrate his concern with the situation of Brazilian indigenous people, although the author has not dedicated himself to working with the issue specifically. Next, we propose a reading of Brazilian indigenous thought through the writings of philosophers Ailton Krenak and Daniel Munduruku, in order to expose some of

their epistemological foundations, as well as possible relationships with Freire's educational thought. Our goal is to verify the contributions of both philosophical currents to the Brazilian educational and epistemic contexts from a decolonial perspective.

### **Paulo Freire's Foundation Thought and Intercultural Education**

According to Oliveira (2015), the issue of interculturality appears in the genesis of Paulo Freire's educational thought since his early productions, not only at the moment it becomes explicit, in his works of the 1990s and posthumously in the 2000s. The thesis sustained by the author is based on some fundamental categories of Freirean thought, such as oppressed, culture, cultural invasion, cultural synthesis, dialogue, autonomy, as well as the concept of unity in diversity, Freire elaborated a consistent epistemic basis to think about intercultural education in a context of unequal power structure as the Brazilian one.

About the notion of the oppressed, Semeraro (2009) and Chabalgoity (2015) consider it relevant to establish contrapositions between its ontological implications in Freirean thought and the term subaltern, present in Gramsci's analyses. The subalterns are conceived from the internal capitalist history of Europe, who are denied the rights to capital, while the oppressed are deprived of the right to tell and create their own history. The oppressed "[...] were not only subjugated, but placed in a condition of inferiority, thus naturalized, in the fundamental context of colonization. It has been prevented from realizing itself ontologically, from humanizing itself. It is a being-for-another" (Chabalgoity, 2015, p. 167). Oppression, in Freire's (1987) terms, is an act that prohibits the possibility of human beings being more.

In this sense, the category oppressed is directly related to the process of European colonial domination experienced by the dominated, or condemned of the earth, the ragged of the world, as Freire says in his writings. In Brazilian context, and in Latin America more broadly, poverty and social exclusion are intertwined with the hegemony of the Eurocentric world view, present both in political-economic relations between centers-peripheries and in education.

On the other hand, Freire's ideas, in line with the thought of the Martiniquan philosopher Frantz Fanon, imprint a strong decolonial connotation, since the ontological meaning of the term oppressed is related to colonization and its role as a denier of the oppressed's right to be.

Freire also postulates the human being's capacity for becoming through his vocation to be more, as an inconclusive being in a constant process of formation. According to Oliveira (2015, p. 73):

From the recognition of dehumanization as a denial of the ontological viability of men and women and as a historical reality is that we visualize the possibility of humanization. Human vocation denied in injustice, in exploitation,

in oppression, and affirmed in the longing for freedom, for justice, and in the 'recovery of its stolen humanity'.

In a context of oppression, for Mota-Neto (2015, p. 219)

[...] discouragement and hopelessness are associated with the feeling of inferiority that both mark the deep structure of the personality of the oppressed, the colonized, the violated. For Freire (2008), for this very reason, this feeling of inferiority needs to be replaced by one of self-confidence, while the previously imported schemes and models must be replaced by projects and plans resulting from serious and autonomous studies about reality. This is how dependent, peripheral, neocolonized societies build more confidence in themselves.

On Freire's perspective, although the dehumanization that deprives human beings of their capacity to be more is located in history, it is not an ontological vocation; "[...] it is, therefore, the very condition of being dehumanized that suggests the struggle for its liberation" (Chabalgoity, 2015, p. 169). It is a process of insurgency, because in order to humanize, to be more, the human being needs to break out against everything that prevents him from being, in a process of struggle against the constant dehumanization he suffers from the dominators in the context of oppression.

The notion of culture appears in Freire's thought as one of the central categories through which the author analyzes the structures of the oppressor-oppressed relationship. In the book "Conscientization: Theory and Practice of Liberation" Freire (1980, p. 38) defines culture as "[...] every result of human activity, of the creative and recreative effort of *men and women*, of their work for transforming and establishing dialogical relations with others *human beings*" (our emphasis).

Through this notion, the author worries about the destructive characteristic of the colonial heritage of Brazilian society. For Freire, in terms of culture, the epistemic and subjective dominations of colonization caused the creation of negative and inhuman identities for the colonized (Azevedo; Oliveira; Sousa, 2019). On this aspect, the author points out that:

One of the fundamental characteristics of the colonialist domination process, or class, gender, all mixed together, is the dominator's need to culturally invade the dominated. Therefore, the cultural invasion is fundamental because it thinks about power, sometimes through violent, tactical methods, sometimes through caviolous methods. What the cultural invasion aims at, among other things, is exactly destruction, which fortunately does not achieve in concrete terms. It is fundamental to the dominator: to shred the cultural identity of the dominated (Freire, 2002, apud Azevedo et al., 2019, p. 36).

According to Freire, the project of destroying the cultural identity of the dominated also has the pretension of conquering their cultural

being, that is, besides suppressing their own culture, considered inferior, it also intends to convert them to the cultural standards of the dominator in this violent and oppressive process. This is what Freire called cultural invasion. In his own terms, it consists of “the invaders’ penetration into the cultural context of the invaded, imposing their worldview on the invaded, while holding back their creativity by inhibiting their expansion” (Freire, 1987, p. 178).

Cultural invasion serves to maintain oppression by implanting ideas in the minds of the dominated, in which they are made to believe in their inferiority in relation to the cultural status of the dominators, and this action is justified by the supposed backwardness and weaknesses of the invaded cultures.

On cultural invasion in Freire, Oliveira (2015, p. 76) points out:

For Freire, in Brazil, since the time of the plantation owners in the colonial period, the cultural roots that were built were the negation of the people, due to the inexistence of “popular participation in the public thing. There were no people”. What existed was the “creation of a host consciousness of oppression and not of a free and creative consciousness, indispensable to authentically democratic regimes” (1980a, p. 71), predominating a European ethnocentrism based on Western and white superiority. [...] Social oppression, then, is linked to cultural oppression. In the oppressive process, according to Freire, there is the *manipulation of the oppressed masses*, so that they do not think about their situation as oppressed, and consequently do not rebel.

Through Freirean thought we understand the constitution of the antidialogical scenario of oppression, guided by the need for conquest, cultural invasion and manipulation of the masses (Oliveira, 2015).

Besides exposing the problems and the wounds of oppression, the thought outlined by Freire was very much concerned with the construction of announcements of possible paths for the transformation of reality.

Dialogue is a central axis for the humanization of the oppressed, because, according to the author: “it is part of our historical progress on the way to becoming human beings” (Freire; Shor, 1986, p. 122). Dialog between people makes it possible to get to know the other person, their ideas, ways of being, and options, in an ethical and democratic relationship. Through encounter, co-laboration, and dialogue, people establish communicative relationships to reflect on reality and transform it. In this sense, the dialogic person knows and transforms the world, receiving the impacts of his own transformation. According to Freire (1997, p. 67),

True dialogicity, in which dialogic subjects learn and grow in difference, above all in respect for it, is the way to be coherently demanded by beings who, unfinished, assuming themselves as such, become radically ethical.

Dialogic action also promotes criticality, through the human being's awareness of his incompleteness:

The experience of openness as the founding experience of the unfinished being that ended up knowing itself to be unfinished. It would be impossible to know that one is unfinished and not open oneself to the world and to others in search of explanation, of answers to multiple questions. Closure to the world and to others becomes transgression of the natural impulse of incompleteness (Freire, 1967, p. 7).

According to Chabalgoity (2015), dialogicity represents, in Freire, the essence of education as a practice of freedom. The Brazilian popular educator also established ontological characteristics fundamental to dialogicity: love, humility, faith in human beings, hope, and true thinking. These are ontological characteristics inherent to human beings themselves; “[...] they are not just categories of dialogicity. If dialogicity is the ontological vocation of human beings, its characteristics will be equally ontological” (Chabalgoity, 2015, p. 193).

In a dialogical action, co-laboration must prevail instead of conquest, which is antidialogical by nature (conquest starts from dominating action, while co-laboration starts from liberating action):

The working of the world in communion reflects the dialogical perspective in which the self is not constituted as the opposite of the other, but as the other's partner in history. [...] There is not a subject and an object – the reified human being – but men and women who constitute themselves as makers of the world, pronounce the world. This is the ‘vocation to be subject’ (Freire, 2005, p. 192) that the author will refer to throughout his life (Chabalgoity, 2015, p. 204).

In this collaborative perspective, human beings move in a sense of unity and organization around dialogical action with the aim of affirming the freedom of all people. Therefore, Freire understands that the dominating action of cultural invasion needs to give way to what he calls cultural synthesis, an action that promotes integration among people and their different ways of being in the world. The cultural synthesis is based on these differences and denies the invasion of one by the other, affirming the unquestionable contribution that one gives to the other (Freire, 1987). Therefore, intercultural relations need to overcome the alienating pattern of cultural invasion, in which one manipulates and dominates the other; being dialogical implies, on the contrary, transforming reality together with the other, in co-laboration and partnership. Based on this, Oliveira (2015, p. 79) considers:

To be a *subject* implies having autonomy, being a participant in the construction of its history, its culture, and its education. To be a *subject* presupposes that one recognizes oneself as such, which implies becoming aware of one's situation of social oppression, of one's situation as a sub-

ject denied in an unjust and unequal social reality. However, assuming oneself as a subject implies not denying or excluding the other. For Freire (1997, p. 46), 'the assumption of ourselves does not mean the exclusion of others. It is the 'otherness' of the 'not-me' or the 'you', which makes me assume the radicality of my 'I'.

We see, in this way, Freire's mobility towards the construction of a real, we might even say critical, intercultural education since the elaboration of the theory of dialogicity in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. The author takes colonization (violation and oppression of different native cultures) as a key process in the construction of the dominating antidialogical action that still prevails in society today. A context of conquest, invasion, and manipulation that must be subverted and fought against by a liberating dialogical action based on the union, organization, and co-laboration of the oppressed, as well as on the cultural synthesis.

24 years after the publication of *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, in *Pedagogy of Hope*, Freire (1992) returns to these ideas and updates them, calling attention to the need for unity in diversity, in this intercultural perspective, so that the various oppressed groups can become more effective in their struggles against all forms of oppression.

For Freire (1992, p. 153-154), "[...] the more the so-called minorities assume themselves as such and close themselves off from each other, the better the only and real minority sleeps: the dominant class", in a configuration in which "[...] the way to assume oneself as the majority is to work on the similarities among themselves and not only the differences, and thus create unity in diversity". In this sense, it is important to recognize the cultural differences and the specificities of oppression that each group experiences on the skin, but we also need to keep in mind that the struggle for liberation must be collective, bringing together political forces (Oliveira, 2015).

### **Educational Thought and Native People: Freire's brief considerations**

Throughout his career, Freire was not directly involved with indigenous movements, but he showed sincere love for them, as he did for all the oppressed groups he spoke about in his texts and speeches (Freire, 2004). It is possible to locate the transcribed record of a dialogue with the author during the 8th Assembly of the CIMI - Indigenous Missionary Council, held in Cuiabá/MT between June 16 and 20, 1982, where Freire exposes some contributions to the theme of education in the context of indigenous people in Brazil. The transcript is present in the book *Pedagogia da Tolerância*, a posthumous work by Freire organized by Ana Maria Araújo Freire and published in 2004. It is worth pointing out that the context of the 1980s, in which Freire's speech is located, was that of the struggles for the re-democratization of Brazil, where the possibilities for vindication were restricted.

According to Freire, in the 1980s, it was possible to observe the implementation of school education in indigenous territories as a mechanism to train indigenous labor for urban centers, which perpetuated the dominating action over these people through new patterns. In this context, for the author, education appears as a maintainer of oppressive relations that have the command of Science and Technology. In Freire's (2004, p. 34) words:

The Brazilian whiteness, by expropriating the land, by dominating the culture, by considering the natives as inferior, incapable, cysts of negativity in Brazil, and of inferiority, spots of national impotence, by doing this, it intends, however, always [...] in favor of this development of the country, it intends to obtain a labor force in this whole region of the country. A cheap, exploited, vilified labor force. And for this, [...] they intend to offer, in this quest to conquer the cultural BEING of the dominated, to initiate him in skills that are important for whiteness. But these skills are minimal because what is needed, in order to interdict the indigenous to better serve pure whiteness, is exactly a half dozen of knowledge, in order to, with this knowledge, become a semi-skilled labor force with the vocation to continue as exploited as the worker. This is what, for a certain Brazilian whiteness, the Integration of the Indian into Brazilianness means.

According to Freire, education oriented to native people must be committed to knowing the being of their culture, through history, oral memory, language, etc. Linguistics, for Freire, is responsible for unveiling other pedagogies, decolonial pedagogies, based on the way of being of the different people who make up the indigenous groups.

Furthermore, Freire indicates the importance of studying what he calls the tricks of the dominated in the case of native people. The tricks are ways of resisting that are found in the language, the attitude, and the reactions of the oppressed, which demonstrate their capacity for resilience: "[...] the violence of the exploiters is such that if it were not for the tricks, there would be no way of withstanding the power and the denial that is found throughout the country" (Freire, 2004, p. 39). The author sees in these indigenous ways of resisting suggestions for the construction of another, more liberating, pedagogy:

To the extent that we were able to understand the tricks and study them and discover their role in the totality of the form of behavior of the tricky one, who is the oppressed, his existence and the importance of his language, of being able to enter into the depth of the language of the oppressed, I have no doubt that later on we would discover that the tricks would become pedagogical methods (Freire, 2004, p. 40).

Thus, Freire defends the need to rethink indigenous school education and education in general based on indigenous knowledge, on the denied scientificity of indigenous people. These knowledges need to be

evidenced in order to minimally build a pedagogical practice based on the cultural and historical concrete of these oppressed groups, because: “[...] our school will only be valid to the extent that, thinking differently, it respects different thinking. Otherwise, it is one more invasion, it is violence against the other culture” (Freire, 2004, p. 71).

In the text, the author recalls one of the reactions presented by native groups to the implementation of indigenous school education: in the 1980s, the Xavante people of Mato Grosso claimed the opportunity for native peoples to expand their studies and professional qualifications in universities. More than dreaming the dreams of the dominator, of whiteness, this kind of response demonstrates, for Freire, traces of the struggle and resistance of these populations against the injustice structure of the oppressive power:

[...] it's not just out of sheer alienation, it's that deep down it's as if the indigenous people are saying: If you come here to offer us the first years of school, so we can become workers for you, we now want studies so we can become doctors, engineers, priests, bishops; it's not only you, no... (Freire, 2004, p. 35).

In this sense, Freire argues that the native peoples should be seen as subjects who claim and position themselves, since it signals a political act of refusal by the Xavante to the impositions of the State. They didn't just want to join the labor force, but to enter the universities. It is important to note that the Xavante's claim takes place in the context of the struggle for the re-democratization of the country, which resulted in the promulgation of the 1988 Federal Constitution, despite the fact that it was a moment of few claiming possibilities. In the decades that followed, the struggle for university entrance gained strength among the native people.

With data from the mid-2000s, Gersem Luciano Baniwa (2006) points out a series of advances achieved by native peoples with regard to school education, such as the intercultural degree courses offered by public universities for indigenous teachers:

In 2006, only in the area of intercultural degrees offered by the Public Universities to indigenous teachers there are 1,068 students, and some have already completed the course, as is the case of the first class of 198 indigenous teachers from the State University of Mato Grosso which graduated in July 2006 (Baniwa, 2006, p. 137).

The presence of native people in universities today is a reality. They are qualifying as professionals in the most distinct areas. Many of them have master's and/or doctoral degrees. In this sense, it is important to resume the act of vindication of the Xavante people mentioned by Freire, in the 1980s, as a landmark of a historical process of struggle for emancipation of the Brazilian indigenous movements.

Baniwa (2006) also points out the importance of the struggles waged by indigenous teachers and leaders in favor of a differentiated,

intercultural, and bilingual or plurilingual indigenous school education, which began to be supported by the country's legislation in the early 21st century. This aspect refers to the insertion of Freirean ethical-political principles in a broader context of indigenous struggles. As we saw earlier, in the foundations of his critical pedagogy (in which the ontology of the oppressed underlies), Freire postulated the end of the destructive action of denying the cultural identity of the other, as well as the intercultural epistemological exercise that recognizes the cultural being of this other.

However, this is an ongoing process. The ways of knowing, educating, and being of the native peoples are still little assumed as such, both from the perspective of indigenous school education practiced in the daily life of the villages (Baniwa, 2006), and for those of us who experience education in an urban, institutional, and academic context.

### **Indigenous Thinkers and Dialogue with Freirean Thought**

We understand that answering Freire's call to learn about the cultural being of the other, denied and vilified by the structural actions of the Western culture we experience, requires the work of listening to the other through himself, his narratives, his way of being and being in the world. In this sense, it is of utmost importance to know the Brazilian indigenous thought through its own protagonists. Here it is important to emphasize that the Brazilian indigenous intellectual production comprises a rich field of publications, although they are still little studied and/or used as a basis for epistemic reflections, even within the scope of decolonial studies.

Currently, in a decolonial epistemological context, many studies seek to highlight the contributions of original Amerindian thought for the transformation of the political, economic, social, educational, epistemic, etc., reality in Latin America. In these studies, the notion of Good Living, or *Buen Vivir*, stands out, identified in academic research carried out in South America as the translation of the *Kichwa* (or Quechua) term *Sumak Kawsay*, present in the cosmovision of the native people of the Andes and which refers to a specific way of being in the world. About the appropriation of the notion of *Sumak Kawsay* through the category Good Living, the Brazilian indigenous philosopher Ailton Krenak points out:

When they took from that worldview an idea by translating it into Spanish and called it *Buen Vivir*, and then, into Portuguese, as *Bem Viver* (Good Living), we have made so many bridges, that we have come much closer to something that is Western. This Western proposal has nothing to do with the Amerindian worldview, but it was the most advanced experiment that Europe managed to promote after World War II. This experience became known as Social Democracy, especially after Germany. It had many important leaders in Europe, among them Willy Brandt

and some others. It seems that the last heir was Helmut Kohl and also François Mitterrand from France. These are people who had a worldview and who sought to constitute an economy and a policy in relation to the distribution of wealth. They even instituted a practice which was the welfare state. This welfare state was an idea supported in economics and politics. Politics as an engine of activity where the economy was going to create a distribution of wealth to all, access to everything, to education, to health, to infrastructure, everything that a country, or a nation imagines is necessary for people to have equal access to the good and essential things for life. Now, this was in the context of Europe, and the dispute was so great that this perspective of well-being for everyone was abandoned and limited to a few very rich countries in Europe. And, from time to time, in these countries the idea of well-being is compromised. This is just to show the difference between well-being and *Sumak Kawsai*, or *Buen Vivir*, the expression that comes from the Castilian (Krenak, 2020, p. 7-8).

In this sense, we need to be aware of the coloniality in which Western science and its praxis underlie the process of expanding the notion of the Good Living, which can be confused with the Western notion of welfare, where capital, profit, production relations, and the division of social classes are necessarily intertwined. The original *Kichwa* context, as well as the *Krenak*, and others, do not allude to these elements as structuring conditions of their way of being on land, so, for Ailton Krenak, it is important to establish this differentiation between Western and non-Western views.

In a Western perspective, for example, nature is always seen as a resource, so that Western wellbeing ends up “bearing down on it and taking bits of it,” due to “[...] a foundation, an ontology, that suggests that we humans are separate from this entity, nature” (Krenak, 2020, p. 13).

According to Krenak, what differentiates well-being from the Good Living is the deep cosmo-ontological engagement with the life dimension of Planet Earth. For Living Well, it is necessary to understand the Earth as a living organism and recognize oneself as a living being that integrates its ecosystems and participates in its balance or imbalance. In this way: “[...] it is not about you impacting the body of the Earth, but it is about you being equalized with the body of the Earth, living, with intelligence, in this organism that is also intelligent, doing this dance” (Krenak, 2020, p. 13-14).

The Good Living is not about having a lazy life, on the contrary, it demands a continuous effort:

The Good Living can be the difficult experience of maintaining a balance between what we can get from life, from nature, and what we can give back. It is a balance, a very sensitive balance, and it is not something that we access by a personal decision. When we are inhabiting a planet disputed in an unequal way, and in the context here in South

America, in the country where we live, which is Brazil, that has a history deeply marked by inequality, we simply make a personal exercise of saying that we are going to achieve the state of *Buen Vivir*; it is very similar to the debate about sustainability, about the idea of sustainable development. I once said that sustainability was personal vanity, a sustainable life was personal vanity. What I meant by this is that if we live in a cosmos, in a vast environment, where inequality is the main mark, how, within this mark of inequality, are we going to produce a sustainable situation? Sustainable for me? Sustainability is not a personal thing. It concerns the ecology of the place where we live, the ecosystem in which we live (Krenak, 2020, p. 8-9).

According to Karla Lúcia Bento (2018, p. 101), the philosophy that underlies the praxis of the original Good Living proposes:

[...] a State and a society in which there are no privileged people who enjoy the benefits that the 'development' preached in the capitalist system provides, while those excluded from this system, called underdeveloped, do not have what is necessary for a life with dignity.

In this sense, more than an ideal, the Good Living is a way of being in the world that dialogues directly with the ethical-political assumptions of Freirean thought and his ontology of the oppressed.

Ailton Krenak (2020) considers the education of the Good Living as fostering a critical pedagogy, which is concerned with the formation of human beings for a living land. In general, Brazilian education has responded to the demands of the market to train professionals, technicians, in short, people to make the system operational. For Krenak, it is an education committed to enabling human beings to have an impact on life on Earth. With the balance of ecosystems shaken and the maintenance of life put at stake by the actions of Western civilization on the planet, education must not continue to commit itself to training that directly or indirectly corroborates the actions of incidence on land.

We will have to think about helping to form human beings to inhabit a living land, so that we can escape what Bruno Latour calls necropolitics. If we are not able to inspire ourselves to create living bodies for a living land, we will not experience the Good Living. The Good Living is living bodies on a living land. We can't focus on land as if we were a backhoe machine. We do not have to form technicians. We have to help form human beings (Krenak, 2020, p. 19-20).

The ethical-political project thought up by Paulo Freire through his dialogical theory (liberating education) comprises the struggle against the exploitation, among other things, of nature and Planet Earth. In *Pedagogy of Indignation*, the author states: "[...] it is urgent that we assume the duty to fight for the most fundamental ethical principles such as respect for the life of human beings, the life of other animals, the life of birds, the life of rivers and forests (Freire, 2000, p. 81).

While Krenak criticizes the idea of sustainability for its individualistic connotation, Freire's ethics presupposes values based on experiences of solidarity and dialogical collective actions (Oliveira, 2003). In the thinking of both authors it is necessary to abandon the moral perspective of capitalist society, where profit and material goods, having over being, selfishness over solidarity, and the self over the other prevail. According to Oliveira (2015), Freirean ethics has life as its fundamental principle, which in Krenak's perspective also needs to be prioritized, from its first expression, nature.

Thus, beyond personal transformations, there needs to be a radical change in the European/Euro-North American capitalist/patriarchal modern-colonial world-system (expression adopted by Castro-Gómez and Grosfoguel, 2007), which encourages human beings to recognize themselves as part of a living organism. As a mediator of this process, education must be liberating and question the structures of domination that condition not only human beings, but also nature and Planet Earth.

The education of the Munduruku indigenous people is one of the themes addressed by philosopher and educator Daniel Munduruku (2009). According to the author, indigenous philosophies are based on the notion of unity between body-mind-spirit, and therefore indigenous education is an education focused on body, mind, and spirit. A holistic education, in which the notion of circularity (of time, events, intra and interpersonal relationships, etc) prevails. In this sense,

Indigenous education is very concrete, but at the same time magical. It takes place in different social spaces that always remind us that there can be no distinction between the concrete of tasks and learning and the magic of existence itself, which "materializes" through dreams and the search for daily harmony. This, of course, may seem contradictory at first glance, but it follows a logic that is quite understandable to our peoples, for it is not a denial of the different modes of coexistence as if everything were a single thing, but a way of the mind operationalizing what we have to think and live (Munduruku, 2009, p. 23).

In this concrete and magical reality, another notion of temporality also emerges. According to Munduruku (2009, p. 23), for some indigenous people the notion of future, for example, is nonexistent, because indigenous philosophies understand the "idea of the present as a gift we received from our ancestors and by the certainty that we are beings of passage, therefore eager to live the moment as it presents itself to us. Indigenous philosophies, then, expose a notion of time grounded in ancestry, in the memorial past, where the orientation to the future does not appear as evident as in the modern Western context, in which the future is valued in a utilitarian sense, associated with the economy and the production of wealth (Munduruku, 2009, p. 23).

The 'future' is, therefore, a time that has not materialized, has not become present, and it is therefore unthinkable for the logic that governs our existence. In some people there is not even a word to express future as elaborated in the West, more in the utilitarian sense linked to economics and the production of wealth. For indigenous thinking, the idea of accumulating, producing, saving or storing brings with it a conception of time that impoverishes existence itself because it makes people emptier and more selfish. Of course, thinking in this way within a world marked by speculation - which is indeed a utilitarian view of time - leads us to an understanding of the reasons that have marked the West's relationship with the original people. It was an imposing relationship ruled by both secular and religious violence. Both views denied humanity to the indigenous people because they brought with them a notion of time and work based on the Judeo-Christian myth of creation that preached that man should dominate nature, submit it to his whims, and take from it everything he could. They thus denied the possibility that these peoples had built a worldview based on the unity of body/mind/spirit, because this undermined the doctrine of the Christian power of the king and the church. Hence the cross was brought to be carried by the natives of the land and never by those who brought it; hence the sword that pierced not only the body of the ancestors, but also their spirit.

In view of this, indigenous philosophies today conform an ancestral heritage and a heritage of resistance that the indigenous people have bequeathed us, because, according to the author: "[...] even if ignored, denied, or transformed by the colonizers - in body and soul - the knowledge that has always fed our traditions has remained faithful to its founding principles. Munduruku (2009) understands that the main phenomena that indigenous philosophies must resist are capitalism and modern economics, as they exalt the domination of humans over nature and the consequent destruction and subordination of nature for profit and power. However, according to the author, among indigenous peoples, such resistance does not occur without "[...] many casualties to the siren song of savage capitalism, whose cold gaze focuses on human frailty that is able to sell its dignity and ancestry in exchange for an illusory comfort and well-being" (Munduruku, 2009, p. 24)

For Munduruku (2009, p. 25), it is precisely in the holistic view focused on the triple understanding of body-mind-spirit education that one of the main factors of resistance of the indigenous philosophies lies, because it is a theory elaborated "[...] by life experience, by meticulous observation of natural phenomena and by the certainty that *we are threads in the web*".

Knowing the cultural context of education in the case of indigenous people is an indispensable task in the work of perpetuating the practice of critical pedagogy outlined in Freire's thought, as well as updating some perspectives brought by the author, who did not have di-

rect contact with Brazilian indigenous philosophies and ways of being. In Freire, respect for the culture of the other, of the oppressed, presupposes the recognition of their cultural identity.

This is the path of action practice of cultural synthesis, in which the prevalence of integration among differences overcomes the invasion of one culture by another and this leads us to a state of unity in diversity in the struggle for the transformation of social reality.

True dialogicity, in which dialogic subjects learn and grow in difference, above all, in respect for it, is the way to be coherently demanded by beings who, unfinished, assuming themselves as such, become radically ethical (Freire, 1997, p. 67).

## Final Considerations

As we have seen, the ontology of the oppressed evidenced in Freirean thought requires the humanization of the original people and the full exercise of their vocation to be more, which, in turn, involves the work of political, economic, social, epistemic, and ontological decolonization. Colonial action, perpetuated by the European/Euro-North American capitalist/patriarchal modern-colonial world-system, has robbed these people of their capacity to be. In this sense, the indigenous intellectual production, of which Ailton Krenak and Daniel Munduruku are just a few representatives, is insurgent, because it erupts against the structures of oppression that prevent them from being and demonstrates their capacity to be more. Through this production, processes of epistemic and ontological decolonization already assumed by Freire as necessary for Brazilian education are put into effect.

In the exercise of dialogic action, proposed by Freire, it is up to us, as inheritors of Western culture, to undertake critical interculturality in our relationship with the cultures of native people. Listen to them attentively, learn from them, and co-labor, within our training, in the struggle against the structures of oppression for the liberation and humanization of the oppressed. For this, it is necessary to recognize its epistemological exercise, denied by modern science, which is deeply anchored in its way of being and being in the world. In the thought outlined by Ailton Krenak we find the need to abandon the moral and functional perspective of capitalist society, something also present in Freirean thought, but from Krenak's perspective, there is a radical awareness of the damage and impacts that we, as a civilization, have caused to nature and to Planet Earth. The transformation of reality, for the author of the *Krenak* ethnicity, happens through the recognition that we are living beings that are part of a living organism.

In Daniel Munduruku we find some traces of indigenous philosophy and education. These, according to the author, are oriented toward a holistic human formation, concerned with the physical, mental, and spiritual capacities of the human being. In the task of unveiling the existing veils over the other's thoughts and getting to know his or her

cultural being, as proposed by Freire, we find in Munduruku's writings other notions of temporality, space, body, and education.

Thus, we believe that the thoughts of Paulo Freire, Ailton Krenak, and Daniel Munduruku expose other epistemological possibilities that reveal other pedagogies, other forms of production and reproduction of knowledge. These, in turn, can help us to think, create, carry out pedagogical actions, epistemological know-how, ideas that enable us to head in directions other than that of epistemic Eurocentrism.

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## Note

- 1 We agree with Walsh (2009) about the need to consider the intercultural exercise from the recognition that cultural differences are constructed from a matrix colonial power system, racialized and hierarchical, where whites are on top and indigenous people and Afro-descendants are below. The author calls this praxis critical interculturality.

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