

The concept of formacting from the perspective of Paulo Freire^{1 2 3}

O conceito de formagir na perspectiva de Paulo Freire

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Abstract

This work seeks to develop the concept of formacting supported by the concept of dialogue as a basis for the ethics and politics of liberation from Freire's perspective. The objective is to conceptualize formacting to think a dialogical, problematizing, democratic, and liberating education, recreating the concept of whattodo by Freire. The methodology is bibliographic, based on a philosophical perspective of analyzing and reconstructing concepts based on Freire's works. As a result, formacting connotes liberating praxis as a process of being more in search of what one is not, breaking with the oppressive being. The dialogical formacting allows us to think of the ethics and politics of education as liberation and growth of the democratic way of life.

Keywords: Formacting, Dialogue, Problematizing education, Ethics, Policy

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Resumo

*Este trabalho busca desenvolver o conceito de *formagir* amparado no conceito de diálogo como base para a ética e a política da libertação na perspectiva de Freire. O objetivo é conceituar o *formagir*, para pensar uma educação dialógica, problematizadora, democrática e libertadora, recriando o conceito de *quefazer* de Freire. A metodologia é de caráter bibliográfico, numa perspectiva filosófica de análise dos conceitos, reconstruindo-os com base nas obras de Freire. Como resultado, o conceito de *formagir* conota a práxis libertadora, como processo de ser mais na busca do que não se é, rompendo com o ser opressor. O *formagir* dialógico permite pensar a ética e a política da educação como libertação e crescimento do modo de vida democrático.*

Palavras-chave: *Formagir, Diálogo, Educação problematizadora, Ética, Política*

Introduction

This work's challenge is to develop the concept of *formacting*, illuminated and supported by Paulo Freire's concept of problematizing dialogue. The author conceives dialogue as a creative and recreating matrix of concepts to break with the oppressive violence of colonialism, which prevails in our culture and in the class structure.

Based on the analysis of Romão (2002, pp. 13-14, our translation), we seek to understand how Freire elaborates his work: "Paulo Freire always re-wrote what he had written before, in a tireless re-elaboration and dialectical re-writing of the same work, updating it permanently according to the new contexts in which he sought to insert himself critically". Romão (2002) highlights the importance of Freire's permanent intellectual updating that feeds his gnosiological creativity and the original way of recreating theories, conceptions, and categories. Citing concepts such as "prettiness", "dodiscence", "world-word", "whattodo", and many others is enough to provide an example. From a theoretical and methodological perspective, Freire⁴ makes a significant critical and creative synthesis of the philosophical sources of pragmatism, existentialism, Christian thought, phenomenology, and Marxism to think about oppressive reality and seek perspectives of transformation. Freire's work has an original and distinctive mark from the philosophical-political point of view: to read reality from the historical

⁴ The following sources are indicated to deepen this discussion: Beisiegel (2010) and Muraro (2012).

perspective of the oppressed, which implies a radical critique of the colonialist heritage, capitalist exploitation, the class system, oppressive elites, and the banking education corollary of oppression. In this context, the oppressed are the educational-liberating force of radical transformation in the world. This praxis is continuously fed by dialogue as a matrix that generates the experience of being but transforming the condition of being oppressed.

Paulo Freire analyzed the roots of the denial of dialogue in our historical-cultural-educational formation. Following his reading, the first cause of this denial is colonization, which has been and is being done through the culture of silence, mutism, the deprivation of speech by political oppression, and the economic exploitation of the working class. These conditions favored the inexperience of being human and democracy.

The analysis of Levitsky and Ziblatt (2018) shows that the democracy crisis is related to the advance of authoritarianism. In the book *Como as democracias morrem*, the authors analyze the democracy crisis in a country honored to proclaim itself democratic but that elected Donald Trump in 2016, an extremely authoritarian man. This study corroborates the understanding that the democracy crisis or the difficulty of its development in our country is due to an authoritarian culture.

The democracy crisis is a crisis of class society amid the expansion of neoliberalism⁵. Therefore, the crisis is, in the sphere of discourse, what compromises the relationship of dialogue. In this context, the transformation of communication into a commodity, produced with the most sophisticated journalistic and propaganda techniques, is associated with the technological development and accessibility that created the consumer of communication, entangled in the fetish of the news commodity or prisoner of *fake News*⁶. The tendency of the social media user is far from worrying about critically unveiling news or fake News but using it according to their beliefs, which are also usually formed without criticism. Thus, media colonialism compromises transformative dialogue and threatens democracy.

⁵ We indicate the following sources to learn more about how neoliberalism has been acting in the Brazilian context: Andrade et al. (2021), Frigotto e Ferreira (2019), Mascaro (2018), Miguel (2019), and Souza (2016).

⁶ For a critical view of this phenomenon, we indicate the work of Santaella (2018), *A pós-verdade é verdadeira ou falsa?*, especially chapter I entitled "O que as bolhas ocultam".

In this paper, we propose developing the concept of formacting anchored in dialogue as an ethical and political action supported by Freire's thought. The hypothetical proposition to be investigated understands dialogue as a political *formacting*, one of the primary themes in the work of this philosopher of Brazilian education. Therefore, this question outlines the issue: What is the political *formacting* dialogue from Freire's perspective?

The philosophical research follows the concept analysis methodology, reconstructing them from the reading of Freire's works. The hypothesis proposed in this itinerary of conceptual construction takes the *formacting* dialogic creator of democratic forms as ethical and political forms. In turn, the research seeks to credit the *formacting* the notion of liberating practice as a process of "being more", as a being that is not yet, and that is created in the becoming of liberation, shaping dialectically and praxiologically ways of humanizing oneself through dialogue. The proposition of dialogic *formacting* understands education as ethical, political, and aesthetic liberation, dimensions of human growth. Thus, we aim to analyze the dialogue, articulating three dimensions that complement each other: political *formacting*, liberator *formacting*, and educational *formacting*. We believe that these three dimensions of *formacting* contribute to the studies of critical confrontation of colonialism in the current world. Neoliberalism, which uses mechanisms such as conservative authoritarianism, denialism, historical revisionism, and reforms that privilege the market, has exacerbated colonialism by imposing oppressive conditions. From this perspective, neoliberal colonialism threatens democracy, human rights, liberating education, and the possibility of humanization through dialogue, thinking critically and creatively about the common world.

To analyze the concept of dialogue and education, we reference the works of Freire that address these concepts more intensely: *Educação e Atualidade Brasileira* (2001); *Educação como prática da liberdade* (1989b); *Extensão ou comunicação?* (1980 / 1983); *Pedagogia do oprimido* (1988); *Por uma pedagogia da pergunta* (1985); *Pedagogia da autonomia* (1996), and articles by the author addressing this issue.

In the first part of the study, we analyze the relationship between politics and education, criticizing the idea of teacher neutrality and the need to perceive the politicality present in the educator's *formacting*. Subsequently, we will approach problematizing education through critical and creative dialogue, composing the epistemic, ethical, and political *formacting*. This discussion

necessarily leads us to understand the concept of oppression, which follows the liberating vocation of the oppressed. In this sense, we bring liberation as a condition of *formacting*. In the last part, we discuss the relationship of dialogue with democracy as a possibility to hope for changes that make history more effective, breaking with the inexperience and barbarism of oppression. Democratic *formacting* is the urgent task of education as a possibility of confronting the regression to authoritarian colonialist barbarism and creating a shared, humanized community life.

Origins of *Formacting*

We begin our analysis with a brief essay about the term *formacting* which, from our perspective, implies the differentiation between two terms: doing and acting. This differentiation requires a comprehensive license from the reader since it results from a reflective effort, based on the works of Freire. In this sense, we recognize that the differentiation is quite problematic since Freire elaborated on the concept of "whattodo", which uses two terms: doing and acting. However, we are postulating a differentiation that can enhance Freire's perspective.

Freire's reading requires first understanding the concept of *whattodo*. The conjunction of "what" and "to do" can be written in two ways: "what to do?" and "what to do!" The first is an attitude of search linked to the idea of "ad-miring" and transforming, widely used by Freire; the second is an attitude of accommodation to the oppressive reality, criticized by the author. We seek support in explaining the term *whattodo* in two Freire scholars, Zitkoski and Streck (2010), indicating an approach to the first form exposed earlier: "In this case, 'what' designates the search for a direction and content for action and 'to do' directly says that it is an act in the sense of producing something" (p. 671, our translation).

Freire (1988) dedicates himself to developing the concept of "whattodo" more intensely in the work *Pedagogia do oprimido*. He uses the term to differentiate the human from the animal. Therefore, "whattodo" is proper for man, while *doing* is proper for the animal:

Men are beings of praxis. They are beings of "whattodo", different, for that matter, from animals, beings of "pure doing". Animals do not "ad-mire" the world. They immerse in it. Men, on the contrary, as beings of "whattodo", "emerge" from it and, objectifying it, can know it and transform it with their work (Freire, 1988, p. 121, our translation).

Freire uses the concept of "whattodo" to designate the doing guided by a theory or science. Thus, on the one hand, this concept can demonstrate a non-humanist "doing" of the oppressor and the oppressed that houses the oppressor in itself and, on the other hand, the humanist "doing" of the oppressed, in their liberation process, also involving the "doing" of the social worker or educator committed to the transformation of the world. In his words: "This is why the oppressive 'whattodo' cannot be humanistic, while the revolutionary necessarily is. As much as the in humanism of the oppressors, revolutionary humanism implies science" (Freire, 1988, p. 130, our translation). This understanding of "whattodo" is also assumed by Zitkoski and Streck (2010, our translation):

Freire is dedicated to qualifying the "whattodo" from the perspective of the pedagogy of the oppressed with the following connotations: praxis, action-reflection, problematization, transformation, liberating action, criticality⁷, being more. However, we consider that problematic, if not contradictory, the "whattodo" also designates the oppressor's way of proceeding, characterized as inhuman, a transgressor of ethics, mechanical "what to do, be less and have more, pragmatic.

Thus, to overcome this impasse, we propose the term *formacting* to make explicit the Freirian sense of the historical, ethical, and political *whattodo* of liberation, as summarized by Zitkoski and Streck (2010, p. 673, our translation): "What to do is placed in the search to make explicit its ethical-political position, as well as its vision of the world and the human being as a historical presence".

From this understanding of *formacting*, we consider it necessary to make the difference between doing and acting explicit. In this sense, we begin from some uses of the term "what do that", to our understanding, implying the material production of the world through the execution of a previously outlined task, with an end external to it: do the lesson, make an artifact (in the factory, industry, etc.), make a service, make a house, make a play, make a move, etc.

⁷ We indicate the following reference to deepen this concept in Freire: Muraro (2015).

Therefore, it presents a character of materialization of something previously outlined by someone other than the subject who does the thing. In this sense, "doing" implies a dichotomy between theory and practice, between those who think about doing it and those who perform it.

Philosophizing is opposed to doing because doing is mechanical, reproducing, passive, and spectator because it receives doing thought, controlled, and disciplined by another. Thus, philosophizing criticizes actions, methods, and consequences in personal and social life.

The uses mentioned above do not fit the term to act. Acting is creativity and invention. Acting is the source of thought: reflecting, creating, deliberating, choosing, deciding, qualities of morality, and politicality. Acting is the beginning, middle, and end of activity. Acting sets in motion the use of freedom, enabling experience. It is opposed to passive receptivity, to routine, to the mechanization of doing.

The act thinking or thinking acting modifies knowledge, concepts, or ideas expanding meanings. Acting is to exercise power in the social and cultural environment in which one lives. It is conducting oneself; therefore, it is autonomy and self-government.

Acting generates learning that does not end with provisional knowledge and can feed on it for new knowledge. Acting brings newness to the world. It allows the human being to be what it is not, a builder of new forms of life in social interaction.

Acting is learning and addressing an issue for which a solution is not previously known. Problems are the matrix of *formacting*. The central problem of *formacting* is the human being that is not yet, the unfinished being, the more being.

Formacting is the work dialogued (with the other), perceiving itself as a historical, social, unfinished, and projected subject, conditioned by an experiential context, but not determined.

In this sense, *formacting* constitutes the field of creation of the human; therefore, of subjectivity in the intersubjective relationship.

Banking pedagogy, centered on the deposit or transmission of knowledge, is a pedagogy of doing: a disciplined doing, doing tasks, doing activities, doing the lesson, doing the test. The relationship of commanding and obeying, learning and reproducing prevails.

Formacting or *educating* is to be led by critical and creative thinking in facing common problems through dialogue. This confrontation is a critical positioning in the face of the forces of *do so*⁸ that creative action feeds liberation and transforms the world.

Political *formacting* and the question

The reflection of Freire (1982) concerning the relationship between knowledge and power is valuable in understanding the concept of *formacting* under construction. Freire analyzes the relationship between knowledge, power, politics, and education in a text written four months after his return from exile entitled “Educação: o sonho possível”. The central argument is that the relationship between knowledge and education has a political nature.

For the author, this relationship of power with knowing becomes evident when we ask what to know? why know? and how to know? Questions lead to thinking about the method of knowing (Freire, 1982). This method⁹ of knowing is asking as a way of problematizing historically situated existential experience. In turn, this question posed by Freire is also political when accompanied by the question about who asks such questions and in what context they are asked: “And who should ask the question concerning what to know, and what is the legitimacy that I, as an educator, have to ask this question before being with the students?” (Freire, 1982, p. 96, our translation). This question leads us to reflect on the “almost natural” authoritarianism, says the author, implicit in defining the programmatic content dictated from top to bottom for the whole country and, today, on a global scale, without distinguishing the specificities of each regional or cultural reality, and, with complete exclusion of students, confronting their right to choose, according to their age, their practice, their needs, their interests. In this case, we could add that students are prevented from knowing themselves exactly in the dimensions mentioned above and, in turn, perpetuate the vicious cycle of learning. Thus, this practice of authoritarian

⁸ We will use the term “do” in italics, to indicate the meaning explained above, except when it is in quotations.

⁹ Regarding the relationship of method and existence, we highlight the contribution of Simone Weil (1978, p. 73, our translation): “When we really use *method*, it is when we really begin to exist [...In actions that have a method, we act... we really act.” We borrow this meaning, to connote the *formacting*, except that the method itself is created in the process of *formacting* and not external to it as with the *do*. In this sense, from Freire's perspective, the concept of “right thinking” represents the methodical rigor fueled by critical epistemological curiosity.

political nature acquires the connotation of *do* education in a vertical process typical of colonialism.

Freire insists on this path of asking about knowing, adding other questions: "[...] *in favor of what* knowing and, therefore, *against what* knowing; *in favor of whom* to know, and *against whom* to know" (Freire, 1982, p. 97, our translation). Asking is part of the method Freire advocates, the problematization of the world. The problematizing questions of the teacher's work necessarily lead to the understanding that education is not a neutral work that lends itself to an abstraction called humanity. In this context, the author denounces the aversion of educators to power and the politicality of their practice, which corresponds to the radical need for the method of asking: "Then, the issue of power necessarily enters into the reflection on education, from which we educators almost always distance ourselves so much. It is as if we have a kind of shame of power, disgust of power, disgust of being politicians" (Freire, 1982, p. 96, our translation). The author self-criticized, recognizing that part of his theoretical production, such as the work *Educação como prática da liberdade*, reflects a political practice but does not explicitly assume this form. It thus recognizes the relationship between power, politics, and education: "Hence its *politicality*, quality that has the educational practice of being *political*, of not being able to be neutral" (Freire, 2007, pp. 69-70, emphasis added, our translation). Not being neutral, the practice imposes choices on the critical educator. Above all, choices in which he can continue to exercise the freedom of choice, his pedagogical autonomy (Freire, 2007). Therefore, this intrinsic relationship between education and power constitutes the *formacting*: the dialogical relationship established in a community of teachers, students, and families – *formagents*; dialogical relationship in the choice of contents, methods, techniques, spaces, and temporalities; critical dialogical relationship in the relationship with knowledge and practices in their historicity; dialogical relationship with the humanization project of the community.

In another work, constructed as a dialogue, *Medo e Ousadia*, Freire and Shor (2003) insistently affirm the understanding of the mutual relationship between education and politics: "Now I say that, for me, education is politics. Today, I say that education has the quality of being political, which shapes the learning process. Education is political and politics has educability" (Freire & Shor, 2003, pp. 76-77, our translation). The politicality of education and the educability of politics require criticality to understand the world of oppression and commitment to a praxis of transforming power relations for autonomy, self-determination, and

democratic empowerment. Criticality allows us to unveil the myth of the scientific neutrality of education and pedagogy as a science. An education in and for democracy, built in the process of liberation, in the becoming of praxis, cannot result from a rigorously scientific prediction because it would become a *do*. More than scientific, without dispensing with science, democratic education depends on a philosophical education¹⁰. From the perspective of Freire (1987, 1988, 1997, 2007), democratic practice produces wisdom, a connotative of philosophy. And wisdom concerns the different dimensions of social practice involving morality, politics, aesthetics, and epistemology. As noted at the beginning of this work, the author relied on different philosophies to create his *paideia* of problematizing education. The philosophical dimension of *formacting* is the questioning, criticality, and creativity of the unprecedented viable in history (Freire, 1988), which requires the ability to think in dialogue, involving the philosophical dimensions of the community experience that we have just mentioned. Therefore, Freire (1997, p. 81, our translation) establishes a necessary relationship between wisdom and growth: “It is impossible to know without a certain form of growth. It is impossible to grow without a certain form of wisdom.” We credit the *formacting* with this specificity of humans to take their own growth as an object of their knowledge, being able to historicize themselves critically as a social subject in the world.

The author emphasizes that the educator's practice is neither technical nor strictly scientific but artistic¹¹ and political. The conditions are creativity, deliberation, and choice (Freire, 1983a). Power places on the educator the issue of political clarity that requires a commitment to the non-neutrality of political-educational practice. In this sense, in assuming this commitment, educators cannot remain silent before the students, and the same principle

¹⁰ We indicate the following reference to deepen this relationship: Muraro (2015).

¹¹ The artistic dimension is central to Freire's conception of pedagogy, understood as the art of teaching and learning. It is a constituent process of human beings, understood as unfinished and called to be more. In this sense, it is important to highlight the works *Pedagogia do oprimido* (1988) and *Pedagogia da autonomia* (2007), which widely discuss the art of teaching and learning. On the one hand, art functions as an antidote by making bureaucratic, domesticating, and reproducing the methods, recipes, and technologies used to transfer knowledge from teacher to student, as happens in banking education. On the other hand, art refers to knowing as the creative act of subjects who humanize, transform, and liberate themselves. Thus, the artistic dimension is a condition for critically and creatively apprehending the unpublished viable, allowing human beings to become subjects of their history. Art implies the aesthetic dimension also expressed by the term "prettiness". It is important to highlight the articulation that Freire (2007, p. 32, our translation) makes between ethics and aesthetics, expressed as follows: "Decency and prettiness hand in hand". Art and Prettiness Express a way of acting that entirely permeates the teaching practice by welcoming the student, dialoguing, problematizing, and creating knowledge from the existential experience, transforming it.

leads them to respect others. Respecting is an ethical-political-epistemic act because it implies listening to the other, accepting their “knowledge of experience” (Freire, 1987; 1988; 2007), but also asking as a form of critical distancing (ad-miring), as a practice of “right thinking” to unveil reality and create a transformative, humanized, and democratic practice. The educator's *formacting* is the art and politics of asking from a certain ground shared with the oppressed. In this sense, *formacting* incorporates the “knowledge necessary for the teacher” made explicit in *Pedagogia da autonomia* (Freire, 2007).

Another aspect highlighted by the author is the need for coherence between progressive, democratic, and revolutionary discourses as a political discourse and practical coherence: “It will be this coherence that authenticates the political option and political clarity” (Freire, 1982, p. 98, our translation). The author reveals that this is the character of his writings that link speech with practice. Hence the dialogical character of the intellectual-social work imprinted in his works and ideas. He stresses that it is critical to consistently and coherently seal practice and political discourse. Thus, the educator's *formacting* is artistic and political in the process of electing educational problems, contrasting with the banking educations of the pedagogical *do* concerned with transmitting knowledge, skills, and competencies.

As mentioned in the previous quote, the author poses the method's problem. He criticizes the logical-formal model that dichotomizing and, thus, separates the learning processes as method and content, objectives and practice, etc. A static, mechanical, and schematic method of thinking that, based on technical specialties, separates practices and subjects, what thinks and what performs (Freire, 1983b). This highlights the need to break with this methodological standard of the dichotomous *do*.

Freire realized the need to break with the colonized way of thinking and sought a dynamic and dialectical way of thinking. Freire's dialectical method is a questioning method that explores and exposes the contradictions of reality. The challenge is, as the author clarifies, to think the complexity of the obvious of the experience, to distrust its appearance, to take it in hand, to find a crack in the obviousness to enter and be able to see it *from* and *by* inside and inside out. Thus, the dialectical method problematizes to investigate the contradictions of the real. This is the matrix of problematizing education recommended by the author. Problematizing is part of the authentic existential experience that, resistant, does not allow itself

to be tutored by alienating ideology. The dialectical method is operationalized by dialogue around shared common experiences. In this sense, a significant work of the author is *Por uma pedagogia da pergunta* (1985), in which Freire dialogues with the Chilean philosopher Antonio Faundez concerning the experience of exile that marked the lives of both. Freire explains the meaning of this dialogical book: “And, in doing so, we are responsibly accepting to expose ourselves to a significant experience: that of work in communion’ (Freire & Faundez, 1985, pp. 10-11, our translation). It is important to highlight Faundez's account of his dialogical-political vision of working with philosophy: "Philosophy to us constituted a means of analyzing the political situation, our life in the concrete world, in our country [...] we studied philosophy to solve problems and not to learn systems” (Freire & Faundez, 1985, p. 15, our translation). The study of philosophy is justified as the appropriation of concepts, of the critical capacity to understand reality, and, as the philosopher says, the requirement is to think like “[...] ideas materialize in daily actions, political, personal, etc." (Freire & Faundez, 1985, p. 34, our translation).

Freire analyzes the experience of exile that forced him to interact with other forms of cultural and highlights an important principle for the dialogical method: “Dialogue only exists when we accept that the other is different and can tell us something we do not know” (Freire & Faundez, 1985, p. 36, our translation). Dialogue presupposes listening to the other and thinking about new knowledge in confrontation with the knowledge of “experience made”. The dialogue confronts "world readings", questions beliefs and their possible contradictions. Authoritarianism is the denial of dialogue since it imposes knowledge on the other as absolute truth. Authoritarianism denies the pedagogy of the question, finding itself immune to questioning. Thus, the pedagogy of the question is a political pedagogy since it is a form of confronting authoritarianism and, at the same time, a commitment to dialogue in the construction of knowledge. As a result of this understanding, dialogue is a revolutionary practice that seeks to break with an authoritarian society by denouncing it for the dehumanizing objectification of people. Thus, *formacting* is a policy of confronting authoritarianism through problematizing these indoctrinating and dehumanizing *doings* and creative engagement in a new project of a shared world in solidarity.

In this dialogue between Paulo and Antônio, Faundez poses the central question of the relationship of the pedagogy of the question proposed by Freire with political practice. On the one hand, authentic problematization is linked to curiosity and can unravel the contradictions of reality through the dialogical process. On the other hand, the banking education system makes questions and answers content to be taught, communicated to students, and under the tutelage of the teacher. Identifying these two alternatives indicates that neutrality is impossible; they determine political positions in the educational field based on the relationship between power and knowledge. Thus, in an authoritarian society with a colonialist matrix, whoever holds power holds knowledge; education reproduces this relationship by attributing power and knowledge to the teacher. In this case, standardized questions and answers are controlled by the teacher to transmit to students for passing tests, exams, assessments, entrance exams, etc. In this model, the questions induce interpretation schemes, program and guide the reflection of the teacher and student, and imply a dichotomy between theory and practice since what they learn is a function of the school system and not of existential experience. Education revolves around a mechanical and routine mastery of *do* questions ready. Teachers don't even ask themselves or about the question itself and the answer given. The teacher loses the ability to investigate when losing the ability to ask, to manage technical questions. Hence, there is a need for a political break with this practice of authoritarian power, democratizing learning to ask as an act of curiosity, thinking, and knowing (Freire & Faundez, 1985).

For the author, the way is to teach to ask, to teach from the beginning of knowledge itself, and not to take it as a ready object, without its originating questions or the critical questions of knowledge. To the reflection of his friend, Freire highlights the problem of authoritarianism that interferes with the educational experience by inhibiting, repressing, and castrating curiosity and the question, seen as a provocation to authority. Thus, there is a pedagogy that inhibits the revolutionary power of the capacity to ask, to problematize, that can unveil the world.

Asking is uncomfortable because it is the practice of thought, the irruption of a power that does not accept the world as it is established. The authoritarianism that represses the question, silences the inquiry, represses curiosity and the possibility of a different knowledge, and even opposed to the hegemonic knowledge, often presented as "scientific knowledge" or "knowledge of the tradition of humanity", which would have the power to humanize the new

ones, to be taught in a *do* broadcast technician to students and in a *do* mnemonic that serve as a criterion for your success or not in this system that promises you a certificate at the end of the process. In this sense, Freire warns of the seriousness of the repression of the question because “[...] it is a dimension only of the greater repression – the repression of the whole being, of its expressiveness in its relationships in the world and with the world” (Freire & Faundez, 1985, p. 47, our translation). *Formacting* is liberation from this repression by the question's creativity (Muraro, 2020).

Freire criticizes this process of adaptive domination of the student through the bureaucratic *do* question in banking education, which denies the wonder, the risk of invention and reinvention, creativity, and the possibility of learning from error. Thus, human existence is denied (Freire & Faundez, 1985). For Freire, education succumbed to a technical and productive rationality. This form denies what we have seen, insisting that it is its political character. The author states, "Without this adventure, it is impossible to create. Any educational practice based on the standardized, the pre-established, the routine in which all things are pre-said, is bureaucratizing and, therefore, undemocratic” (Freire & Faundez, 1985, p. 52, our translation).

In this work, in the form of a dialogue, the authors note that the rationalization of procedures anchored in the development of science aims to make work efficient and meet the requirement for greater productivity, which is the nature of the capitalist mode of production. The school began to reproduce this model, brutalizing the creative and inventive capacity of the students, disciplining them, and adapting them to such a procedure in the function of a productive education for this system. The criticism is relevant to the *do* model of teaching of digital education that has been gaining space in our times.

The authors argue that the bureaucratizing rationalization of response pedagogy, by reproducing the authoritarianism of the dominant ideology of capitalist production, contradicts human educability based on wonder, creativity, curiosity, existential question, and resistance to forms of domination.

Freire insists on the need to take an enlightened position on the radicality of the pedagogy of the question since it is the educational force of democracy, to be practiced in all areas of life as a form of criticism of the capitalist system. Criticism of the traditional school is

critical of technical and methodological issues, of educator-learner relations, of the capitalist system itself (Freire & Faundez, 1985).

The pedagogy of the dialogued question aims to create a decolonizing pedagogy. It implies breaking with the oppressive frame sustained by the ruling class. Freire understands that it is necessary to coin the question's obviousness in depth. School practices oscillate between refusing and bureaucratizing the question and lack clarity concerning its existential character; from it: "Human existence is, because it was done by asking, at the root of the world's transformation. There is a radicality in existence, which is the radicality of the act of asking" (Freire & Faundez, 1985, p. 51). This radicality of the question is based on the ability to be amazed by the world, to understand existence as a risk, therefore problematic, and that requires creativity in the search for answers, thus generating action and transformation. The question can generate the dialogical process, questioning the world of experience in which we are immersed and promoting the movement of reflective emergence and transformative insertion. In the work *Extensão ou comunicação?*, Freire (1983b) analyzes the necessary articulation between question and dialogue:

[...] stands before themselves. Questions, ask themselves. And the more they question, the more they feel their curiosity concerning the object of knowledge is not exhausted. Hence the need to extend dialogue - as a fundamental structure of knowledge - to other knowing subjects (p. 67, our translation).

Freire (1983b) highlights the importance of an education that promotes epistemological curiosity that clarifies the criticality in knowing. For him, this curiosity feeds on the relationship question and dialogue in the process of building existential knowledge and socialized and socializing practice, to the extent that the other is part of this search:

The thinking subject cannot think alone; cannot think without the co-participation of other subjects in the act of thinking about the object. [...] This co-participation of the subjects in the act of thinking occurs in communication. [...] What characterizes communication as this communicating communication is that it is dialogue, just as dialogue is communicative (p. 66, our translation).

Dialogue is the activity of thinking regarding the problems of existence. We dialogue when common problems make us think reality to transform, to humanize it. Thus, dialogue allows humans to build themselves as beings by creating themselves socially and historically:

[...] dialogue must be understood as part of the very historical nature of human beings. It is part of our historical progress on how to become human beings. [...] that is, dialogue is a kind of necessary posture, as human beings increasingly become critically communicative beings (Freire, & Shor, 2003, pp. 122-123, our translation).

Dialogue is the possibility of realizing the ontological vocation that is in its primary right to pronounce the word in the encounter with the other. The dialogical and problematizing relationship raise awareness and allow critical insertion in the world's transformation. This humanizing sense of dialogue is central to the concept of *formacting*.

Political formacting of freedom

Another important factor in this dialogue is that popular knowledge has been gestated historically. However, we must pay attention to the colonization of minds and bodies. In this sense, Freire warns that authoritarian knowledge is permeated by "colonizing ideology introjected by the colonizer" (Freire & Faundez, 1985, p. 111, our translation). The colonizer is introjected as a "shadow," and his expulsion from it demands that the void be engaged in the practice of freedom in participation and creative reinvention of a new society.

Critically understanding the force of colonizing ideology is a condition for thinking the pedagogical action of struggle for freedom that is not only mental or intellectual but cultural, physical, corporal, behavioral, and economic (Freire, 2002). This radical, revolutionary education is not of transmission of knowledge to the popular classes but a pedagogical process to be done with them in a dialogical and problematizing way. This understanding permeated Freire's life and is the essence of his intellectual production.

One of Freire's primary political concepts is oppression. As already mentioned, this concept was previously presented using the shadow metaphor in the introductory session of the work *Educação como Prática da Liberdade*. Shadow symbolizes oppressive power that can manifest

in various violent practices, such as physical, psychological, economic, cultural, and educational. Characteristics of this power are centralism, verbalism, antialogation, authoritarianism, assistentialism that imposes mutism, quietism, and passivity, resulting in democratic inexperience, as already analyzed in the previous work *Educação e atualidade brasileira* (Freire, 2002), and which is further elaborated in *Pedagogia do Oprimido* and later writings. Oppression affronts humans' dignity and freedom, forbidding them from “being more” as individuals and citizens. It reduces humans to the thing and consciousness to the other. In this last work cited, Freire understands that oppression is dehumanization in the axiological, ontological, and historical aspects.

The terms Freire (1988) uses to conceptualize oppression are strong: shadow, adherence, prescription, fear, incapacity, lack of self and class, gregariousness, and self-denial. The oppressed alienate their power from being used to assume a shadow that casts it onto an alien world. The shadow is the metaphor of the oppressed who hosts the oppressor in itself. The shadow is your blindness. It blindfolds, preventing individuals from realizing the condition of the oppressed class to which they are relegated. It expresses the manipulation of the emotions, desires, and thoughts of the oppressed to make them accept oppression as something normalized, even pleasurable. They are led to conform and aspire to the standards that dominate them and that serve them as an ideal of superiority and honor. The alienation of the oppressed occurs through the uncritical incorporation of the oppressor's ideology, making emancipation difficult. For Freire (1988), the oppressed, as beings in duality, are castrated from authentic existence: this duality is a prohibition of being, which characterizes the condition of existential violence. The oppressive relationship inaugurates violence in history because it denies the ontological, historical, and educational vocation of men, which is that of *being more*. It is important to emphasize that the oppressed are victims of this oppression. However, the oppressor, to ensure their privileges, victimizes the victim, blaming them as responsible for their condition of misery and, in this condition, practices welfare. In turn, the oppressed, forbidden from themselves, continues to admire the oppressor and despise their ontological and historical condition of ethnicity (origins, color, genetics, culture), social class (income, patrimony, family), gender (identities, sexualities), geographical origin, or any other social difference that, in the shadow of oppressive thinking, the oppressed classifies as inferior. In addition, the shadow induces the feeling of intellectual inferiority, idolizing the knowledge of the oppressor and

passively accepting its narrative, also interdicting its cognitive ability to understand reality and elaborate interpretative discourse of the world.

Pedagogia do oprimido denounces oppression through the metaphor of shadow and adherence, the oppressor's *do* hosted in the oppressed. This work is also an announcement of the freedom of the oppressed (which includes the oppressor) through the metaphor of the “painful childbirth” of the new man freeing himself (Freire, 1988).

This pedagogical dialectic of freedom is the matrix of Freire's thought. Therefore, we see that pedagogy is essentially a political act: "Political action with the oppressed must be, in essence, 'cultural action' for freedom, therefore, action with them" (Freire, 1988, p. 53, our translation). *Formacting* is this political action of dialogue, reflection, criticism, and communication, which does not allow itself to fall into *slogans*. It subjects them to criticism and gives vent to the creative force that sets the new existential reality apart. Once again,

The development of liberating praxis is also democratic praxis. It is *formacting* of dialogue with the other in the construction of the common public space, in communion: “No one frees anyone, no one frees themselves alone: men free themselves in communion” (Freire, 1988, p. 52, our translation). Thus, liberating praxis is always democratic praxis, a condition of possibility for performing the ontological vocation to “be more”, to be what one is not, to be in becoming. Freeing oneself from the patterns of oppression, then admired, imposes the task of thinking of another world without those physical, psychological, moral, social, and economic shackles. The liberating, democratic, and dialogical praxis presupposes developing the power of distancing from the perspective of the oppressor to a *formacting* that creates the conditions for an existence of dignity and freedom. But how to fuel this fight? In the work *Educação como prática da liberdade*, Freire (1987) stresses the importance of the political commitment of education in changing attitudes, creating democratic dispositions and habits of participation and creativity before those of passivity, and adherence to the inexperience of dialogue, investigation, and research: “And it is precisely criticality that is the fundamental note of the democratic mentality” (Freire, 1987, pp. 123-126, our translation).

The habits of criticality and permeability are articulated as aspects of human unfinishedness and incompleteness, which are, in this sense, attributes of freedom and democracy. These concepts of praxis connote the necessary constitutive condition of being more, of opening

oneself to others, of the willingness to listen to others, and to recognize oneself as a fallible and self-correcting being not to reproduce oppression. Democratic action cultivates "critical transitivity", the willingness to review the rules we assume as guidelines for life in communion. Democracy for Freire (1987) is not reduced to the form of government, but requires the construction of transitive, "plastic", critical, and communicative "forms of life". Therefore, democracy is an unfinished historical regime nourished by change: "The very essence of democracy involves a fundamental note, which is intrinsic to it – change. [...] They are flexible, restless, and because of this must give the man of these regimes greater flexibility of consciousness" (Freire, 1987, p. 97, our translation). In democratic *formating*, change occurs through dialogue that transforms reality, transforming the open, unfinished, incomplete human being. Freire creates the concept of prettiness to express his admiration for the action of man in the world. He analyzes, from this concept, the aesthetic dimension of human intervention in the world in which the very process of knowing participates: "[...] one of the prettinesses of our way of being in the world and with the world, as historical beings, is the ability to know the world by intervening in the world" (Freire, 2007, p. 19, our translation).

Freire's analysis is radically critical of the prevailing education model in Brazil since the colonial period. The metaphor of the shadow serves to understand national education. Educational reforms failed to break with banking education, which is authoritarian and has the power to appease curiosity (Freire, 2007). This education mystifies reality and hides the reasons for being men; problematizing education is dialogical, problematizing and unveiling reality (Freire, 1983b, 1988). Thinking in a democratic society requires an ethical-political position regarding the educational *formating*.

The unveiling occurs through the problematization of reality, as we have already discussed, and is a constituent of the *formating*. In the work *Pedagogia da autonomia* (1996), Freire highlights the gnosiological cycle as a way of knowing to transform the known. A problematizing education is done by developing the capacity to discern the various aspects of this existential reality while intending to act as a way of assuming its commitment to its historicity. This existential reflective practice involves "The question of decision, option, valuation, ethics, aesthetics. Evidently, the question of choice, of decision, implies a concrete reality that women and men dream, choose, value, and fight for their dreams" (Freire, 1992, p.

143, our translation). The denial of critical and creative insight is the primary cause of oppression.

Political-ethical *formacting* of democracy

From the perspective of Freire (1987), the central condition of democracy is that it is built with the hands of the people. However, Freire recognizes the historical fragility of democracy due to the democratic inexperience of the colonizing process, which translates into inexperience of being a people because it is placed on the margins, oblivious to events, silenced, without knowledge and participation in public affairs, and treated in an assisted manner (Freire, 1987, 2002). Thus, Freire considers it necessary to create some democratic qualities through experiences that develop habits, beliefs, and attitudes that form the mental disposition and characteristics of the democratic way of life, such as the public debate and examination of common issues in a cultural action that allow the transitivity of consciousness.

Democracy¹² presents as a possibility of creating a public space for reflection on common issues and consequent action, creating “a common world” that makes possible the realization of the ontological vocation of being more in the transforming struggle of oppression. In participatory democracy, people could find favorable conditions for developing their capacities, contributing to common growth. As a way of life, it is a political praxis that values the manifestation of diversity, dissent, and conflict, which makes it possible for each person to know the individual perspective, partial but necessary for constituting a common world, in the encounter of the “I” with the “other”, constituting a “we” of the people. The political takes place in shared thinking or in a “communion of thoughts” about the common world. Thus, Freire (1988) understands the need for dialogically based cultural action from the oppressed, which allows the critical confrontation of the antagonistic contradiction in which they find themselves, overcome the alienated culture, and creatively commit to a project of liberation as historical subjects.

¹² Dalaqua (2021) analyzes the relationship between freedom and democracy. For him, democracy is "a political regime in which oppressed groups can resist the epistemic injustice and oppression that befalls them. By giving vent to resistance, epistemic injustice, and oppression in general, democracy allows citizens to develop cognitive and aesthetic capacities" (p. 215, our translation).

But hegemonic forces dominate power and do not want the common world, a public space of freedom and dignity, since it threatens the world of privilege.

Creating a democratic way of life can only be sustained by the ethics of dialogue. The presupposition of ethics is freedom. Ethics is only possible by the awareness humans develop of themselves in their relationship with the other. Ethics concerns the dialogical constitution of subjectivity regarding other subjectivities. This dialogical relationship constitutes the consciousness of the world and the capacity to think about oneself, allowing the intentionality of action from a social, cultural, and historical perspective. According to Freire (1988, our translation):

On the contrary, the dialogical self knows that it is precisely the you that constitutes it. It also knows that, constituted by a you – a not-I –, this you that constitutes them constitutes themselves, in turn, as I, by having in their I a you. Thus, the I and the you become, in the dialectic of these constitutive relations, two yours that become two Is (pp. 165-166).

The process constituting the self is related to the consciousness of oneself as unfinished, incomplete, historical beings who are being in and with a reality of becoming, and their ontological vocation is to be more. To be more specific, it is necessary to think of creative choices from the knowledge and problematization of historical and social conditions that break with the mystified vision of the oppressor. Choices that inevitably involve the other in a common quest. Therefore, dialogue implies a speaking-thinking interaction of the process of sharing being in the world. Freire (1987, our translation) explains a set of values implied in this ethical democratic action:

And what is dialogue? It is a horizontal relation between A and B. It is born from a critical matrix and generates criticality. It is nourished by love, by the humility of hope, by faith, by trust. Thus, only dialogue communicates. And when the two poles of dialogue connect in this way, with love, with hope, with faith in the other, they become critical in the search for something. Thus, a relationship of sympathy is established between the two (p. 115).

The ethics of dialogue involves horizontal relationships of those who critically place themselves in the search for being more with the other and allowing growth. Freire highlights in this quote the feelings of ethical action that make the common world valuable. Freire indicates a new ethical path for democracy, opposing what he calls pharisaic ethics, ethics of the market

that submits relations to the primacy of profit. We can recover the criticism of democratic inexperience and dialogical inexperience with the ethical inexperience of the colonialist framework. In this ethics, dialogue is impossible against moralism, the imposition of norms that oppress through punishment, guilt, fear. This ethic that takes on a fascist, pharisaic, puritanical form is anti-dialogical. In this sense, no dialogue between oppressor and oppressed is possible, only communication, bossiness, and silencing. This ethic does not aim at human growth, but at passive adaptation to the oppressor *do* system, created to accumulate wealth for the oppressor and more poverty, fewer conditions to be more for the oppressed.

In this perspective, Freire understands that ethics always implies a philosophical engagement, as a liberating praxis, supported by the historical criticality of colonizing oppression. Ethics unfolds in various forms of pedagogy: pedagogy of the oppressed, pedagogy of the question, pedagogy of indignation, pedagogy of hope, pedagogy of dialogue, pedagogy of autonomy. Pedagogy of *formacting*. These pedagogies or *formactings* have as ethical presupposition what we have been insisting on: the ontological vocation to be more. Vocation is freedom itself. Only thus is it possible the *formacting* of the ethical experience that is "[...] the deep experience of assuming oneself. To assume oneself as a social and historical being, as a thinking, communicating, transforming, creative, dream-making being [...]" (Freire, 1992, p. 41, our translation). The vocation to freedom, the ethical vocation is also the democratic vocation, as a form of dialogical life in search of human and dignified life with the other, which implies the creation of another possible world, a world of dialogue, communion, cooperation, and sharing, breaking with competition, exploitation, concentration of income, alienation, and exclusion, *doings* of capitalism.

Final Remarks

In the wake of Freire (1997), philosophy can be characterized as the “radical intelligence of the concept”. In this sense, the concept of *formacting* constitutes a possibility of improving the concept of *whattodo*, based on the anthropological, ethical, political, epistemic, and aesthetic notion of conceiving the human being as a being who constitutes and acts in the world, based on dialogue, curiosity, and thinking-knowing. As historical beings, *formacting* was broken, and

women and men were reduced to beings of the oppressed *do* in the world of colonialist neoliberal capitalist productivity. The student's question, in a math or philosophy class "What am I going to *do* with this?" or the teacher, "what to *do* for the content to be interesting to the student?", are signs of how this logic forces the conformation of the being with the *do*, and of the latter with having information. The questions change when the gravitational center is constructing common historical experience. Therefore, formacting is constituted as an effort to improve the "weapons of criticism", in Marx's words, from the perspective of Freire's philosophy of liberating praxis.

Dialogue, as a central concept of critical and creative pedagogy, is not a spontaneous, licentious practice, attributes that denounce the very inexperience of dialogue. Dialogue, like freedom and creativity, has no pre-established formula, but neither does it occur without methodical rigor. Dialogue occurs during reflection and action, during which subjects learn and grow in the differences constituting democratic culture. Dialogue, questioning, reflection, and criticism are not easy practices or an automatism of the *do*. It is very difficult to incorporate this process into practice, especially in a world that lives in the shadows, minds and bodies docilely colonized by the anesthetic enchantment of neoliberal ideology. We live in difficult times, in which the intolerance of fascism, as an authoritarian force of neoliberalism, in its various fronts of action, such as denialism, *fake news*, and movements like "Escola sem Partido", want to *make* prevail a worldview that protects the privilege of the elites (Souza, 2017) and shuts up the difference. Dialogue becomes a political struggle for human dignity and freedom.

Finally, political formacting should think of itself as educational formacting guided by question and dialogue as becoming and realizing the ontological and ethical vocation of being more in its process of liberation as an autonomous practice, self-governed democratically. Educators and pupils *formacting* as subjects and architects of transformative knowledge. Be more! More, and always more questions, dialogue, democracy, and humanization.

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