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ANALYSIS OF TERMS USED
IN THE PEDAGOGY OF THE
OPPRESSED BY PAULO FREIRE

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In The Pedagogy of the Oppressed, Paulo Freire uses several terms which are not clearly defined. Some of those in question are; liberation, exploiters, educator, codification, and dialogue. Viewing this work in an attempt to analyze these terms, I find that Freire applies these in a very ^{abrançante} comprehensive sense.

The encompassing theory of "liberation" is used throughout the book. According to the dictionary to liberate usually means - to release from restraint or bondage; to free. Liberation involves the act of freeing or of being balanced. For Freire, the term seems to imply much more, almost a theory to construct a way of life.

(pp. 28-30) To liberate is mentioned in the conventional terms of a freeing process. (p.32) He indicates liberation is a growth process as a child developing and "becoming", striving for some defined goal. (p.34) Conditions for liberation are outlined indicating it is a process which includes a climate setting and a great preparation both emotionally and socially. (p. 39) He adds a personal aspect to liberation by stating that a pedagogy of men must support their own liberation. A liberating pedagogy must be representative of one's own struggle. On this page he introduces the concept of liberating education and again implies it must be personal or originated at the base of its needs - the people themselves.

(p. 40) He attaches the word "permanent" to liberation with the concept of pedagogy formation and acceptance. (p. 42) Liberation again is the freeing process and connotes a growth to be-
come more fully human. (p. 43) He uses liberation as an overall ^{global} label for the whole process of social change.

(p.52) Liberating is an adjective used to clarify and support dialogue. He still seems to use it to describe a freeing and educating process. He repeats that liberation involves becoming more completely human.

(p.53) Liberation can also be the "goal" desired. He states those who work for liberation must not take advantage of the emotional dependence of the oppressed. "Libertarian" action

seems to be a term which implies a human examination and social responsibility. Freire states, "Accordingly, while no one liberates himself by his efforts alone, neither is he liberated by others. Liberation, a human phenomenon, cannot be achieved by semi-humans." This passage sums the many terms he associates with liberation, such as the human quality, the personal aspect, and a dependence on others to assist in a freeing process.

(p.54) He labels liberation as a task for the leaders and he also calls it a struggle for "their liberation". Again he places a personal point of view which indicates, it could be a different process for each individual or group involved. (p. 56) He states that "their liberation will be what it should be; not pseudo-participation, but committed involvement."

Freire doesn't seem to have a firm outline for liberation other than a process he feels should be followed to arrive at this goal - liberation, which must be defined exactly by the needs and desires of the participants. (p. 59) His description of libertarian education further supports that the definition of what is actually liberation must begin from within, develop, and grow into a philosophy of life. (p.66) Authentic liberation is called a process of humanization, a praxis - action and reflection of men upon their world in order to transform it. (p. 77) Liberation of men is again used as the goal of the freeing process but is a result of a creative action plan. (P. 79) Liberation is a struggle through a rebirth and re-creation - the beginning.

(P. 92) Liberation is the end result of a "full realization of a human task," the permanent transformation of reality in favor of the liberation of men. (p.93) In discussing themes he states, that the theme of domination is opposite to the theme of liberation. To Freire liberation is a theme, goal, process, way of life, encompassing philosophy for individual direction and meaning for being, as well as the vital task of each in achieving humanization. It is a struggle to wage, an end to conquer which is above all else.

(P. 120) It is a true committment that must be implemented with action and reflection by all involved. (p. 127) He uses

the term in reference to leaders to liberate rather than dominate the people. Here he hints it is a tool or function of leadership. (p. 128) He goes on to clarify that in a process of revolution that someone doesn't really liberate someone else or himself, but men must meet in communion to liberate each other. This passage demonstrates that liberation needs to be a co-ordinated process of communication to define what is the procedure and goals of freedom for these particular individuals and leaders.

(P. 131) "Liberates" implies freeing through education.

(P. 134) Liberating action is a result of communication and is continuing - ongoing. Here the term takes on new meaning. In the past liberation seem to be the end result of a struggle. It was a freedom goal. But now it again seems to be a process which continues but never stops. Continuing action symbolizes another way of life, a constant achieving but not reaching for an end, as was previously indicated.

(P. 140) He talks of harmony while engaged in the liberation struggle. (p. 157) Humanistic education is to be at the service of permanent liberation - of humanization. This concept of permanent liberation seems contradictory of continuing liberation mentioned on page 134. This inconsistency makes me wonder if Freire feels that liberation can ever be totality achieved or just must be a goal constantly strived to attain.

(P. 171) The fusion of communication can only be liberating if it is loving, communicative, and humble. (P. 172) The topic of unity for liberation is stressed. Leaders have a difficult task of carrying out a liberating praxis. (P. 174) He goes on to refer to dialogical libertarian action. The term liberation takes a different shade of meaning when used in the many phrases in this book.

(P. 178) Liberation is used as a synonym or clarifier to mean the objective of organization. (pp. 180-181) The term "become" appears in relationship to dialogical, cultural action and it aims "at surmounting the antagonistic contradictions of social structure thereby achieving the liberation of men." Here Freire uses liberation as a definitely achievable goal - the objective

of the capacity of dialogical cultural action. His last paragraph on page 186 summarizes that liberation is an action pattern inspired by a theory or pedagogy to achieve some defined goal in a quest for a better life.

After a tour of this book in relation to "liberation" it seems exceedingly difficult to define liberation. However, the term seems to be a definite goal of freedom self defined by participants arrived at, by the process (liberating) identified by the same term. This process is continuous and a constant striving at becoming or a humanization attempt. The term is such a vital part of other concepts such as dialogue, conscientizac^{tion}ao, education, communication, and revolution that it often seems to overlap with their meanings.

EXPLOIT

As we think of exploit it means to - utilize, to get value from or to use for one's own advantage or profit.

Freire seems to use this term in the context of taking ^{unjust, deval} unfair or ^{egoistic} selfish advantage. (P. 28) He indicates that oppressors use their power to gain from the weakness of the oppressed. (P. 40) He describes a situation in which one exploits another to hinder his pursuit of self-affirmation as a responsible person. This, he feels, is a condition of oppression - exploitation is a tool. (P. 41) Those who initiate this tool of exploitation seem to categorize humans by not recognizing them as persons.

(P. 46) Exploiters suggest a pre-determined role structure exists assumed by individuals through historical inheritance. It seems one is marked as an exploiter or one of the exploited. This role brings with it expected traits - lack of confidence, ability to think, and a desire or lack of to transform life. (P. 51) There is an indifference of moving from role to the other. As long as the oppressed remain unaware of the causes of their condition they fatalistically "accept" their exploitation. The use of the term exploited seems to be synonymous with the "oppressed." The exploiters are the oppressors and the exploited are the oppressed by conditions of a oppressed society.

EDUCATORS

The term educate is : to develop and cultivate mentally and morally by systematic instruction; teach, train, discipline, or form. An educator is charged with the task of this cultivation.

For Freire this process involves a deeply rooted theory of learning and social change. (P. 56) He mentions co-intentional education where teachers and students work together to re-create knowledge which will reveal reality. By teachers and students he means leaders and people. By leader I think he is referring to one who has accepted the responsibility to share himself and to facilitate learning, not necessarily a formal hired educator. In the next chapter he is very critical of what he calls the "banking" concept of education. (P. 62) A true educator must be a humanist who is dedicated to "engage in critical thinking and the quest for mutual humanization." (P.66) Problem-posing education which responds to the "essence of consciousness - intentionality " is his solution.

(P, 69) He suggests that education is the practise of freedom. Educators in the past, have been bank depositors, insensitive to all human needs. His kind of educator is completely sensitive to, and willing to learn with - all individuals. They have the humility to recognize how to create. They could be any one with the ability to unveil reality. Not a formal teacher hired by an institution to impart tidbits of knowledge- but a learner themselves. Mexico in an attempt to fight illiteracy has used various methods. One was the philosophy of "Each one, Teach one." Any one able would assume the responsibility to educate others. I think Freire's use of the term educator could include those outside any formal system who dedicate themselves to an educative process.

(Pp. 99-100) The term investigation is used in the same context as education. He seems to be more concerned with the process and the philosophy embodied in the procedure than with the actual educators. They would have to subscribe to a system of research and investigation technique. The idea seems to be that a team can be effective in an investigation and curriculum planning to implement the process of discovery.

CODIFICATION

To codify is to reduce to a code as to laws; to systematize and classify. (P. 106) Freire discusses developing codifications and implies they can be sketches, photographs or words, written or oral, which present an existential problem. This process is often followed by a de-coding process which converts this code to an understandable language. (P. 106-107) Freire states codifications are the objects which mediate the decoders in their critical analysis.

The preparation of codifications have certain principles and guides:

1. they must represent situations familiar to the individuals whose themes are being examined
2. their thematic nucleus is not overly enigmatic- they should be simply and clearly stated
3. they should be organized as a thematic fan - step by step according to degree of difficulty
4. they should represent a totality
5. they should be inclusive

Codifications seem to be steps in the actual process of planning. They are an outline of content material based on the desires and needs of the individual participants. They are specific guides whose results will need to be closely observed, interpreted, and de-coded into meaningful evaluative data. They are unlike text books and readings because they are prepared with a select group in mind and designed for (them only).

After themes or topics are chosen and coded into a meaningful plan (codified), codification is a matter of selecting communication patterns. (P. 115) The codification seems to be a task of finalizing devices to implement the method of Freire's education plan. (P. 116) An example could be dramatization which is a technique but can be selected and labeled as a codification. It seems codifications can often be what we think of as techniques but are selected in a more precise and thoughtful manner. Their selection must be in accordance with the thematic investigation in the problem-posing approach to education. It represents stages of interpreting a living code by the participants and designing

situations to serve an appropriate educational pattern. This process is codifying or transferring the existing life style of humans through stimulation to a new realization and a search for knowledge.

DIALOGUE

The dictionary defines dialogue as - a written composition representing two or more persons as conversing or reasoning; a colloquy between two or more; the conversational element as in literary or dramatic composition.

Freire uses all these meanings plus a dozen more to express his description of dialogue. (P. 52) He talks of liberating dialogue whose content should ^{variously} vary with conditions. He states that monologues, slogans, and communiques can't be substituted for dialogue. In this context the term seems to express a type of communication pattern on a personal basis which deals with meaningful expressions of ideas. (p. 54) Dialogue is called the correct method to employ liberation. (P. 74) It is stated, to be a truly revolutionary leader dialogical communication must be employed from the onset. This implies a certain humanistic approach of dealing with people in a fashion conducive to open communication - that is responding to what is meant rather than what is said.

(P. 75) He analyzes dialogue as a human phenomenon and states the essence of dialogue itself is: the word. In the "word" there are two segments -1. reflection and 2. action. These are so inter-related both must exist. A true word which in turn is the component of dialogue is "to transform the world." Any other word which isn't based on reflection and action is not authentic and is incapable of transforming reality. This unauthentic word results in verbalism and is empty. It cannot produce transformation from word to action as Freire feels dialogue can. However, he warns that to emphasize action without the necessary reflection and authentic communication is also defeating.

(Pp. 76-77) He speaks of dialogue "as an encounter between men mediated by the world, in order to name the world." Therefore,

dialogue is goal oriented and must begin on a common ground. It seems there needs to exist a consensus and agreement of the reflection and action process before dialogue can occur. Freire calls it an existential necessity and a creative act which must begin out of "profound love for the world and for men." Love is a condition of dialogue and he uses love as dialogue itself.

To be able to communicate with words in the way Freire describes, deep feelings for mankind and life must be present with an extreme level of sensitivity and openness. (P. 78) He adds that humility must exist to learn and act by this communication of dialogue. Intense faith in man and faith in his power to create and to be human is a necessity. A hope and optimism must prevail to enter into a dialogue to expect goals such as liberation to result.

To sum, before a communication process using the medium of the word can even begin, two people must possess several common concepts and accept certain conditions. These are a philosophy of the nature of communication, an openness and acceptance, humility, faith in man, a belief man can create, and a mutual trust that this is a horizontal relationship in which each has equal value.

(P. 81) Dialogue must consist of critical thinking and with the results of this communication - true education can be formulated. (P. 86) Dialogue of education is the same as the practise of freedom. The term dialogue here is the synthesis of his previous comments and seems to mean "language" or the tool of education.

(P. 101) Freire begins using the term dialogical in which he seems to include more of a total view of the world, probably as a result of his goal of "naming the world" through a deep real communication - dialogue. (P. 112) The phrases dialogical nature of education and dialogical teacher seem to enrich his philosophy of communication.

(P. 121) Behavior is categorized by an ability to act dialogically. To exhibit dialogical behavior must mean to practise communication with dialogue and to accept the premises of love, humility, faith, equality, hope and behave toward others in accordance with these beliefs. To do so, would also be to accept the

humanization process of liberation.

(P. 122) Dialogue is a basic climate setter for a revolution to occur. (P. 124) Dialogue is not naive and idealistic but real and concrete if executed as intended. (Pp.131-33) He emphasizes the necessity for dialogue and the reasons why it cannot be ignored. (P. 134) Dialogue is a continuing aspect toward liberating. (P. 146) Freire concedes dialogue can be impossible without the ^{admit} acceptance of the conditions. (P. 147) Leaders fear a meaningful dialogue and see it as a danger. (P. 157) Even cultural action must be dialogical in nature and a result of true and open communication. It must embody a permanent dialogue between leader and people.

(P. 161) The path of dialogue and of communication must be followed. (P. 163) Leaders ^{must} go to the people spontaneously practicing the openness of dialogue. The same equal dialogue needs to continue when power is reached - power is just shared. (Pp. 167-68) The dialogical theory of action is a co-operation which is formed by constant reflection and action -- dialogue. (Pp. 170-71) Communion is a co-operative fusion of leaders and people to practise love, communication, and humility, which is dialogue for the sake of liberating. The result seems to be a dialogical-liberating action which makes it possible for the oppressed to transform reality and achieve freedom. (P. 182) Dialogical theory unites, creates a cultural synthesis, establishes a creative climate and develops action.

The term dialogue is a fashion in which humans can effectively communicate. Since communication is the essence of human interaction, dialogue grows from a term to a theory, encompassing emotions and human behavior. It then becomes a living pattern for action, co-operation, cultural synthesis, a basis for problem-posing education, a revolutionary ^{is m} tool, a total language process and a freedom goal. It seems impossible to discuss a change or liberation process without including the communication which underlies theory and action.

To use the term dialogue in so many facets is confusing but so basic to Freire's philosophy that it becomes impossible to isolate. He seems to feel that inadequate "dialogue" is responsible for the

social injustice and protects the established structure of the unfair systems. It is both an inability and unwillingness to communicate. His point is valid that before trying to converse we need to accept ^{basic} conditions and learn to really communicate. Just talk and verbage is meaningless. Without a deeper committment for understanding talk is idle. Words come easy and by abusing them we are all as guilty as the oppressors.

Freire's pedagogy is thought provoking and very practical. His description of the oppressed is universal. The poor, disadvantaged, and welfare recipients are all products of oppression, either societal, organizational, or personal. His solution also can have practical applications. Even though ^{ainda quando} his thoughts are based on a totality and commitment of large groups, some of his suggestions could be implemented with individuals. Our attitude, communication, educational approach, organization, and philosophy can start with individuals interacting with each other to achieve a freer relationship. This is not the liberation Freire is seeking but it can be a start in a society filled with oppression of all types. Some is self-imposed other forms are directed by outside forces. But the encouragement to examine, understand, and react as an educated, informed individual making a free decision is approaching the direction of attaining the goal of self-satisfaction which is also liberation.