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**Between letters, narratives, songs and poems: In favor of an  
Afrodiasporic philosophy**

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"Education as a practice of freedom is a way of teaching that anyone can learn [...] We have to recognize that our teaching style must change."

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In this brief essayist prelude, I bring as a central axis the word concept education, to concatenate as a surface movement small passages contained in letters, narratives, songs and poems in favor of an Afrodiasporic philosophy. Although the word education brings a polysemy of answers, in this essay, the purpose of educating will appear as a political action aimed at an emancipatory and anti-racist philosophical education.

Thus, Education, in the sense of the term, "from the Latin *educare, educere*, which literally means "to lead out" or "to direct out". The Latin term *educare* is composed of the union of the prefix *ex*, which means "outside", and *ducere*, which means "to lead" or "to carry". Thinking in another way, what is the meaning of the word education and its developments when we dialogue with other traditions and conceptual interpretations produced throughout history. For example, the peoples of the tradition of kemetic philosophy<sup>3</sup>, Bantu philosophy, Yoruba from ancestral Africa, Afro-diasporic philosophy and/or native peoples. Both had and have a way of educating for the world and for life, or rather, of cultivating as a fundamental activity of human existence.

The brevity of this essay does not allow us to bring to light the full understanding of the concept of educating in the most varied

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<sup>3</sup>The Kemetic or Egyptian civilization is one of the first great cultures of the ancient world, dating back to time immemorial.

contexts, the analysis of the various schools and the theorists who have focused on the theme of education. In other words, we must lead to the understanding that the understanding of educating as a philosophical cultivar is beyond maieutics, astonishment or admiration, enlightenment, etc. This understanding advocates in favor of other ontologies of enchantment in favor of freedom.

the history of ideas and the practice of education requires an effort to understand its own political dimension [...] delving into an important theme such as education, according to the laws of erudition and the rigorous examination of texts, is a challenge that goes beyond academic studies that involve the entire researcher (Reis, 2018, p. 23).

It is essential to establish a dialogue about educational purposes, especially by establishing a parallel with the purposes of the educational legislation on which they are based. When reflecting on the purpose of education in the most varied historical contexts, the concept of politics, in the sense of action and the public use of the voice, the forms of government in which the formative fabric of educare and cultivating for freedom in teaching-learning in the aspects of form and content are outlined, must operate in favor of other concepts.

In the contemporary situation, it is perhaps more appropriate to speak of *philosophies*, because, in the face of dispersion, Philosophy no longer presents itself as a body of knowledge and, therefore, does

not propagate itself in the same way as knowledge is transmitted; only by acquisition... What should be taught?, what can be taught? how to teach (Favareto, 1993, p. 97).

On the other hand, we must understand that philosophies and their teaching must have an open nature.

Understanding the open and speculative nature of philosophy is a necessary condition for a fruitful understanding of its teaching... that in order to have a fruitful understanding of the teaching of philosophy, it is necessary to carefully distinguish the strictly philosophical competences of historical information, and the active philosophical reading of the texts of philosophers from their mere understanding (Murcho, 2008, p. 80).

Thinking of educating as an open concept or as a philosophical problem from other conceptual perspectives makes us reflect on the questions present in the article Education: From the common census to philosophical consciousness (Saviani, 1996). The article invites us to questions proper to philosophy and that is when educating appears as a problem and as a necessity.

What is it that leads the educator to philosophize? What leads the educator to philosophize are the problems (understood in the meaning given to it) that he encounters when carrying out the educational task... the task of the Philosophy of Education will be to offer educators a method of

reflection that allows them to face educational problems, penetrating their complexity and directing the solution of issues such as: the conflict between "philosophy of life" and "ideology" in the activity of the educator; the need for the ideological option and its implications; the partial, fragmentary and surmountable character of ideologies and the conflict between different ideologies; the possibility, legitimacy, value and limits of education; the relationship between means and ends in education (how to use old means in function of new objectives?); the relationship between theory and practice (how can theory dynamize or crystallize educational practice?); Is it possible to redefine objectives for Brazilian education? What are the constraints of educational activity? To what extent is it possible to overcome them and to what extent is it necessary to count on them? (Saviani, 1996, p. 23)

The questions raised do not point to a single philosophical reading and teaching, but it is a question that is political. From this perspective, knowing, being and doing is related to criticism and changes in socio-spatial structures. I take the questions and contributions of Saviani (1996) in favor of a transposition of the philosophical view, that is, to other philosophies, from other contexts that mediate teaching to an anti-racist education. Let's see, when we take education from the Western tradition, the Greek Paideia (2013) says that,

... Every people who reach a certain degree of development feels naturally inclined to the

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practice of education. It is the principle through which the human community preserves and transmits its physical and spiritual peculiarity... education is not an individual property, it belongs to the community (Jaeger, 2013, p.2).

Here I understand that the word education is relevant to the Western perspective because it outlines an ontology of ways of knowing, powering and being. On the other hand, for an education that intends to reflect the non-Europeanizing Afrodiasporic understanding, it is necessary to understand that the ontologies and perspectives of philosophies are African and Afrodiasporic is not an individual property either, it belongs to the community. What is intended is to weave paths in the teaching of the verb educate/cultivate philosophical, incorporate other epistemologies, concepts and contexts, concatenating knowledge necessary for the construction of a conceptual theoretical framework of the knowledge of the African diasporas.

If education aims at an autonomous construction as a practice of freedom, there is a need to think through other perspectives, since education brings within itself an ethical, human and epistemological dimension, etc. In other words, in the teaching of philosophy, to paraphrase Ngozi (2019), it should not expose us to the danger of a single history. Educating for freedom is to allow future generations not to have to repeat the following phrase: "I spent my childhood on a university campus in eastern Nigeria... I became a reader early, and what I read were British and American children's books" (Ngozi, 2019, p. 11).

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Thus, the school talks to the word educate when "in the immensity of the gaps of the quilombola territory, Vão das almas, Vão do moleque, vão is an abyss, usually coincides with the body of the river, where the span is also a valley". But above all, the Jurema School in the Span of the Souls figured the abyss where the undoing of the clay was also a tomb, enclosing the possibility of the living school in the territory. (Firmeza, 2022, p.20).

The words of Firmeza (*Ibidem*) are about the maintenance of a living and necessary school. In this sense, it is linked to education that must meet emancipatory precepts. And why should education be emancipatory? To answer the question, I resort to two concepts that are not equidistant in their meaning, that of Necropolitics and holocaust. In the first line of the essay Education after Auschwitz, by the German philosopher Theodor Adorno (1986) he guides the concept of education as a civilizing purpose as opposed to barbarism. He says that, "for education, the requirement that Auschwitz not be repeated is paramount" (...). Paraphrasing him, and bringing the light of the anti-racist reason of (Mbembe, 2023), education, to overcome racism, is paramount. Since,

"Race" (or, indeed, "racism") having a prominent place in the rationality proper to biopower is entirely justifiable. After all, more than class thought (the ideology that defines history as an economic class struggle, race has

been overshadowed in the thinking and practice of Western politics, especially when it comes to imagining the inhumanity of foreign peoples – or the domination to be exercised over them... the politics of race, in the final analysis, is related to the politics of death" (Mbembe, 2023, p.18).

By allowing dialogue in favor of freedom of thought against the politics of who should live and stop living, the teaching of Afro-diasporic philosophy must be conducted to anti-racist education. Why? In 1841, the Narratives of Frederick Douglass (2018) were published in the United States. Narratives that still dialogue with institutional racism, as a social pathology and as structural racism (Almeida, 2019). The reports make us think about what really constitutes us as humans. A slave master told his wife about the dangers of teaching a slave to read:

"If you give a Creole a finger, he will steal the arm," he says. "A Creole should know nothing, only to obey his master, only to do what he says. The study spoils the best Creole in the world. If you teach this Creole (he pointed to me) to read, it will be impossible to hold him. He would be ruined to slavery forever. He would be unruly immediately and would no longer be of any value to you... These words penetrated the depths of my heart, awakening dormant feelings and bringing out a whole new line of reasoning. It was a new and special revelation... It was a great achievement and one for which I had the highest respect. From that day on, I understood the path that leads from slavery to freedom" (Douglass, 2018, p. 40). He



adds, Slavery is a bad school for the intellect and heart of man" (Douglass, 2018, p.7.)

Someone could point out to us the paths to the practice of freedom and a full life that does not pass through or dialogue with educating. We would direct our philosophical gaze to the astonishment, admiration or enchantment that distances us from barbarism. Or we can let the children's gaze guide us through the writing of Rubem Alves (2018).

It is the children, who without speaking, teach us the reasons to live. They have no knowledge to transmit"... That is why schools exist: not to teach the answers, but to teach the questions. The answers allow us to walk on dry land. But only the questions allow us to enter the unknown sea.

Thus, "education would only have full meaning as education for critical self-reflection... an education that wants to avoid recidivism will have to focus on early childhood" (Adorno, 2015, p. 3). Or should we follow the guidelines of Luiz Gama in a letter addressed to his son,

"My son... Make yourself the apostle of teaching, from now on. He fights with ardor the throne, indigence and ignorance. Work for you and with unwavering effort so that this country in which we were born, without king and without slaves, is called the United States of Brazil. Be a Christian

and a philosopher; believe only in the authority of reason, and never join any religious sect. God reveals himself only in man's reason, he does not exist in any Church in the world. (Mouzar, 2011).

For, for "Philosophy, we find that its object is the problems that arise in human existence... Philosophy will only make sense to the extent that it allows us to make explicit the educational problem. If it hides the educational problem, it will not be contributing to fulfill its own function and as such it will be betraying itself as a philosophy" (Saviani, 2006, p. 28).

### **Paths for a possible debate**

Path to the end of a long educational beginning that intertwines human issues and where we must not dance alone. Like so

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Thus, we will always walk where an essay allows us to dialogue about educating as a philosophical problem, where

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No one dances alone! Dance with, dance for, dance together... Dance is enchantment, it is resistance, it is movement from within announced in the body, this partner that allows us to say who we are. Dance is an expression that there is something vibrating, being. Living is such a beautiful dance. Lulled by a music felt, but not played by us [...] If Philosophy is a love, it is a movement, a going out of oneself, a journey, a walking, it is, therefore, a point of enchantment, it is an enchantment. Those who do not leave the place cannot conquer it. Those who are not open to their wanderings, those who do not accompany their freedom, those who do not take the steps, and there are many, looking for them. If Philosophy is a desire, a need, we are desirous of wisdom, not its possessors. How beautiful the condition of the one who desires and cares, knowing that he is not the owner. How beautiful is philosophizing, precisely because it is the declaration not of possession, but of passion, of love, of search (Lopes ; Simas, 2024).

In these writings, in which education was evoked and traversed between letters, narratives, and poems, based on the essayistic brevity of the exhibition, there are "plural and diverse voices that provoked me to write" (Evaristo, 2022, p.11). In this aspect, I am not allowed to continue looking at philosophy as a mathematician cradle with a Europizing look at the craft of educating. Or in another sense, to end the essay as I began is to return to the cycle of a single vision of philosophical thought as if

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Paideia were the world. We must not refrain from understanding it, it is a fact. However, we allow ourselves to take a plural look at a plural world, of those who were, of those who are, of those who are to come, under the restless look that philosophy is capable of providing.

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