


**POPULAR KNOWLEDGE AND CULTURES: DIALOGUES BETWEEN EXPERIENCES AND ECOLOGY OF KNOWLEDGE IN THE ZONA DA MATA OF MINAS GERAIS** <https://doi.org/10.56238/sevened2024.037-077>**Valter Machado da Fonseca<sup>1</sup> and Carmen Lucia Ferreira Silva<sup>2</sup>.****ABSTRACT**

In this research, the authors discuss some foundations, assumptions, principles and concepts that are important for working with Popular Education. They examine the basic concepts of culture, correlating them with the need to value the knowledge produced by the marginalized sectors of modern society. In this text, the authors show that working with the most diverse forms of cultures demands giving up dogmatic conceptions, precisely because they understand the concept of culture inserted in a spontaneous and free historical and social context, where social actors build their cultural identity independent of the cultural conceptions and concepts imposed by the State and by the economic elites that hold political and economic power that govern modern society. It makes a distinction between the knowledge coming from the popular sectors and those produced by the capitalist State and reproduced by formal education. Finally, the article presents aspects and records of the richness of cultural dialogues of the "Exchange of Knowledge", an event held at UFV.

**Keywords:** Education. Popular culture. Critical Pedagogy. Knowledge Exchange/UFV.

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## INTRODUCTION

This article arises from the context of research and debates, readings and discussions held from the classes of the Master's/Doctoral Program discipline, "Education and Popular Cultures: dialogues and contributions to the different educational contexts". The article aims to (1) analyze the concept of popular cultures, (2) investigate the relationship between culture and popular education and (3) report the richness of popular experiences and movements in the Zona da Mata Mineira. The methodology that supports this study is literature review, experience reports and documentary research.

The methodological proposal of the discipline brought, at least in our understanding, fundamental elements that enabled the collective of the group to acquire a contextualized understanding of the object of study (the practice and reflections on cultures and Popular Education), through dense pre-selected readings focused on questions about popular education and culture, "*conversation* circles", lectures and thematic seminars that contributed greatly to the enrichment of the debates and growth of the group.

The richness of the classes and bibliographic research, as well as the debates and dialogues arising from them, inspire the registration of some reflections that can become starting points for teachers, researchers, students and militants of popular causes, in studies on the countless meanings, forms of expression and manifestations of the various forms of culture of popular roots, which can serve as important anchors for Popular Education projects.

Nowadays, themes, debates and discussions related to education and popular cultures have surfaced at various times such as meetings, seminars, congresses and even in the communities and behind the scenes of the school.

The insistence on the recurrence of these themes in debates involving the major themes of today's society may be linked to the large gap left by formal or traditional education, or even to the increase in the level of information and organization with sectors and/or social movements. The fact is that, in times of "perverse globalization" (as the late Prof. Milton Santos would say) these themes return, in a healthy way, constituting another important channel of expression and organization of the broad popular sectors and social movements.

On the threshold of the twenty-first century, at a time when we are witnessing the offensive of the neoliberal project on the achievements of workers around the world, and especially on the most marginalized sectors of society, it is even more urgent to revisit the concepts and categories involved in education projects and popular cultures. It is extremely necessary to understand the origin and conceptual bases of the knowledge originated from the popular sectors, as well as its connection with the aspects that demarcate the cultures of

the most different peoples that make up the popular sectors. Therefore, *the objective of this theoretical essay is to understand the bases that sustain the projects of Popular Education, as well as to understand the connection between Popular Education and the aspects that determine the culture of the subjects involved in this model of education.*

## **CULTURE: A "CONCEPT", "NON-CONCEPT" THAT DISSOLVES AND DISSOLVES INTO THE AIR!!**

This title is a provocation, due to the gaps that are formed and the void that is established around the meaning of culture. Prof. Carlos Brandão categorically stated that "the day a rigid, dogmatic and definitive concept of human culture is established, on that same day, it will lose all its meaning and then it will no longer make any sense to study it" (BRANDÃO, 2009, p.131).

The categorical statement of the Anthropologist and Professor Carlos Rodrigues Brandão is bold and opens up a series of reflections on the concept of culture. In fact, the considerations and meanings credited to human culture and all its forms of manifestation cannot be formulated following theoretical standards and conceptions, rigid methods that follow certain standards established by sectors of society or social groups. Since cultural manifestations must be observed and analyzed within a dynamic historical and social context, whose patterns and aspects that characterize them are in a constant process of mutation and transformation over the years and that cross several generations. It is necessary, above all, to understand the dialectical movement of societies and the various social groups that compose it.

Thus, it is totally different to analyze a piece of handicraft, a utensil, a work of art exhibited in a museum from the analysis of these same objects in the locality, in the tribes or social groups in which they were produced and under the eyes of those who produced them. It is necessary to argue about the needs, desires, desires and reasons for its production.

In the field of philosophical thought, we can verify the conceptual ambiguity about human culture, according to the analysis of thinkers such as Hegel and Marx, highlighted by Chauí (2006, p. 108), for example:

It was Hegel and then Marx who emphasized culture as history. For the former, time is the way in which the Absolute Spirit or reason manifests and develops through works and institutions – work, religion, arts, sciences, philosophy, social institutions, political institutions. In each period of its temporality, the Spirit or reason engenders a determined culture, which expresses the stage of spiritual or rational development of humanity in a sequence of civilizations that begin in the East and end in the West – China, India, Egypt, Israel, Greece, Rome, England, France, Germany would be phases of the life of the Spirit or reason. each one expressing itself with its own culture and surpassed by the following ones, in a continuous process. For Marx, Hegelian spiritualism or idealism is, of course, unacceptable. History-culture is not the

development of the life of the Absolute Spirit, but the way in which, under conditions determined and not chosen by them, men materially produce (through the social division of labor and economic organization) their existence and give meaning to this material production. History-culture does not narrate the temporal movement of the Spirit, but the real struggles of real human beings who produce and reproduce their material conditions of existence, that is, they produce social relations, by which they are distinguished from nature and differentiate themselves from each other in antagonistic social classes. From this point of view, the movement of history-culture is carried out by the struggle of social classes to overcome forms of economic exploitation, social oppression and political domination.

We can verify, through the excerpt in Chauí's text (2006) that in Hegel human culture resides in the evolution of the spirit and reason, while in Marx, in the evolution of human action over nature. In short, in Hegel, culture is linked to "being in the world", in Marx it is linked to "being and acting in the world and on it". Here we see two totally antagonistic formulations about the meaning of human culture.

## CULTURE IN DIFFERENT CONTEXTS

The very contribution of Hegel and Marx, highlighted in the text by Chauí (2006) demonstrates that dealing with the concept of human culture requires a keen look at various aspects and factors imbricated in the process of the realization of man as a cultural being par excellence. Thus, working on the analyses related to cultural investigations requires an astute look at the various dimensions, the various approaches and the most diversified categories that permeate the process of production of human culture in its most different nuances. To begin this discussion, we draw on Eagleton's formulation of human culture:

Culture is not only what we live on. It is also, to a large extent, what we live for. Affection, relationship, memory, kinship, place, community, emotional satisfaction, intellectual pleasure, a sense of ultimate meaning, for most of us, than inhuman bills of rights or treaties of commerce. However, the culture can also get uncomfortably close too close. This very intimacy can become morbid and obsessive unless it is placed in an enlightened political context, a context that can temper these surroundings with more abstract but also somewhat more generous affiliations. (EAGLETON, 2005, p.184)

Terry Eagleton (2005) highlighted some fundamental aspects that should be observed in research on cultural issues. Thus, the characteristic aspects of the subjectivity of human thought and that make up the terrain of the "sensitive" have an extremely relevant connotation in the treatment of studies and research on culture.

In the same sense, Fonseca (2011) also highlights some fundamental aspects in such investigations:

As a spontaneous process located within a certain historical-social context, culture is framed within a network of social experiences that mark and determine the context in which it arises. Thus, culture in a given context is different from other cultures within other contexts different from this one and even from each other. In this interpretative

direction, we can then accept that the concept of culture is relative, depending on the type of spontaneity of the process that originated it, the historical-social context in which it is inserted, and also the point of view of those who examine it. We will never be able to observe a culture of a certain people or social group, from the same angle and with the same eyes as those who built it within a spontaneous process and in a certain historical-social context, in which we do not participate. [...] Thus, it may be useful to make use of a "notion" and not a "concept" of culture, a notion that can guide us in our elaborations and that is not tied to rigid and predefined conceptual norms and standards. Perhaps it is valid to start from the notion that culture is something originating from a spontaneous and free process, inserted in a historical-social context and that expresses values, beliefs, faith, religiosities, ways of life, conceptions of life, of the world and of nature. It is something non-static, on the contrary, it moves as the elements and aspects determined by the constant evolution of the sociocultural context that originated it move, in accordance with the transformations of the conceptions and positions towards the world and its elements, of those who built it. (FONSECA, 2011, p.3-4, passim)

In this sense, we can believe that from this notion built within a conception of contextual transformations, of movements arising from the very life experience of the subjects who live within a historical and social context, these same subjects act to transform the collective as well as to self-transform.

From this perspective, researchers and scholars of aspects related to human culture must exempt themselves from the very common tendency to draw hasty particular conclusions on the subject, since the cultural process comes from the relationship between man and nature, from his intervention in the world of things and in the world of men, where there are relations with material production, mediated by human (or social) relations. In this sense, we can affirm that human culture is the result of a process of evolution of historical experiences of man's relations with nature, within a context permeated by social relations.

Mistaken cultural observations, based on immediacy of interpretations, can lead to unforgivable errors, annihilating even the cultural formations of a people or a certain social group. Such mistakes can cause gross errors that become the basis of supposed absurd theories. Richard Geertz presents an excellent contribution from this perspective;

[...] The obstructive sin of interpretive approaches to anything—literature, dreams, symptoms, cultures—is that they tend to resist, or are allowed to resist, conceptual articulation and thus escape systematic modes of evaluation. Either you grasp an interpretation or you don't, you see its fundamental point or you don't, you accept it or you don't. Imprisoned in the immediacy of its own detail, it is presented as self-validating or, what is worse, as validated by the supposedly developed sensibilities of the person presenting it; Any attempt to see what she is in terms other than her own is seen as a travesty – as ethnocentric, the anthropologist's harshest term for moral abuse. Of course, this does not serve a field of study that, although timidly (although I am not shy about the subject, at all), asserts itself as a science. There is no reason why the cultural conceptual framework should be any less formidable and thus less susceptible to explicit canons of approval than, say, a biological observation or a physical experiment – no reason except that the terms in which such formulations can be presented are, if not entirely nonexistent, very close to it. We are reduced to insinuating theories because we lack the power to express them. (GEERTZ, 2005, p.17)

Geertz's (2005) statement is too serious to go unnoticed. Unfortunately, we can see in a large number of studies on culture, the lack of commitment to research methods and criteria, the overvaluation of the individual values of researchers to the detriment of the most relevant categories that make up the spectrum of the research object.

Geertz's (2005) formulation allows us to reflect that, although in a large number of studies on human culture we have to take into account the aspects related to the subjective of human thought, to the component parts of the "sensitive", inherent to the particularities of the human being, the researcher can never let himself be involved, let himself be weakened by the aspects related to human sensitivity, it can never be swallowed up by the torrent of emotions emanating from the subjects and/or social groups which may be central objects of research on the various dimensions and approaches of their own culture. Otherwise, there is a serious risk of carrying out a work guided merely by abstract data and observations that will inevitably lead to totally distorted results about the cultural formation under study.

## THE CULTURES THAT EMANATE FROM THE OPPRESSED AND MARGINALIZED PEOPLE

So far we have made analytical digressions and a revisit to the concepts and philosophical foundations about cultural formations in a generalized way. However, the new times put on the agenda the small, almost murmuring discourse that emanates from the most suffering and marginalized sectors of the population. Until recently, the history of culture was told by grand narratives coming from the ruling elites. Thus, the history of the culture of the broad sectors of marginalized populations occupied between the lines of official historiography, dictated by the elites.

To illustrate this evidence, it is important to resort to an excerpt from the work of Carlos Rodrigues Brandão, when he refers to the narratives that deal with black culture in Brazil;

Regardless of the position occupied in the work systems of the countryside and the city, the black is explained according to the way he is recognized by the white: as a minority category, whose presence needs to be explained. By defining himself, he manages to bring together the attributes of an exploited and trustworthy worker with those of a naturally devalued ethnic category. Identifying himself as a worker and black, he divides himself between positive and negative qualities. On the one hand, indisputably, there are no manual workers, specialized or not, better qualified and more productive in Goiás than blacks. On the other hand, being black is an impoverished variant of an idealized way of being people, the way of being and living of the whites of the city. We know that the time of captivity does not frequent the discourse of blacks with the same intensity of detail with which it is present in that of whites. The white man speaks of a black slave: pure and haughty as a race; an individual and collective subject, docile and servile as a worker. For the Negro, the qualities of the race are omitted. Even the origin of slaves, the basis of a characterization of being black underlying the idea of being African, is almost always vague and undefined. (BRANDÃO, 2009, p.62)



Brandão's (2009) quote is part of a research he carried out with blacks from the interior of Goiás. It serves perfectly to illustrate the way in which the history of the oppressed is manipulated by the narratives of official historiography directed by legitimate representatives of white and Western macho culture. Thus, the roots of popular culture have been hidden, in a camouflaged way, by narratives of Western hues.

To reflect on this nonsense, we highlight a textual excerpt from Martins (1980, p.16):

The people are the ones who know about the people. This is feared by those who make the social sciences a capitalist enterprise, mediated by fat funding, based on the reproduction and reaffirmation, in scientific practice itself, of the essential brutalities of this society that materialize in the figures of the oppressor and the oppressed, the exploiter and the exploited. They are those researchers who are always willing to render a service to the oppressors of the people, becoming themselves instruments of oppression. They are the ones who always have elaborate justifications for refusing to commit to popular struggles, but who do not need the slightest justification to put themselves at the service of those they oppress.

In fact, popular culture constantly lives under the veiled threat of tyranny and the power that emanates from capital and/or its representatives. In this way, this culture is always appropriated by the mechanisms of capital control, which puts it at the service of surplus value. Thus, the free expressions that emanate from the marginalized sectors of the populations are subjected to mechanisms of capital control. It is capital functioning as a manager of the production of popular culture. In the vast majority of cases, this control takes place through the State apparatus itself, and its various representative institutions. Marilena Chauí (2006) discusses the process of appropriation of the Brazilian State over the cultural production of the popular sectors:

If we examine the way in which the State operates in Brazil, we can say that, in the treatment of culture, its tendency is anti-democratic. Not because the State is occupied by this or that ruling group, but because of the very way in which the State aims at culture. Traditionally, it seeks to capture all the creation of culture under the pretext of expanding the public cultural field, transforming social creation into official culture, to make it operate as a doctrine and radiate it to the whole of society. Thus, the State presents itself as *a producer of culture*<sup>3</sup>, conferring on it national generality by removing the antagonistic social classes from the place where culture is effectively realized. There is also another modality of state action, more recent, in which the State proposes the "modern treatment of culture" and considers it archaic to present itself as an official producer of culture. By modernity, the rulers understand the criteria and logic of the cultural industry, whose standards the State seeks to repeat, through the governmental institutions of culture. In this way, it starts to operate within the culture with market standards. (CHAUÍ, 2006, p. 134)

This tendency of the so-called "modern state" to take over popular demonstrations comes in the sense that the state apparatus distorts the very idea of democracy and popular participation. By appropriating the various forms of expression of the people, he tries to pass

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<sup>3</sup> Emphasis in the original

on the idea of "openness to the ideas of the people", of "equal opportunities, spaces for citizenship and cultural creation". From the moment it appropriates popular cultural productions, including the injection of resources from the people themselves, it also creates all the effective conditions for the control of these creations, institutionalizing them and placing them under the reins of the capital and consumer market.

In the same vein, Peter Burke (2003, p.33) states that "most studies on knowledge are concerned with the knowledge of the elites, while studies of popular culture have relatively little to say about its cognitive element, popular or everyday knowledge". In fact, the knowledge considered valid is that which serves to legitimize the logic of the so-called "progress", arduously defended by the elites, in each period of the history of humanity. In this way, the knowledge and culture produced by the majority of populations are considered invalid, useless, disposable, contrary to the ideas of progress consecrated over time by the dominants.

Therefore, serious studies about popular culture should be encouraged by all educators committed to Popular Education. From this perspective, the history of popular culture in Brazil was told, until recently, by the intellectualized elites who had the role of telling the history of the country, of the occupation and delimitation of the borders of its territory, that is, the official history of the nation was reinvented by the intellectual elites representing the ideas of civilization of Western society.

### WHAT ARE THE LINKS BETWEEN EDUCATION AND POPULAR CULTURE?

The term "popular" often used for those who work with marginalized sectors of society, and especially with poor communities, is difficult to define. For the proper understanding of this term, it is necessary to locate it in the context of the State and outside it. That is why Popular Education takes place in formal and non-formal spaces. A large number of scholars tend to disregard popular knowledge and knowledge, claiming their proximity to common sense and, therefore, are not useful for science.

Now, in the context of class society, we must never despise popular knowledge, because it is knowledge that comes from the majority, that is, from the proletariat. Ignoring the share of knowledge and knowledge produced by the exploited class is the same as saying that science and its practice can only have value when it is based on the knowledge of the elites who hold political and economic power. This is the logic of capital, to validate only the knowledge, desires and desires of the owners of the means of production, that is, the capitalists. For capital, popular knowledge and culture are worthless. And, the school as a



model for the reproduction of this logic, also does not see validity in the knowledge and knowledge coming from the popular sectors.

The traditional school, as a reproducer of the ideology of the capitalist State, exempts itself from its social role and begins to assume the bureaucratic role of control and management of the State in the educational space, as stated by Freitas (2003, p.17);

[...] For those who look at the effectiveness of the school from the perspective of equity, what remains to be done is to study and disseminate which factors intrinsic to the school (pedagogical and school resources, size of the school, management style, teacher training, etc.) affect the increase in the quality of learning (student proficiency), despite the influences of the socioeconomic level on which, they say, nothing can be done. This is the neoliberal dream: regardless of socioeconomic level (or, as they say, discounting the effects of socioeconomic level) all students should learn at a high level of mastery.

In modern society, the school still lends itself to the role of "conscience former". How many times do we see the pedagogical discourse filled with the word "awareness". In fact, the term "consciousness" comes from the meeting of the terms "consciousness" added to the term "action", which means that consciousness is formed in the practical action of the subject in the world and before the world. The liberating consciousness, then, comes in the sense of reinforcing the "being" in the world and not the "being" in the world of capital as recommended by formal education. It turns out that the pedagogical discourse that perpetuates the logic of the interests of capital has already appropriated the word "consciousness". And, it is in the sense of resuming the meaning of "being" in the world that the term "critical consciousness" was placed by Paulo Freire.

There is a lot of knowledge coming from the popular sectors, from the needy communities of the periphery, from the countryside, from indigenous and African philosophy, among others, which are silenced around a supposed "scientific truth". Here we will not focus on the validity or not of this supposed truth, but rather on understanding the knowledge and narratives of these social actors that a significant portion of science wants to silence. They act as if such discourses did not exist and, consequently, the subjects who produce these discourses are also silenced. It is the denial of the ontology of popular knowledge.

To begin this discussion, we will make use of the studies of (XAVIER; FLÔR, 2015, p.310);

We live in a country that, due to its own history, has a huge diversity of beliefs, cultures and forms of expression, which makes each community unique, with its own characteristics. We believe that these specificities need to be considered in the local educational practice, which should, therefore, value and rescue the knowledge coming from society and that students bring with them, the result of their experience.

Completing their thought, the authors show that:

Popular knowledge is pointed out as knowledge "on the margins of formal institutions" (LOPES, 1999, p. 152). In school, the dominant culture is transmitted as something natural, without being questioned, and primitive knowledge is hardly valued, since it is not validated by the Academy. [...]. It is not a matter of overvaluing popular knowledge, but rather recognizing the knowledge that exists in the daily practices of a portion of the population that is often not seen as having knowledge. It tries to deconstruct the paradigm of a single form of education, based only on scientific knowledge, and explore new possibilities. (Idem, p.310)

The textual passages of the authors above show the riches of our country, of continental dimensions built on a mosaic of different beliefs, knowledge and cultures, whose particularities and empirical knowledge need to be valued and strongly taken into account in our studies.

Therefore, Popular Education must seek its political orientation with the elements posed by the culture, experiences and ways of life of the marginalized sectors of society and not with the models presented by the capitalist State. Therefore, the task of Popular Education in the space of the formal school must have as its method the struggle of resistance to pernicious discourse and practice in favor of a school that perpetuates the current model of production. In informal spaces, Popular Education should aim for projects that promote the condition of "being" in the world of the subjects that make up the marginalized sectors. In both cases, Popular Education should never lose sight of the need to transform the school and society, aiming at the construction of another paradigm of education and society that excel in the liberation of the subjects in all senses. Thus, critical consciousness serves as an important instrument that will allow us to distinguish the meanings of the term "popular", on the one hand defended by the capitalist State and on the other hand, from those defended by those who strive for the full liberation of the subjects that make up the marginalized sectors of society.

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## THE RELEVANCE OF POPULAR KNOWLEDGE

Here in the Zona da Mata Mineira, popular culture is manifested emphatically, through the cultural manifestations of the Ternos de Congo, Folias de Reis, Manifestations of Candomblé and Umbanda, Movements of Quilombola Communities, of those affected by Mining and Dams, Manifestations of artisans, among others. It is worth mentioning the "Knowledge Exchange", an event that opens the "Farmer's Week", held in July within the scope of the Federal University of Viçosa (UFV). It is of great relevance to highlight this diversity of cultural movements that has been added to the "Exchange of Knowledge", a rich mosaic composed of the most diversified cultures that participate in this very rich experience in exchanging and debating experiences and knowledge related to the land and the marginalized people of the Zona da Mata Mineira region, such as movements of small farmers, family farmers' movement, Agricultural Family Schools, artisans' movements, indigenous movement, women's movement, black movement, movement of those affected by dams, movements of those affected by mining, student movement, ecological and agroecological movements, among many others.

In his studies on Popular Education, Fonseca (2015) observes that in the face of the denial of popular knowledge and knowledge by science, we can affirm that popular culture **does not have** any ontological **and/or** epistemological **dimension 2[in the face of so-called universal scientific knowledge]**. From the moment that science denies the validity of popular knowledge, it affirms that it also does not recognize its **ontological dimension**. It denies the very **essence**, ideas and **thought** of the subjects who produce such **knowledge**. Thus, in the face of its positivist methods, science ends up denying the **real existence** of these subjects who inhabit the margins of society regulated by the set of values [cultural, ethical and moral] regulating the capitalist state and by bourgeois formality. In the same sense, it also denies the **"episteme"**, or the set of values that could build any theory about **popular knowledge**.

So, in this interpretative direction, if it denies the **real existence** of these subjects in the plan of the methodology of the construction of valid universal knowledge, it also **refuses** to validate any theoretical or empirical bodies of knowledge coming from the popular sectors. Therein lies the question that insists on remaining: is it really important to fight for the recognition of science to the knowledge and knowledge produced by the oppressed and marginal sectors, or will this recognition not lead the cultural values of the marginalized

sectors to the framework arising from the positivist methods of doing science? Wouldn't such recognition format spontaneous, autonomous and popular knowledge to the straitjacket derived from the rigid, Cartesian and positivist methods of doing science? Wouldn't this validity of knowledge before science take away the autonomy, freedom of expression, the opportunity of these subjects to write their own history, minimizing their potential to transform the reality in which they live? These are relevant questions for the studies of popular movements, as is the case of cultural expressions originating from communities of Afro-descendants.

So spaces such as the "Exchange of Knowledge" are fundamental for the struggle for the autonomy and organization of the popular sectors and placed on the margins of an exclusionary society par excellence.

It is important to note that in the two days of the event there are important meetings and cultural activities such as congada groups, folias de reis, celebrations of indigenous philosophy, capoeira circles, installation of studies of the work of Paulo Freire, the black movement, settlements and the Homeless Movement and the Landless Movement, among other various forms of cultural and popular manifestations. We can say that these are very rich moments of effervescence of a true exchange of knowledge and popular knowledge. In Figure 01 we see the official plaque of the event and a tribute to Paulo Freire, our great educator from Pernambuco. There are also spaces for activities and facilities for children to follow and accumulate knowledge and knowledge passed from past generations to the youngest.

Figure 03: Exchange plaque and tribute to Paulo Freire



Source: Authors' collection (2019)<sup>4</sup>

The next figure, later on, is the record of members of the Purí indigenous community in the states of Espírito Santo and Rio de Janeiro. In the image on the right we can

<sup>4</sup> All figures, images, photos and illustrations present in this text were kindly made available to the author for publication, as well as the images of the people in the photos.



contemplate a Shamanic ceremony of the Purí people. The Purís communities are indigenous communities that are remnants of the indigenous genocide and inhabit regions of the states of Espírito Santo (ES) and Rio de Janeiro (RJ). In the image on the right we can contemplate a Shamanic ceremony of the Purí people.

Figure 02: Poster of activities of the Purí indigenous community (left) and Shamanic Ceremony of the Purí people (right).



Source: Authors' Archive (2019)

The indigenous community of the Purí people participates and assists in the organization of the "Exchange of Knowledge". There are even members and leaders of the community who are studying for the Degree in Rural Education at UFV.

Figure 03: Popular singers/educators and suit of Congo de Airões (MG)



Source: authors' collection (2019)

In the figure above, we can see (left), presentation of regional songs typical of the peasant communities. In the first photo, the first on the left (accordion) is the retired professor from UFV, Edgar Coelho: Founder of the Paulo Freire Chair at UFV and the person on the right (viola) is the educator and popular songbook Sebastião Farinhada: one of the main creators, organizers and participants of the Exchange of Knowledge, present at the event since its first editions. In the photo on the right we see a presentation of a Congo Suit, with "Mestre Boi" (in the background) as captain, from the quilombola community of Airões (MG), also always present at the event.

Figure 04: Capoeira workshop for children in the "Troquinha de Saberes" (left) and Anti-racist Banner (right)



Source: authors' collection (2019)

In Figure 04, we can see, in the photo on the left, a presentation of capoeira, an activity dedicated to the children participating in the event called "Troquinha de Saberes". In the photo on the right we see a banner with the inscriptions of an anti-racist agenda, placed on the agenda, especially after the brutal and cowardly murder of George Floyd (USA) and which had a gigantic worldwide repercussion. This range has always been current and has in this times, in particular, a great symbology for the set of exploited and marginalized peoples of this society of unequals.

As already mentioned, the event is composed of a diversity of social and popular movements that have joined it, under the banner of agroecology. It is relevant to emphasize that the agroecological flags were powerful to the point of establishing a connection with other agendas of struggles that bring together a rich mosaic of social movements of the most diverse colors and nuances. The "Exchange of knowledge" that began with *a nucleus of a few dozen people* grew, gaining new body and thickened with a diverse range of social movements and, in this way, becoming a trench of resistance and struggles of the various sectors of popular movements, bringing together within itself several banners of struggles of these movements.

The following figures show some highlights of the 2019 edition of the "Knowledge Exchange".



Figure 05: Women's movement and indigenous handicrafts and pieces



Source: author's collection (2019)

Figure 06: Icons thinkers and fighters of black culture



Source: author's collection (2019)

In the figure above, we highlight illustrations (drawings) of personalities from the movement and black culture: Zumbi dos Palmares (left), Professor Milton Santos (center) and Carolina de Jesus (right). These illustrations were made by members of the collectives of social movements.

## PARTIAL CONSIDERATIONS!

Dealing with education and popular cultures means always leaving a text open. The complexity and the enormous range of aspects and themes correlated with the subject, most of the time, leave several reflections that lead to multiple interpretations, in addition to a series of questions (also open) on which the theme instigates the study. Thus, when we try to produce any text on this relevant subject, we must always cover ourselves with special care and attention, otherwise, we run the serious risk of, as formal education does, reproducing the capitalist discourse on the subject.

Dealing with the analysis of this theme requires from the researcher a keen look, a look that instigates the subjects of the communities of the excluded to take steps towards understanding the suffering reality that surrounds them, to perceive the roots and the true responsible for the situation of marginalization in all senses, through which these subjects

pass. It requires educators to be careful to constantly work on the line of rupture/continuity between the formality that permeates the school and the perspective of the construction of an emancipatory model, of liberation, always pointing in the direction of rupture.

On the other hand, Brazil is a very rich cultural mosaic composed of different shades of cultural expression, with cultural contributions that demarcate the origins and essence of the identity constitution of our population. This cultural mosaic provides us with elements, factors and ethnic-cultural aspects that make it possible to build and reconstruct the diverse cultural formations of our people. It also allows us to analyze the degree of exploitation to which our population was subjected during the process of "colonization" of our territory.

This text sought to point out some conceptual aspects in the field of Popular Education and Culture, as well as signaling the formation of subjects who can intervene, concretely, in their reality through the continuous construction of their critical consciousness. Finally, working towards a truly popular education means giving up the archaic, bourgeois and outdated principles that permeate formal education and moving towards the construction of other principles that can guide the action of subjects from the marginalized sectors of society, guaranteeing them the conditions for the formation of their critical consciousness, which will point them to the path of liberation. in the fullest sense of the word, in the face of the oppression of a system that appropriates the values of popular culture, placing them in favor of the flourishing of capitalist surplus value.

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