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Tópico 3

One of the easiest ways to define a human being is by simply stating that he is everything except from what he is not. Similarly, one of the easiest ways for someone to define the world that encompasses him is by saying that it is everything except from what he is. Those statements, by themselves, do not say much, and put together might seem like purposely confusing wordplay. However, as simple and poetic as they seem, they are also completely true, and manage to reveal the fundamental aspect of human existence: the complementarity between each person and the reality in which he is inserted. For a human to be, there ought to exist, within the reach of his own perception, things that are not him. If there were not, he would be everything, and if something that is everything would actually exist, it would be no different from nothing.

Not just human existence, but existence itself is, essentially, the dynamic of being and not being: anything is what it is because it is not what it is not. Someone's hair is their hair because it is not someone else's and it is not anything other than hair. A dog is a dog because it is not a cat, a mouse or any other being. Each thing exists as it is because it could possibly not exist or exist in a different way. It is the fact that it could, in other circumstances, not have been that makes being have any meaning at all.

To humans, however, being is not enough. The perceivable reality is not a static scenery that individuals share existence with, nor are individuals static props in such scenery. Only because something is, it does not mean that it cannot cease to be, and the fact that it is not does not prevent it from possibly becoming. For it is the dynamic of being and not being, existence is inseparable from the possibility of becoming. As Paulo Freire states in the excerpt from *Pedagogy of the Oppressor*, reality is a constant challenger and the source of all action, as well as the object of said action. It is, at all times, begging to be changed because it could always be completely different from what it is, which forces humans to interact with it in a mutual exchange. This concept can be applied both to the relationship between human and nature and to the relationship between human and human. Freire's work focuses on the latter, bringing light to the way each individual is able to interact with humanity itself.

The most decisive difference between humans and other animals is the particular ability of developing and believing in ideals that do not come from nature. Humans have created religion, politics, contracts, law, titles, morals, culture. The dynamics between human and human and human and humanity are based on those rather than pure physiological needs or instincts and, therefore, are much more complicated. Wars have killed more than natural disasters and famine exists not because there is not enough food, but because an invented system, Capitalism, does not allow it to be distributed to people who do not own enough of another invented concept, money. The fact that they did not come to exist directly from nature does not make those ideals any less impactful, because humanity has made them a part of concrete reality.

As Freire states, humanity is something that goes beyond each human and exists as a sort of “project”. It is a project because it is completely surrounded by the possibility of becoming and because the individual is able to interact with it in a transformative way, when he is able to perceive reality not only for what it is but for what it is not and for what it could be. We live in a capitalist Society, but we could not, and it is that vision that allowed Marx, for example, to formulate his thesis. Women have conquered the right to vote around the world because they believed that the law could be different from what it was at the time and acted to change it.

Human action is essentially motivated by the conviction that change is achievable, that what is not can become, that what is can be something else or cease to exist entirely. All of the transformations caused by humans throughout history come from this same principle, and every single system that has tried to or will try to make society static is bound to fail, for existence is not existence without the inherent possibility of becoming that permeates it, and humanity is formed by humans with the inherent ability to see and act on that possibility.