Lecture 2 - Eve saw the grape
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As Freire points out, our existence is marked by the contradiction between oppressors and oppressed, a dehumanizing process that corrupts the ontological vocation of becoming more, and developing to the full human potential. In this reality, it is up to education to abandon oppressive practices, where knowledge is transferred between the all-knowing educator and the ignorant learner.

Education needs to be a process of dialogical and critical construction based on the reality of the people, so they become conscious of the oppressive relations, and becoming conscious, fight to transform the oppressive reality. This is what Freire calls the unveiling. Unveiling is the awareness that enables transformative action. Freire has a good example when he criticizes the mechanical literacy education that uses phrases like "Eve saw the grape".

Explaining the context of this phrase. "Eve saw the grape" is the English translation of "Eva viu a uva", a phrase used in booklets of literacy education in Portuguese in Brazil. This phrase is disconnected from the reality of many people in regions like the Brazilian northeast, the place where Freire started his educational actions, a region where Eve is not a common name and where few people have tasted grapes, because they are not a typical fruit. "Eva viu a uva" is an empty sentence, without a context critical view, created only to be written repeatedly to train syllables with the consonant V.

Unveiling reality, especially in adult literacy, does not occur by writing "Eve saw the grape" over and over without proper reflection about it. Unveiling this given reality involves questioning: Who is Eve? In what social context is she? Where did this grape grow? Who produced this grape? Who profited from its production? And not just writing and repeating this sentence over and over again. More than learning how to read and write correctly, this critical vision of education wants people to learn how to read and write their own world, becoming aware of the political dimensions of their context and recognizing their own lived reality.

Bringing Paulo Freire's ideas closer to design, the "Eve saw the grape" approach makes us look at our practices and assumptions in a critical way, trying to unveil the political dimensions that are always present, but not always perceived. In a world marked by the contradiction between oppressors and oppressed, it is urgent to understand how our design choices impact this reality: by action or omission, do they allow oppressive relationships to continue existing? Or do they seek alliance with the oppressed in their struggle for freedom? In a world of oppressed and oppressors, on which side are you?

See, for example, the famous phrase by Tim Brown, present in lots of design courses everywhere: "design thinking is a human-centered approach to innovation that draws from the designer's toolkit to

integrate the needs of people, the possibilities of technology, and the requirements for business success."

What could this phrase be hiding behind? Where is Tim Brown speaking from? What are his political views? What is his definition of innovation? What tools can or cannot go into this designer's toolkit? Which people's needs are we talking about? The needs of the oppressed or the needs of the oppressors? If the needs are different, which ones will be chosen? And why are the requirements for the success of the business at the same level of importance as the needs of the people?

As I answer these questions, any apparent neutrality that this sentence could have disappears, what I realize is a way of thinking design completely aligned with the maintenance of oppressive capitalist practices. A design that wants to identify needs only to create new products and increase its profits. Innovations that will not radically change the current oppressive structures, but that are just enough changes to give a new brand to what is already old, to change everything so that everything stays the same.

This pedagogical approach from "Eve saw the grape" can help us demystify design and all its unquestionable truths. At the same time it enables the unveiling of the political positioning of projects, tools, methods, and approaches that promise engagement with underprivileged social sectors but that may be masking domestication processes and reinforcing oppressive structures.