

HISTORICAL-CRITICAL PEDAGOGY IN DEFENSE OF REVOLUTIONARY EDUCATION

A PEDAGOGIA HISTÓRICO-CRÍTICA EM DEFESA DE UMA EDUCAÇÃO REVOLUCIONÁRIA

PEDAGOGÍA HISTÓRICO-CRÍTICA EN DEFENSA DE LA EDUCACIÓN REVOLUCIONARIA

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ABSTRACT: The importance of education is related to human needs and social rights. Thus, educational proposals have emerged for decades with different intervention perspectives that seek to meet equally different goals and worldviews. Given this scenario, based on historical dialectical materialism, we will present an analysis of the contribution of school education to the formation of class consciousness and human emancipation. In this sense, we aim to debate the specificity of school education and its relations with the political struggle in capitalist society and present historical-critical pedagogy as a revolutionary alternative. In addition to understanding the contributions of the multiple spaces where teaching and learning take place, we list school education as a privileged locus for access and appropriation of essential content and inherent to human rights. The research is based on the possibility of a counter-hegemonic education that contributes to overcoming the social relations of domination.

KEYWORDS: School education. Historical-critical pedagogy. School contents. Class consciousness.

RESUMO: *A importância da educação está na sua relação com as necessidades humanas e os direitos sociais. Sendo assim, emergem há décadas propostas educativas com diferentes perspectivas de intervenção que buscam atender objetivos e concepções de mundo igualmente distintas. Diante deste cenário, fundamentados no materialismo histórico dialético, apresentaremos uma análise da contribuição da educação escolar para a formação da consciência de classe e emancipação humana. Neste sentido, temos como objetivos debater a especificidade da educação escolar e suas relações com a luta política na sociedade capitalista e apresentar a pedagogia histórico-crítica como alternativa revolucionária. Para além de compreendermos as contribuições dos múltiplos espaços onde ocorrem o ensino e a aprendizagem, elencamos a educação escolar como locus privilegiado para o acesso e apropriação de conteúdos essenciais e inerentes aos direitos humanos. A pesquisa está pautada*

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na possibilidade de uma educação contra-hegemônica que contribua para a superação das relações sociais de dominação.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: *Educação escolar. Pedagogia histórico-crítica. Conteúdos escolares. Consciência de classe.*

RESUMEN: *La importancia de la educación está relacionada con las necesidades humanas y los derechos sociales. Así, desde hace décadas han surgido propuestas educativas con diferentes perspectivas de intervención que buscan cumplir con objetivos y visiones del mundo igualmente diferentes. Ante este escenario, a partir del materialismo dialéctico histórico, presentaremos un análisis de la contribución de la educación escolar a la formación de la conciencia de clase y la emancipación humana. En este sentido, buscamos debatir la especificidad de la educación escolar y sus relaciones con la lucha política en la sociedad capitalista y presentar la pedagogía histórico-crítica como alternativa revolucionaria. Además de comprender los aportes de los múltiples espacios donde se desarrolla la enseñanza y el aprendizaje, enlistamos la educación escolar como un lugar privilegiado de acceso y apropiación de contenidos esenciales e inherentes a los derechos humanos. La investigación se basa en la posibilidad de una educación antihegemónica que contribuya a superar las relaciones sociales de dominación.*

PALABRAS CLAVE: *Enseñanza. Pedagogía histórico-crítica. Contenidos escolares. Conciencia de clase.*

Introduction

Historical-critical pedagogy is a pedagogical perspective outlined by Professor Dermeval Saviani and debated by several Brazilian researchers over the past few years. One of the main elements of the debate around the contributions of historical-critical pedagogy to human formation is its political-social commitment to understanding reality and the transforming potential of human action on it. Therefore, it is necessary to defend the fundamental role that the school plays in transmitting and learning of the most developed human objectives. This does not mean that other educational theories and perspectives do not have political and social aspects that determine and guide directions for the education of individuals.

The political role played by educational theories is analyzed by Saviani (1982) in a historical, materialistic and dialectic perspective, which leads him, for example, to argue that traditional pedagogy, despite its character as a non-critical theory of education, played a revolutionary role in the historical moment when the bourgeoisie was a revolutionary class. The question that arises, therefore, is that of a pedagogy that articulates educational activity in a critical and historicizing way with the construction of a revolutionary social practice, that is, a social practice that positions itself in the perspective of overcoming bourgeois society.

We believe, therefore, that the school, dialectically inserted in the capitalist society, can contribute to its overcoming, since, from the relationships that are built inside the school, the contradictions present in the human being formation process also emanate. To move beyond adapting to the *status quo*, it is necessary for individuals to overcome the superficiality of reality. It is necessary to understand the essence of the real, to recognize the nexuses that support the organization of society (BATISTA; LIMA, 2012).

In order for thought to critically appropriate objective reality in its multiple determinations and its movements of evolution and involution, revolution and counter-revolution, it is necessary to go beyond empirical thinking and purely pragmatic action. It is necessary to develop theoretical thinking, capable of working with the dialectic between apparent events and essential processes, which requires, at school, the deliberate action of the teacher in the sense of producing theoretical thought in students.

Such reflections lead us to highlight teaching as a way that the grandest human objectives are properly appropriated, raising the degree of development of thought and, more broadly, of the psyche in its integrity. Considering that “only through its mediation will reality be captured in its genesis in its development, that is, as a synthesis of *multiple determinations*” (MARTINS, 2011, p. 53, our translation).

Thus, it is up to school education to guarantee the conditions, in what it is responsible, for the development of transforming consciousness in individuals, an indispensable “tool” so that they do not exist under immediate action by the environment, but as subjects of history. This objective is not achieved within the limits of reiterative knowledge of everyday life to the detriment of classic knowledge (MARTINS, 2011, p. 55, our translation).

However, for the teacher to consciously trigger this process, to contribute effectively to this formation, it is needed an understanding of the factors that will constitute and build this need. In the words of Saviani (2008, p. 64),

[...] such a contribution will be even more effective the more the teacher is able to understand the links between his practice and global social practice. [...] I insist on this point because, in general, there is a tendency to disconnect the specific contents of each discipline from the broader social purposes. So, either the content is thought to be worth it without the need to refer to the social practice in which it is inserted, or the specific content is believed to be unimportant, putting all the weight in the broader political struggle. This dissolves the specificity of the pedagogical contribution, thereby canceling its political importance.

However, it should be noted that, according to Saviani (2008), there is a difference between education and politics. These are different practices with their specificities, and it is

not their intention to dilute them, reducing their potential. Although they are interdependent and inseparable practices when we speak of educational action, as they have an internal and an external relationship to themselves.

The specificity of education and the political struggle

In the dialectical, materialistic and historical perspective adopted by historical-critical pedagogy, the intentional and systematic teaching work carried out by the teacher is not opposed to the active character of the learning carried out by the student. Although both teacher and student have different degrees of awareness of the pedagogical relationship, the nature of this relationship is not that of a clash between antagonistic forces, but of a movement for human development produced by the reciprocal action of opposite poles. In politics the opposites are antagonistic, which reflects the need for struggle. Thus, we need to consider the dialectical movement in the relationship between politics and education, since there is a dimension in each of them.

The development of the educational action depends on political practice, in the sense that the latter can enable the conditions for the effectiveness of the former. The issue of public funding for education is the subject of intense struggle, as was noted in the recent question on the Proposed Amendment to the Constitution (PEC) of the Fund for the Maintenance and Development of Basic Education and the Valorization of Education Professionals (FUNDEB), in that the government of Jair Bolsonaro, through Economy Minister Paulo Guedes, tried to prevent its approval. In addition to the clashes over education financing, which also involve disputes over teachers' salaries, the use of funds for education, etc., there are other struggles in the field of educational policy, which is the case, for example, of regulation school curricula, which for some time has become the site of intense ideological struggle by obscurantist forces.

The policy is linked to education, as it also offers subsidies for the development of the subjects' "subjective conditions" for their political participation, such as access to knowledge (SAVIANI, 2008). In relation specifically to this issue, it is worth noting that the creation of barriers to access to knowledge is, at present, a strong political strategy, as seen in the phenomenon of so-called "fake news" and in the ideological war against the school and teachers moved to the far right.

Thus, education and politics integrate the totality of social practice. However, in view of the reality we live in, politics is overvalued in relation to education, which is, in turn, (really

and relatively) subordinated to politics (SAVIANI, 2008). This subordination, according to Saviani (2008), is historical and not only precise but must be overcome.

This is because, if the conditions for the exercise of political practice are inscribed in the essence of capitalist society, the conditions for the exercise of educational practice are inscribed in the essence of human reality, but they are denied by capitalist society and cannot be realized there except in a subordinate, secondary way (SAVIANI, 2008, p. 69, our translation).

At this point, it is important to think about human formation within the contradictions that permeate social relations. What stands out in the dynamic movement of education are points of advances in the process of overcoming and raising awareness so dear to social transformation and, with this, the identification of new needs for coping.

This understanding is also the result of the dialectic between capitalist society, the current conditions of existence and human plenitude, or the full realization of educational practice. That is, we can only glimpse human plenitude in the current reality because it presents us with this possibility. In this sense, Saviani (2008, p. 70, our translation) states that “being an idealist in education means precisely acting as if this type of society were already a reality. Conversely, to be realistic means to recognize it as an ideal that we seek to achieve”. An observation should be made here about the meaning with which Saviani (2008) uses, in this context, the adjective “idealist”, which is not, therefore, a person who acts driven by an ideal, but rather as an attitude of disregarding the real objective conditions in which actions take place.

For that, it is necessary to recognize the power that the truth has and the potential that the working class will be able to exercise in appropriating the truth. Since it brings with it the possibility of understanding the relations of domination and the path to universality instead of alienation. This is the revolutionary power of those who exercise the educational function, because, by socializing knowledge, we are politically and pedagogically contributing to the constitution of humanity in each individual, giving them the possibility to act, transform or reproduce, consciously (SAVIANI, 2008).

Furthermore, as much as education, in capitalist society, is (to some degree) subordinated to politics, it does not completely lose its autonomy. However, when overcoming the society divided into classes, the “primacy of politics” and the subordination of education ends (SAVIANI, 2008). Therefore, it is necessary to think about the relationship between politics and education in the direction of a revolutionary world view, from the point of view of the working class. That is, overcoming the worldview based on alienated daily life.

Thus, as stated by Martins (2011), we cannot shy away from active and transforming actions and propositions that surpass mere contemplation and adaptation to the reality created by human beings themselves. Actions that must necessarily emerge from the understanding of what is reality, the world in which the human being lives and through which it takes place. However,

Such actions necessarily require a type of thinking that promotes the overcoming of fetishized empiricism, of appearances - whether false or true - , instrumentalizing individuals for conscious activity, for the transformation of circumstances and of themselves. It is with this task that we understand school education that is truly emancipatory (MARTINS, 2011, p. 56-57, our translation).

This type of education urges us to defend and call for a pedagogy that meets the interests of the dominated class, that prepares individuals for coping in search of overcoming social classes, that is, a pedagogy that is in its essence revolutionary from the point of view. view of the worker, the humanization of social relations.

The question we must answer, in view of a revolutionary pedagogy is:

Is it intended that there are always governed and governors or is it intended to create the conditions in which the need for this division disappears? That is, is it based on the premise of the perpetual division of mankind or is it believed to be just a historical fact, corresponding to certain conditions? (GRAMSCI, 2011, p. 325, our translation).

As Saviani points:

[...] the proposed pedagogy, since it is intended to serve popular interests, will have against it the interests that have hitherto prevailed. Therefore, it is a matter of fighting in the pedagogical field in order to make prevail the interests that until now have not been dominant. And this struggle does not come from consensus, but from dissent. Consensus is seen at the point of arrival. To get there, however, it is necessary, through social practice, to transform the relations of production that hinder the construction of an egalitarian society (SAVIANI, 2008, p. 60, our translation).

A pedagogy that claims to be revolutionary must, therefore, start from the history itself and from the productions of the human being in the educational field. Which brings us to the need for analysis and understanding of pedagogical theories and the role they have assumed throughout the development of society. This attitude is based on the foundations of Marxism, since it understands that society is not revolutionized except from the transformation of existing conditions, using existing means, recognizing the real possibilities of creating a society that not

yet exists, but potentially contained in the social forces set in motion by human beings themselves.

When we frequently heard, both from some representatives of the youth, as well as from certain defenders of the new teaching methods, attacking the old school, claiming that it was limited to decorating the texts, we answered that, in spite of that, all that it was good should be used. [...] We do not want a mechanical education, but we need to develop and perfect the memory of each student, providing him with essential facts, because communism would be a vacuum, it would be reduced to an uncharacteristic facade, the communist would be nothing more than a braggart, if he did not understand and assimilate all the acquired knowledge (LENINE, 1977, p. 126, our translation).

For this reason, the contemporary debate about pedagogies and their insertions in education is of great contribution to the formation of the conscience of those who defend a critical and revolutionary education. In the same way, we need to advance in the domain of what would be a pedagogy with these same characteristics, that is, we need to understand the needs, the possibilities and the reality to which this proposal is committed.

Historical-critical pedagogy in the context of a “pedagogical revolution”

The central problem that drove, in the late 1970s and early 1980s, the development of historical-critical pedagogy was the need to think about ways for the teacher to act critically, envisioning a horizon of social changes, under the conditions that reality presents (SAVIANI, 2013). In other words, to answer the question: how is a critical and transformative pedagogical practice possible considering the limits imposed on educational action by society divided into social classes?

This problem emerges from the insufficiency of a merely negative response, posed by critical-reproductive theories. What prompted Saviani to move forward with a dialectical proposition for education in the late 1970s.

In view of the dissatisfaction with these critical-reproductive analyzes, the demand for an analysis of the educational problem that became aware of its contradictory character grew, resulting in orientations with an influence on pedagogical practice, altering it and enabling its articulation with popular interests transforming society (SAVIANI, 2013, p. 61, our translation).

Saviani (2013, p. 61, our translation) explains that the theory came to be called “historical-critical” in order to “retain the critical character of articulation with the social conditions that the reproductive view has, linked, however, to the historical dimension that reproductivism loses sight”. In defending the school and the teaching and learning process of

content, school knowledge, historical-critical pedagogy becomes the target of criticism that disqualifies it as being content, that is, a pedagogy centered on content and unconcerned with form, with the processes (SAVIANI, 2013; DUARTE, 2015).

However, Saviani (2013) emphasizes the importance of pedagogy as an area that will be concerned with form, that is, the way in which the contents are selected and taught, based on the transformation of the knowledge developed into school knowledge. “Thus, the central issue of pedagogy is the problem of forms, processes, methods; certainly, not considered in themselves, because the forms only make sense when they enable the mastery of certain contents” (SAVIANI, 2013, p. 65, our translation).

Therefore, it is of interest to the historical-critical conception, as well as to pedagogy specifically, to reflect the methods by which the student will appropriate the knowledge. More than the quantitative accumulation of knowledge, it is necessary to qualify what is taught and learned, how and why. In this sense, the historical understanding of knowledge is essential, as its production is social. Hence also the need to appropriate what previous generations have already produced so that we can move forward and overcome (by incorporation), according to the interests and purposes of the working class.

A pedagogy articulated with popular interests will therefore value the school; it will not be indifferent to what happens inside it; will be committed to making the school work well; therefore, you will be interested in effective teaching methods. Such methods will go beyond traditional and new methods, surpassing by incorporation the contributions of others. They will be methods that will stimulate the students' activity and initiative without giving up, however, the teacher's initiative; they will favor the students' dialogue between themselves and with the teacher, but in failing to value the dialogue with the historically accumulated culture; they will take into account students' interests, learning rhythms and psychological development, but without losing sight of the logical systematization of knowledge, its ordering and grading for the purposes of the transmission-assimilation process of cognitive content (SAVIANI, 2008, p. 55-56, our translation).

Understanding the historical-dialectical movement of education and school in this society is the basic objective of historical-critical pedagogy to, from this understanding, purposefully contribute to a transformative pedagogy, in defense of the specificity of the school, seeking to show, historically, its contradictions and possibilities. Task that has become even more necessary and urgent today.

Brazil has provoked a wide movement of changes in education that corroborate the discourse of improving the quality of teaching and adapting basic, technological and higher education to the demands of the labor market, typical of neoliberal policies. On 15 October

2019, the Ministry of Education announces: "From civic-military schools to *Future-se*: the New Paths for teachers in the Bolsonaro government". The emphasis is given to the role of teachers in the implementation and success in the results of programs developed by the federal government for education in the country (BRASIL, 2019a).

The programs (National Civic-Military Schools Program, *Future-se*, *Novos Caminhos*) cover basic education, higher education and professional and technological education, with objectives aligned with all dimensions of educational work, from pedagogical practice, management and production of new knowledge. In order to guide teacher training, we are also implementing the Proposal for the Common National Base for the Training of Basic Education Teachers (BNC-Teachers).

According to the Ministry of Education,

The premise of the BNC-Teachers proposal is the recurring insufficient student learning outcomes and the low quality of teacher training. In general, the courses have a lot of theory and little practice, there is a lack of depth in teaching for early childhood education, literacy and early years, in addition to curricular internships without planning and without ties to schools (BRASIL, 2019b).

Such policies reflect international guidelines for Latin American countries to adapt basic, higher and professional education to neoliberal dictates and interests (SANTOS; ZANARDINI; MARQUES, 2020) and contribute to the advancement of neoliberal and obscurantist common sense (DUARTE; MAZZEU; DUARTE, 2020). In the meantime, we cannot fail to emphasize that we are facing a worldwide pandemic that has brought as one of its consequences the explosion of distance education as an innovative resource that saves all educational problems for society, without taking into account the social reality, which needs and it generates inequalities in the conditions of existence and human formation.

In addition, the importance of school education has been constantly seconded in relation to other means and spaces of education, such as family, internet, practical and professional experiences, minimizing their effective contribution to the appropriation of knowledge. In the current scenario, of pandemic and social isolation, with distance education and remote education, the continuity in the school being second tends to reach destructive limits.

Historical-critical pedagogy understands that the tendency to give secondary importance to school reflects the contradictory character that crosses education, from the contradiction of society itself. To the extent that we are still in a class society with opposing interests and that the generalized education of the population contradicts the interests of class stratification, this attempt to devalue the school occurs, whose objective is to reduce its impact

in relation to the transformative demands of the society itself (SAVIANI, 2013, p. 84, our translation).

In order to oppose the hegemonic perspective of school education and contribute to the full development of individuals, critical historical pedagogy, according to Saviani (1987), faces a double task: a negative one, whose objective is to criticize the dominant concept of education (devaluation/emptying school knowledge); and a positive one, whose objective is to work on the valid core of common sense, which would be common sense, detaching it from the dominant ideology (which today is obscurantist neoliberalism³) and articulating it with a critical view of society and history, that is, what Saviani called raising consciousness from the level of common sense to that of philosophical consciousness. Its purpose, therefore, is to counter the naturalization of established social relations.

Foster (2019) analyzed capitalism and its decline in recent years, pointing out how much neoliberal policies are intertwined with the capitalist mode of production and the need to overcome them completely. In other words, the strengthening of the social struggle towards a new form of organization in the face of the destruction of human relations and nature. Scenario that we perceived and felt in Brazil in recent years with the advancement of the ultra-right and the attacks on public education.

In this sense, the theoretical-methodological strategies mark historical-critical pedagogy as a revolutionary conception, in the broadest sense of social rupture. It is a pedagogy whose objective is to produce humanity in individuals through an intentional, systematic activity, aimed at the most appropriate ways of transmitting scientific, artistic, and philosophical knowledge. These, in turn, are not data constituted *a priori*, as they require systematization and didactic transposition, transformation of this knowledge into school knowledge.

Thus, the object of education concerns, on the one hand, the identification of cultural elements that need to be assimilated by individuals of the human species for them to become human and, on the other hand and concomitantly, the discovery of the most appropriate ways to achieve this objective (SAVIANI, 1987, p. 13, our translation).

At this point, we must emphasize that, as stated by Marsiglia and Martins (2018), in all educational processes there is a strong historical tension between humanization and alienation of individuals, since we need to consider the elements that make up society. It turns out that the deeper and more acute the contradictions of capitalist society become, the less the dominant ideology has an interest in allowing the socialization of knowledge that enables the

³ For analyzes on obscurantist neoliberalism see Duarte, Mazzeu and Duarte (2020).

development of a truly dialectical, materialistic and historical worldview.

It is, therefore, the fight to spread the truth because, as explained by Löwy (1994, p. 208), if the bourgeoisie managed to come to power and impose a form of social organization without the need for “a lucid conscience events”, the same cannot be said of the revolutionary practice of the proletariat:

The proletariat, on the contrary, cannot seize power, transform society and build socialism except through a series of deliberate and conscious actions. Objective knowledge of reality, the economic and social structure, the relationship of forces and the political situation is, therefore, a necessary condition of its revolutionary practice; in other words: the truth is a weapon of his combat, which corresponds to his class interest and without which he cannot proceed (LÖWY, 1994, p. 208-209, our translation).

The school has as its main function, or in the words of Saviani (2013, p. 15), has as its core activity, “the transmission of instruments of access to elaborated knowledge”. However, it is not uncommon for the teaching objective based on the transmission of knowledge to be confused between traditional pedagogy and historical-critical pedagogy, both in terms of its accusation and its overvaluation. Pasqualini and Lavoura (2020), when discussing the differences between the two pedagogical proposals and presenting the ontological character of historical-critical pedagogy, defend the need to overcome the mechanical and uncritical notion of content transmission, which causes the erroneous “idea of that the school that transmits art, science and philosophy imposes a passive and coercive process for students” (p. 21, our translation).

The historical-critical perspective is not based on verbalisms present in traditional teaching, nor even on the spontaneity of new methods, typical of learning to learn pedagogies (PASQUALINI; LAVOURA, 2020). It is not an abstract proposal, but a proposal that links the school with a concrete function and open to the contradictions of this society.

This implies a dialectical view of determining and overcoming the limits imposed on education. It is not, therefore, a deterministic conception that understands education only under negative and reproductive aspects. This dialectical view is linked to the historical perspective of reality. As a proposal resulting from the dialectical historical materialism, it starts from the category of work as a founding element of the human being and, consequently, an explanatory element of school education. Which allows

situate the specificity of education as referring to knowledge, ideas, concepts, values, attitudes, habits, symbols in the aspect of elements necessary for the formation of humanity in each singular individual, in the form of a second nature, which is produced, deliberately and intentionally, through historically

determined pedagogical relationships that take place between men (SAVIANI, 1987, p. 20).

Education as an activity intentionally focused on the production of humanity, requires systematization and transmission to other singular individuals. In this sense, Duarte (1998) defends an affirmative conception about the act of teaching, which means that it is necessary to attribute to pedagogical work an intentionality that refutes the negative conceptions about such an act. For historical-critical pedagogy, the teacher has a central function, the measure that contributes to the appropriation of human objectifications that constitute the human race itself (DUARTE, 2013). The elevation of the human being's level of knowledge, from common sense to more developed knowledge, makes it possible to critically reflect on the historical and social processes of the production of mankind and the social relations that determine daily life (SAVIANI, 1987; DUARTE, 2013).

According to Duarte (2016, p. 67, our translation),

The most developed knowledge is that which allows the achievement of the objectives of the human being in an increasingly universal and free way. The criterion, therefore, is that of full human emancipation. In educational terms, it is necessary to identify what knowledge can produce, in the various moments of personal development, the humanization of the individual.

In this sense, critical philosophical thinking, reflection on social activity in addition to everyday pragmatic immediacy, are imperative needs for the working class, even though a good part of the individuals who compose it today may not be aware of this need. The teaching of concepts based on systematized knowledge, based on science, philosophy and art, is a condition for overcoming spontaneous knowledge, based on daily life. In this movement, to overcome the alienated daily spontaneity, the human being appropriates knowledge that will integrate with his personality, becoming constitutive elements of it, enabling the transformation of the individual's view of the world.

This does not mean that the systematized concepts are in pure and simple negation in relation to those derived from immediate practice, since,

According to Vygotsky, scientific concepts would, when compared to spontaneous concepts, have the strength given by their high capacity for synthesis, systematization, and generalization. The weakness of scientific concepts, however, would be in its abstract character. Spontaneous concepts, on the other hand, would have the strength of their immediate proximity to the object, giving it more concreteness, but they would have the weakness of its limitation, its lack of systematicity and its inability to go beyond appearances. Without spontaneous concepts, children and adolescents would not be able to acquire scientific concepts, but without this their thinking would become a

prisoner of the immediacy of everyday life (DUARTE, 2016, p. 69-70, our translation).

The task of transmitting these concepts is therefore up to teachers in schools, so that the student has the opportunity to understand reality and overcome the common sense view. In addition, “the appropriation of concepts and theories is based on the interests, the worldview and the position that individuals occupy in the social framework” (SAVIANI, 2013, p. 72, our translation). Although systematized knowledge is not of the student's immediate interest, it is the teacher's task to mediate it for the student's appropriation.

Scientific concepts are manifested in a sphere subjugated to consciously directed guidance, to voluntariness, a sphere that proves to be extremely fragile in the adoption of everyday concepts, guided fundamentally by its immediate and pragmatic application. The conscious and volitional character of the formation of scientific concepts, properties insufficiently mobilized by spontaneous concepts, is established, according to Vygotsky, in the complete dependence on the participatory collaboration of adult thought - conforming, therefore, in the zone of imminent development⁴ (MARTINS, 2013, p. 223, our translation).

It is important to think about the teacher's work in this area of mediation⁵, since the teacher is responsible for transmitting the knowledge that, in turn, will mediate between student and reality. It is in this sense that Saviani (2013) defends the teaching of classic contents in school education. Not in the direction of reproducing the alienated way of seeing society, but, as Duarte (2016) pointed out, reproduction, in this context, is elevated to the level of appropriation and enrichment of human subjectivity.

A revolutionary pedagogy that aims to instrumentalize the human being is not based on a merely instrumental teaching process, but on universalization, development of the capacity for critical thinking and the enrichment of individuality. In this sense, Duarte (2016), calls attention to the need, in the perspective of historical-critical pedagogy, to recognize the reproduction of humanity in the individual as opposed to the idea of reproducing capitalist

⁴ In Vygotsky's psychological theory, psychic functions are born in social relations, therefore, as intersychic functions to later internalize, becoming intrapsychic functions. In this process, when the psychic functions have not yet been internalized, the child does not put them into operation autonomously, but in the activity with the adult, being guided, taught and guided by the adult. They are often functions that are set in motion by imitative processes. Step by step, the child gains the ability to put these functions into action on their own, relatively autonomously and they are internalized. The zone of imminent development is precisely constituted by the functions that have yet to be internalized, that is, they are still in the process of formation. Vygotsky argued that educational actions should focus precisely on the area of imminent development.

⁵ The use of the mediation category to characterize school education as “mediation within global social practice” (SAVIANI, 2008) is totally different from the constructivist meaning of the teacher as a mediator. This second one, when affirming that the teacher is a mediator, aims to mischaracterize his activity as teaching, transmitting knowledge.

forms of existence. Therefore, the humanization of the social being is the assumption of reproduction and the objective of the transmission of knowledge.

Throughout this process, it is essential to have a synthesis of what was appropriate at the level of consciousness, which in the Gramscian conception we know as catharsis. According to Saviani (2008), catharsis concerns the incorporation of cultural instruments in such a way that they become new elements for social transformation (SAVIANI, 2008).

Duarte (2019, p. 18, our translation) understands catharsis as “a production of needs that point to the expansion of the universe of social relations in which the individual is inserted, as well as to a new positioning of the individual before the reality of which he is part”, that is, a qualitative advance in the relationships between individual subjectivity and socio-cultural objectivity.

The changes in this process can occur partially, as the catharsis does not take place drastically and evenly overnight. In the same way that overcoming alienation is not always a visible process of rupture. The catharsis for Duarte, Ferreira and Anjos (2012, p. 11, our translation), “is this impulse towards the suspension, even if momentary, of the immediacy of everyday life and the fetishism that predominates in it”. For this reason, the teacher and the school have a fundamental role in mediating between individuals and human objectifications so that catharsis can develop.

From the catharsis, the student reaches a more complex and comprehensive understanding of the whole, overcoming the syncretic and fragmented view, allowing the explanation of the real and the conscious and significant action on it. Thus, when moving from synchrony to synthesis and having the possibility to understand the phenomena in their entirety, the student reaches another level of awareness and understanding of the world (qualitatively and quantitatively higher).

Historical-critical pedagogy, however, does not consider the transformation of consciences as a phenomenon independent of social practice and isolated in itself. The definition of education as mediation within social practice starts from the Marxist thesis of the unity between revolutionary transformation of social reality and the subjects of revolutionary praxis. Marx, in the third thesis on Feuerbach, criticizes the idea that the materialist perspective on the need for the transformation of society can reach people only through processes of education of consciences. Paradoxically, this vision of people's education, intending to spread a materialist conception, ends up adopting an idealistic premise, that the change of society and life would be a process limited to the level of consciences.

It is in this sense that Marx considered Feuerbach's criticism of Christianity to be insufficient. Both agreed that the god of Christians, like all gods of all religions, is a human creation. Marx, however, understood that the overcoming of this alienation of human beings in the gods is not only overcome by philosophical criticism, it is necessary to overcome the type of society that makes people live and relate in certain ways that generate both religious and other forms of alienation. In other words, the transformation of subjects does not precede the transformation of social reality and vice versa. It is a dialectical process in which the two poles are transformed into reciprocal action:

The materialistic doctrine about changing circumstances and education forgets that circumstances are changed by men and that the educator himself must be educated. It therefore must divide society into two parts - the first of which is placed above society. The coincidence between changing circumstances and human activity or self-modification can only be apprehended and rationally understood as a *revolutionary practice* (MARX, 2007, p. 533-534, authors' highlights, our translation).

This means that the class struggle cannot happen ideally.

Final considerations

Research such as that of Fernandes and Franco (2019) and Almeida, Barros and Rabal (2019) show that the teacher, in seeking to overcome alienation in his work, needs to be based on a pedagogical, historical and social perspective that is positioned before the class struggle and consider the category of contradiction in the dynamics of educational institutions, public policies and educational work. In other words, a perspective that aims to overcome capitalist relations, while considering the countless contradictions that exist in reality and that constitute the transformation process itself.

For this reason, in order for historical-critical pedagogy to advance in the direction of the transformation of society divided into social classes, its effective incorporation as a theory based on the world-view of historical-dialectical materialism is necessary, so that it starts to guide the processes of formation of individuality and to constitute the relations in the educational practice. Therefore, we believe it is essential to think about the meaning that the reality we live and the task of forming human beings has for the teacher. The teacher, on the other hand, also needs to have overcome the world view based on common sense to assist in the construction of an emancipating hegemony.

The teacher's world conception mediates between the theory that is accepted, defended, believed, and the educational action, the teaching practice. However, it is necessary to understand the dialectical relationship between theory and practice that supports such a conception of the world and the material conditions that support practical action, since the materiality of educational action is a foundation of historical-critical pedagogy.

On this issue, Saviani (2013) points out three major challenges for education: the elaboration of a national education system, the organizational restructuring of the practice for the realization of a new theory that is proposed and the need for continuity of work to such an extent that persistence causes irreversibility, otherwise the goals may not be achieved. According to the author, “spreading a conception implies its incorporation at the level of common sense, denaturing in several aspects what is presupposed” (SAVIANI, 2013, p. 73-74, our translation).

Among these problems and challenges is the precarious situation that the school has been going through for many years, from working conditions, low salaries, long hours and even the formation of teachers. Which reflects in problems for the actual effectiveness of the theory we defend:

In such conditions, it is difficult for these teachers to assimilate the theoretical proposals and try to implement them in their practice. A precarious situation is evident, and it has repercussions on the theory, placing obstacles for its development and for verifying the degree to which the theoretical proposals can in fact be alternatives for a pedagogically differentiated qualitative work (SAVIANI, 2013, p. 98-99, our translation).

At the same time that such conditions put the development and full realization of historical-critical pedagogy on hold (or slow march), it also instigates difficulties, as the precursor of the proposal itself points out. We conclude by adding that this task is historical and requires constant evaluation to join efforts that contribute to strengthen it as a truly revolutionary pedagogy, therefore, coherent, critical and emancipatory.

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