


## THE CATEGORY OF FREIREAN AUTONOMY FOR THE PRACTICE OF TEACHING PHILOSOPHY

### A CATEGORIA DA AUTONOMIA FREIREANA PARA A PRÁTICA DO ENSINO DE FILOSOFIA

### LA CATEGORÍA DE AUTONOMÍA FREIREANA PARA LA PRÁCTICA DE LA ENSEÑANZA DE LA FILOSOFÍA

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#### ABSTRACT

The article discusses the category of autonomy in philosophical and educational thought, highlighting its relevance in Immanuel Kant and Paulo Freire, as well as its contribution to the practice of teaching philosophy. For Kant, autonomy is linked to rational and moral self-government, being the result of enlightenment and the formation of citizens capable of acting according to universal laws. In Freire's perspective, autonomy is understood as a fundamental condition for liberating education, based on dialogue, critical reflection, and the overcoming of "banking education," which reduces students to mere recipients of knowledge. By proposing the collective construction of knowledge, Freire emphasizes autonomy as a path to the social and political emancipation of individuals. In this context, philosophy teaching acquires an essential role by stimulating critical thinking, investigation, and the active participation of students, making them protagonists of their learning and agents of social transformation. The study concludes that the category of autonomy, especially from Freire's perspective, remains a pedagogical challenge but also a necessary horizon for an emancipatory and humanizing education.

**Keywords:** Autonomy. Liberating Education. Critical Thinking.

#### RESUMO

O artigo discute a categoria da autonomia no pensamento filosófico e educacional, destacando sua relevância em Immanuel Kant e Paulo Freire, e sua contribuição para a prática do ensino de filosofia. Para Kant, a autonomia está vinculada ao autogoverno racional e moral, sendo resultado do esclarecimento e da formação de cidadãos capazes de agir de acordo com leis universais. Na perspectiva freireana, a autonomia é compreendida como condição fundamental para a educação libertadora, baseada no diálogo, na reflexão crítica e na superação da educação bancária, que reduz o discente a mero receptor de conhecimento. Ao propor a construção coletiva do saber, Freire enfatiza a autonomia como caminho para a emancipação social e política dos sujeitos. Nesse contexto, o ensino de filosofia adquire papel essencial ao estimular o pensamento crítico, a investigação e a participação ativa dos discentes, tornando-os protagonistas de sua aprendizagem e agentes de transformação social. O estudo conclui que a categoria da autonomia, especialmente sob

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a ótica freireana, permanece como um desafio pedagógico, mas também como horizonte necessário para uma educação emancipadora e humanizadora.

**Palavras-chave:** Autonomia. Educação Libertadora. Pensamento Crítico.

## RESUMEN

Este artículo analiza la categoría de autonomía en el pensamiento filosófico y educativo, destacando su relevancia en Immanuel Kant y Paulo Freire, y su contribución a la práctica docente de la filosofía. Para Kant, la autonomía se vincula al autogobierno racional y moral, resultante de la ilustración y la formación de ciudadanos capaces de actuar conforme a las leyes universales. Desde una perspectiva freireana, la autonomía se entiende como una condición fundamental para una educación liberadora, basada en el diálogo, la reflexión crítica y la superación de la educación bancaria, que reduce a los estudiantes a meros receptores de conocimiento. Al proponer la construcción colectiva del conocimiento, Freire enfatiza la autonomía como camino hacia la emancipación social y política de los individuos. En este contexto, la enseñanza de la filosofía desempeña un papel esencial al estimular el pensamiento crítico, la indagación y la participación activa de los estudiantes, convirtiéndolos en protagonistas de su propio aprendizaje y agentes de transformación social. El estudio concluye que la categoría de autonomía, especialmente desde una perspectiva freireana, sigue siendo un desafío pedagógico, pero también un horizonte necesario para una educación emancipadora y humanizadora.

**Palabras clave:** Autonomía. Educación Liberadora. Pensamiento Crítico.

## **1 THE CATEGORY OF FREIREAN AUTONOMY FOR THE PRACTICE OF TEACHING PHILOSOPHY**

This article aims to discuss the concept of the category of autonomy in philosophy, observing its importance for the philosopher Immanuel Kant, as well as for the philosopher and educator Paulo Freire. Then, it will be discussed how this concept contributes to the practice of teaching philosophy. The concept of autonomy in philosophy has been debated throughout history by several philosophers, but it was in modern philosophy that this concept developed in a more systematic way, where autonomy is linked to the idea of freedom, moral responsibility and the capacity for self-determination.

## **2 THE IMPORTANCE OF THE CONCEPT OF AUTONOMY, BASED ON KANT**

The philosopher Immanuel Kant developed the concept of autonomy as one's own will, as self-control. Thus, autonomy in Kant is linked to the obedience of a given rule, being based on the understanding and acceptance of a universal law and not simply by punishment or fear.

According to the philosopher, autonomy refers to the individual's ability to govern himself, that is, to act according to laws that he himself gives himself, instead of being controlled by external forces or irrational impulses, this principle establishes that an action is morally correct if it can be universalized, that is, if everyone could act in the same way without contradiction.

In this context, autonomy is a product of enlightenment, because autonomous individuals are those who have reached intellectual maturity and are also capable of acting according to self-imposed rational principles.

In his famous essay "Answer to the Question: What is enlightenment?" Kant defines enlightenment as the ability to think for oneself, without the guidance of others. He emphasizes the importance of the use of reason and intellectual autonomy, arguing that enlightenment is a state of maturity in which individuals free themselves from tutelage, especially those imposed by society. In this way, enlightenment encourages people to become agents of their own reason. According to Kant (2022, p.9), "Enlightenment is the exit of the human being from the minority to which he himself has relegated himself".

Enlightenment is ultimately the search for autonomy, that is, enlightenment promotes autonomy by encouraging individuals to think for themselves and develop their rational

capacities. As Kant (2022, p.11) explains, "the public use of reason must always be free, and only it can promote enlightenment among people".

This concept of autonomy, brought by Kant to modernity, influenced the way education is thought of, which should aim at the autonomy of the subject. This philosopher, as well as a university professor, showed interest in educational problems in his writings, although he was not an exclusive scholar of the area, his idea was to promote autonomy through rational education. As Kant presents in his work "On Pedagogy" (p.27, 2019): "Practical or moral education is the one through which man must be formed, so that he can live as a being who acts freely", thus expressing a moral subject who acts through the determination of moral duty as part of the human condition.

In this sense, the main goal of education is to promote autonomy, enabling individuals to fully exercise their reasoning capacity freely and consciously. Thus, education, presented by Kant, aims to develop the most different potentialities of man.

It is essential that the learner initially submits to the authority of others in order to learn to deal with freedom and responsibility. Only after this learning process will he be able to exercise his freedom and act according to his own conscience. Throughout the educational process, proposed by Kant, the child gradually develops a voluntary obedience to his own reason, learning to follow his own criteria without depending on external orders. In this way, to become autonomous is to guide your will by reason.

For the philosopher, only an autonomous individual can be truly enlightened, as he does not depend on other authorities to guide his actions. When individuals become enlightened, they become better able to govern themselves and act according to rational principles, rather than simply following external traditions or authorities.

In this context, the school then assumes the fundamental role of promoting an education that stimulates free thinking and enables students to achieve their goals. However, why turn to Kant and Paulo Freire to address this question? Kant defined the concept of autonomy, seeing in it the foundation of human dignity and respect. His vision of freedom as self-determination had a great impact on education and the modern school model.

Kant's view of education emphasizes the development of reason, morality, and autonomy. He sees education as a crucial means for the formation of free and responsible individuals, capable of contributing to a just and rational society. Education, for Kant, is not only the transmission of knowledge, but an integral process that involves the formation of character and the training for ethical and rational life.

For him, education should teach people to think critically and to use reason independently, it implies educating for freedom, where the individual is able to govern himself according to self-imposed moral laws. For him, the ultimate purpose of education is the formation of morally responsible citizens, capable of contributing to the common good.

In Paulo Freire's proposal, autonomy has education as its central objective, believing that individuals should be able to think critically and act autonomously to transform their reality and society in general.

Thus, Freire proposed that education should not be a process of mere transmission of knowledge, but an act of liberation. He believed that true education leads to autonomy, empowering students to critically reflect on the world around them and take action to transform it.

### **3 PEDAGOGICAL PHILOSOPHY IN THE CATEGORY OF AUTONOMY IN PAULO FREIRE**

The concept of autonomy in Paulo Freire emerges as an integral part of his critical pedagogy and is deeply rooted in his life experiences, his theoretical influences, and his view on education as a process of emancipation and social transformation.

Paulo Freire, was an educator and philosopher, he was taught to read and write in his home with words that were part of his world, of his daily life. At the age of 13 he was orphaned when he lost his father, and had to interrupt his studies. His brothers helped him continue his studies until he graduated in Law. In 1943 he entered the University of Law of Recife. In 1947, he was appointed director of the Department of Education and Culture, of the Social Service of Industry, starting a work of literacy for needy young people and adults and industrial workers. (Paulo Freire, 2024)

But late and with few resources, he developed the education of young people and adults that inspired the National Literacy Plan developed by the Ministry of Education and Culture (MEC) in the government of João Goulart.

Paulo Freire was exiled from Brazil accused of communism, the accusation against him began from a strike of workers, who demanded their rights from labor laws, that is, from the CLT (Consolidation of Labor Laws). The literacy project he developed not only awakened to literacy, but to an awakening of consciences and a new vision of the world, and this was not well seen by some politicians who were in power, since for them the illiterate people are easier to control.

Paulo Freire obtained a doctorate in Philosophy and History of Education from the Federal University of Pernambuco (UFPE) in 1959. His thesis was on "Education and Brazilian Actuality". In addition, he has received several honorary doctorates from universities around the world, including Cambridge and Oxford.

In 1969 he was invited to teach at Harvard, being a consultant and coordinator of the World Council of Churches (WCC) in Geneva, Switzerland. In this historical context, the popular education project emerged, of literacy carried out in the state of Rio Grande do Norte, which managed to teach three hundred peasants to read and write in forty-five days.

On May 22, 1987, he died at the age of 76 due to circulatory problems. During his lifetime and posthumously, he was awarded 48 honorary degrees, and around 350 schools and institutions in the world bear his name. In 2005, a bill was created by Congresswoman Luiza Erundina, which was approved and sanctioned only in 2012 by then-President Dilma Rousseff, recognizing the teacher as the Patron of Brazilian Education. (Paulo Freire, 2024). To this day, Paulo Freire is a reference in universities and schools because of his important contribution in the area of education.

The issue of education was analyzed by Paulo Freire in some of his works such as "Pedagogy of the Oppressed and Pedagogy of Autonomy" that debated education as a transformer of reality.

In the work Pedagogy of the Oppressed published in 1968, Freire sought to raise awareness and promote human superiority, freeing the oppressor from the oppressed, that is, freeing the student from the ideas established by the dominant class, making him think for himself and change the reality he was experiencing.

This work can be interpreted as a form of philosophical anthropology, as it deals with the human condition and the relationship between oppressors and oppressed in the educational and social context. Freire explores the nature of the human being in situations of oppression and how education can be a means of liberation.

In his work, Freire discusses the dehumanization of the oppressed, which occurs when they are denied their rights and their ability to think critically about the world. He argues that this dehumanization is not a permanent condition, but a state that can be overcome through awareness and liberating education.

Freire's approach proposes that education should emphasize the importance of dialogue and critical reflection, which are essential tools for the oppressed to become aware of their situation and act to transform it.

In the work *Pedagogy of Autonomy* by Paulo Freire published in 1997, being the last work published during his lifetime, he proposed to dialogue with teachers, as a way to encourage a new rereading of the world. In addition, it showed that educational practice should be guided by ethical values that promote autonomy, freedom and mutual respect. For Freire, educating is an act of love, courage and commitment to the transformation of the world into a more just and humane place.

Thus, Freire's work not only offers a pedagogical guide, but also an ethical call for teachers to become agents of social change, committed to building a more equitable and supportive society.

Freire argues that the act of educating is not neutral, it involves an ethical posture of respect for the other, recognizing him as a subject with the potential to build knowledge.

Thus, in his works Freire argues that education should promote autonomy, as the student should be able to think critically and act freely in his personal and social life.

In this sense, the category of autonomy for Paulo Freire represents the individual's ability to be the author and agent of his own learning. It is fundamental for the construction of an education that is truly liberating, because only through the development of autonomy can individuals fully participate in the creation of knowledge and the transformation of their reality. As Freire (2005, p.84) explains, "Education does not transform the world. Education changes people. People transform the world".

Thus, education for Freire is a process of awareness, where teachers and students engage in a critical dialogue, this dialogue allows students to reflect on their reality, question oppression and seek social transformations, where education should empower individuals, promoting their autonomy and ability to act in the world.

For him, true education is liberating and must be based on mutual respect, curiosity and the collective search for knowledge. According to Freire (2023, p. 118), "An education that would enable man to courageously discuss his problem", that is, an education that promotes critical reflection, where individuals become aware of their condition and act to change their reality, promoting both personal and collective liberation.

#### **4 FREIRE'S AUTONOMY FOR THE PRACTICE OF TEACHING PHILOSOPHY**

Paulo Freire, having grown up in an environment of poverty in Brazil, sensitized him to the issues of social inequality and oppression. This experience shaped his perception that

education should be a means of social transformation and emancipation of the oppressed, not just a tool to transmit knowledge.

For Freire, education should enable individuals to be autonomous, that is, to think for themselves, to make decisions and to act in accordance with their values and convictions. Autonomy, therefore, is not only an individual capacity, but a desired result of an education that respects and promotes human dignity.

Thus, autonomy, for Freire, is linked to the ability of individuals to understand and question the power structures that oppress them, thus promoting a change in society.

Freire criticized the traditional model of education, the so-called banking education, in which students are treated as passive recipients, as well as proposing an education that promotes autonomy through social transformation.

In this way, Freire's educational proposal sought to transform the student into a subject, promoting autonomy and awareness of their social condition, that is, an education that liberates, empowers and transforms, challenging educators to rethink their practices and create learning environments that promote dialogue, awareness and critical action.

In his career, Freire dedicated himself to analyzing education as a way to free people from the ideologies of the dominant class. Based on this context, both Kant and Freire bet on the human potential to build a better world, making the human being overcome the will of the other by creating his own reality.

In this scenario, the school must provide means for students to release the ties placed by the dominant class that provide banking education that does not aim at reflection, because when it is not reflected, it is not questioned. Thus, education must be transformative, in which the student reflects on his reality and may be able to change it.

Thus, the teacher must propose a pedagogical approach that values the active participation of students, stimulating dialogue and questioning as essential tools for the construction of knowledge.

In view of this, Philosophy was inserted in the school curriculum in 2008 through Law No. 11.684/08, but only in mid-2009 it began to be taught in public and private schools in Brazil, becoming mandatory. Consequently, the discipline comes with the proposal of making students begin to reflect on themselves and on the world, being able to modify the reality in which they live.

Philosophy, as part of the school curriculum, will stimulate the student to reflect philosophically on the contents taught by the teacher, who should be the one who gives the



path or direction to reach knowledge, that is, leading him in his philosophical activity, as Cerletti exposes (2009, p. 15): "[...] through gradual and successive stages, the student, with the help of a master or a teacher, passes from not knowing to knowing".

For Freire, knowledge is not something that is simply transmitted from a teacher to a student in a passive way. Instead, he sees knowledge as something that is actively constructed by the subjects involved in the educational process. Autonomy, in this sense, is the student's ability to actively participate in the construction of knowledge, instead of being a mere receiver.

The category of autonomy is intrinsically linked to awareness in Freire, he understands that, for the individual to become autonomous, he must be able to critically reflect on his reality and understand the power relations that oppress him.

In this context, we seek to answer the following question: How does Paulo Freire's category of autonomy make it possible in the practice of teaching philosophy to transform the human being into an autonomous subject?

In view of this question, the teaching of philosophy has shown itself to be a promising path for autonomous education, since students are encouraged to question, reflect and develop critical thinking, which contributes to their autonomy and ability to make decisions.

Thus, education must free people from dogmatic thinking and the passive acceptance of information, presented by banking education, which aims to maintain the naïve consciousness of the subjects, this education does not contribute to the formation of autonomy because it is at the service of the dominant class, which uses education to place its ideologies, which ends up making any transformative and critical action of the system unfeasible.

In this model of education, the practice of domination is perceptible, since it becomes an instrument for the dominant class to implement its ideals of the world, something that must be criticized, as it seeks active subjects who participate in the world, who know how to reinvent and transform it.

Education should help the subject to develop his own characteristics and the school should provide the means for the subjects to be able to have their autonomy, and this will only be possible if education and teaching are not understood only as transmitters of knowledge, but as transforming agents.

Autonomy in Freire is not only an educational goal, but also a means to liberation. He sees autonomy as a necessary condition for the oppressed to be able to free themselves

from the structures that keep them subjugated. Epistemically, this means that the autonomous student is able to question, challenge, and transform the truths imposed by power structures.

From this, the teacher assumes an important role for this change to happen, as it will provide students with the conditions to overcome this banking education. With the overcoming of this type of education, education will emerge with a problematizing conception presented by Freire in his work "Pedagogy of the Oppressed" (2023, p.97) which explains, "[...] instead of being docile recipients of deposits, they are now critical investigators, in dialogue with the educator [...]", they are active subjects who participate in the development of knowledge.

Thus, in the classroom, the teacher should not transfer knowledge, he should enable the construction of concepts, because when the student starts to build knowledge, he begins to understand his position in the world, not that of those who have nothing to do with it, but the one who transforms the world through what he is learning, becoming a subject of transformation, a subject who creates his own story.

When talking about the subject of transformation, the idea of the teacher who imposes his will on the students is removed, and a subject capable of reflecting and thinking from his daily experiences is sought. As Freire (2023, p.67) explains: "[...] The ability to learn, not only to adapt, but above all to transform reality, to intervene in it, recreating it [...]".

In this approach, education is only important when it helps subjects to change their reality, so the teacher must teach the student to be concerned with his reality so that he can transform it. It is necessary to seek the autonomy of the student, this must be the central idea that the teacher must take to his classroom. According to Freire (2023, p. 47),

[...] When I enter a classroom I must be being open to questions, curiosity, students' questions, their inhibitions; a critical and inquisitive being, restless in the face of the task I have – that of teaching and not that of transferring knowledge.

In this sense, the teacher must stimulate the student with the knowledge he offers, helping him to understand it and not to receive it in full, so that the relationship between teacher and student happens, when established, it is easier for the student to interact, clear his doubts, raise his questions and be curious to seek in other means what was taught and draw his own conclusions.

As Freire (2023, p.121) explains: "[...] the learner assumes the role of subject of the production of his intelligence of the world and not only that of receiver of what is transferred by the teacher". According to the thinker, the subject is this being who, interacting dialectically with reality, transforms it, because the human being must be an instrument of the investigation of thinking, a being of reflection and transformation.

Thus, the education presented by Freire values the integral formation of the human being that must guarantee the development of the subject in all its dimensions - intellectual, physical, emotional, social and cultural, stimulating him to think for himself, to question the world around him and to seek answers to his own questions, thus contributing to the humanization of the individual. As Freire (2020, p. 118) explains:

An education that would enable man to courageously discuss his problem. Of its insertion in this problem. That he would warn him of the dangers of his time, so that, aware of them, he would gain the strength and courage to fight, instead of being led and dragged to the perdition of his own "I", subjected to the prescriptions of others. Education that would put him in constant dialogue with the other.

Freire, when reflecting on education, seeks to observe the social situations imposed by the economic system, that is, by the dominant class, which ends up demanding an education for work, leaving the individual without autonomy, being only a reproduction of pre-established ideas, since we live in a contradictory society, in which economic values are superimposed on human values.

In this way, education today should not be linked to ideal models, that is, ready-made models, and it is contradictory when we think of the autonomous man, because education should not model individuals through the transmission of knowledge, but rather encourage them to create their concepts in the face of what is being presented by teachers.

In this context, the teaching of philosophy plays a fundamental role, because by studying the great thinkers and, consequently, their theories, students are exposed to different perspectives and ways of thinking, they are challenged to reflect on existential, ethical, political and social issues, thus developing a critical view of the world. Philosophy also promotes dialogue and debate, encouraging students to have their opinions and listen to the ideas of others.

When the student is able to observe and understand the world around him, he is able to free himself, because he begins to realize that he lives under a dominant ideology, determining his way of acting and thinking, and thus begins to reflect on his condition of being

dominated and tries to change it. The student is led to write his or her own history, and this must be based on the practice of autonomy, because through reflection and action on the world it can be transformed.

In this way, Paulo Freire teaches us to develop the ability to think for oneself, through education that will provide the means to be able to read the world and oneself, because "literacy is awareness" (2023, p.13).

According to Freire (2023, p. 17): "it is with the word that man becomes man. By saying his word, therefore, man consciously assumes his essential condition." Freire (2023, p. 20) "did not invent man; it only thinks and practices a pedagogical method that seeks to give man the opportunity to rediscover himself".

This method makes man create his own existence, because when he reflects, he reflects on something, and this enables the change that is sought against the ideas pre-established by the dominant class, "man makes himself free" (2023, p.23).

For this, it is essential that teachers adopt a participatory approach and stimulate students' critical reflection. Spaces for discussion and debate should be created, where different opinions are valued and respected. In addition, it is important that students are encouraged to seek answers to their own questions and to develop projects that apply philosophical knowledge in real situations. As Freire exposes in his work *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (2023, p.15):

[...] one does not teach, one learns in "reciprocity of consciences"; there is no teacher, there is a coordinator, whose function is to give the information requested by the respective participants and provide favorable conditions for the dynamics of the group [...].

Thus, philosophy enters the school curriculum not only as a specific discipline but as a potential for resistance, since its teaching helps in the formation of reflective and independent thinking, that is, students learn to analyze the arguments presented, to identify fallacies and to build their own ideas based on evidence and logical reasoning. This ability to think critically is essential for individuals to become active and participatory citizens in society. In short, the teaching of philosophy is a powerful tool for the construction of an autonomous individual.

So, education comes to the individual as a motivation to change their reality and that of the world, as this must be the way to contest and resist in the face of an oppressive system

that only stimulates and encourages banking education. Thus, the teacher and the students must become subjects of their own process, overcoming all forms of domination. As Freire (2023, p.108) puts it: "To exist, humanly, is to pronounce the world is to modify it".

For this reason, it is necessary to analyze the education presented by Freire as transforming the human being, for this, it is necessary to leave banking education based on domination and move towards an autonomous education. In this sense, Freire (2011, p. 25) states:

The alienated society is unaware of its own existence. An alienated professional is an inauthentic being. Your thinking is not committed to itself, it is not responsible. The alienated being does not look at reality with personal criteria, but with the eyes of others. That is why he lives an imaginary reality and not his own objective reality.

Therefore, it must be recognized that learning implies the activity performed by the subject who will interpret reality and reconstruct it based on his observations. Thus, it is important to recognize the student as an active being who participates and intervenes in the concepts presented by the teacher, thus becoming autonomous as Freire has already exposed in his works.

For autonomy to happen in the classroom, it is necessary that there is the construction and reconstruction of knowledge, where the student interacts with the object and the environment in which he lives, with the school being the motivating and human space capable of contributing to the development of this autonomous subject.

The student must understand that he is largely responsible for his education and for his learning process, which will be built, step by step, in each one's time, with the school and the teachers having fundamental roles in this process, as they will provide the necessary knowledge for their personal and social formation.

To this end, the teaching of philosophy must base its didactics on the active participation of the student who, through his curiosity, will go along with the teacher building his knowledge. The teacher will be the one who teaches by learning, being an education in which everyone participates in the new discoveries.

The school must collaborate for this process to happen, being a place for reflection and questioning, respecting the knowledge that the student brings, forming him not for pre-established knowledge, but as a builder of knowledge, this knowledge that is deconstructed and reconstructed from the knowledge that is acquired during the research developed in the

classroom. Thus, the student will assume the role of protagonist of his story, forming for life with his potentialities, making education the path to his freedom and autonomy.

From this context, the importance of philosophy in the classroom is perceived, as it will make the student question, ask and be curious about what is being discussed, in this exercise new perspectives will emerge, the new will continue with more questions, which will give rise to the investigation, which will seek the probable answers to what was questioned.

In this path of investigation, the search for knowledge takes place, so it is noticeable that philosophy cannot be based on banking education, because knowledge cannot be something ready and finished. Therefore, for philosophy to happen, education must be participatory, where teachers and students have the autonomy to create their own conceptions of the world.

In this context, the school should then be a space for the exchange of knowledge between teacher and student, so that education based on autonomy can happen, stimulating a new look at things and the world, without the influence of others.

Thus, the entire education process necessarily depends on the humanization of the school environment, in which everyone is an active subject of education, where each one is listened to, giving the opportunity for everyone to participate in the development of knowledge, to be protagonists of their knowledge.

That is why it is important to seek an autonomous education in which teachers and students are together for this to happen, as Freire presents when he shows that everyone must be builders of their knowledge, as they are part of this process as agents of their own formation. The human being must think authentically, observing his situation and thinking about his own condition of existence.

Paulo Freire contributed significantly to the category of autonomy in education, as he centered his thought on the emancipation of the oppressed and their awareness. His pedagogical approach is based on the idea that education should be an act of freedom, not domination.

Therefore, when observing the category of autonomy in Paulo Freire, one realizes that true education with autonomy is still distant, after all the ideas of the dominant class still interfere in the possibility of making the individual an autonomous subject, but teachers should not give up, they should continue to fight for education to happen autonomously without having to follow pre-established ideas, so that the student can be the protagonist and subject of his own story.

## 5 FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The article aimed to enable the practice of teaching philosophy with reference to the concept of the category of autonomy in Immanuel Kant and Paulo Freire, which reinforced the importance of autonomy as an essential element of education. For Kant, autonomy refers to the individual's ability to govern himself, being the product of enlightenment, because when they reach intellectual maturity they are able to act according to self-imposed rational principles.

Paulo Freire presents autonomy as the fundamental instrument to enable individuals to think critically and act autonomously to transform their reality and society in general.

In Freire's philosophy, autonomy transforms the individual in relation to his view of the world and consequently in the way he interacts in society, because, as critical thinking is worked, the individual becomes capable of establishing his criticality in relation to the dominant *status quo*, and, consequently, establishing his own concepts, detaching his thought from a mere receiver of ideas to a subject capable of producing autonomous thoughts. Therefore, understanding Freire's autonomy helps us decipher who we are and who we can be.

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Note: The references to online biographies of Paulo Freire ([brasilecola.uol.com.br](http://brasilecola.uol.com.br) and [todamateria.com.br](http://todamateria.com.br)) are not included, as APA style typically does not recommend citing general informational websites like these unless they provide unique, authoritative content not available elsewhere. If these sources are essential, please clarify their specific contribution, and I can include them appropriately.