

# The conception of popular education in José Martí and Paulo Freire: an encounter between Cuba and Brazil<sup>1</sup>

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**Abstract:** The article deals with the conception of popular education in José Martí, from Cuba, and Paulo Freire, from Brazil. Considered two references in the field of education, José Martí, who lived from 1853 to 1895, and Paulo Freire, who, in turn, lived from 1921 to 1997, have consistent production in the area of Education, particularly in the field of popular education. But, what relationships are there between José Martí's and Paulo Freire's conception of popular education? Methodologically, it is a bibliographic study, focused on the analysis of theoretical axes that permeate the idea of popular education in the authors. The results demonstrate that the conception of Popular Education, in José Martí and Paulo Freire, is marked by a profound humanism, viewed by the sense of justice and the fight for freedom. The pedagogy that supports the idea of education in both authors is life. Education is defended by them as an instrument of struggle for the right to a dignified existence.

**Keywords:** José Martí; Paulo Freire; popular education.

## 1 Introduction

Considered two important thinkers, the reflections of Martí (2002a; 2002b; 2002c; 2002d; 2002e, 2007) and Freire (1967; 1980; 1983; 1986; 1987; 1992; 1993) spanned the 20th century and still serve as inspiration for generations, concerned about the freedom and sovereignty of Latin American countries. Although they lived, chronologically, in different times – when Freire was born in 1921, Martí was already 26 years old –, both understood education as a necessary tool for the training of children, young people and adults to guarantee economic advancement and social peace. and cultural freedom on the continent.

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They are, in fact, two anti-colonial voices that inspired (and still inspire) educators who see education as an important instrument for political freedom and social equality.

In Cuba, Martí (2002a; 2002b; 2002c; 2002d; 2002e) dedicated himself to the fight for his country's independence; in Brazil, Freire (1967; 1980; 1983; 1986; 1987; 1992; 1993) committed his entire life to defending the freedom of colonized, domesticated consciousness. Because their fundamental axis is politics, both identify education as the essential element in action against subordination and the dependence of their nation-states on foreign interests.

These relationships demonstrate how much the authors' thoughts can favor fruitful reflections for the debate regarding the "place" that education has occupied, occupies and could eventually occupy in Latin American societies. In this sense, the article in question aims to answer the following question: what relationships are there between Martí's and Freire's conception of popular education? Thus, throughout the text, the aim is to describe the conception of popular education expressed in the authors' intellectual production, recognizing that the limits of this article impose a significant restriction on the scope of analysis. From a methodological point of view, the analysis was carried out based on conceptual axes that permeate its discursive constructions of popular education.

It is therefore necessary to identify, in general terms, how popular education will be treated in this article, with a view to understanding the authors' analyses. Initially, it is based on Carrillo (2016a), a Colombian scholar of popular education, who identifies the Cuban author as linked to popular education. Alongside Simón Rodríguez<sup>2</sup> and Simon Bolívar<sup>3</sup>, the Cuban author is considered by Carrillo (2016a) to be one of the precursors of popular education; and the Brazilian author is its representative in the 20th century, in its emancipatory sense<sup>4</sup>.

In fact, Martí (2002a; 2002b; 2002c; 2002d; 2002e) and Freire (1967; 1980; 1983; 1986; 1987; 1992; 1993), each in their own way, in accordance with the historical context in which they lived, constitute the basic ideas of popular education, namely:

- that educating means critically knowing reality;
- that educating means committing to the utopia of transforming reality;

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<sup>2</sup> Venezuelan thinker, who lived from 1771 to 1854, defender of the search for appropriate solutions for education in Latin American societies, for whom, without popular education there will be no true society. He was Simón Bolívar's tutor.

<sup>3</sup> Military, Venezuelan political leader, called "the liberator", who lived from 1783 to 1830. He presided over not only Venezuela, but Peru and Gran Colombia, formed by Colombia, Venezuela, Ecuador and Panama. He laid the democratic ideological foundations in Hispanic America and fought in the liberation battles against Spanish rule.

<sup>4</sup> For Carrillo (2016b), popular education, as it is conceived today, emerged between the end of the 1960s and the mid-1980s, as a result of historical conditions and circumstances of a political and cultural nature in Latin America.

- that educating means training the subjects of this change;
- that education is dialogue.

Also for Adams (2022), although popular education has developed, marked by varied meanings, concerning different places, practices and theorizations, the Cuban author, as well as Simón Rodríguez and José Carlos Mariátegui<sup>5</sup>, is an example that marked the popular education in Latin America. In it, states Adams (2022), the historicity of popular education and its evident features are rediscovered:

[...] the integral vision of knowledge, articulating the scientific with the human, the tenderness, the intellectual, the poetic; learning as exchange and sharing; and the dimension of gratuitousness, of ethical-political commitment that privileges solidarity between people who recognize their condition of interdependence (Adams, 2022, p. 8).

Although the production of Freire (1967; 1980; 1983; 1986; 1987; 1992; 1993), even due to the historical moment in which he lived, presents depth, delineation and consistency more closely matched to popular education, it is in Martí (2002a; 2002b ; 2002c; 2002d; 2002e), as in other Latin American authors from the 19th century, we find the founding ideas of popular education, although authors, such as Streck (2008), identify in the thinker traces of popular education from the political-pedagogical movement of the second half of the last century. Regarding the foundations, Streck (2008) says that the Cuban lays these foundations when he defends the education of the people in the sense of universal education, that is, education for all. After all, Martí said (1884 apud Streck, 2007):

[...] every nation will be unhappy until it educates all its children. A people of educated men will always be a people of free men. Education is the only way to save yourself from slavery. A people who are slaves to men from another people are just as repugnant as they are slaves to men from their own people (Martí, 1884 apud Streck, 2007, p. 48).

In relation to popular education in the 20th century, Streck (2008) identifies four principles present in the Cuban thinker:

[...] the appreciation of the plurality of knowledge; the interpersonal relationship as an environment for learning-teaching and a basis for social transformation; knowledge of reality from an emancipatory perspective as a political act; and education as a self-formative process of society (Streck, 2008, p. 11).

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<sup>5</sup> Peruvian thinker who lived from 1894 to 1930. Historian and journalist, he is considered one of the most important Latin American Marxists.

Popular education, for Cubans, in that context of which they were part, meant the inclusion of everyone in the education system, such as indigenous people and peasants. For Freire (1983), based on his reality, in addition to inclusion, the system needed to recognize the cultural universe, vocabulary of this exploited man, his words and his life.

To better address the topic, this article was organized as follows: in the first part, a brief biography of the authors is presented, highlighting the main events in their lives that are linked to reflections on popular education; in the second, the points considered main in the conception of popular education in Martí (2002a; 2002b; 2002c; 2002d; 2002e) are identified, in conjunction with his revolutionary reflections in Cuba; in the third, the conception of popular education in Freire (1967; 1980; 1983; 1986; 1987; 1992; 1993), in the context of conditions of profound inequality, promoted by an authoritarian mentality, historically constituted in Brazil; in the fourth, as final considerations, complementary reflections are outlined, crossing the authors' conceptions. And finally, the references, which contain the theoretical support that supported this research.

## **2 A brief biography of José Martí and Paulo Freire**

With a view to understanding the authors in their contexts of existence, a panoramic view of the authors' lives is presented below. To understand ideas, without a doubt, it is necessary to understand, as Bourdieu (2006) says, the "social surface", where the individual acts. It is from this perspective that ambience is a fundamental factor for understanding, according to the vision of Levi (2006, p. 175), the "[...] atmosphere that explains the singularity of trajectories".

For Veloso (2011), the Cuban author was one of the most important references in literature and politics in Latin America, who was born on January 28, 1853, in Havana, Cuba. His life was marked by his commitment to freedom, social justice and the independence of his country from Spanish colonial rule. The legacy of this revolutionary is not only found in his writings, but also in his influence on the independence movements in Latin America. Because of this, Marinello (1963) says this in relation to Martí:

Our hero lived in an intricate, struggling jungle of men and books, of resonances, memories and premonitions. A complete onomastic balance and a record of dates and places that appeared on its pages would make a good-sized volume (Marinello, 1963, p. 10, our translation<sup>6</sup>).

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<sup>6</sup> Translated from Spanish: Nuestro héroe vivía en una intrincada y luchadora jungla de hombres y libros, de resonancias, recuerdos y premoniciones. Un balance completo de nombres y un registro de las fechas y lugares que aparecieron en sus páginas formarían un volumen de buen tamaño (Marinello, 1963, p. 10).

From a young age, the revolutionary Cuban author showed a deep interest in Literature and Politics, which explains, among other reasons, his extensive intellectual production, which is now available, in digital format, in collections made up of several volumes<sup>7</sup>. At the age of 16 he was arrested for his activism against the Spanish colonial government. His prison sentence was followed by exile that took him to Spain, where he continued his intellectual training. He later lived in several countries, including Mexico and the United States. In this he interacted with Cuban exiles and other Latin American revolutionaries.

During his life, in addition to politics, the Cuban author, according to Veloso (2011), also dedicated himself to teaching and promoting Spanish-American culture. His work includes essays, poetry, journal articles and texts that reflect his deep love for freedom and criticism of oppression. For Baró and Cesar (2023), Martí placed the struggle for the liberation of Cuba at the center of his existence, which led him, in 1892, to found the Cuban Revolutionary Party (PRC). The fundamental objectives of the PRC were:

- achieve Cuban independence; and
- encourage and assist in the independence of Puerto Rico.

Veloso (2011) considers Martí one of the fathers of modernism and Spanish-American literature. His poetry, full of vivid imagery and symbolism, explores themes such as national and Latin American identity, love and freedom. One of his best-known poems – *Versos Sencillos* – stands out for its quality and emotional depth. In these, Cuban captures the essence of the everyday life and struggles of the Cuban people. According to Lea (2022):

[...] as a poet, Martí sought coherence in his speech and action, making his literary expressions pedagogical and using political pedagogy to achieve liberation. However, it was necessary to reinvent Latin American agency and identity and face and decolonize political contradictions (Lea, 2022, p. 6, our translation<sup>8</sup>).

In addition to his poetry, the Cuban author wrote essays and articles that became fundamental to Latin American thought. His work, *Nuestra América*, is a key essay, where he defends the unity and identity of the Latin American peoples in the face of foreign influence. In this work, Martí (2002d) invites Latin Americans to recognize their cultural diversity and build their own identity based on their historical roots.

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<sup>7</sup> For more than 40 years, the Center for Martinian Studies has dedicated its work to publicizing the work of José Martí. One of his greatest achievements was the publication, in 1991, of the Complete Works of José Martí, in 27 volumes, later republished in other formats, such as PDF publications, from 2002 onwards, which were widely used in this article.

<sup>8</sup> Translated from Spanish: Como poeta, Martí buscó la coherencia en su discurso y acción haciendo pedagógicas sus expresiones literarias y utilizando la pedagogía política para lograr la liberación. Sin embargo, era necesario reinventar la agencia y la identidad latinoamericanas y confrontar y descolonizar las contradicciones políticas (Lea, 2022, p. 6).

At the end of the 19th century, Valdés Puentes and Valdés Navia (2004) state that Martí became a key leader in the fight for Cuban independence. His vision of a free and sovereign Cuba was inclusive, defending racial and social equality. In his writings, he denounced racism and promoted a society in which all Cubans, regardless of their origin, had the same rights and opportunities. Despite the obstacles, he organized the resumption of the struggle for Cuban independence, which took place in February 1895. Two months later, his premature fall occurred in “Dos Ríos”. Despite his death, his legacy endured and his figure was transfigured as a symbol of the struggle for sovereignty, not just of Cuba, but of all of Latin America.

According to Streck (2007), the Cuban legacy is recognized to this day. His thinking has inspired political leaders and social movements across Latin America. His call for social justice and unity of people has resonated in diverse contexts, from the Mexican Revolution to contemporary movements for social justice, such as Brazil’s (Landless Movement) Movimento Sem Terra (MST).

Puentes and Navia (2004) highlight that Martí has been studied in several disciplines, from Literature to History and Sociology, including Popular Education, and that due to his ability to address universal themes from a local perspective, this makes him an important intellectual in academia. It is no coincidence that his life and work are the reason for celebrations and tributes in several countries, as he is remembered as a national hero and defender of human rights.

An icon of the fight for freedom and identity in Latin America, the Cuban’s life was marked by exile and resistance, which reflects his deep commitment to justice and human dignity. Through his poetry, essays and political actions, he left a legacy that continues to inspire generations. His call for unity and the fight for independence resonates strongly to this day in a continent that continues to face challenges in the search for a more just and equal future. For Streck (2007; 2010; 2024), Martí is not only a testimony of his time, but a guide for the contemporary struggle for freedom and social justice.

Regarding Freire, Brazilian, born in 1921, state of Pernambuco, and died in 1997, in São Paulo. Although he studied Law, he dedicated his entire life to Education, a field of knowledge from which he became a reference with his successful literacy method, applied to adult rural workers. As he theorized about the epistemological bases of his method and shared his reflections dialogically, he strengthened a liberating conception of education that gave rise to Pedagogy of the Oppressed, in 1968, one of the most translated and read works in the entire world<sup>9</sup>. For his life dedicated to education, Brazilian Law no. 12,612, sanctioned in 2012, declares him Patron of Brazilian Education.

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<sup>9</sup> Freire’s intellectual production is extensive, consisting of authorial books and collaborative works, through interviews and shared writings. Among the many works published, the following stand out, in addition

Freire's (1992) work in the area of Education began when, still very young, he became a teacher at Colégio Oswaldo Cruz, in Pernambuco, and then director of the Education and Culture sector of the Social Service of Industry (SESI), institution created by the National Confederation of Industry. Engaged in educational work, in 1955, together with other educators, he created the Capibaribe Institute, an alternative school to the traditional and uncritical models of education, in force in society at the time.

From then on, he became known for the innovative pedagogical proposal that he sought to put into practice, assuming several prominent public roles in the area, as a member of the Recife Education Advisory Council and director of the Culture and Recreation Division of the Department of Documentation and Culture of Recife City Hall, as well as professor of the Philosophy of Education course at the School of Social Service, among other, no less important activities.

Just before the military coup of 1964, Gadotti (1996) states that the Brazilian author assumed with greater vigor and intensity the revolutionary dimension of his thought and was involved in founding the Popular Culture Movement (MCP)<sup>10</sup>. Establishing himself as a progressive educator, he began the first experiences of popular literacy that would result in the Paulo Freire Method (1983), with the Pedagogy of the Oppressed. Due to the success of his team's literacy experience, he was invited by President João Goulart (later deposed by the military) to lead the National Literacy Plan, which provided for the mass training of educators to eradicate illiteracy in the country through his method<sup>11</sup>. The intention was to provide literacy, according to Affonso (1996), politicizing 5 million adults by 1965.

The awareness-raising dimension and the successful technical quality of his method made Freire (1992) a political persecutor. In direct contact with the oppressed, he soon realized that literacy was a necessary step towards the transformation of a colonized country, immersed in exploitation, conformity and domination. For Freire (1967; 1980; 1983), educat-

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to Pedagogy of the Oppressed (1968): Education as a practice of freedom (1967); Awareness (1967); Extension and communication (1969); Letters to Guinea Bissau (1975); Cultural Action for Freedom (1976); Education and change (1979); The importance of the act of reading (1981); For a pedagogy of the question, in partnership with Antonio Faundez (1985); Fear and boldness, in partnership with Ira Shor (1986); Pedagogy of Hope (1992); Politics and education (1993); Teacher, yes; aunt, no (1993); and Pedagogy of autonomy (1996). Part of Freire's works are available on the Coletivo Paulo Freire website: <https://www.coletivopaulofreire.org/SME/acervo-paulo-freire/obras-de-paulo-freire>. Accessed on: 31 Oct. 2024.

<sup>10</sup> The MCP is a movement created in Recife, Pernambuco, Brazil, in 1960, with the aim of educating the city's poor population. The MCP teams worked with the support of Mayor Miguel Arraes, a left-wing politician. Subsequently, the MCP joined the Basic Education Movement (MEB) and the National Conference of Brazilian Bishops (CNBB) and also began to operate in the corners of the Northeast and deepen the literacy process of the marginalized population with a view to transforming their reality.

<sup>11</sup> The National Literacy Plan is established by Decree no. 53,465, of January 21, 1964, which in its Article 1 decrees: "The National Literacy Program is hereby established, through the use of the Paulo Freire System, through the Ministry of Education and Culture".

ing should then be a political act. Poverty, the result of all types of expropriation and alienation, from his perspective, could be mitigated by making the working class aware, through literacy, of their oppressed condition. In this way, he articulated a method in which adults become aware of their place in the world and their ability, through the culture they produce, to make it work. To do this, it was necessary to end silence and provoke dialogue.

This proposal became a threat to the military who aimed to further oppress the most disadvantaged in Brazilian society. Unable to continue his work of raising literacy awareness, he left the country and, in exile, published in Spanish, in Chile, in 1968, the first edition of *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. In Chile, reports Freire (1996), he works as an advisor to the Instituto de Desarrollo Agropecuario and the Chilean Ministry of Education and as a consultant to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) with the Instituto de Capacitación e Research into Agrarian Reform in Chile. Afterwards, upon invitation, he will work as a professor at Harvard, Cambridge, Massachusetts and in several countries in Africa, Asia and Oceania.

With the country's redemocratization, Freire (1992) returned from exile in 1980 and began working as a professor at several universities, mainly at the Pontifical Catholic University of São Paulo (PUC/SP) and the University of Campinas (UNICAMP). But the biggest challenge he faces is that of Municipal Secretary of Education for the city of São Paulo, in 1989, when Luiza Erundina, a member of the Workers' Party (PT), wins the election<sup>12</sup>. In 1992, Freire (1992) left the Secretariat and resumed his classroom activities at universities and publishing work.

Awarded with the title Doctor Honoris Causa and Professor Emeritus from countless universities around the world, his work is recognized for its philosophical, political and pedagogical consistency. For his work in education, he has received numerous national and international awards and honors<sup>13</sup>. He crossed borders, he is considered by Gadotti (1996) a citizen of the world, Freire left an extensive legacy:

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<sup>12</sup> Luiza Erundina governed the city of São Paulo, today the fourth largest city in the world in terms of number of inhabitants (approximately twelve and a half million inhabitants), between 1989-1993.

<sup>13</sup> Among the universities from which he received the title Honoris Causa, we mention: Open University of London, England; Catholic University of Louvain, Belgium; University of Michigan – Ann Arbor, United State of America (USA); University of Geneva, Switzerland; New Hampshire College, USA; San Simon University, Cochabamba, Bolivia; University of Santa Maria, Brazil; University of Barcelona, Spain; State University of Campinas, Brazil; Pontifical Catholic University of Campinas, Brazil; Federal University of Goiás, Brazil; Pontifical Catholic University of São Paulo, Brazil; University of Bologna, Italy; Claremont University, USA; Piaget Institute, Portugal; University of Massachusetts, Amherst, USA; Federal University of Pará, Brazil; Complutense University of Madrid, Spain; University of Mons-Hainaut, Belgium; Wheelock College, Boston, USA; University of El Salvador, El Salvador; Fielding Institute, Santa Barbara, USA; Federal University of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil; University of Illinois, Chicago, USA; Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil; Federal Rural University of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil; Stockholm University, Sweden; Federal University of Alagoas, Brazil.



[...] spread across the most different countries, but united around the commitment to put education at the service of the cause of the “tattered people of the world” – to whom Paulo Freire dedicates his main work: *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* –, an immeasurable number of educators have found in the ideas and militant actions of Paulo Freire the necessary food to enrich and perfect his praxis. Thus, over the last few decades, at the same time that Freire’s reflections have deepened, his approaches have spilled over into other fields of knowledge, creating roots in the most varied soils, strengthening educational theories and practices, as well as helping reflections not only of educators, but also of doctors, therapists, social scientists, philosophers, anthropologists and other professionals, both in the area of human sciences and in the area of natural and exact sciences. This trajectory has made him one of the most translated and read educators in the world today (Gadotti, 1996, p. 19).

Although they lived in different times, the desire that animates Martí (2002a; 2002b; 2002c; 2002d; 2002e) and Freire (1967; 1980; 1983; 1986; 1987; 1992; 1993) is the same: emancipation. In the particular case of Martí (2007), the desire for political emancipation is directed at oppressed Latin America, represented by Spanish colonization in Cuba. For Freire (1967, 1980, 1983), the desire for emancipation is focused on the working class oppressed by the exploitation of an already politically independent country.

### **3 Between scientific education, ethics and political formation, the idea of popular education in José Martí**

Martí’s texts (2002a; 2002b; 2002c; 2002d; 2002e) show his engagement with his time and concern for social justice. For Cuba, he articulated an entire project of transformation and social change in which independence from Spanish colonialism was placed at the center of all efforts and around it he conceived the need for education; an education designed for the liberation of Latin America.

Based on the neighborhood schools he attended as a child in Havana – a fact that probably served as an essential device for thinking about a better education – and his studies on high school and university education in Spain, Martí (2002a) understands the education of human beings as a process through which life is made. For him, everyone should have access to education to develop in society. The author explains:

Educating is depositing in each man all the human work that preceded him; it is to make each man a summary of the living world, until the day he lives; it is to place it at the level of its time, so that it floats above it, and not to leave it below its time, so that it cannot float; is to prepare man for life (Martí, 2002a, p. 281, our translation<sup>14</sup>).

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<sup>14</sup> Translated from Spanish: Educar es depositar en cada hombre todo el trabajo humano que le precedió; es hacer de cada hombre un resumen del mundo viviente, hasta el día en que viva; es colocarlo al nivel de su

For Martí (2002a) it was urgent to overcome the scholastic conception of education that prevailed at the time and replace it with a scientific vision. According to Perilla and Guadarramara González (2008, p. 371, our translation<sup>15</sup>), “[...] the first de-alienating element to which Martí paid homage was science”. He proposed the introduction of science into the curriculum and school programs from Primary Education to University, at the same time as he was concerned with how to develop a scientific approach to teaching.

Martí (2002a) aimed for an education inspired by the best experiences of educational theories from Europe and the United States, but which could adapt to the Latin American reality and its own needs. From his perspective, the advancement of the Latin American people towards more developed societies necessarily involved the inclusion of the most oppressed layers of society, such as the original populations, in the education system. For Martí (2002a), this was an aspect that required attention and a practical solution, since compulsory education was not enough to serve this population, much less transform their living conditions and give them the necessary independence to participate in the society they live in should be built.

However, Martí (2002e) understood that bringing social sectors closer to the original populations, peasants and workers was difficult and complex. Mandatory education was not enough to approach and work with them. To this end, he proposes the itinerant school, the only one, in his view, capable of remedying the peasants’ lack of school education, because it would offer practical training.

Upon noting the situation of poverty and lack of education among workers, a result of colonizing exploitation, Martí (2002b) proposes an entire training process that combines education with economic development. In his understanding, education should promote training that would enable preparation for work and, by extension, the country’s economic growth. Thus, he says that “[...] an agricultural country needs agricultural education” (Martí, 2002b, p. 160).

By associating educational processes with the improvement of areas with the greatest impact on the reality of Latin American countries, Martí (2002b) believed that it was viable to meet the continent’s real possibilities and expectations. In its conception, the School of Arts and Crafts, for example, although it was an important invention, could not serve as a single model to be implemented everywhere. Very concerned with the development of agriculture, he defends practical schools about land management and cultivation, what was urgent and what needed to work with the mediation of an itinerant teacher because only

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tiempo, para que flote por encima de él, y no dejarlo por debajo de su tiempo, para que no pueda flotar; es preparar al hombre para la vida (Martí, 2002a, p. 281).

<sup>15</sup> Translated from Spanish: “[...] el primer elemento desalienante al que Martí rindió homenaje fue la ciencia” (2008, p. 371).

then would it be plausible to develop a living pedagogy, to take place in agricultural seasons, different from the abstract teaching of technical schools. Such an experience would provoke curiosity, desire and surprise in the student, a condition prevented by rhetorical teaching, sedimented by colonization.

For Streck (2007; 2010), the Cuban was an intellectual committed to reality and praxis as a pedagogical strategy, for whom an efficient education would involve subjects, transforming them and transforming their society, but, to do so, teaching needed to make the student an educational subject, meaning that he or she should be active, involved in learning. In the case of agriculture, he said that the student should learn directly from working the land and that working the land should be part of the training of new generations.

Martí's (2002c) experiences in the preparation of the Necessary War<sup>16</sup>, which led him to establish a close relationship with Cuban immigrants in Tampa and Cyo Hueso, resulted in the "Liga de Nueva York". In this regard, he expresses himself:

The Liga de Nueva York is a house of education and affection, although those who claim to educate already say they want to. In the League, after the tiredness of work, there are those who know that there is only true happiness in friendship and culture; those who feel or see for themselves that being of one color or another does not diminish the sublime aspiration in man; those who do not believe that earning their bread in one trade gives a man fewer rights and obligations than those who earn it in any other; those who heard the inner voice that orders the natural light to be turned on [...] (Martí, 2002c, p. 252, our translation<sup>17</sup>).

Martí (2002c) defends an education oriented towards practical and scientific knowledge, with emphasis on subjects such as Physics, Mechanics and Agriculture, which should replace the excessively abstract and speculative teaching of logic and rhetorical precepts. For Martí (2002b), the arts and applied sciences offer rigor and clarity, which are more useful for the development of thinking and action capabilities than classical texts, which are often confusing and distant from contemporary realities.

Martí (2002a) proposed a "radical revolution in education", which implied not just a change in the curriculum, but a philosophical change that promoted a balance between the intellectual and the practical, between thought and action, thus forming individuals that

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<sup>16</sup> The Necessary War was the fight against Spanish colonialism and, of course, Cuba's political independence.

<sup>17</sup> Translated from Spanish: La Liga de Nueva York es una casa de educación y cariño, aunque quienes dicen educar ya dicen que quieren hacerlo. En la Liga, después del cansancio del trabajo, hay quienes saben que sólo hay verdadera felicidad en la amistad y la cultura; los que sienten o ven por sí mismos que ser de un color u otro no disminuye la aspiración sublime en el hombre; los que no creen que ganarse el pan con un oficio le da al hombre menos derechos y obligaciones que quien lo gana con cualquier otro; aquellos que escucharon la voz interior que les ordena tener encendida la luz natural [...] (Martí, 2002c, p. 252).

would contribute to both the economic progress and social well-being of their nations. With this vision, Martí (2002a) placed education at the center of the project of modernization and emancipation of Latin American peoples, suggesting that only through comprehensive and accessible education would the structural limitations that perpetrated inequality and underdevelopment be overcome.

The understanding that science should be taught in a direct and fun way illustrates Martí's (2002a) understanding that scientific knowledge should be available to everyone. His conception was that when scientific knowledge is presented in a clear, easy and attractive way, it stops being something distant and exclusive, and becomes a valuable resource for the people. By making science alive, that is, pleasant and easy to understand, its "generalization" and massive diffusion is achieved.

The particular vision that Martí (2002a) had of popular education made scientific knowledge democratic, key to social progress, since science should be within the reach of everyone, not just the elites. This would not only contribute to promoting a more educated society, but would also allow scientific advances to directly impact people's daily lives, improving their well-being and contributing to collective development.

Martí (2002a) was a fervent defender of the practical school, teaching through experimentation, and the permanent work of teachers and students through example. In his texts, he referred to "tested methods"<sup>18</sup> which should be taught, for example, to farmers, as well as the knowledge accumulated by agricultural science and the experience of other peoples.

For Martí (2002a), instead of working solely with traditional practices, science and technique should provide tested tools and methods, which demonstrate their capacity for success in different contexts. This meant an openness to innovation, the exchange of knowledge and the implementation of practices that had shown "amazing" results, that is, surprising and admirable.

Martí (2002b) saw the modernization of agriculture not only as a way to improve production, but also as a necessary step towards competition on a global level, ensuring the economic and social well-being of Latin American countries. Scientific and technical knowledge should be put at the service of farmers so that they could obtain the best results, benefiting both producers and the nation as a whole. This part of the analysis reflects the sense of urgency and the need to update the progress that occurred at the time in different parts of the world.

As a follower of scientific-practical education and defender of teaching those subjects that bring direct benefits to producers, he maintained:

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<sup>18</sup> Pedagogical proposals implemented abroad, especially in Europe.

In our countries there must be a radical revolution in education, if we are not to always see them, as we still see some of them now, irregular, stunted and deformed, like Horace's monster: the head was colossal, the heart immense, dragging its feet weak, dry and almost bone-like arms. Against Theology, Physics; against Rhetoric, Mechanics; against the precepts of Logic – which the rigor, consistency and intertwining of the arts teach better than the degenerate and confused thought texts of schools –, agricultural precepts (Martí, 2002d, p. 279, our translation<sup>19</sup>).

By questioning the traditional structures that, according to him, generated unbalanced and stagnant societies, Martí (2002d) proposed a profound transformation of the educational system in Latin American countries. When he uses the metaphor of “Horacio's monster”, he means that the social and educational development of Latin American countries resulted in nations that, although they had potential and spirit, lacked the necessary tools to advance effectively. The educational model, anchored in Theology and Rhetoric, which, although they had a formative value, did not respond to the pragmatic needs that societies required at the time: applied science and technical knowledge for material progress.

Martí (2002e) made several comparisons between the education observed in Latin America and the educational processes in countries such as France, Germany and Switzerland. These nations stood out for being at the forefront of educational progress at that time, establishing significant guidelines in the scientific and pedagogical sphere. The ability of teaching in these countries to produce active and critical learning will serve as a reference for our Cuban author as an education capable of promoting social well-being and the empowerment of individuals in the most distant places. In this regard, he noted:

[...] it is in the villages that the great revolution is taking place. Popular education has just saved France; I saw her three years ago and predicted, somewhat unconvinced, her triumph over any new reaction. The reaction came and France triumphed (Martí, 2002e, p.155).

The analysis of ideas presented by Martí (2002e) about education in Switzerland and Germany highlights the fundamental role of popular education in building respected and powerful societies. In this direction, Martí (2002e, p.155, our translation<sup>20</sup>) points out: “Popular education keeps smiling Switzerland respected externally and honored internally”.

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<sup>19</sup> Translated from Spanish: En nuestros países debe haber una revolución radical en la educación, si no queremos verlos siempre, como todavía vemos a algunos, irregulares, atrofiados y deformes, como el monstruo de Horacio: la cabeza era colosal, el corazón inmenso, arrastrando sus pies débiles, secos y brazos casi como huesos. Contra la Teología, la Física; contra la Retórica, la Mecánica; contra los preceptos de la Lógica –que el rigor, la coherencia y el entrelazamiento de las artes enseñan mejor que los textos de pensamiento degenerados y confusos de las escuelas–, los preceptos agrícolas (Martí, 2002d, p. 279).

<sup>20</sup> Translated from Spanish: “La educación popular sigue sonriendo: Suiza es respetada en el exterior y honrada en el interior” (Martí, 2002e, p.155).

In addition to criticizing the classic model of education, imposed by Spanish colonization, which created obsolete and inoperative countries in the face of social, political and economic problems, Martí's (2002d) intellectual production deals with ethics. The thinking about ethics in Martí (2002d) is based on the deep conviction that freedom and justice are inalienable rights of every human being. For Martí (2002d), the fight for Cuban independence was not only a political act, but a moral imperative. His ethical vision focused on human dignity, which led him to defend a society in which everyone, regardless of their origin or material conditions, could enjoy the same rights and opportunities. This ethical focus translated into a rejection of any form of oppression, both colonial and internal, and the production of a political discourse in favor of armed struggle. He defends:

War is a political procedure, and this procedure of war is convenient in Cuba, because it will definitively resolve a situation that continues and will continue to disturb the fear of it; because of the war, in the conflict between the owners of the country, already poor and discredited among their own, with the children of the country, natural friends of freedom, the freedom indispensable for the realization and enjoyment of legitimate well-being will triumph; because the war will put an end to the friendship and fusion of regions and social entities, without whose close and cordial treatment independence itself would have been a focus of serious discord; for the war will give occasion to the diligent Spaniards to make them forget, by their neutrality or by their help, the cruelty and blindness with which in the past struggle they stifled the virtue of their sons; because through war a state of happiness superior to the efforts to be made for it will be obtained (Martí, 2002d, p. 317, our translation<sup>21</sup>).

Martí (2002d) also emphasized the importance of education as an essential pillar for the ethical development of society. He believed that education, being accessible to everyone, would have the power to transform individuals and communities. In his writings he defended a comprehensive education that promoted critical thinking and empathy, fundamental points for building active and responsible citizenship. This vision of education is a central component of his ethics, as knowledge and critical consciousness were essential tools in the fight against injustice.

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<sup>21</sup> Translated from Spanish: La guerra es un procedimiento político, y este procedimiento de guerra conviene en Cuba, porque resolverá definitivamente una situación que continúa y seguirá perturbando el temor a ella; A causa de la guerra, en el conflicto entre los dueños de la patria, ya pobres y desprestigiados entre los suyos, con los hijos de la patria, amigos naturales de la libertad, triunfará la libertad indispensable para la realización y disfrute del legítimo bienestar. ; porque la guerra pondrá fin a la amistad y fusión de regiones y entidades sociales, sin cuyo trato cercano y cordial la propia independencia habría sido foco de graves discordias; porque la guerra dará ocasión a los diligentes españoles de hacerles olvidar, con su neutralidad o con su ayuda, la crueldad y ceguera con que en la lucha pasada sofocaron la virtud de sus hijos; porque mediante la guerra se obtendrá un estado de felicidad superior a los esfuerzos que se hagan para lograrla (Martí, 2002d, p. 317).

Another relevant aspect of Martí's ethics (2002d) is his vision of solidarity and unity among peoples, as he believed that Cuba's independence could not be achieved without a sense of fraternity among Latin American nations. His famous phrase **with all and for the good of all** encompasses this idea of inclusion and collaboration. Thus, ethics should transcend borders and be a means to build a united continent, where individual struggles are intertwined in a collective effort for justice and peace.

Furthermore, Martí (2002a; 200b; 2002c; 2002d; 2002e) questioned the injustices and inequalities inherent in the social structures of his time. His criticism of racism and racial discrimination is a reflection of his ethical commitment to equality. In his writings, he defends a Cuba in which all races and social classes were recognized and valued. This stance demonstrates his deep sensitivity towards social problems and desire to build a more just and egalitarian society.

Ethics in Martí's (2002d) thinking also manifests itself in his focus on individual responsibility. He considered that each person has a moral duty to act in favor of the common good. This sense of responsibility was not limited to political action, but encompassed all aspects of everyday life. Martí (2002d) understood that social transformation began with individual action and ethical awareness which, in turn, could mobilize each person to be an agent of transformation within their environment. His ethical legacy continues to inspire those who seek a more just and supportive world.

#### **4 The culture of the oppressed as an instrument of popular education in Paulo Freire**

Freire's texts (1967; 1980; 1983; 1986; 1987; 1992; 1993), like those of Martí (2002a; 200b; 2002c; 2002d; 2002e), reveal their historical time; a time that, even in a national context of political independence, runs under the sign of injustice and political manipulation. In these terms, it is possible to recognize the intellectual production of the Brazilian thinker as a reaction to this context, as a pedagogical proposal, combined with a political movement to fight against social inequalities, responsible for promoting a profound process of alienation that led to the perpetration of a model of society unequal, therefore, unfair.

In his first writings, in 1967, when he was in exile against the closure of the political regime in Brazil by the military, Freire (1967; 1980; 1983) already announced, based on experiences carried out in the northeast of the country with adult literacy, that education could not be limited to technicalities of teaching people basic knowledge (writing, reading and counting); it was necessary to transform this process into an act of awareness, that is, of teaching this knowledge, providing those who teach and those who learn, the experience of critically reflecting on reality. This is because, for him:

[...] what is felt, day by day, more strongly here, less there, in any of the worlds into which the world is divided, is the simple man crushed, diminished and accommodated, converted into a spectator, directed by the power of myths what powerful social forces create for him. Myths that, turning against him, destroy and annihilate him. He is the tragically frightened man, fearing authentic coexistence and even doubting its possibility. At the same time, however, leaning towards a gregariousness that implies, alongside the fear of loneliness, which extends as “fear of freedom”, the juxtaposition of individuals who lack a critical and loving bond, which would transform it into a unity cooperative, which would be authentic coexistence (Freire, 1967, p. 44).

It is against this reality that Freire’s Pedagogy (1967; 1983) rebels; against the existence of a marginalized but also passive people, domesticated by colonialism, sedimented in the ways of thinking and acting of a politically independent people, but imprisoned by a culture of oppression built over centuries. Thus, political freedom, from the author’s perspective, had not been enough to make the Brazilian people – subjected to exploitation, like the colonized peoples of America – free, because the absence of participation remained. Subjected to silencing, even politically free, the most impoverished sections of society needed to have the experience of speaking, of expressing themselves, of being heard. It was necessary to promote dialogue.

Dialogue, the basic instrument of the Pedagogy of the Oppressed, is a primary resource of Freire’s educational proposal (1963; 1983). Through dialogue, it would be possible to access culture immersed in the concrete living conditions of those expropriated from societies marked by profound inequalities. It is this culture, which Freire (1983) calls “real context”, without which it is not possible to carry out a liberating pedagogical practice, an education beyond school content; an education that was capable of making the subject understand themselves in and with the world, that is, that could understand their social condition and reality so that, upon realizing their place in the world, they could transform it.

The pedagogical process, according to Freire (1967), with a view to transforming societies marked by profound inequalities, which come to operate in politically independent but not free countries, new forms of exploitation, subjugation and expropriation, involves the practice of awareness that, in his words, means acquiring the ability to “separate” oneself from the world and perceive oneself in it, to objectify existence by distancing oneself from it and, in doing so, to become aware of the processes underlying its existence. functioning, assuming a critical position. He clarifies:

The more awareness, the more reality is “unveiled”, the more one penetrates the phenomenal essence of the object, in front of which we find ourselves to analyze it. For this same reason, awareness does not consist of “standing before reality” by assuming a falsely intellectual position. Awareness cannot exist outside of “praxis”, or rather, without the action-reflection act. This dialectical unity permanently constitutes the way of being or transforming the world that characterizes men (Freire, 1980, p. 26).



It is in this world shaped by dehumanization, where silence penetrates the souls of the oppressed, that their culture is woven into the fabric of domination, hindering, as he says in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, “[...] the affirmation of men as beings of decision” (Freire, 1987, p. 184). By becoming hostage to the oppressor, to the point of depriving themselves of decision, the oppressed internalize the “shadow” imposed on them, fearing freedom, which is an achievement and not a gift. Liberating education is then responsible, through the educator-student dialogic practice, to guarantee the act of educating. It is only through this concrete openness to listening to others, working with their culture, that the silence of existence will be broken and the possibility of learning to transform will be realized. In this direction, for Freire’s liberating pedagogy (1983):

[...] dialogue is an existential requirement. And, if it is the meeting in which the reflection and action of its subjects addressed to the world to be transformed and humanized comes together, it cannot be reduced to an act of depositing ideas from one subject to another, nor can it become simple exchange of ideas to be consumed by the exchanges (Freire, 1983, p. 93).

The break with the culture of silence for Freire (1983) means an important decision-making for the educational experience, in order to create the necessary ambience for cultural circles – a pedagogical strategy from which the educator mobilizes the group to reflect on topics from their daily lives and, thus, survey the popular vocabulary from which the literacy process develops through generating words.

In this way, Freire (1983) makes the word the mobilizing instrument of a teaching that breaks with alienation, so responsible for maintaining the status quo and accommodating the exploited. His proposal carries the hope of provoking rebellion. He argues that one of the educator’s tasks is “[...] transforming rebellious consciousness into revolutionary consciousness” (Freire, 1986, p. 169).

In the context of this pedagogical work towards the formation of revolutionary consciousness through culture circles, the question becomes a resource for conducting debate about problems experienced. The educator, in these terms, positions himself as a coordinator-educator who, by breaking with the hierarchical teacher-student relationship, so present in banking education, promotes the appreciation of working-class culture and overcomes the authoritarianism that pervades the educational experience.

The authoritarianism of the traditional school, which reproduces “banking education”, where silence permeates the school environment, prevents curiosity and freedom of knowledge. Such a model, according to Freire (1967; 1983), makes creativity unfeasible and stultifies the student, as education for emancipation requires a permanent stimulus to the act of asking. It is through the question that the world is transformed and not through the certain-

ties or bureaucratized questions of the pedagogy of response, which is “[...] a pedagogy of adaptation and not of creativity” (Freire, 1985, p.51).

Freire’s method of popular education (1967; 1983) is based, especially, on the idea of participation; This participation takes place from two perspectives. The first, when it recognizes that the formation of culture also occurs through popular culture, a culture denied by school. Therefore, for Freire (1967; 1983), participation is something intrinsic to culture. The second, when it makes participation a pedagogical teaching strategy, mediated by dialogue. Participation as a pedagogical experience is thus linked to the first perspective because it is the denied popular elements of culture formation that pedagogically guide participation in the educator-educated relationship.

Under this understanding, participation takes on a deeply democratic dimension in Freire’s (1992) thinking because it is linked to the exercise of power, a power present in the formation of culture; and a shared power in the pedagogical relationship.

By assuming his democratic commitment to Brazilian culture, recognizing the contribution of a large portion of the population to its production – the working class –, and rescuing this contribution in pedagogical practice, through the exercise of participation, Freire (Costa; Ferreira, 2020) reinforces the political dimension that underpins his method. In these terms, it makes each literacy student a militant, a leader in defense of their cultural heritage; rescues dignity, self-esteem, prevented from prevailing by fear, fear and arrogance.

The Brazilian author, in discussion, thus removes the educational process from passivity. Educator and student become active subjects in the learning process. Instead of domestication, so present in traditional schools, promoted by the ruling class, which means educating for obedience, he proposes a progressive work of emancipation, an emancipation capable of developing feelings of social responsibility. Educating, says Freire (1987), is a political act.

From his perspective, there is no neutrality possible in education. Denying the political nature of the educational process and taking it as a pure “what to do” is the same as “[...] engaging in the service of humanity understood as an abstract [...]” (Freire, 1987, p. 26). The assumption of this conception is, in his understanding, an important step towards overcoming naive consciousness.

Between naive consciousness and critical consciousness, Freire (1983) understood the need for hard work in the field of education, which involved understanding that knowledge is not transferred, knowledge is (com)shared. In this sense, its method, as a problematizing education, stands as a resource of hope, as a humanist and liberating pedagogical work to be carried out, based on the assumption that men subjected to domination fight for emancipation. This is a proposal in which the educator-student, overcoming the authoritari-

anism of banking education, also overcomes the false consciousness of the world. He then argued that:

[...] the education of the masses is, therefore, something absolutely fundamental among us. Education that, stripped of its alienated and alienating clothing, is a force for change and liberation. The option, therefore, would also have to be between an “education” for “domestication”, for alienation, and an education for freedom. “Education” for the man-object or education for the man-subject [...] (Freire, 1967, p. 36, emphasis in the original).

In fact, Freire (1963) converted a field responsible for oppression – banking education –, which was (and still is) an important tool in the process of political, economic and cultural submission of his country and the continent, into the possibility of freedom, of practice for freedom. His experience with the oppressed in the world, especially in Brazil, made him a staunch critic of the education model promoted by the elites, which prevented free learning and, for him, every time freedom is suppressed, a merely being is formed. adjusted and accommodated, with his creative capacity sacrificed, which dehumanizes him and makes the world divided between the wealthy and the exploited.

Such dehumanization removes from the oppressed any possibility of the right to have rights and from the oppressors the condition of having all power. This disparity of condition, due to authoritarian banking education, without which it would not be possible to maintain the oppressor-oppressed relationship, produces in the exploited the naturalization of injustice and the idea that oppressors are successful models to be imitated. This generates in the oppressed, according to Freire (1983), the seed of becoming an oppressor, which strengthens, as Barreto (1998) explains, the unjust social structure. This situation, in his perception, can only be overcome by the oppressed himself, using liberating education as a tool.

Ultimately, this understanding by Freire (1963; 1980; 1983) aims to make education an instrument for the preservation of life. Overcoming the unjust model of society, made possible by the liberating education of the oppressed, is a requirement for the very existence of humanity, since the overwhelming process of exploitation will not lead the world to a path other than its own destruction.

From this perspective, freedom becomes the faithful provider of life. It is in this direction that Freire (1963) demonstrates how much the colonization process destroyed lives. Colonizing oppression, which prevented the freedom of the colonized, was what destroyed them, eliminated them, and made entire ethnic groups disappear from America. This has to do with the ethical principles of respect for human life, for the life of the planet. From this point of view, educating as a practice of freedom represents unveiling the process of de-

struction of life and exploitation, in a comprehensive perspective, the exploitation of land, water, air, animals, has been able to generate itself in the world.

Due to the importance of preserving life, in its deepest sense, Freire's Pedagogy of the Oppressed (1983) became a reference proposal for educators and called into question banking education and, with it, the attitude authoritarianism of the teacher. In view of this, he states that one of the virtues of the educator is knowing how to work the tension between the word and silence, that is, the word of the educator and the silence of the student, or even the word of the student and the silence of the educator. This is because living, in practice, means recognizing the obvious: that none of us are alone in the world. Each of us is a being in the world, with the world and with others.

To this end, the act of teaching, which implies educating, as Freire (1963; 1983; 1986; 1992) argues, involves the "passion for knowing", the desire to know and the willingness to listen and dialogue. This requires boldness from the teacher because "[...] one of the tasks of the progressive educator, through serious and correct political analysis, is to unveil the possibilities, no matter the obstacles, for hope, without which little we can do [...]" (Freire, 1992, p. 11).

## **5 From José Martí to Paulo Freire: popular education and the liberation of Latin America**

Different contexts marked the existence of the Cuban author and the Brazilian author, although there are points of convergence in the conception of education between them. According to Arias (2007, p. 3, our translation<sup>22</sup>), "[...] José Martí and Paulo Freire's ideas about education respond to a conception of the world in which the reflection and action of both are part of a praxis that places them as counter-hegemonic intellectuals [...]"

Without a doubt, in their writings, both recognize that access to knowledge and culture must have an emancipatory value, which allows individuals to question and challenge power structures. Thus, education stood for both as a transformative process that would allow marginalized sectors to acquire critical awareness of their reality. For them, true education is not that which imposes knowledge from the top down, but that which nurtures dialogue and the ability of students to act in their surroundings.

Although at a national level the authors lived in very different historical contexts – while Paulo Freire (1921-1997) produced his reflections in an independent country, José Martí (1853-1895) did so in a historical moment of colonization in Cuba –, both recognize in the formation of their societies, oppression was introjected into the hearts and minds of

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<sup>22</sup> Translated from Spanish: "[...] Las ideas de José Martí y Paulo Freire sobre educación responden a una concepción del mundo en la que la reflexión y acción de ambos son parte de una praxis que los ubica como intelectuales contrahegemónicos [...]" (Arias, 2007, p. 3).

the people, strengthened by a scholastic education model, called by Freire (1967; 1983) of “banking education”, responsible for perpetuating social inequalities and the dominance of elites. Under this condition, they defended, in theory and practice, a completely opposite education proposal, which would free the dispossessed from oppression, converting them into active subjects of their own process of emancipation.

In both, a profound humanism can be identified, marked by indignation and revolt against injustice. Martí (2002a; 2002b; 2002c; 2002d; 2002e) and Freire (1967; 1980; 1983; 1986; 1987; 1992; 1993) understood that a change in the society in which they lived would only occur with the education of the most disadvantaged sections of society. In particular, for Martí (2002d) this situation would be transformed with a scientific pedagogy, methodologically focused on everyday life, deeply connected with people. He defended a simple and practical science, capable of improving the lives of citizens and giving them the necessary tools to solve concrete problems (Martí, 2002e). For Freire (1967; 1983), transformation would be possible with a liberating pedagogy, methodologically based on the culture of the oppressed, operated by dialogue between educator and student.

The two authors articulate such proposals based on an education rooted in participation, only viable through a loving and tender teaching practice. Martí (2002e) argued that scientific teaching did not mean a lack of feeling in pedagogical work. Education, from his point of view, should not only enlighten the intellect, but also cultivate a sense of belonging and responsibility towards the world, only possible if the act of educating did not dispense with affection. It is in this sense that Martí (2002e, p. 288) expresses himself: “[...] here, then, is what teachers should take through the fields. Not just agricultural explanations and mechanical instruments, but tenderness, which is so missed and so good by men [...]”.

Freire (1993), in turn, lovingness is an indispensable quality for the educator, not only in the relationship with his students, but with the teaching process itself. However, Freire (1993) does not refer to a mushy love, but to an “armed love”. In his perception, only “armed love” can make educators survive the negativities of their “what to do”. It is the “[...] quarrelsome love of those who assert that they have the right or the duty to have the right to fight, to denounce, to announce. This is the way of loving that is indispensable to the progressive educator [...]” (Freire, 1993, p. 38).

For both Martí (2002a; 2002b; 2002c; 2002d; 2002e) and Freire (1967; 1980; 1983; 1986; 1987; 1992; 1993), education is a tool that cannot be reduced to the transmission of knowledge. Both understood education as an integral process, which should not only instruct in academic terms, but, mainly, cultivate the dignity, autonomy and critical consciousness of individuals, especially those located in the most marginalized areas. As Freire (1983) argued, educating cannot be reduced to an act of simple exchange of ideas.

Finally, culture and education are, from both perspectives, instruments capable of challenging power structures and creating a more just and egalitarian society. In this context, the itinerant teacher and the liberating teacher are agents, with the students, of transformation, by taking education to distant corners, empowering peasants and the most disadvantaged sectors of oppressive societies with their action-reflection-action.

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**Note:** translation by Ana Conceição Borges de Oliveira