

## Colonialism and Education in Africa: Echoes of Paulo Freire's Voice in Africa \*

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**Abstract:** In the 1970s, Paulo Freire advised some African governments in the newly independent countries, mainly the former Portuguese colonies. From that time until the beginning of the 1990s, these countries put into practice experiences that can be considered socialist, single-party that, even though they were authoritarian, subordinated participation to a single political ideology, they presented values such as the commitment of the State with the interests of the people, the right to education, and health (Ngoenha, 2004), which can be valid today to re-found the new society at a time when our states, which adopted new democratic and multi-party constitutions in the early 1990s, face liberal policies, savage capitalism and colonialism, in which the populations are abandoned by the state, public services are commodified like education, health; corruption became widespread, and violence settled, etc. (Ngoenha, 2004). Convinced, on the one hand, that the situation lived in our country can be explained, along with other factors, by colonialism, on the other hand, understanding that the voice of Paulo Freire can be a theoretical basis for educators to work colonial mentality in Africa, we intend with this article to enhance the voice of Paulo Freire who participated in the construction of the education of the first republic (1970–1990) and interrogate him in relation to his equation of colonialism and education in Africa. For this we have done a bibliographical review of his works on Africa and not only analyzed its formulations and what can be found under these formulations on colonialism in Africa and organized categories that allowed us to systematize what we consider to be his discourse on colonialism in Africa. Without going directly into Paulo Freire's conceptual discussion of colonialism, we simply seek his ideas about colonialism such as his understanding of the colonial invasion by force, the use of a certain mode of production, desaficanization and its relation with education and its result and re-africanization.

**Key words:** Paulo Freire, colonialism, desaficanization, reaficanization

### 1. Introduction

In the 1970s, Paulo Freire advised African governments such as the governments of Tanzania, Guinea Bissau, Cape Verde, São Tomé and Príncipe and Angola. From that period until 1990 the African countries colonized by

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Portugal put into practice experiences that were intended to be socialist and single-party. In the case of Mozambique, for example, during the first republic (1975–1990), it can be said that the state and government officials were committed to serving the interests of Mozambicans (Ngoenha, 2004, p. 99). The values of the nation were to count on its own strengths, love for work, right to schooling, education, health; it was a struggle against all kinds of racial, ethnic, tribal, and religious discrimination. At that period, were also considered values to serve the people, to participate in the construction of the Mozambican State through work. But this state eventually succumbed due to intrinsic contradictions that ended up invalidating the nobility of its values. The dynamics of participation were subordinated to a unilateral ideology of a single political family (Ngoenha, 2004, p. 99), as happened in all states colonized by Portugal. The state of the first republic (Ngoenha, 2004) sinned due to the pan-presence (Ngoenha, 2004). It ended up being harmful because it decided for education, health, public and individual morality, justice, individual and collective values. For that purpose, it fought the individual and collective foundations of individuals and groups (Ngoenha, 2004, p. 100). From the 1990s, all African countries of Portuguese official language changed their political systems, with the end of the cold war, and introduced new, capitalist, multiparty and neoliberal constitutions. At least in Mozambique, in second republic (since the early 90s), the state was very absent in the lives of the population and individualism, violence, corruption in the civil service, health and education began to occur (Ngoenha, 2004); instead of promoting democracy, we fall, as posited by Ngoenha (2004), into the “dollar-crazy” (Ngoenha, 2004). Everything began to be done in terms of earnings, income and stewardship. The public official stops serving and serves himself. Despite the economic growth that was observed until recently in Mozambique, the living conditions of the people and the quality of education worsened. Health and education became trade. This put enormous problems of justice, both at the distributive and juridical level (Ngoenha, 2004, p. 101).

Convinced that the first period of our Independence, despite its limiting and excessive aspect, had been characterized by values still valid to-day, we thought to enhance the voice of Paulo Freire, who participated in the edification of education in African countries that were under the Portuguese domination to help make an unfamiliar reading, distant (from the situation), about how he equated colonialism, at that time, in its relationship with liberation through education. Our idea, on the one hand, is that the situation lived in our country today can be explained, along with other factors, by colonialism, on the other hand, that the voice of Paulo Freire can be a theoretical basis for educators to work colonial mentality in Africa

With this paper, we intend to contribute to a broadening of the study of Paulo Freire in Africa, shifting it a little from the simple study of the Method (Paulo Freire), in Africa, to the pedagogical, philosophical and political postulates. It is common in Africa to study Paulo Freire from the *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* perspective, but what we verify is that, without taking away the great importance of this work, he dialogues better with Africa from the works that resulted from his work in that continent. In these works he sought to understand the African historical context in which he collaborated; he documented himself on Africa; he spoke with African leaders, educators, cultural animators, and literacy students; visited cultural circles; wrote working papers, letters, articles, books, etc. We can safely affirm that in this work he has an interlocution with Africa, with its context and with its thought and thinkers like Amílcar Cabral, Julius Nyerere, Samora Machel, Aristides Pereira, Frantz Fanon, Alberti Memmi, Mário Pinto de Andrade, etc.

Thus, it is our goal to understand the ideas drawn from Paulo Freire of colonialism in Africa.

This study does not intend to discuss the very concepts of colonialism or post colonialism (Giroux, 1992). The intention was only to bring, from the voice of Paulo Freire, the origin, mechanisms and results of colonialism

in Africa and its relationship with education. Paulo Freire analyzed colonialism as a system against which the countries which he helped were fighting and with which he also fought. That is why he examines the colonial situation as a context that he encountered in Africa and that there was a need to critically understand it before producing answers.

From a methodological point of view, we read his formulations on colonialism in Africa and try to understand what he intended to affirm under these formulations and other ideas based on the historical context of the time, his dialectical vision, his dialogue with African leaders and intellectuals.

For that purpose, a review of literature of Paulo Freire's works about Africa was undertaken, some of his previous works revisited. We update our knowledge about the historical context of the time and about the ideas of the Africans with whom we think he was talking.

There are available studies on Paulo Freire and colonialism to sustain a colonial debate based on Paulo Freire in North America (Giroux, 1992; Apple, 2011), in Latin America (Neto, 2013; Semeraro, 2009). The research on Paulo Freire and colonialism with reference to Africa can be identified in the works of Gadotti (2010), Romão (2012), Pereira and Vitoria (2012) in bringing these authors to dialogue our epistemic subject with Amílcar Cabral and then referred to the decolonization of mentalities. The article discussing Paulo Freire and decolonization in Africa (Mesquida, Peroza & Akkari, 2014) sought to trace the nature and trajectory of colonialism in Africa, to Paulo Freire's formulations on colonialism based on the ideas of Frantz Fanon and Alberti Memmi and discusses contemporary Africa and the current situation of Paulo Freire. This study, like the others, is characterized as an initial step towards the study of colonialism under Paulo Freire's perspective. Therefore, this article discusses Paulo Freire's ideas on colonialism presenting Freire's relationship with African colonialism, his view on the organization of the production method, desafrikanization and its results, and reafrikanization.

## 2. Paulo Freire and African Colonialism

Paulo Freire has penetrated the African colonial issues through some historical similarity between Brazil and Africa, for study and for his work.

Paulo Freire, being a Brazilian, was from a country that had suffered colonization. For that reason, so early in Pernambuco, he became involved with colonial ideas to perceive his own country. This can be attributed, among several writings, in his book *Education as a Practice of Freedom*.

But Freire will become more involved with the African colonial issues precisely by reading African authors who became noticeable on the subject, such as Frantz Fanon, Alberti Memmi, whom allowed him to give all the originality that we discover in his best-known book, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (Paiva, 2000). It will be through this work, already working as an official of the World Council of Churches (WCC) that he will be known in Africa and it will be through this work that the African leaders will invite him to contribute in the movements of liberation or to advise their governments after the Independences.

Freire advised in Tanzania at the University of Dar-es-Salam and it was during his trip to Tanzania that a group of guerrillas from the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) asked during his stopover in Zambia for a meeting on a basis that the movement maintained in this country, with some members of the direction of the MPLA to talk about literacy in the liberated areas. While in Tanzania, he accepted an invitation to contact members of the Mozambican Liberation Front (FRELIMO), which resulted in his participation and contribution to a seminar on literacy training for liberated areas (Freire & Macedo, 1990). After the Independence

of the Portuguese-speaking African countries, he served as an advisor to the WCC and the *Instituto de Ação Cultural* (IDAC), with the governments of Guinea-Bissau, Cape Verde, Angola and São Tomé and Príncipe. It was during his presence among the liberation movements and governments that he improved his study on Africa, he discussed and wrote his ideas on colonialism and liberation in Africa.

During his work in Africa, Paulo Freire will be persuaded, like the leaders of the African revolutions, that colonialism had one of its greatest objectives in Africa to profit, having used for that end a production organization that would lead to the enrichment of Europe in detriment of Africa.

### 3. Exploring from a Production Mode

In Africa Paulo Freire was convinced, like the African leaders, that colonialism was always linked to an organization of production exploitative and colonialist (Freire, 2011a; Freire, 2011b). However, in the *Second Notebook of Popular Culture*<sup>1</sup> used in São Tomé and Príncipe he taught to literacy students, that in order to understand a society it was necessary to know how this society organizes its productive process (São Tomé, 1978, p. 36), e.g., how the means of production and the workforce are combined. It was necessary to perceive the social relations that take place in the production (São Tomé, 1978, p. 36): “If they are relations of exploration or if they are relations of equality and collaboration between all” (São Tomé, 1978, p. 36, our translation).

He would categorically argue that the social relations of the colonial period were exploitative relations and therefore violent, with colonialism taking the means of production and the labor force of Africans. The colonialists have become “absolute owners of the lands, raw materials, tools, machines, transport and the labor force of the workers. Nothing escaped its power and its control” (São Tomé, 1978, p. 36, our translation).

With effect, in the same notebook, Paulo Freire will describe the logic of exploitation of Africa from the era of the accumulation of European capital with the trafficking of metals and then of slaves to the establishment of a European capitalist economy, with the exploitation of raw materials and cheap African labor (São Tomé, 1978). This narrative was intended to denounce a colonialism fueled primarily by a greed for profit that led to the domination of territories, appropriation of resources and the use of cheap labor in more cruel conditions. It aimed at denouncing a Portuguese colonialism that even after the abolition of slavery continued to resort to forced labor in the colonies.

Paulo Freire was against the capitalist production system because his educational project envisaged an education as a practice of freedom. For him, in a capitalist production relation there would be no emancipative education due to the fact that in this system dominates values such as individualism, competition, the instrumentation of human relations. Therefore, for his educational project he preferred a relationship of equality and collaboration.

In his view, the organization of the profit-based production process in Africa created a class-dominated society and that class determination was tied to the color of the skin and culture.

Colonialism, through making use of an exploitative production system, will invent a discourse that not only legitimizes domination but intends to perpetuate it. In the next section we'll introduce an anti-dialogical theory (Freire, 2014b) that colonialism resorted in order to desafrikanation of Africans.

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<sup>1</sup> Segundo Caderno de Cultura Popular.

## 4. Desafricanization

Paulo Freire uses the word desafricanization (Freire, 2011a) without elaborating on it, but he takes it from Amílcar Cabral who used it extensively as well as other African intellectuals such as Mario Pinto de Andrade, Marcelino dos Santos, Agostinho Neto, Lúcio Lara, Eduardo Mondlane, etc to refer to the uprooting of the Africans. With desafricanization Paulo Freire was intending to refer to a cultural action that aimed at the colonization of African minds (Freire, 2011a). The desafricanization was possible through the use of mechanisms of the anti-dialogical theory (Freire, 2014b) such as the conquest, manipulation, the division and the cultural invasion. All of the following terms are developed on the basis of African writings and applications.

### 4.1 Conquest

Through Paulo Freire it is possible to affirm that Africa suffered a violent conquest with the use, since the sixteenth century, of brutal and repressive force and was a victim of slavery, colonialism and forced labor (São Tomé, 1978). Africans were uprooted from their lands to selected African territories; were taken by force to Europe and America. From the end of the nineteenth century colonialism prospered (São Tomé, 1978).

Following Paulo Freire's speech one can discover that Africa was taken over by a so-called "civilizing" project and the territories colonized by the Portuguese received the "pompous name" of "overseas provinces" (Freire, 2011a). Among hard and brutal methods and between subtle and sweet methods, Africa was being conquered.

Through interpreting Freire it can be argued that Africa was imposed the project of colonialist exploitation, racism and social exclusion. A western modernizing model was imposed as a model of classist, elitist and authoritarian character (Freire, 2011a). The African was obliged not only to conform to this imposition but to become what the colonizer expected of him/her. She/he had no right to participate in a project carried out in her/his name that affected his/her life. For this it was necessary to affirm that the African had no culture, had no history and that this, at least, began with the arrival of the Europeans in Africa (Sao Tomé, 1978; Freire, 2011a; Freire, 2011b). Europeans considered the languages of the African dialects and, as such, inferior to the European languages. The colonized could not "name themselves" nor name the world that was robbed from them (Freire, 2011a, p. 218).

The imposition of the language of the colonizer on the colonized is a fundamental condition for colonial domination, which extends into neocolonial domination. It is not by chance that the colonizers speak of their language as language and of the language of the colonized as dialects; of the superiority and wealth of the former to which the "poverty" and "inferiority" of the second (Freire, 2011a, p. 217, our translation)<sup>2</sup>.

The colonizer also attempted to kill the Africans' expressiveness. It was not by accident that Paulo Freire, in the first pages of his *Letters to Guinea-Bissau*, wrote that what impressed him upon his arrival in Tanzania was the discovery of the resistance of African expressiveness even with colonizing violence:

The color of the sky, the blue-green of the sea, the coconut trees, the mango trees, the cashew trees, the perfumes of its flowers, the scent of the earth, the bananas, among them my beloved banana-coconut, the grasshoppers jumping in the grass, the gypsies of the body of the people walking in the streets, their smile

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<sup>2</sup> In the original: A imposição da língua do colonizador ao colonizado é uma condição fundamental para a dominação colonial, que se estende na dominação neocolonial. Não é por acaso que os colonizadores falam da sua língua como língua e da língua dos colonizados como dialetos; da superioridade e riqueza da primeira a que contrapõem a "pobreza" e a "inferioridade" da segunda (Freire, 2011a, p. 217).

available to life, the drums sounding in the depths of the night, the bodies dancing and, in doing so, “drawing the world”, the presence among the popular masses, the expression of their culture (Freire, 2011a, pp. 13–14)<sup>3</sup>.

Colonialism attempted to kill the colonizer's curiosity, their ability to “ad-mire” the world; hence it was on the agenda of Paulo Freire in Africa to help in the restitution of an inquiring view of the world. That is why he will write in São Tomé and Príncipe, in the *Second Notebook of Popular Culture*, that the new man and woman mean, combined with study and right thinking, “to develop curiosity about reality to be better known, to create and recreate, correct criticism and accept constructive criticism” (Sao Tomé, 1978, p. 64, our translation).

Just as the curiosity of the colonized was not welcome, the union between the colonized was discouraged and rejected.

#### 4.2 Divide to Keep the Achievement

Paulo Freire, for his values and for his commitment to the struggle in the African countries in which he worked, was always in favor of unity. He contributed in an Africa that fought for the unity of the tribes, of men and women, of different social extracts, of different races, etc. Colonialism had developed legislation, discourse and mechanisms that promoted the division between ethnic groups, tribes; between workers and peasants, between them and public officials and between workers and students.

Freire, like Amílcar Cabral or Eduardo Mondlane, thought of a unity in diversity, that is, in the formation of a national culture in which the cultural realities of different ethnic groups continued to flourish after Independence.

In what he considered the only error he had identified in Amílcar Cabral, such as his admission that the only important thing the Portuguese had left for Africa was the Portuguese language, he pardoned the African leader for having been in favor of national unity.

In addition to national unity, he advocated unity and solidarity among all the oppressed peoples of the world (Sao Tomé, 1978), and so he was also in favor of the formation of class consciousness.

One thing Freire (2011a) noticed was that colonialism had not only divided tribes, genders, races, as the being of the colonized had split. That is why in his intervention in Africa he also wanted to contribute to the reunification of the subject. Therefore he will defend the general and polytechnic training in which there is, therefore, no separation between manual training and intellectual training, theoretical and practical training and general training and technical training (Freire, 2011a). Therefore he will argue that there should be no separation between school and factory; between it and the field. In addition to dividing people and subjects, colonialism sought to manipulate to achieve its attempts.

#### 4.3 Manipulation

One of the problems that Paulo Freire found and with which he would have to deal with in Africa was manipulation. That is why he said in São Tomé and Príncipe that it was necessary to develop an education that “does not favor lies, false ideas, cheating” (Sao Tomé, 1978, p. 65, our translation). It was that he knew, as he had written in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, that colonialism in favor of conquest had used manipulation. In addition to the use of myths as “Historical Right” of the land, “national unity”, “civilizing mission”, used the myth of

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<sup>3</sup> In the original: A cor do céu, o verde-azul do mar, os coqueiros, as mangueiras, os cajueiros, o perfumes de suas flores, o cheiro da terra, as bananas, entre elas a minha bem amada banana –mação, o peixe ao leite do coco, os gafanhotos pulando na grama rasteira, o gingar do corpo das gentes andando nas ruas, seu sorriso disponível à vida, os tambores soando no fundo das noites, os corpos bailando e, ao fazê-lo, “desenhando o mundo”, a presença entre as massas populares, da expressão de sua cultura (Freire, 2011a, pp. 13–14).

“assimilation”.

Portuguese colonialism carried out the assimilation policy that, African being a “barbarian and savage”, could, through the fulfillment of the requirements of “civilization”, have access to the well-being of a worthy citizen and reach the success that was discovered in the Portuguese/European citizen. For the African to become assimilated he should be 18 years old, able to read and write, to speak fluent Portuguese and to have what was considered illustration and, it must be said, that if ordinary Portuguese at that time had to fulfill these requirements to be “civilized” perhaps many of them remained outside “civilized” life because Portugal, at the time, still had a high percentage of illiterates (Cabral, 1978; Mondlane, 1995). The assimilated, in fact, was citizen of the third. There were reports of assimilated Africans who were beaten by the guards because they frequented toilets at the cinema or train station for the whites. There are episodes of segregation on buses, even after the end of the *Indigenous Statute*<sup>4</sup>.

The policy of assimilation led some Africans, at the cost of sacrificing their customs and, sometimes, of the contempt of their families and communities, to study in the European schools and to learn, therefore, Portuguese language and Western culture; most of whom Paulo Freire and Amílcar Cabral called the African “petty bourgeoisie” and with the emergence of the “petty bourgeoisie”, which began to think that it had some privileges, colonialism took the opportunity to deepen the separation between the latter and the rest of the population. School and other means of propaganda have sharpened this class position (Freire, 2011a).

So Freire (2011a) posits that,

Those urban minorities, “desafricanizing”, are assumed by a strange “biculturalism”, an expression, in fact, of their cultural alienation and which does not always correspond to biculturalism. The more alienated these urban minorities are, the more they struggle to deny their roots, to forget or ever learn the language of their people, defined by the colonizer as dialect, as something inferior and inferior. In this way attracted by the dominant culture, which profiles them as inferior, they deny themselves in the denial of their culture (Freire, 2011a, p. 218)<sup>5</sup>.

It is the so-called African petty bourgeoisie that has worked in the public service as nurses, teachers, interpreters and other positions that could help in the administration of the colonial state to guarantee some peace to the colonizer. Part of this group of colonial subaltern workers increasingly attracted by the culture of the colonizer and feeling less and less African became an African elite. At some point they were them and they were not they, they were doublebeings, inauthentic. They had introjected the colonizer hence we might even identify some horizontal violence (Freire, 2014).

The colonial mechanisms would go as far as Paulo Freire would call cultural invasion.

#### **4.4 Cultural Invasion**

As we read the Introduction of the book *Letters to Guinea-Bissau*, we will realize that the methodology adopted and detailed is intended to be precisely against the cultural invasion. So what is Freire going to criticize based on his methodological statements?

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<sup>4</sup> The so called *Estatuto do Indígena*, The Organic Law of the Overseas Territory (Law No. 2,066 of July 27, 1953) contained several precepts relating to indigenous populations of the provinces of Guine, Angola, and Mozambique.

<sup>5</sup> In the original: essas minorias urbanas, “desafricanizando-se”, são assumidas por um estranho “biculturalismo”, expressão, na verdade, de sua alienação cultural e a que nem sempre corresponde um biculturalismo. Tanto mais alienadas essas minorias urbanas quanto mais se esforçam por negar suas raízes, para esquecer ou jamais aprender a língua de seu povo, definida pelo colonizador como dialeto, como algo obre e inferior. Desta maneira atraídos pela cultura dominante, que as perfila como inferiores, se negam na negação de sua cultura. (Freire, 2011a, p. 218).

Any entry and stay on the other's land to put or help put any educational idea or project into effect without being committed to its causes is an act of cultural invasion. Is configured as such, because neutrality is impossible in education, if you are not in favor, then you will be against it.

Colonialism made a cultural invasion in Africa upon reaching the continent and considered that Africans had neither History nor culture (Sao Tomé, 1978).

The colonialists said that only they had culture. They said that before his arrival in Africa we had no history. That our history began with their coming. These statements are false, they are lies. They were necessary statements to the spoiling practice that they exerted on us. In order to maximize our economic exploitation, they had to try to destroy our identity by denying our culture, our history (São Tomé, 1978, p. 38)<sup>6</sup>.

And then clarifies to the students of literacy that all peoples have culture because all of them work and in working transform the world and transform it, they transform themselves and that everything that is done by man is culture (São Tomé, 1978).

Considering the method of work of Paulo Freire in Africa it is possible to realize that he considered that within his contribution in Africa he would teach and he would learn. That is why colonialism made a cultural invasion by not accepting to learn from native peoples by imposing its vision of man and society, its objectives, methods and contents (Freire, 2011a). That is why its pedagogical project was authoritarian, excluding and against the vast majority.

Paulo Freire started from a radical position in relation to Guinea-: never to carry a ready project, from Geneva to Bissau (Freire, 2011a). "We were therefore in a radical position: the refusal of any kind of "packaged" or prefabricated solution; to any kind of cultural invasion, clearly or slyly hidden" (Freire, 2011a, p. 18)<sup>7</sup>. Freire did in Africa what the colonizer refused to do, namely to elaborate his project of implantation in Africa with the Africans themselves.

Without a doubt, the school was taken as an important instrument for desaficanization to those who could gain access to it.

#### 4.5 The Role of Colonial School

In his book *Letters to Guinea-Bissau*, Paulo Freire explains that when he and his team arrived in this country their concern was not only linked to literacy as to the school as a whole. They had contact with the department of Adult Education and with the whole Ministry of the Education. They wanted to know the problems with which they were confronted at the primary and secondary levels (Freire, 2011a). And what did they find out?

They found that the school Guinea-Bissau inherited from colonialism could not be called upon to build the new society and should be completely discarded. It was a school that had as one of its objectives the "desaficanization" of Africans (Freire, 2011a) and/or the formation of subordinate officials of the State to serve as intermediaries between colonial government and the popular masses.

They also found that it was a discriminating school, mediocre verbalist. In fact, the colonial school in the Portuguese colonies was of two systems, one for white and assimilated and the other for black Africans. The

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<sup>6</sup> In the original: Os colonialistas diziam que somente eles tinham cultura. Diziam que antes da sua chegada à África nós não tínhamos História. Que a nossa História começou com a sua vinda. Estas afirmações são falsas, são mentirosas. Eram afirmações necessárias à prática espoliadora que exerciam sobre nós. Para prolongar ao máximo a nossa exploração económica eles precisavam tentar a destruição da nossa identidade, negando a nossa cultura, a nossa História (São Tomé, 1978, p. 38).

<sup>7</sup> In original: Partíamos, pois, de uma posição radical: a recusa de qualquer tipo de solução "empacotada" ou pré-fabricada; a qualquer tipo de invasão cultural, clara ou manhosamente escondido (Freire, 2011a, p. 18).

system of Africans had only elementary education and that of the white and assimilated could continue until the university.

The colonial school organized in primary, secondary and technical and this separated from that, according to Freire, was antidemocratic in its objectives, contents, methods and completely divorced from reality (Freire, 2011a). It formed the Europeans and assimilated to ascend in society and to the Africans to continue submissive, to do manual labor and subaltern ((Freire, 2011a).

Paulo Freire criticized a school of colonialist content that exalted Portuguese culture and despised African culture, teaching the Portuguese language that most of the population did not speak, the History and Geography of Portugal (Freire, 2011a). Geography taught the beauty and grandeur of Portugal and, in History, the bravery of its heroes.

The methods used were frontal, authoritarian, based on a horizontal social structure. The school passed on to the students that their role was to obey and that in it they would live in peace if they did not think.

For Freire (2011a), this school was a school “of the few, for the few and against the great majority” (p. 25). The culture it conveyed was completely alien to the lives of Africans. For this reason, according to Freire, following Julius Nyerere’s (1967), the colonial school selected the few students who had access to it. For those who gave up, they emphasized their feeling of inferiority, of incapacity in view of their failure (Freire, 2011a, p. 25).

Deeply, we had a school that reproduced the colonial ideology, because it sought to reaffirm in the children and young Africans the profile that the colonial ideology drew from them; for the colonizer they could only save themselves by becoming “white” or “black with a white soul” (Freire, 2011a, p. 25). For the colonizers the culture of the colonized began with their arrival and their “civilizing” presence. The culture of the colonized was only a manifestation of their barbarous way of understanding the world (Freire, 2011a, p. 11).

With a school like this and a society set up as we have just seen, it is permissible to ask ourselves which marks can be found of colonialism. And that’s what we’ll see next.

## **5. Result of the Desafricanization**

Through the reading of Paulo Freire we can see two results of colonialism: the colonized reproduction of the colonizer’s way of life, and colonized resistance that would unfold in the liberation. In the next steps we discuss the first result.

One of the first results of colonialism is for the colonized to assume the myths of the colonizer, for example, to accept that they are inferior; who are lazy, who know nothing or know little; the myth that only one studies in school; the myth of the neutrality of education (Freire, 2011a; Freire, 2011b; São Tomé, 1978).

The African “petty bourgeoisie” may consider itself superior to the people. By having some European school education they may despise their people, their culture and their language, for example. That is why Paulo Freire (2011a) wrote that some members of the elite still looked at the national languages as inferior to the pretext that it does not have writing or because they are not able to express the scientific concepts so Portuguese should be kept and be the official and national language. And it would not be rare to hear, among these elite, that the expression of the people in “dialects” or in Creole is ugly.

The African elite of the former assimilated may still consider themselves superior to the people by the colonial ideology which regarded intellectual work as superior to manual labor and they basically dealing with the

former. For Paulo Freire the individual could be illiterate to read and write the word and be highly literate politically. The latter was the situation he considered to have been in 1975 in Guinea-Bissau and Sao Tome and Principe, where the former had about 90% illiterates and the second 85%, but in both countries the people were very politically literate.

For this reason, one of the great results of colonialism will be the reproduction of colonial ideology. It follows that the African leadership may adopt, naively or slyly<sup>8</sup>, in turn, colonialist and elitist forms of leader with the people as spontaneity, authoritarianism, simplism and bureaucracy.

By adopting spontaneity, leadership could be accommodated in solving problems because, allegedly, in time they would be arranged. This position is accompanied by licentiousness with events delivered to their fate. On the other hand, with authoritarianism the leaders practice, instead of the authority that is desired, authoritarianism taking the popular masses their properties. That is why Freire (2011a) said, neither licentiousness nor authoritarianism and “Nor the avant-garde behind the popular masses, getting lost in the ‘dust’ they make, not too far ahead, making them lose themselves in ‘dust’ of the avant-garde, but it is with (emphasis added) those, teaching and learning mutually, in the struggle for liberation” (Freire, 2011a, p. 31, our translation)<sup>9</sup>.

Simplism is an elitist way of dealing with the people in which the leaders in speaking to the people omit important elements or speak frivolously on the pretext that if they are addressed properly they will not be understood by their interlocutors (Freire, 2014c, p. 130). This was not the case with a leadership committed to the causes of the people like Amílcar Cabral who spoke with simplicity and not with simplism (Freire, 2014c).

Another problem would be the bureaucracy in which the revolutionary leaders could practice a revolutionary management with gestures and mechanical, stagnant and paralyzing speeches. Thus, for Freire it was important a political clarity that could help the revolution to flow:

One thing is politics made in every sector by a rigid bureaucracy in the name of the popular masses, to whom slogans are transmitted; another thing is politics made with them, with their critically conscious participation in the reconstruction of their society, in which the slogans, necessary, never, however, in pure slogans (Freire, 2011a, p. 183)<sup>10</sup>.

Paulo Freire considered that vigilance was necessary so that elite could not be established, naively or slyly; end up making the Independence of Africa mere substitution of foreign settlers by national colonizers (São Tomé, 1978):

The sacrifice of our struggle against colonialism would be useless if our Independence meant only the replacement of the colonialists by a privileged national minority. If this were so, our People would continue to be exploited by the ruling classes of the imperialist countries through the national minority (Sao Tomé, 1978, p.22)<sup>11</sup>.

It was therefore necessary to avoid the possibility of a privileged national minority to push Africa into a

<sup>8</sup> Translated from the *manhosamente* in the original.

<sup>9</sup> In original: “Nem a vanguarda atrás das massas populares, perdendo-se na “poeira” que estas fazem, nem demasiado à frente, fazendo-as perder-se na “poeira” da vanguarda, mas esta com (grifo do autor) aquelas, ensinando e aprendendo mutuamente, na luta de libertação” (Freire, 2011a, p. 31).

<sup>10</sup> In original: Uma coisa é política feita, em todos os sectores, por uma rígida burocracia, em nome das massas populares, a quem se transmitem palavras de ordem; outra coisa é política feita com elas, com a sua participação criticamente consciente na reconstrução de sua sociedade, em que as palavras de ordem, necessárias, jamais, porém, em puros “slogans” (Freire, 2011a, p. 183).

<sup>11</sup> O sacrifício da nossa luta contra o colonialismo seria inútil, se a nossa Independência significasse apenas a substituição dos colonialistas por uma minoria privilegiada nacional. Se fosse assim, o nosso Povo continuaria explorado pelas classes dominantes dos países imperialistas através da minoria nacional (São Tomé, 1978, p. 22).

nominal “Independence” while continuing to benefit from a neo-colonization at the expense of the people.

In a scenario like this Freire feared that the people, in turn, could be taken by low self-esteem. “When they hear of themselves that they are incapable, that they know nothing, that they cannot know, that they are sick, indolent, that they do not produce by virtue of all this, they end up convinced of their “inability” (Freire, 2014b, p. 69, Our translation)<sup>12</sup> and forget that in their process of daily coexistence and production of culture they bring together a series of invaluable knowledge, values and attitudes.

In the article, *The People say their word or Literacy in São Tomé e Príncipe*, he argues clearly trying to unmask the myth that one only learns in school that: “this myth penetrates the popular masses provoking in them at times low self-esteem for being people of no utility or very low level of ‘literacy’”(Freire, 2011b, p. 74, our translation)<sup>13</sup>.

Another result of colonialism may be the fear of freedom in which the colonized fears to radically change the existing situation by fear of the unknown in relation to the only model of life witnessed (by the colonized) to the colonizer or by the fear of responsibility (Freire, 2014b). While reflecting in his work in Africa, Paulo Freire considered that Africans, among many situations, expressed some fear of freedom in the way they articulated the question of language. He argued that the choice of the Portuguese language as a national language and for the education of children, young people and adults was a biggest mistake. So it was hard for him to forgive Cabral for what he considered the only error he had identified in his writings by affirming that it is wrong to regard the Portuguese language as the greatest inheritance of the Portuguese: “For me the only slip of Cabral is exactly in a text of his that I have here when he says: ‘The greatest gift that the ‘Tugas’ left was the language’. This was one of Amílcar’s ingenuities” (Freire, 2014c, p. 139, Our translation)<sup>14</sup>.

For Freire, the adoption of the Portuguese language by the Africans could be equated with embracing neocolonialism as an option:

From a colonialist perspective, national leadership necessarily attaches itself to the language of the former colonizer, without the popular masses being touched by that language. At bottom there is a social division of society between two groups: a minority group of a small national bourgeoisie who commands the language of the colonizer, and the large masses who do not have access to the language of the colonizer and are therefore discriminated against in their own pedagogical training (Freire & Guimarães, 2011, p. 48)<sup>15</sup>

He states that (Freire, 2011a), “The imposition of the language of the colonizer to the colonized is a fundamental condition for colonial domination, which extends into neocolonial domination” (p. 217, our translation)<sup>16</sup>. Still making an inroad into the language issue he would argue that: “Without the right of self-definition, they are ‘profiled’ by the settlers. They cannot, therefore, ‘name themselves’ nor ‘name’ the world that is stolen from them” (Idem, p. 218).

<sup>12</sup> In original: De tanto ouvirem de si mesmo que são incapazes, que não sabem nada, que não podem saber, que são enfermos, indolentes, que não produzem em virtude de tudo isto, terminam por se convencer de sua “incapacidade” (Freire, 2014b, p. 69).

<sup>13</sup> In original: este mito penetra as massas populares provocando nelas às vezes auto desvalia por se sentirem gente de nenhuma utilidade ou de muito pouca “leitura” (Freire, 2011b, p. 74).

<sup>14</sup> Para mim o único deslize de Cabral é exatamente num texto dele que eu tenho aqui quando ele diz: “O maior presente que os “os tugas” deixaram foi a língua”. Essa foi uma das ingenuidades de Amílcar (Freire, 2014c, p. 139).

<sup>15</sup> Numa perspectiva, por exemplo colonialista, a liderança nacional necessariamente se filia à língua do antigo colonizador, sem que as massas populares sejam tocadas por essa língua. No fundo se assiste a uma divisão social da sociedade entre dois grupos: um grupo minoritário de uma pequena burguesia nacional que comanda a língua do colonizador, e as grandes massas que não têm acesso à língua do colonizador e que, portanto, são discriminadas na sua própria formação pedagógica (Freire & Guimarães, 2011, p. 48).

<sup>16</sup> In original: A imposição da língua do colonizador ao colonizado é uma condição fundamental para a dominação colonial, que se estende na dominação neocolonial” (Freire, 2011a, p. 217).

Urban minorities who, living under and around colonial power, indulge in colonial culture and the dominant language, as opposed to the great peasant majorities that escape the most destructive power of the colonizer, survive in preserving the remarkable features of their culture.

In a sense, these urban minorities, “becoming more or less”, are assumed by a strange “biculturalism”, an expression, in fact, of their cultural alienation and that bilingualism does not always correspond (Freire, 2011a, p. 218, our translation)<sup>17</sup>.

For that reason Freire still insisted in *Letters to Guinea-Bissau*: “A society that, surpassing its state of colonial dependence, seeks to revolutionary rebuild itself as in the case of Guinea-Bissau, cannot truly escape the equation of its linguistic problem” (Freire, 2011a, p. 219)<sup>18</sup>.

For “In reality, the people’s liberation process does not succeed, in deep and authentic terms, if that given society do not regain its voice, the right to say it, to ‘pronounce’ and ‘name’ the world” (Freire, 2011a, p. 217)<sup>19</sup>.

For him, therefore, it was urgent that

Creole, which should be for Portuguese what the former is for Latin, should be affirmed as a national language, a serious effort to be made in the sense of its “regulation”, as written language, since, as a language already spoken, already has its structure.

The role that Creole has been playing ... in national unity, since the hard times of the struggle, seems indisputable (Freire, 2011a, 219)<sup>20</sup>.

Freire did not understand why, especially in relation to Guinea-Bissau that already had Creole, which could be a language of national unity, the adoption of the Portuguese language as the common language of the Guinean people. For him, the idea was not defensible because there was no free people without the possibility of “saying their own word” (Freire, 2011a). Apart from that the majority of the Guinean people, for example, did not speak Portuguese. He could agree that the Portuguese language was introduced and used while preparing the conditions for the introduction of the languages of the peoples. For him, the Portuguese language could later be used as a secondary or foreign language.

In Freire’s discourse on Africa, the issue of language was a constant concern. He once returns to this issue in an interview with Sérgio Guimarães in *Africa Teaching Us*<sup>21</sup>. From this writing, and reading his interview with Fernando Faundez, in *For a Pedagogy of the Question*<sup>22</sup>, but especially reading his speech at the University of Brasilia in 1992, it can be noted that he dominated the issues around cultural policy of Africa colonized by Portugal, by speaking, for example, of other colonies such as Mozambique, Angola. He “acknowledged the enormous political difficulties that the leaderships of Angola and Mozambique faced and still face with regard to the language issue” (Freire, 2014d, p. 134).

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<sup>17</sup> minorias urbanas que, vivendo sob e em volta do poder colonial, se entregam à cultura colonial e à língua dominante, em oposição às grandes maiorias camponesas que escapando ao poder mais destruidor do colonizador, sobrevivem na preservação dos traços marcantes de sua cultura.

<sup>18</sup> In original: A sociedade que, superando seu estado de dependência colonial, procura refazer-se revolucionariamente, como é o caso da Guiné-Bissau, não pode escapar, realmente, ao equacionamento de seu problema linguístico (Freire, 2011a, p. 219).

<sup>19</sup> In original: Na verdade, o processo de libertação de um povo não dá, em termos profundos e autênticos, se esse povo não reconquista a sua palavra, o direito de dizê-la, de “pronunciar” e de “nomear” o mundo” (Freire, 2011a, p. 217).

<sup>20</sup> In original: o crioulo, que deve estar para o Português como este para o latim, se afirma como língua nacional, de um sério esforço a ser feito no sentido de sua “regulamentação”, como língua escrita, pois que, enquanto língua que se fala, já tem sua estrutura.

“O papel que o crioulo vem jogando (...) na unidade nacional, desde os tempos duros da luta, parece indiscutível (Freire, 2011a, p. 219).

<sup>21</sup> *A África ensinando a gente.*

<sup>22</sup> *Por uma pedagogia da pergunta.*

He recognized that the issue of language in Africa was directly linked to the issue of the creation of the nation or national culture, with which Freire as well as the African liberators had to deal with. From the *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Paulo Freire has advocated unity as the necessary weapon for the liberation of the oppressed. In *Pedagogy of Hope, Politics and Education* as well as in *For a Pedagogy of the Question*, he discusses unity or diversity and he concludes that oppressed groups had only to win united rather than divided. He spoke, for example, in the *Pedagogy of Hope*, of the unity between ethnic groups, races, genders, workers and peasants: “the more so-called minorities assume themselves as such and close themselves to each other, the better the real and only minority, the ruling class” (Freire, 2014a, p. 211, our translation). Therefore, in his view, he still argues in *Pedagogy of Hope*:

The so-called minorities, for example, need to recognize that, deeply, they are the majority. The way to assume the majority is to work the similarities between themselves, and not only the differences, and thus create unity in diversity, outside of which I do not see how to perfect oneself and even how to constitute a substantive democracy, radical (Freire, 2014a, p. 212)<sup>23</sup>.

In the case of Angola and Mozambique, choosing any of the native languages could risk some group or other groups to rise up suspicious that there could be favoritism of one group over another or others. Ethnic conflicts in Africa are cause of bloody wars as happened recently in Burundi, Rwanda or Nigeria. These conflicts are exacerbated by the practice used by the colonialists to cast intrigues among different ethnicities to better govern (Cabaço, 2009).

In any case, Freire was not satisfied with the use of the Portuguese language for the education of children and young people, including in adult education: for him, African leaders gave the language of the colonizer an “impossible task: to form youth in a foreign language” (Freire, 2014d, p. 134). For Freire, he and his team in Guinea-Bissau could not do a miracle of “literacy a people in a language that was foreign to them” (Freire & Faundez, 1985, p. 124).

Freire understood that there should have been courage to literate or educate the African population in their languages, even recognizing the high price of doing so, such as designing teaching materials, translating various literatures into these languages, hiring or the availability of competent linguists to work on these languages (Freire & Guimarães, 2011).

Freire defended a linguistic diversity as a form of respect for cultural diversity, since language was more than a vehicle of words as a true cultural source, but he advocated, as African leaders, unity insofar as, for them, the various ethnic groups had many things in common and one of them, that was fundamental, it was to be exploited, as Eduardo Mondlane, an African leader, would argue (Mondlane, 1995).

It is understandable that Paulo Freire perceived that the choice of the Portuguese language as an official and national language was a lack of courage from African leaders to radically change the lives of Africans or a certain fear of freedom or, in other words, they were afraid of reafrikanizing themselves.

## 6. Reafrikanization

Freire used the term reafrikanization, taken from Amílcar Cabral, to refer to the decolonization of the minds.

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<sup>23</sup> As chamadas minorias, por exemplo, precisam reconhecer que, no fundo, elas são a maioria. O caminho para assumirem-se como maioria está em trabalhar as semelhanças entre si, e não só as diferenças, e, assim, criar a unidade na diversidade, fora da qual não vejo como aperfeiçoar-se e até como constituir-se uma democracia substantiva, radical (Freire, 2014a, p. 212).

The term reaffricanization, same as desafricanization, is adopted by African intellectuals attached to the *Casa dos Estudantes do Império* (House of Students of the Empire) between the years 1940 and 1950 in Lisbon, before being appropriated by other African intellectuals from various places (Pinto de Andrade). In the face of colonialism, it means that Africans have not only reproduced colonial ideology but practiced resistance or the struggle for reaffricanization.

When Paulo Freire arrived in Tanzania in 1970 or in Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde in 1975 and later in Sao Tome and Principe or in Angola, the governments of these countries have already put their educational projects into practice, what justified his participation grounded in the acceptance of what these governments were doing at that moment in early years of independence (Freire, 2011a; Freire, 2011b). According to Freire (2011a, 2011b), he accepted to collaborate in African countries because the governments of the countries he accessed, like him, believed that education was political. He agreed to go to these countries because he was aware that he would not meet with cold and neutral intellectuals as he was not a neutral and cold consultant, but militant intellectuals who fought for certain causes and, he argues, with which he agreed. For him as for the Africans, education should not be only a political act, but should be an unveiling, criticizing education (Freire, 2011b).

So he assumed that the African people were starting from their history and culture and that he was going to Africa not only to teach but to learn. It was his principle from the outset that the Guinea-Bissau education project should be developed along with nationals and not an idea taken as a prefabricated or packaged solution from Geneva to that country (Freire, 2011a). The Guinea-Bissau education project would be elaborated based on the knowledge he and his team acquired from the local reality. That is why he and his team began their preparation from Geneva and made their in-depth study on the spot based on conversation with nationals and in local visits.

Paulo Freire defended as much as the nationals, the radical transformation of society, men, economic structure and the mode of production. For that reason he advocated the formation of a new society, a new man and a new woman, the adoption of the socialist production mode and the construction of a new school and new literacy.

The new society would be based in popular culture, which without romanticizing it, should be based on a new mode of production and the foundation of new social relations between people. The new man and the new woman would in reality be the new intellectual, who would be trained at work, with a dynamic conception of society and in close communion with his people.

Therefore, those who belonged to the assimilated African “petty bourgeoisie”, as Amílcar Cabral had formulated, should accept to commit “class suicide” in order to be reborn as a revolutionary in the service of the masses (Freire, 2011a), which would be completed by reaffricanization.

Education should start from popular resistance (Freire & Faundez, 1985). To know and take into account its vision of society, its culture and fighting experience. Former educators who agreed to commit “class suicide” and new fully Africanized educators should be trained. For this, it would be conceived a new theory of knowledge that, first, would take human beings as active beings and capable of transforming the world, second, which would lead education to start from reality with production as a fundamental dimension..

Being education linked to production, it would be an education contrary to the separation between school and factory, between the school and the countryside and therefore an education that would link manual labor with intellectual work, theory and practice. In Paulo Freire education would relate itself to various sectors such as agriculture, health, information, etc.

The contents would thus spring from the existential reality of the people in which the educators, together

with them, and not for them, would help them to move from a predominantly sensitive knowledge to a rigorous knowledge (Freire, 2011a). Revolutionary education would not only teach to read and to write as it would teach reading and writing the world. That is why literacy would be simultaneous with post-literacy (Idem).

The knowledge would not be a gift to the people, but would result from the problematization, an education that would stimulate curiosity and a true encounter between the educator and learner mediated by the world.

## 7. Conclusion

Colonialism was a long process characterized by violence, inhumanity and cruelty, which operated by using, in addition to force and repression, a cultural action aimed at the desafricanization. It was necessary to desafricanize, turn African things, in accordance with imperial profit, power, and control.

The neoliberalism that began to take root in our countries from the beginning of the 1990s, accompanied by individualism, competition, "dollarcracyzation", commercialization of public services, health, education, can be a sign, in light of Paulo Freire's discourse, from an untransformed or poorly transformed colonial situation. It may be a sign that the assimilated elite did not accept the "class suicide", did not engage, naively or slyly, in the struggle and want to continue to enjoy colonial privileges at the expense of the people. We may have an elite divided between being and not being African, once attracted by the standards of living of the colonizer and having the latter introjected. But we, Africans, may also lack the courage, to take more decisive steps towards liberation by assuming the inherent responsibility.

The theory of Paulo Freire calls for constant vigilance against the shadow of the colonizer we introject. It beckons us to vigilance and work with the myths, manipulation, with the shadow of the colonizer, with our ideological conditioning.

Paulo Freire's theory appeals to African leaders to return to true communion with the people not to romanticize the past but to build the new society together.

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