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## Critical Review of the Paulo Freire Pedagogy of the Oppressed (30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Edition)

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### Abstract

*This review analyses the Paulao Freire's Pedagogy of the Oppressed. A brief introduction is presented in the review. This review analyses the approach of the other towards the study. At first, reviewer mentions the Central theme the author focus upon which is "Dialogics", which author treats as essence of education. The review has also points out the author's inclination towards the humanism while talking of pedagogy. The review, other than this, mentions that the author brings out the spirit of education as a practice of freedom. The reviewer has examined whole issues one after the other that the author has pointed out as major issues that needs to be addressed. The brief textual exploration of the issues systematically offers the reader a unique interpretation.*

**Key Words-:** Paulao Freire, Pedagogy of Oppressed, Teacher, Student & Society

### Introduction

The author Paulo Freire proposed dynamic pedagogy with a new relationship between teacher, student and society in his book the pedagogy of the oppressed. It was originally written in Portuguese titled 'pedagogy do Oprimido' and published in 1968. Myra Ramos first translated it into English and was finally published in 1970. Publisher of this book acknowledges the fact, in book's publisher foreword section, that there is desperate need of transformation as well as modification of translation to ensure the connection between liberated thoughts and inclusive language which can cover vast diversity of thoughts in ever evolving era of changing thoughts, beliefs, attitude and outlook. This revised thirtieth-anniversary edition of Pedagogy of the Oppressed thus represents a fresh expression of a work that would influence and transform the thoughts of educators and people all over the world.

Myra Ramos dedicated this book –To those who are oppressed and to those who suffer with them and fight on their side. The introductory section of this book is presented by Donaldo Macedo which is very well crafted, providing much lived examples, evidences and real life experiences, enriching targeted readers with progressive understanding and insightful ideas. Donaldo firmly justifies the term 'oppressed' used by Paulo. This edition basically put the concepts of 'consctentizagdo' which means critical consciousness, in this developmental procedure one may learn to perceive social, political and economic challenges and to battle against the oppressive elements of reality and the concept of fear of freedom.

**Review of the 3<sup>rd</sup> chapter of Pedagogy of the Oppressed with critical academic lenses.**

The third chapter of this book contextualizes the certain central arguments of this book. Basically author strives to develop the instructive content of education. Central emphasizes has been placed on “*Dialogics*”- which author treats as essence of education. Along with this author introduces few other themes. Author argues that the essence of dialogue is in *words*, within which there are two elements ‘reflection’ and ‘action’. Both the elements have such a radical interaction that if even the part of one is sacrificed the other suffers. The human existence can only be nourished by true words, with which they can transform the world, name and rename the world or renovate it accordingly (Freiere, 2007).

In the chapter some requisites for dialogue are given such as the author states that no one can say a true word alone rather it is a unified reflection and action. It is not an act of only one person or some kind of naming the world on behalf of others. It requires love for the world and the people living in it, it is the foundation of dialogue, it is an act of freedom and it must generate other acts of freedom. Dialogue cannot be an act of arrogance it calls for humility. The author explains this adequately by putting himself into the situation and mentions ‘how can I dialogue if I will be arrogant per se. The dialogue also cannot exist without an intense faith in humankind; it is a prerequisite for it. The dialogue found upon love, humility and faith produces an ambiance of mutual trust, which leads the dialoguers into ever closer partnership in the naming of the world. However this mutual trust is absent in *banking* method of education.

With these points regarding dialogue the author brings out the spirit of education as a practice of freedom and asserts that the dialogical character of education begins when the teacher’s preoccupy themselves with the content of dialogue which is actually preoccupying the program content of education when they will dialogue with the students. According to the author, Authentic education is when teachers communicate with students rather for or about students in the world which challenges both the parties, giving rise to anxieties, doubts, hopes, or hopelessness and bring about significant themes on the basis of which the program content of education can be built.

This point underlines that the program content should not be constructed as per what the educators thinks best for the learners or on their own personal views of reality rather it should take into account the real men in the situation for whom the content is apparently directed. The ones who do not follow this system; the author terms them as oppressors who just instruct the people without linking themselves with the masses and fall in the banking method of education. He also focuses on the use of language by the educators and the politicians and states that the language used should be clear and in accordance with the structural conditions in which the thought and language of the people are dialectically framed. The investigation of the program content of education for finding the reality which mediates men and the perception of that reality held by educators and people is termed as people’s “thematic universe” by the author. Here the author highlights how humans are distinguished from the animals.

The human world is historical and the humans are aware of the world they live in and their activities. Author says that in contrast to animals, that do not have a decisive attitude towards the world, the human are the conscious beings who exist in a

dialectical relationship between the determination of limits and their own freedom. While acting and taking decisions in the world they live in, people overcome the situations which limit them- the "limit-situations." And the actions of men and women while responding to the challenges are called as "limit acts" by Vieira Pinto. The critical perception in action and a climate of hope and confidence can lead men to attempt to overcome the limit-situations. The difference between animals and humankind, who through their action upon the world create the land of culture and history, is that only humans are the beings of the praxis. The praxis (informed action) as the reflection and action truly transforms reality and is the source of knowledge and creation.

The human beings develop as a constant process of transformation within which epochal units materialize. These epochal units interrelate in the dynamics of historical continuity. An epoch (era) is characterized by a composite of ideas, concepts, hopes, doubts, values, and challenges. The concrete representation of many of these ideas, values, and hopes, as well as the obstacles which obstructs people's full humanization, constitute the themes of that epoch. These themes involve others which are opposing and they also indicate tasks to be carried out. Thus, historical themes are never isolated, or static; they always interact dialectically with their opposites and cannot be found anywhere except in the human-world relationship. The complex of interacting themes of an epoch constitutes its "thematic universe." The methodology proposed by the author requires that the investigators and the people should act as co-investigators as the more active the position of the men and women in regard to the exploration of their thematic universe, the more their critical awareness of reality will expand. Discussing about the thematic investigation the author states that the motives and objectives embedded in the meaningful thematics are human aspirations, motives, and objectives. They cannot be apprehended apart from them. Therefore to understand them one should understand both the people and the reality to which they refer.

Then he very well states that the real danger of the investigation lies in the risk of shifting the focus of the investigation from the meaningful themes to the people themselves, thereby treating the people as objects of the investigation. The thematic investigation cannot be reduced to a mechanical act as it requires the investigators to discover the interpenetration of problems, concern to find the links between themes, a concern to pose these themes as problems, and a concern for their historical-cultural context. The educators who do not elaborate the program to present are the ones who fears change and see it as a sign of decay.

The author says that unlike in the non-communicative banking method of education, in problem-posing method the course content is constituted and organized by the students' view of the world, where the themes of their own generative are found thus constantly expanding and renewing the program content. The task of the dialogical teacher is to represent that universe to the people from whom it was first received and represent it as a problem not as a lecture. Through an example about an adult education plan in a peasant area with a high percentage of illiteracy the author explains how the subjects being the assistants of the plan can develop critical thinking and can expand their understanding by analyzing partial dimensions which can later

help them to penetrate the totality. The whole process of the investigation that an investigator should follow is very adequately given here by the author.

The investigator as per the author even at the first stage by locating the nuclei of contradictions could organize the program content of their educational action. However if the investigator apprehend complex contradictions or challenges in the first stage it can hinder him to begin to structure the program content of educational action and from there the second stage of the investigation begins.

In the second stage the investigator has to select few contradictions to develop the codifications to be used in the thematic investigation. The first requirement is that these codifications must represent situations familiar to the individuals whose thematics are being examined, so that they can easily recognize it. Presenting pictures of reality unfamiliar to the participants is inadmissible. The other requirement is that their thematic nucleus be neither overly explicit nor overly implicit. Since they represent existential situations, the codifications should be simple in their complexity and offer various decoding possibilities. By stimulating “perception of the previous perception” and “knowledge of the previous knowledge,” decoding stimulates the appearance of a new perception and the development of new knowledge. The new perception and knowledge are systematically continued with the inauguration of the educational plan, which alters the untested feasibility into testing action.

The author justifies his method further by bringing up the work of Gabriel Bode, a young Chilean civil servant in one of the most significant Chilean governmental institutions: the Institute de Desarrollo Agropecuario (INDAP). The method projected by the Bode can help in overcoming the limitations of the method proposed by the author. Once the codifications are prepared, there begins the third stage of the investigation by returning to the area to initiate decoding dialogues in the "thematic investigation circles. In this process in addition to the investigator acting as decoding coordinator, two other specialists—a psychologist and a sociologist attend the meetings and they note and record the significant reactions of the decoders. During the decoding process, the coordinator must not only listen to the individuals but must challenge them, posing as problems both the codified existential situation and their own answers.

After the decoding process, the last stage of the investigation begins. The investigator now begins to list the themes highlighted by the psychologists and the sociologist and the declarations made during the sessions. The author, here with the help of an example explains that the themes should not be classified only to single isolated category but to all the possible relevant categories so that the themes achieve totality. After that break down of meaningful thematic is done and the team also look for other fundamental themes, which were not directly suggested by the people, could be included in the program content. The introduction of the themes not previously suggested, were termed as the “hinged themes” by the author as they may facilitate the connection between two themes by filling possible gaps between the two; or they may illustrate the relations between the general program content and the view of the world held by the people. The stage of “codification” follows the breakdown of thematic. This stage helps in choosing the best channel (visual or audio) of communication for each theme and its representation. The author has revealed some

of the examples of didactic material and the methods that can be used to present the real material.

### **Conclusion**

The pedagogy of oppressed 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary editions overall provides an interesting reading. The introduction given by Donaldo generates the required curiosity for the reader to go through the book without any second thought it was also helpful in providing a good base to this edition by very aptly describing the Paulo's original "The pedagogy of oppressed". The chapter 3 of the book clearly explained about all the themes that were claimed to be explained by the author in the content part. There were many long and short examples given by the author for clarifying the points in between. There were many footnotes given in the chapter in a smaller font than the rest of the text and these sub-lines are helpful in making more sense and understanding of the content. At the near end of the chapter the author also suggested an alternative method for those educators who lack sufficient funds to carry out the preliminary thematic investigation. This shows the concern of the writer towards his readers. This re-analyzes what it means to teach and focus on humanism for liberation. Everything about the chapter is good except that repetition of lines while explaining few themes at some places made it monotonous. I especially want to recommend this book to teachers as well as students interested in pedagogy and also to the people functioning in the field of education as it provides an immense essence to the education.

### **Reference**

Freiere, P. (2007). Third Chapter. In P. o.-a. edition), Pedagogy of the Oppressed (30<sup>th</sup>-anniversary edition) (pp. 32-58). The Continuum International Publication Group.