

Educative Work as Consciousness and Human Emancipation Construction

Helena Martins Mikado, Otilia Maria A. N. A. Dantas
Universidade de Brasília (UnB), Brazil

Abstract

The research study reflects the work of educative principle in favor of consciousness and human emancipation construction. In the educative activity is essential the formation of critical conscience to reach human emancipation. This critical awareness is possible to be build when there is historical and dialectical comprehension of the construction of the humanized world. The results and conclusions point out that the educational work constitutes intentional and transforming reality aiming the formation of critical awareness.

Keywords: education; educative principle; human emancipation; critical consciousness.

1. Introduction

The constitution of human being as social being inserted in a humanized reality accrue from work. In this case, work is presented as ontological principal owing to the consciousness development, soon the subject itself. In view of this proposition this article aims to give thought to work as an educational principle in favor of the construction of the critical consciousness and the human emancipation.

2. Educative work as consciousness and human emancipation construction

The critical awareness of both reality and profession contributes to the educative process development. Such perspective proves to be important in view of the essentiality of things [1] and tend to lead the subject to comprehend labor as ontological principle and its implication in teachers' activity breaking it apart from the superficialities of reality and from the immediacy.

Regarding the methodology this research has a qualitative approach and it is projected by the critical method and adopt the bibliographical research as an instrument of concepts comprehension.

The action of men kind over nature modifying it in conformity to their needs is exactly what we call as labor [2]. Retrieving the humanity historical reality, we tracked studies and discussions down about work as creator of human development possibilities starting from primary needs [3]. Overcoming each need, the human has been accumulating knowledge and making feasible the

constitution of a more and more complex subject. Thus, as Saviani [2] emphasize, the humanity essence inhabits the historical process produced by humankind through work.

By a dialectical point of view, Marx highlights the importance of understand labor as a way of transformation. By means of the accumulation of knowledge and the constant renewal of needs, human emerges the possibility of overcoming previous realities and the possibility of creating new ones [4]. In addition, also happens the reconstruction of himself/herself. In terms of that, human modifies nature via work and simultaneously changes himself/herself and raising a new reality also creates new possibilities to reach human consciousness causing impact in the being constitution as a humanized being.

We based on the assumption of labor as a constituent of human consciousness, soon also source of human emancipation. The transformation of the nature in favor of human needs generates the possibility of a liberating human existence. Wherewith the labour materiality human being builds instruments that turn their existence possible as a humanized being and distance themselves away from a purely natural existence [5]. Since there is no longer the need to fight for survival of the fittest, in other words, of the process of natural selection, human beings break free to construct their existence inside the imagination possibilities.

2.1 Consciousness transformation

In the work process, there is a conscious transformation of nature in relation to a purpose [5]. Based on this assumption and the premise that work and education are properly human activities, there is no way to deny the importance of awareness in the educational process, that is knowledge about the purposes of educational action. This action presupposes a practical activity thought out, reflected, and therefore transforming. In this sense, it presupposes praxis. According to Vázquez [5], the real character of praxis must be emphasized with a view to the real transformation of the world and as a result to create a new reality whose existence is made by man and for man as a social being. There is only the possibility of praxis in face of this real, objective action of reality, so theory and practice must be

articulated otherwise the pedagogical process will reside in pragmatism or in abstraction.

In this regard, Vázquez [5] defends the revolutionary praxis in view of the possibility of the constitution of humanity by means of the consciousness. Being conscious of themselves and of the reality gives the possibility of human emancipation. Highlighting the intellectuals, who are aware about class struggles and defend the interests of the oppressed people. About this, Vázquez [5] emphasize the awareness of objective materiality as a determinant factor to the possibility of a revolutionary praxis. Thus, the critical thinking about reality can foster a transforming practical action.

Marx [6] stated in the third thesis about Feuerbach that the human being modifies reality therefore the educator himself/herself. By being a being under construction needs to be educated considering that human activity cannot be based on immediacy otherwise it becomes an alienating and fetishistic practice. Through critical awareness, it is possible to rationally apprehend and understand human activity as a transforming practice [6]. Whether we question ourselves about the relation between work and education considering the prompts in this text, it is notable how imbricate these two categories are. Once the human constitution does not occur on a natural way, it is imperative to learn how to produce their own existence. With this in mind, the production of the human being would be the same as human being education, that is it is part of an educational process. “The origin of education coincides then with the origin of human being” [2]. Articulating this statement with the following: “[...] what man is, he is by means of work” [2], it is possible to ensure that labor and education are jointed as human being attributes. It is important to underline that Saviani [2] makes this analyze clear by discussing about primitive societies education whose circumstances happens in daily life by including children in daily adults’ work.

Clearly, we are not arguing in favor of child labor. The question is regarding labor as precursor of human life, as a right and as a duty. According to Frigotto [7], these values avoid the creation of what Gramsci called luxury mammals. This expression, as refers to those individuals who believe that is natural to explore others of their own kind as a way of living life. Thus, it is fundamental to educate the young ones reveling the importance of participating in the creation of their own lives and of the collective live by means of doing some compatible works with their ages. And concomitant this sense of labor as duty, work is also a right as provide the individual a way to produce his/her own existence, therefore his/her own freedom [7]. Aiming to reach this perspective of work and the consequent liberator ideal, the dialectical point of view is defended whose theory and practice relationship is comprehended in the

light of the praxis epistemology. According to Duarte [8] it is not possible to dispense with this dialectic, because the needs of practice require theoretical answers as well as theories require practical answers for possible advances. In this sense, understanding the unity between theory and practice contributes to knowledge construction of and for the world. Gramsci [9] emphasizes that “the identification of theory and practice is a critical act, through which it is demonstrated that practice is rational and necessary or that theory is realistic and rational”. Therefore, the challenge of seeking this criticality of educational work is evident starting from the indispensable intentionality in teachers’ performance. Gramsci refers to the importance of intellectual discipline in education whose principle is established in a certain severity in education. In this sense the Italian philosopher broach the matter of discipline not as the brutal sense of the term, but as the formation of the being in the perspective of historical and cultural inheritance to a new generation and to deny the spontaneity which understand individuals as natural humans[10]. By means of the discussion about the intellectuals, Gramsci highlights human being capacity regardless of social class and defends the foundation of an unitary school as a possibility of human being integral education engaging both manual and intellectual work. As consequence the consciousness formation of the subjects and therefore capable of comprehend and reach their emancipation [10].

Gramsci [11], states that there is a need to consider both the social order and the natural order in education. The social order concerns the understanding of rights and duties of a society and its construction and internalization are possible precisely in the natural order through work. In the balance between social order and natural order, according to Gramsci lies at the starting point to comprehend the world as historical and dialectical in the sense of movement and becoming, by not losing the perspective of efforts and sacrifices that “[...] the present has cost the past and which the future is costing the present, and which conceives the contemporary world as a synthesis of the past, of all past generation, which projects itself into the future” [11].

3. Theoretical-Practical activity

Work is taken as a theoretical-practical activity that provides a balance between the social order and the natural order “and provides the starting point for the further development of a historical and dialectical conception of the world” [11]. By presenting work as a human activity, Vázquez [5] understands the differentiation between natural and human activity. For the author, the existence of natural activity is unique, that is it exists only once – as a materiality –,

on the other hand human activity has a double existence “and at different times: as an ideal result and as a real product” [5]. Starting from these two instances, the first existence resides in the field of consciousness ideally produced with a conscious character. The second existence is the ideal product, that is the previously designed product takes its material form. In this sense, the ability to project, to reflect, to think about their own action provides the human being with the differentiation factor between natural activity and human activity. “Properly human activity only takes place when the acts directed at an object to transform them begin with an ideal result, or end, and end with an effective real result or product” [5]. This condition of consciousness necessary for human activity leads us to question the current process of alienation within the logic of capital accumulation. How can we reflect on conscious activity when we live in an indisputably unequal reality whose configuration presupposes alienated beings? About the lack of awareness regarding the laws that govern the economic-social process, Vázquez [5] affirms the importance of class awareness in view of the different purposes of each social group.

Thus, it is possible to understand the development of consciousness importance about the process of building the human world if we take educating as revolutionary praxis that esteems human emancipation. The severity presented by Gramsci [11] in his educative principle justify itself by this possibility of the formation of beings capable of comprehend both their duties and their rights and by the desire of a fairer society, especially with the subaltern class, therefore less individualistic. Duarte [8] explains in the Marxist understanding of the world that the singularity is presented in the whole educative activity, however it is always a historical and social singularity. Thus, there is the need to consider the concrete individual instead of the empirical individual, because the “[...] concrete individual is the synthesis of countless social relationships” [2], [8]. In agreement with the author the formation of the individual goes through a process that begins with the development of individuality itself – spontaneous synthesis of social relations – towards individuality for itself – conscious synthesis of social relations [8].

Duarte [8] highlights the historical, social and objective perspectives in understanding human subjectivity considering that individualization and socialization are two sides of the same coin. In this sense “the human being only individualized themselves and conquers their freedom through the development of social relations and through the objectified human reality” [8], that is the being is socially individualized. Thus, the individuality itself and individuality for itself constructions are possible through the objectification and appropriation

processes. It is noteworthy that both processes present contradictorily the humanizing and alienating characters, so the issue is not to deny the realization of objectification and appropriation, but to overcome their alienated forms [8].

By proposing labor as an educative principle, it is important to consider both the individuality constitution and the educative activity configuration. For example, in an authoritarian pedagogy there is no space for the formation of the mentioned individuality, since this kind of pedagogy forms alienated people due to the fact that suppose the submission as element of guarantee of learning. However, when we talk about the formation of critical consciousness, the creativity category is present as it enables the creation and elaboration of the human mind. In this sense Freire and Shor [12] emphasize the possibility of developing creativity only in a liberating environment. It is important to highlight that both authors agree that proposing a liberating classroom does not exclude the demanding character of learning much less includes permissiveness. Therefore, intellectual discipline must remain when considering the freedom of both teacher and student in the educational process.

Gramsci (2011) highlights in the twelfth notebook the importance of getting used to the collective discipline since childhood distancing yourself from hypocritical and mechanical forms of discipline. Regarding this instead of an imposed and controlled discipline, the efforts must be directed toward the development of intellectual self-discipline and moral autonomy through its unlimited biases.

In this sense, the education of adults [13], is relevant in view of the social divisions of classes and work. The defense concerns the school of work that emancipates itself from the perspective of laborious and disciplined action articulated with the knowledge of culture, technique and science [13]. Starting from Gramsci's [11] ideas about the education of adults makes perfect sense if we think that in practice the emphasis is on training for the labor market in an uncritical way [14], a fact that distances the possibilities of an education for emancipation and highlights the alienating forms of human objectification and appropriation. In this regard, it is important to reflect on the role of the school as a space for human formation based on the multiple determinations of social relations and labor, because according to Frigotto [14] “it is about understanding that production of knowledge and the formation of critical consciousness has its genesis in these relationships”.

4. Educating the educator

Educating the educator is of paramount importance in terms of the feasibility of constructing human autonomy and emancipation in the sense of

praxis. In the process of fetishization of knowledge, the formation of the human being is reduced to the internalization of the “bourgeois truths” and, contrary to the formation of critical conscience and for emancipation, “a process of sterilization of the human capacity to create, produce etc” [14].

Labor as a human activity that emancipates that is as a praxis resides in the understanding that we cannot reduce it to mere external expression. Education in the sense of praxis presupposes awareness of the historical determinations that led human beings to current social and work relationships. The conscious activity leads the human being to act in favor of transformation considering that the conscious being does not accept the world as it is: the conscious being acts knowing and knows acting [5].

Therefore, the educational activity must be thought out and have clarity of its purposes or it will reside in pure practical action and may follow any logic including the alienating logic imposed by the relations of production and accumulation of capital. It is a fact that within a society there is a diversity in relation to the level of consciousness, however we cannot speak of the existence “of a blind praxis, without a conscious subject and therefore without an author with whom we can put it in an end and result relationship [5]. Furthermore, criticism presents itself as an important category. Consciousness is essential in human activity and criticism adds refinement as it provides a rational examination and makes aware the fundamentals, conditioning, and limits of historically accumulated knowledge [15].

According to Roio [13], for Gramsci there is an incongruity between school and the social reality of the proletarian class whose possibilities of emancipation dissipate as education helps to maintain the status quo and does not educate the proletariat to understand its subordinate condition, on the contrary it only alienates him / her further and naturalizes his / her condition.

Since Antonio Gramsci has a clearly class awareness, he made crucial contributions to the reflections regarding the educative principle and the school role in historical and dialectical materialist perspective. In his findings about education, it was evident that culture and school organization reproduced social exclusion, a fact that demanded awareness by the oppressed regarding this situation and the fundamentality of equality of humankind [13]. Although the Italian philosopher contributions took place in the beginning of the twentieth century and took a long time to be disseminated it is possible to note the relevance of this reflections. To this day questions about the construction of critical consciousness, and human freedom and emancipation remain in vogue.

5. Conclusion

In the scope of Latin America, especially Brazil, a great challenge is given to us as education professionals in the sense of resistance to the molds of the capitalist system and to the processes of alienation. However, it would be negative to think that any transformational action is impossible. Starting from the premise that critical awareness provides the subject with the ability to form other conscious beings we realize that the teacher’s action has transformative potential as this professional becomes aware of its importance and its pedagogical praxis. This great challenge highlights the importance of not only talking about human emancipation but also understanding this concept. Without the intention of creating a reductionist concept, emancipation is understood as the process of building one’s freedom through critical awareness of the reality of exploitation of the capitalist system and the possibility of creating one’s own existence through work understood as the foundation of human life in opposition to the alienating, salaried and exploited bias. How do we understand human emancipation in education ahead of the educational proposals based on the interests of the capitalist system in Brazil? It is a fact that the system is not interested in a society of emancipated subjects and aware of the processes of exploitation. The transformative power of a society is not in one particular individual, nevertheless this particular individual may have the transformative potential of his/her own reality. Regarding this a teacher may have the transformative potential of his/her class, as starting from intentional actions aimed at the formation of critical thinking. In other words, starting from praxis as a transforming practical action and labor as an educational principle.

6. References

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