

**IMPLICATIONS OF PAULO FREIRE'S THOUGHT
FOR
NORTH AMERICAN EDUCATION**

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this thesis is to identify the implications of Paulo Freire's philosophy for education in North America. To appreciate fully the value of Freire's philosophy, this study will review six themes which are commonly found throughout his work and are significant for education. The implications of his ideas will be identified by reviewing specific case-studies conducted in the United States and Canada.

Freire's ideas are developed within the context of Latin American societies. Elements of oppression and injustice in his homeland differ from the dehumanizing elements in North America. Yet, his insistence upon reflection and action as a means to emancipate people from social and political oppression has direct implications for education in the United States and Canada. North American educators have adopted, modified, and applied Freire's methodology with remarkable results.

RÉSUMÉ

Le but de cette thèse est de circonscrire la portée de la philosophie de Paulo Freire sur l'éducation en Amérique du Nord. Pour bien comprendre les mérites de cette philosophie, l'auteur se penche sur six thèmes qui reviennent couramment dans son oeuvre et qui revêtent de l'importance pour l'éducation. La portée de ses idées sera analysée au moyen d'études de cas spécifiques réalisées aux États-Unis et au Canada.

Les idées de Freire sont nées dans le contexte de la société latino-américaine. Les éléments d'oppression et d'injustice qui règnent dans son pays natal diffèrent des éléments déshumanisants qui prédominent en Amérique du Nord. Cependant, son insistance sur la réflexion et l'action comme moyens de libérer les peuples du joug social et politique a des répercussions directes sur l'éducation aux États-Unis et au Canada. Les pédagogues nord-américains ont adopté, modifié et appliqué la méthodologie de Freire avec des résultats remarquables.

INTRODUCTION

"Those who take the meat from the table
Preach contentment ...
Those who eat their fill speak to the hungry
Of wonderful times to come ...
Those who lead the country into the abyss
Call ruling too difficult
For the ordinary."

Bertolt Brecht, 1937.

In past years educators have contentiously debated the function of the many facets of formal, nonformal and informal education; teachers, school administrators, curriculum, pedagogical methods and so on. In many instances the arguments are polarized and considered leftist or rightist. In too few instances positions reflect a harmonious balance between the two extremes.

Many critics of Paulo Freire identify his works as leftist. Leftist tends to be synonymous with the words 'radical', 'revolutionary' and 'transformative'. Derived from the Latin word 'radix', meaning a root, the word 'radical' is well suited for writers like Freire, Illich, Apple and Goodman because they seek the root of the issue to achieve change.

Radical educators have provided a variety of useful modes of analysis to challenge rightist educational ideology. Rightist educators consider schools as transmitting agents of objective knowledge. Radical educators challenge this position by presenting theories of the hidden curriculum and theories of ideology that identify the interests underlying specific

forms of knowledge. They argue that school knowledge transmits a particular representation of the dominant culture. For radicals, schools are more than instructional sites. These institutions reproduce the dominant culture by selecting specific forms of language, modes of reasoning and social relations. In this view, culture is linked to power and the imposition of a specific set of ruling class codes and experiences. Radical educators also challenge conservative schools of thought which propose that schools are relatively neutral institutions. Radicals claim that schools are highly political and biased. Through selective grants, certification policies and legal powers, schools are shaped in the interest of the elite's rationalization.

The works of Paulo Freire are based on one basic assumption: the 'ontological vocation' of a person is to be a Subject who is capable of acting upon and transforming the world. The result is a richer and fuller life, both individually and collectively. It is, as suggested by Richard Shaull in his Introduction to Freire's Pedagogy of the Oppressed,

...the conviction that every human being, no matter how 'ignorant' or submerged in the 'culture of silence' he may be, is capable of looking critically at his world in a dialogical encounter with others. Provided with the proper tools for such encounter, he can gradually perceive his personal and social reality as well as the contradictions in it, become conscious of his own perception of that reality, and deal critically with it.⁽¹⁾

Even though the works of Paulo Freire are rooted primarily in the forgotten land of illiterate adults in the Third World of Latin America his philosophy is relevant to North American capitalism. Discussing the position in which illiterate adults are placed, Richard Shaull wrote,

Their struggle to become free Subjects and to participate in the transformation of their society is similar, in many ways, to the struggle not only of blacks and Mexican-Americans but also of middle-class young people in this country. And the sharpness and intensity of that struggle in the developing world may well provide us with new insight, new models, and a new hope as we face our own situation.⁽²⁾

John Ohliger offers a comparison between the pragmatic value of Freire's work to the theoretical approach offered by Ivan Illich.

¹ Paulo Freire, Pedagogy of the Oppressed (New York : Seabury Press, 1987), p.13.

² Ibid., p.10.

While Illich's ideas seem to strike more intellectual fires, Freire's work has attracted more attention from adult educators who are determined to engage in some kind of mutual endeavor to end the domination of oppressive economic, political and now educational structures.⁽³⁾

Freire's ideas are recorded in a large quantity of published articles and books⁽⁴⁾. Unfortunately his style of writing is often obscure, repetitious, sometimes sexist⁽⁵⁾ and filled with rhetoric. Needless to say, any attempt to synthesize his works into a single chapter invites challenge and frustration.

In this thesis we will look at the life and works of Paulo Freire and identify some implications of his thought to education in North America. We will travel biographically through some important events in his life. This will provide us with an insight into the man and his persistent devotion to the struggle against human oppression. Immediately

³ John Ohliger, "Introduction to Freire," Convergence VI, No.1 (1973) : p.48.

⁴ Freire's more popular works include Pedagogy of the Oppressed (New York, 1987), The Adult Literacy Process as Cultural Action for Freedom, HARVARD EDUCATIONAL REVIEW, XL, No.2 (May, 1970), The Politics of Education : Culture, Power and Freedom (Mass., 1985), Education for Critical Consciousness (New York, 1987), Pedagogy in Process (New York, 1978).

⁵ Sexist language can be found in Freire's earlier works. In recent years he has made an honest attempt to avoid use of such language in his writing.

following this biographical introduction we will identify some of the philosophical foundations of Freire's writings. This will offer an understanding into the way he appropriates knowledge, his ideological assumptions and his position related to education and schooling. Some themes related to Freire's work will be discussed. To synthesize his works under the umbrella of a few themes is difficult due to the breadth of his research. As a result a criterion was implemented to select each theme.

We will explore the meanings Freire associates with human consciousness and discover how he uniquely relates consciousness with a socio-political self-awareness he calls 'conscientization.' We will consider how reflection and action, or what Freire refers to as 'praxis', acts as the catalyst for liberation. Also, we will identify some interesting characteristics of education and educators commonly found in impoverished Latin America and highly industrialized North America.

This thematic review will be followed by a critique of Freire's works. We will consider comments offered by both admiring and vehement critics. Some implications of his philosophy will be identified. Specific case-studies will be considered which adopt and transpose Freire's ideas for use within the context of North American education.

Freire's works reveal how people, acting as transforming agents in society, deal critically and very

realistically with the world. To appreciate the value implicit in the words of Freire we must be empathetic to the needs of the oppressed and develop a creative and critical spirit which is committed to the struggle of human liberation. We must want to live 'in the creation of a world in which it will be easier to love.'

CHAPTER ONE

THE MAN AND HIS THOUGHT

A. A BRIEF BIOGRAPHY OF FREIRE⁶)

"Wandering between two worlds,
one dead and the other
powerless to be born."
Matthew Arnold,
Stanzas from the Grand
Chartreuse

Paulo Freire was born in 1921 in Recife, a port city of Northeast Brazil. During the earlier part of the century this part of Brazil was well known for its high poverty rate, low literacy rate, catastrophic droughts and an unequal distribution of land.

Freire's family was of bourgeois, middle-class extraction. During the depression his family suffered great financial difficulties. It was during these trying times that Freire experienced the pangs of hunger and found himself sharing the plight of the 'wretched of the earth.' He decided to dedicate his life to the struggle against hunger. Freire did not want future generations of children to know the

⁶ See the following texts for a more detailed biography of Paulo Freire: Denis E. Collins, Paulo Freire : His Life, Works and Thought (New York : Paulist Press, 1977); (Foreward of) Paulo Freire, Pedagogy of the Oppressed (New York : Seabury Press, 1978); Paulo Freire, The Politics of Education : Culture, Power and Liberation (South Hadley, Mass. : Bergin & Garvey Publishers, 1985).

agonies he was then experiencing.

By living the life of the poor Freire discovered what he calls the 'culture of silence' of the dispossessed. Richard Shaull suggests,

He [Freire] came to realize that their ignorance and lethargy were the direct product of the whole situation of economic, social and political domination ... they were kept 'submerged' in a situation in which such critical awareness and response were practically impossible. And it became clear that the whole educational system was one of the major instruments for the maintenance of this culture of silence. (7)

In school Freire fell behind his classmates and was soon labelled as having 'mild mental retardation.' He claims hunger to be the true cause for his inadequate scholastic performance at that time.

Freire eventually completed high school and entered the faculty of law at the University of Recife. In addition to his studies in law Freire read numerous works by Maritain, Bernanos, and Mounier.

Upon graduation from the university Freire worked as a labour union lawyer. He established and participated in seminars for adult education among the workers to whom labour unions addressed themselves.

⁷ Freire, Pedagogy of the Oppressed, p.10.

As a child I had associated with working-class children and peasants. As an adult I again associated with adult laborers, peasants, and fishermen.⁽⁸⁾

With the use of insights expressed by men like Sartre, Mounier, Fromm, Martin Luther King, Marcuse, and Che Guevara, Freire developed a personal perspective on education responding to the concrete realities of Latin America. Upon completion of his doctoral dissertation in 1959 Freire taught History and Philosophy of Education at the University of Recife. While teaching at the university as well as during his work with illiterates in Recife he developed and refined a literacy method.

I remember well my first night after working in adult literacy in Recife. When I got home Elza asked me, "How was it?" And I told her, "Elza, I think that what I saw today, what I experienced today, in two or three years many people will be asking me, 'What is this, Paulo?' But possibly I will be jailed. And I think the possibility of jail is more likely."⁽⁹⁾

Freire's literacy programs made him famous throughout his country. By 1963 the Brazilian Minister of Education under Goulart adopted Freire's method for a nationwide literacy campaign.

⁸ Freire, Politics of Education, p.176.

⁹ Ibid., p.180.

Attempts were made to develop the poor Northeast by overcoming the resistance of the powerful landlords. Peasant leagues, Catholic bishops and others adopted Freire's philosophy and methodology as a means of integrating the peasants into the Brazilian society.

These developmental movements were quickly halted in the wake of the 1964 military coup. Freire's activities were considered threatening to the Brazilian military. He was labelled as a 'subversive of the democratic order' and jailed for seventy days.

I was jailed for a short time after the coup in 1964. ... I was jailed twice before I was exiled, for a total of seventy-five days.⁽¹⁰⁾

This was an interesting experience for me, even though I am not a masochist... But I took advantage of the time in jail by thinking things over.⁽¹¹⁾

Upon release from jail Freire, his wife Elza and their five children were encouraged to leave the country.

No one goes through exile peacefully... Exile touches you existentially. It envelops you as a being. It shakes you up physically and mentally. Exile magnifies your virtues and faults.⁽¹²⁾

¹⁰ Ibid., p.180.

¹¹ Ibid., p.180.

¹² Ibid., p.181.

It was while in exile I realized I was truly interested in learning... My exile was a long time of continuous learning.⁽¹³⁾

Freire left Brazil and went to Chile to work with UNESCO and the Chilean Institute for Agrarian Reform (ICIRA) in programs of adult education. In 1969 he spent a semester as a visiting professor at Harvard University's School of Education. In 1980, with a new democratic opening in Brazil, Freire and his family returned to their native country. Freire continued to travel extensively and spoke to new groups interested in critical pedagogy. In 1986 he received the UNESCO Prize for Education. He is presently working as Special Consultant to the Office of Education of the World Council of Churches in Geneva.

Freire invariably searches for love in life. Through his work and his family he persistently lives life to it's potential. In a conversation with Donald Macedo Freire is asked what he likes to do.

I like to live, to live my life intensely. I am the type of person who loves his life passionately.⁽¹⁴⁾

I love to read. And I love to write, even though it is not easy for me to write. For me, writing is always a difficult but tasteful experience. I also love ordinary things like sports, especially soccer. I

¹³ Ibid., p.181.

¹⁴ Ibid., p.195.

love the sea, the beaches. And I love to take walks on the beach and sunbathe in the tropical sun.⁽¹⁵⁾

I love to know I love Elza. We have been married and experiencing each other's love for forty years. I love to be with her and with my children. I love being a father.⁽¹⁶⁾

¹⁵ Ibid., p.197.

¹⁶ Ibid., p.198.

B. PHILOSOPHICAL ASSUMPTIONS UNDERLYING FREIRE'S WORK

"According to tradition, Pythagoras, a Greek thinker of the sixth century B.C., was the first to use the term 'philosopher',... Pythagoras compared mankind to the crowd that assembled on the occasion of the Olympic Games. It could be divided into those who came to buy and sell and look after the material needs of the spectators, those who actually competed, and those who came simply to look on. This classification when applied to the human race as a whole differentiated men into the lovers of gain, the lovers of honour, and the lovers of wisdom, the philosophers."

Curtis, S.J.

INTRODUCTION TO THE PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION, 1958.

In his preface to Pedagogy of the Oppressed Freire explains that his philosophical assumptions are highly influenced by both Judeo-Christian ethics and Marxist theory. The two never conflict. Freire combines both to create his own unique form of Christian-Marxism. He suggests,

I am certain that Christians and Marxists, though they may disagree with me in part or in whole, will continue reading to the end.⁽¹⁷⁾

In his Forward to Pedagogy of the Oppressed Richard Shaull claims that Freire has created some new and creative ideas in educational philosophy. These ideas have many philosophical roots.

¹⁷ Paulo Freire, Pedagogy of the Oppressed, p.21.

[Freire has] reached out to the thought and experience of those in many different situations and of diverse philosophical positions: in his words, to 'Sartre and Mounier, Eric Fromm and Louise Althusser, Ortega y Gasset and Mao, Martin Luther King and Che Guevara, Unamuno and Marcuse.'¹⁸)

Numerous quotations can be cited which may help understand Freire's philosophical assumptions and their various sources.

1. MARXIST THOUGHT

Freire makes reference to the works of Marx, Engels, Lenin and some more contemporary Marxist thinkers. This does not imply that Freire's philosophy is solely Marxist. Henry Giroux recognizes the broadness of Freire's work.

Freire steps outside standard Marxist analysis by arguing that society contains a multiplicity of social relations, which contain contradictions and can serve as a basis from which social groups can struggle and organize themselves.¹⁹)

¹⁸ Ibid., p.11.

¹⁹ Paulo Freire, The Politics of Education, p.xii.

Freire rejects both Hegelian idealism and Marxist dialectical and historical materialism. In a discussion with Donald Macedo Freire suggests,

... you have the possibility of falling into an idealism that might be pre-Hegelian or Hegelian... You can also fall into an antagonistic view in which subjectivity would be only a pure abstraction, a copy of objectivity that is, Marx takes a big leap in these idealist preoccupations... I don't let myself fall into either type of subjectivity.⁽²⁰⁾

Even though Freire rejects some Marxist ideology he has made numerous references to that particular circle of thinkers. These include Marx, Engels, Lenin, Mao, Mounier, Lukacs, Gramsci and Che Guevara. At times Freire uses Marxist theory to explain the dialectical relationship between the oppressor and the oppressed⁽²¹⁾. He also makes reference to the way Marx describes the historical nature of humankind⁽²²⁾. In addition, Lenin's theory of revolutionary movements can be found in Freire's work⁽²³⁾. Collins associates the thinking of Freire with ideas presented by Marx and Engels.

²⁰ Ibid., p. 178.

²¹ See Freire, Pedagogy of the Oppressed, p.34.

²² See Ibid., p.125.

²³ See Ibid., p.120 and p.133.

Freire has pointed out that by concentrating on the role of consciousness in the process of liberation, he follows Marx and Engels who observed that freedom from oppression is facilitated by making oppression 'more oppressive' when men realize their oppression.⁽²⁴⁾

Aronowitz and Giroux identify similarities between the works of Freire and Gramsci.

Gramsci and Freire formed their educational theory in the framework of a historical and social understanding of the collective fates of classes within modern society.⁽²⁵⁾

Like the Italian social theorist Antonio Gramsci, Freire redefines the category of intellectual and argues that all men and women are intellectuals.⁽²⁶⁾

2. JUDEO-CHRISTIAN THOUGHT

The influence of Judeo-Christian thought is apparent in Freire's philosophy. He frequently refers to the importance of love and human emotion; the way love can unite people and

²⁴ Denis E. Collins, Paulo Freire : His Life, Works and Thought (New York : Paulist Press, 1977), p.64.

²⁵ Stanley Aronowitz and Henry A. Giroux, Education Under Siege (South Hadley, Mass. : Bergin & Garvey Publishers, 1985), p. 12.

²⁶ Freire, Politics of Education, p.xxii.

promote peace and self-contentment. Freire makes reference to Christian thought when he admits that love, and thus solidarity, cannot be achieved without a certain amount of human suffering.

The oppressor is solidary with the oppressed ... when he ... risks an act of love. True solidarity is found only in the plentitude of this act of love, in its existentiality, in its praxis.⁽²⁷⁾

It happens that peace cannot be bought; peace is experienced in solidary and loving acts, which cannot be incarnated in oppression.⁽²⁸⁾

I feel my incompleteness inside me, at the biological, affective, critical, and intellectual levels, an incompleteness that pushes me constantly, curiously, and lovingly toward other people and the world... All of this implies wanting to love, a capacity for love that people must create in themselves.⁽²⁹⁾

Collins identifies the way Freire refers to biblical works when discussing the authenticity of Subjects.

²⁷ Freire, Pedagogy of the Oppressed, p.34-35.

²⁸ Ibid., p.143.

²⁹ Freire, Politics of Education, p.197-198.

Drawing upon Western philosophical emphasis of logos (the word) and upon the Genesis myth in which Adam's dominion over the universe was signified by his activity of naming animals, Freire says that men become fully human when they are capable of uttering their own logos, of speaking authentically as Subjects.⁽³⁰⁾

3. EXISTENTIALIST THOUGHT

The influence of Jean-Paul Sartre and existential philosophy is prevalent throughout Freire's work. He acknowledges that people and reality are involved in a process of continuous change. Everyone and everything exists temporarily.

Problem-posing education affirms men as beings in the process of becoming - as unfinished, incomplete beings in and with a likewise unfinished reality.⁽³¹⁾

Insofar as the primer is the mediating object between the teacher and students, and the students are to be 'filled' with words the teachers have chosen ... This same conception led Sartre, criticizing the notion that 'to know is to eat,' to exclaim, 'O philosophie alimentaire!'⁽³²⁾

³⁰ Ibid., p.51.

³¹ Freire, Pedagogy of the Oppressed, p.72.

³² Freire, Politics of Education, p.45.

4. PRAGMATIST THOUGHT

Freire's philosophy reflects ideas presented by John Dewey. For Dewey experiences are the basis for creative and meaningful relationships between people and their historical and contemporary life situations. Freire develops Dewey's ideas on human experience and proposes that knowledge, as with experience, is historically founded but continuously changing⁽³³⁾.

Freire drew conclusions that are by no means far from the educational philosophies of Dewey and Gramsci.⁽³⁴⁾

...Dewey, Gramsci and Freire are intellectuals who made the political more pedagogical ...⁽³⁵⁾

Aronowitz, Giroux, and Collins also recognize the influence of Dewey's philosophy in the works of Freire.

The notion is hardly new with Freire (one can find it in Aristotle and St. Thomas) and he does not pretend the ideal of dialogical analytic-synthetic education is first seen in his writing. He acknowledges his indebtedness to John Dewey and to existential philosophers like Karl Jaspers ...⁽³⁶⁾

³³ See Aronowitz and Giroux, Education Under Siege, p.12.

³⁴ Aronowitz and Giroux, Education Under Siege, p.12.

³⁵ Ibid., p.14.

³⁶ Collins, Life, Works and Thought, p.84.

Freire drew conclusions that are by no means far from the educational philosophies of Dewey and Gramsci.⁽³⁷⁾

The various philosophies identified throughout the works of Freire reflect the importance he places on the capacity of learners to change in order to free themselves from oppression. For Freire, people must be able to critically reflect and act upon the mythologized way in which they see themselves and the world about them.

³⁷ Aronowitz and Giroux, Education Under Siege, p.12.

CHAPTER TWO**THEMES IN THE WORKS OF FREIRE**

"Poverty has many roots, but the tap-root is ignorance."

L.B. Johnson

In this chapter we will review some of the themes related to the works of Paulo Freire. This review will offer an understanding into his philosophical thought. Any attempt to summarize Freire's works in so few pages may invite insult and undue damage to his overall message. The scope of this thesis offers an introduction to his thought for North American education.

A theme was chosen if it fell under at least one of the following two conditions. First, the theme is commonly found throughout the works of Paulo Freire. Second, the theme is highly significant for education and, more specifically, for schooling. Applying these criteria the following themes were selected for the purpose of review; consciousness, liberation, education, dialogue and literacy.

A. CONSCIOUSNESS

Freire refers to consciousness as a state of human awareness. It is 'perhaps the key concept in Paulo Freire's thinking' ⁽³⁸⁾ and the 'essential component of Freire's pedagogical philosophy.' ⁽³⁹⁾

For Freire consciousness is an awareness of being in the world and identifying oneself as an agent capable of transforming reality. Consciousness is intentional; it acts upon someone or something.

In consciousness he creates the world, and, in turn, is made by it. Man is not only in the world; he is with the world. ⁽⁴⁰⁾

The way Freire regards consciousness is similar to the view held by Bernard Lonergan ⁽⁴¹⁾. Reflecting upon Lonergan's account of the operations of human consciousness, Crowe suggests,

³⁸ Colin B. Collins, Consciousness, Conscientization, Cultural Action and Education in Paulo Freire (O.I.S.E., 1972), p.1.

³⁹ Ibid., p.1.

⁴⁰ Ibid., p.2.

⁴¹ For an thorough explanation of human consciousness refer to Lonergan's two most popular works: Insight : A Study of Human Understanding and Method in Theology.

In his view there are two directions of human development... The key lies in the structured route along which ... development may travel, and this is provided by the four interrelated levels of human consciousness: experience, understanding, reflection (and judgement), deliberation (and decision), four levels concerned respectively with data, intelligibility, truth, and values.⁽⁴²⁾

A conscious person has the ability to 'objectify' reality. By objectification Freire means that a person can gain objective knowledge and thus distance from oneself and from the world. Animals are incapable of objectifying reality. They simply live in the world and are atemporally immersed within reality. Animals lack the ability to reflect upon the world and to imagine it to be something different than it is. Marx differentiates between humans and animals in a similar fashion.

We presuppose labor in a form that stamps it as exclusively human. A spider conducts operations that resemble those of a weaver, and a bee puts to shame many an architect in the construction of her cells. But what distinguishes the worst architect from the best of the bees is this, that the architect raises his structure in imagination before he erects it in reality.⁽⁴³⁾

⁴² Frederick E. Crowe, Old Things and New : A Strategy for Education (Atlanta, Georgia : Scholars Press, 1985), p.xi.

⁴³ Karl Marx, Capital, ed. Frederick Engels, trans. Samuel Moore and Edward Aveling, (Chicago : Charles H. Kerr, 1932), p.198, as quoted in Freire, The Politics of Education, p.70.

Reflection is an activity which differentiates human consciousness from animal consciousness. Freire identifies three stages of human consciousness: semi-intransitive, naive-transitive and critical consciousness. Each stage reflects how the individual relates to the world and how that person distinguishes between what is natural and what is cultural. Nature offers laws that are given, not options. Culture is governed by choices which are historically and materially conditioned.

1. SEMI-INTRANSITIVE CONSCIOUSNESS

A semi-intransitive state of consciousness is most commonly found in closed structures or what Freire calls 'cultures of silence.' In these cultures the voices of the dominated are silenced by the cultural myths, values and life styles of the elite.

This state of consciousness characterizes a population which is highly dependent on the ruling class for biological, social and political needs. Decisions regarding the availability and distribution of clothing and food, the construction and maintenance of housing units and the functioning of schools are controlled by the leaders of society. These leaders silence the masses by preventing the

development of critical consciousness to occur. The masses simply echo the voice of the elite.

It is not hard to trace here the origin of the fatalistic positions man assumes in certain situations. If the explanation for those situations lies in a superior power, or in men's own 'natural' incapacity, it is obvious that their action will not be oriented toward transforming reality, but towards those superior beings responsible for the problematical situation ...⁽⁴⁴⁾

The masses fail to perceive the world as it is possible to be. They vision a world painted by the elite. The dependent population attribute the sources of facts to a 'superreality' representing something outside or beyond the present objective reality.

Their action ... has the character of defensive magic or therapeutic magic. Thus, before harvest time or sowing, the peasants of the Third World in general perform magical rites, often of a syncretistic religious nature.⁽⁴⁵⁾

2. NAIVE-TRANSITIVE CONSCIOUSNESS

A naive-transitive state of consciousness is developed when the masses begin to ask socially and politically oriented questions. This questioning process creates effective dialogue

⁴⁴ Ibid., p.76.

⁴⁵ Ibid., p.76.

and 'cracks' in the existing social structure. The culture is no longer silenced. These cracks invite stronger and louder voices to be heard.

What is important, nevertheless, is that once the cracks in the structure begin to appear, and once societies enter the period of transition, immediately the first movements of emergence of the hitherto submerged and silent masses begin to manifest themselves.⁽⁴⁶⁾

During the transitional period the masses recognize some of the oppressive agents in society and apply pressure on the power elite to demand change. The dominated majority are anxious for emancipatory action but the elite intend to maintain the status quo.

To maintain power and, at the same time, please the masses the elite permit superficial societal transformations. Change is permitted so long as it does not threaten the elite's power of domination. Unfortunately the insignificance of these superficial changes is not usually identified by the masses.

⁴⁶ Ibid., p.76.

3. CRITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS

A theme explored and developed throughout the works of Freire is critical consciousness. In his Introduction to Education for Critical Consciousness Goulet exclaims,

No contemporary writer more persistently explores the many dimensions of critical consciousness than Paulo Freire... The unifying thread in his work is critical consciousness as the motor of cultural emancipation.⁽⁴⁷⁾

For Freire critical consciousness involves the combination of coming to an awareness of contradictions expressed as 'limit situations' (serving the interests of some, limiting the actions of others) and understanding that these contradictions exist not so much as obstacles preventing action but challenges stimulating appropriate action. By acknowledging imposed social, political and economic contradictions as challenges the oppressed identify themselves as critically reflecting Subjects in the world and with the world. Collins suggests,

... people with critical consciousness have an ideal balance between subjectivity and objectivity; a correct relationship between self and the environment.⁽⁴⁸⁾

⁴⁷ Paulo Freire, Education for Critical Consciousness, p.vii.

⁴⁸ Collins, Consciousness, Conscientization, Cultural Action and Education, p.17.

Critical consciousness involves the demythification of reality. The distorted visions of reality presented by the elite are considered as myth rather than fact. Goldman (⁴⁹) calls this state of perceptive clarity 'the maximum potential of consciousness.' Freire refers to this same state as 'critical consciousness.' He suggests,

Critical consciousness is brought about, not through an intellectual effort alone, but through praxis - through the authentic union of action and reflection.⁽⁵⁰⁾

⁴⁹ L. Goldman, The Human Science and Philosophy (London, 1969).

⁵⁰ Freire, Politics of Education, p.87.

B. CONSCIENTIZATION

People have interpreted Freire's use of conscientization in different ways. This issue was raised during a conversation between The Institute of Cultural Action and Freire. The Institute states,

... conscientization ... has become the object of all sorts of ambiguous interpretations and distortions... Many see conscientization as a sort of magic wand capable of 'healing' social injustice by simply changing the conscience of men and women.⁽⁵¹⁾

Conscientization is not magic. It is the growth of human consciousness. It is more than awareness or reflection. A conscientized person is capable of identifying and acting upon social, political, and economic agents of oppression. For Freire oppression is a 'distortion of being more fully human.' It occurs in any situation whereby 'A' objectively exploits 'B' or hinders his pursuit of self-affirmation as a responsible person.'⁽⁵²⁾

This growth of consciousness reflects a process whereby people, not as passive recipients but as knowing Subjects achieve a deepening awareness both of the socio-cultural reality which shapes their lives and their capacity to transform that reality. This process of awareness is far more

⁵¹ Ibid., p.160.

⁵² Freire, Pedagogy of the Oppressed, p.40.

than an exercise. It is an awakening which guides people to a new understanding of themselves and of the world. It gives birth to a new 'person' - a newly self-conscious and self-determining individual.

For Freire conscientization envelops the following elements.

- a) A process, not a static moment.
- b) People as Subjects, not as passive objects.
- c) An awareness of one's relationship to and position within society.
- d) An awareness that one is shaped and conditioned by the socio-cultural reality.
- e) A capacity for one to be critical - to perceive, reflect upon, and act against the socio-cultural contradictions in reality.

Freire's concept of conscientization is beautifully incorporated into a poem written by Kenneth Benne, a founder of the human relations movement and a radical Kansas populist and educational philosopher. This poem is called A Dream. It documents how a conscientized person is capable of making individual decisions.

The light, so dim it drew the horizon near,
 Showed giant figures, almost human, hemming me around,
 Faceless or with averted faces. I stood alone and I could
 hear
 Their almost human voices - impressive sound
 Well-amplified, most high fidelity - commanding 'kneel!'
 I did not kneel. And from me came a bleat -
 Most poorly modulated, low fidelity - 'I do not feel
 Your right to make me kneel.' Came their repeat
 'Kneel!' - computer-programmed, nuclear-driven now - 'We
 have the power.
 We are the nations, churches, races, collectivities.
 You are a piece of us - without us, nothing. In this dark
 hour
 Of dire emergency, to stand upright is treason,
 sacrilege,
 disloyalty - down on your knees!'
 Darkness had further dimmed the scenes and it was cold.
 Wavering, my voice came to my ears, perhaps into their
 almost
 human ears, whispering 'No!'
 From near around me, like a significant secret told
 By friend to friend in private, came fellow-sounds - at
 first low
 Then amplified by human power - a chorus free
 Praising man and singing 'No!' Above me dawned a dim but
 brightening star.
 I saw faces of men - a company of little men standing
 tall and welcoming me.
 Now there was light enough to fling the horizon far.⁽⁵³⁾

⁵³ Kenneth D. Benne, The Soul of Post-Contemporary Man,
 (Boston University, 1970). Refer to Louise Collonese, ed.,
Conscientization for Liberation (U.S. Catholic Conference,
 Washington, D.C., 1971) and John J. Dewitt, From Schooling to
 Conscientization, p.160.

C. LIBERATION

"We must force the frozen
circumstances to dance by
singing to them their own
melody."

K. Marx

Freire compares the process of liberation to a painful childbirth. Through the painful experience the 'man who emerges is a new man.' Liberation permits the oppressed to become 'beings for themselves' as opposed to beings for others. For Freire liberation means,

... overcoming authoritarianism and an alienating intellectualism; it also enables men to overcome their false perception of reality. The world - no longer something to be described with deceptive words - becomes the object of that transforming action by men which results in their humanization.⁽⁵⁴⁾

Freire introduces three components of liberation. The first essential component is critical dialogue among the emancipating masses. Through critical dialogue the masses create a new perspective on reality. They no longer view the world as something unattached from themselves. They identify themselves as transforming agents in an unfinished reality. At this point Freire reflects Marxist ideology by suggesting

⁵⁴ Freire, Pedagogy of the Oppressed, p.74.

the world and human beings do not exist apart from each other but in constant interaction. For Freire reality must be constructed both subjectively and objectively in a dialectical relationship. He submits,

... one cannot conceive of objectivity without subjectivity. Neither can exist without the other, nor can they be dichotomized. The separation of objectivity from subjectivity, the denial of the latter when analyzing reality or acting upon it, is objectivism. On the other hand, the denial of objectivity which leads to solipsistic positions, denies action itself by denying objective reality. Neither objectivism nor subjectivism, nor yet psychologism is propounded here, but rather subjectivity and objectivity in constant dialectical relationship.⁵⁵

Liberation involves a second component which requires that the masses be willing to become more fully human. Liberation will not be achieved if the majority of the oppressed simply follow the commands of the few. Each member must want to escape the grasps of mythification defined by the elite and become authentic Subjects.

A third component requires the use of praxis. By praxis Freire means a process of critical reflection and action upon the world (the oppressive reality in which the oppressed live) in order to objectify and transform it. Praxis becomes the new *raison d'etre* of the oppressed.

⁵⁵ Ibid., p.35.

These three components of liberation - critical dialogue, a vocation to become more fully human, and praxis - are essential for liberation to occur. The oppressed learners will achieve a new sense of worth, for themselves and for the world.

D. TYPES OF EDUCATION

"It is the business of schools to help the child to acquire such an attitude toward the inequalities of life, whether in accomplishment or in reward, that he may adjust himself to its condition with the least possible friction."

Frank Freeman

"Sorting the Students,"
Education Review, 1924

Coombs⁵⁶) differentiates between three types of education: formal, nonformal and informal education. Formal education begins in the first grade of primary school and continues to the highest reaches of the university. Nonformal education represents any 'organized, systematic educational activity' conducted outside the framework of the formal system. This would include farmer training programs, adult literacy programs and programs of instruction in health and nutrition. Informal education represents a 'life-long process' of accumulating knowledge through unorganized and unsystematic channels like travel, reading newspapers, listening to the radio or viewing films.

Similarly, Maritain regards education as more than the formal schooling process.

⁵⁶ See Philip H. Coombs, The World Crisis in Education : The View from the Eighties (Oxford : Oxford University Press, 1985), Chapter 1.

... the word education has a triple yet intermingled connotation, and refers either to any process whatsoever by means of which man is shaped and led toward fulfillment (education in its broadest sense), or to the task of formation which adults intentionally undertake with regard to youth, or, in its strictest sense, to the special task of schools and universities.⁽⁵⁷⁾

Freire does not differentiate between formal, nonformal and informal education. He refers to education as an act of love and courage. It invites people to become more fully human in the world in which they exist. For Freire education must encourage the learner to reflect critically and act against oppressive socio-political agents in society. Aronowitz and Giroux suggest,

... education represents a collectively produced set of experiences organized around issues and concerns that allow for a critical understanding of everyday oppression as well as the dynamics involved in constructing alternative political cultures.⁽⁵⁸⁾

⁵⁷ Jacques Maritain, Education at the Crossroads (New Haven : Yale University Press, 1943), p.1-2.

⁵⁸ Stanley Aronowitz and Henry A. Giroux, Education Under Siege, p.132.

Postman and Weingartner⁽⁵⁹⁾ regard schools as institutions which help people deal with a changing world. The schooling process develops abilities and attitudes required to deal adequately with life. For Beck⁽⁶⁰⁾ schools are places which should promote 'human well being' or basic human values.

As the purpose of schooling is to promote human well being, as education is 'for life', and as schooling currently and increasingly takes up such a large part of the young person's life, the goals of the school should cover a wide range of human concerns. They should reflect the priorities of life in general.⁽⁶¹⁾

Even though schools may promote certain values and encourage the development of particular intellectual, moral, and spiritual qualities, there are functions of the schooling process which are not always recognized. Goodlad considers these unassuming roles of schooling.

⁵⁹ Robin Barrow, Radical Education : A Critique of Freeschooling and Deschooling (Oxford : Martin Robertson, 1978), p.154.

⁶⁰ See Clive Beck, Better Schools : A Values Perspective (Bristol PA : The Falmer Press, 1990). Beck identifies some goals of schooling which include basic skill learning, academic mastery, life skills and spiritual development.

⁶¹ Ibid., p.7.

Schools appear not to be acutely self-conscious about what they are trying to do. But they inevitably perform functions - from baby-sitting to job preparation and intellectual development. We might hope that schools would emphasize their educational functions almost exclusively, but they do not.⁽⁶²⁾

Freire claims that 'education is suffering from narration sickness.' By this he suggests the teacher narrates lifeless and petrified content to the patiently listening students. The task of the teacher is one of 'filling' students with 'hollow, alienated verbosity.' The role of the student is mechanically to record, memorize and repeat the imposed content.

As with other themes Freire polarizes education into two mutually exclusive types, banking education and problem-posing education. Reflecting on the strategy of education and incorporating the philosophy of Bernard Lonergan, Crowe discusses the dichotomized views of education.

The question regards the grand strategy of education and can be indicated in a preliminary way by the extreme positions on two sides of a recurring argument. Should education be a kind of banking procedure in which the teacher hands over parcels of information that the pupil duly stores in the safety-deposit box of the mind, and draws out as occasion demands, especially the occasion of examinations? Or should education be a

⁶² John I. Goodlad, A Place Called School : Prospects for the Future (New York : McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1984), p.29.

freely developing evolution of inner resources, where the pupil is put in a sandbox and left to grow in self-realization with the expectation that he or she will advance steadily from sandbox to, say, a laboratory for nuclear physics?⁽⁶³⁾

Freire does not consider education to be a combination of the two poles. This factor will be discussed in more depth later in the thesis.

1. BANKING EDUCATION

In banking education the teacher views the students as containers to be filled with content. Freire makes reference to phrases such as 'words to be digested,' 'nutritionist view of knowledge,' and 'act of deposition,' when describing banking education. He associates banking education with,

... an act of depositing, in which the students are the depositories and the teacher is the depositor. Instead of communicating, the teacher issues communiques and makes deposits which the students patiently receive, memorize, and repeat.⁽⁶⁴⁾

⁶³ Frederick E. Crowe, Old Things and New, p.ix-x.

⁶⁴ Freire, Pedagogy of the Oppressed, p.58.

Implicit in this view of education is the assumption that a dichotomy exists between the student and the world. The student is merely in the world, not with the world or with others. This person is considered nothing more than a spectator in a specific state of consciousness; an empty mind passively and receptively open to deposits of reality.

In similar vein, the Superior Council of Education of Quebec discusses a **mechanistic** view of student development and learning. The characteristics of mechanistic educational activity reflect those presented by Freire in banking education.

The concepts of the first model perceive teaching as a transmission process and learning as a reception process. This style of formation could thus be likened to pouring knowledge from one container into another, that is, from the teacher's mind into that of the student. The teacher ... makes the student benefit from his knowledge by pouring it into the latter's brain.⁶⁵

Banking education creates and maintains a teacher-student contradiction. Freire identifies elements of this contradiction.

⁶⁵ Superior Council of Education of Quebec, Educational Activity, p.33.

- a) The teacher knows everything and the students know nothing.
- b) The teacher thinks and the students are thought about.
- c) The teacher talks and the students listen.
- d) The teacher enforces specific choices and the students comply.
- e) The teacher selects the program of content and the students adapt to it.
- f) The teacher is the Subject of the learning process and the students are objects.⁽⁶⁶⁾

Freire does acknowledge the fact that there are innumerable well-intentioned bank-clerk teachers who do not realize the devastating effects they have on the students. They are not aware that depositing acts are dehumanizing; promoting injustice, exploitation and oppression; stealing humanity and making people less human.

One of the most influential characteristics of banking education is its ability to 'mythicize' reality. Bank clerk educators present fragmented views of reality to the students. To explain the coherence of these fragmented views the teacher uses false myths - the myth that the oppressive order in society is a 'free society'; the myth of the

⁶⁶ Freire, Pedagogy of the Oppressed, p.59.

universal right to education; the myth of the equality of all people; the myth of the charity and generosity of the elites; the myth that rebellion is a sin against God. These myths encompass deceit, alienation and passivity.

Freire cites a song written by Tom Paxton which portrays the effects of mythification.

What did you learn in school today, dear little boy
of mine?
What did you learn in school today, dear little boy
of mine?

I learned that Washington never told a lie,
I learned that soldiers seldom die,
I learned that everybody's free,
And that's what the teacher said to me.

That's what I learned in school today,
That's what I learned in school.

I learned that policemen are my friends,
I learned that justice never ends,
I learned that murderers die from their crimes
Even if we make a mistake sometimes.

I learned our government must be strong,
It's always right and never wrong
Our leaders are the finest men,
And we elect them again and again.

I learned that war is not so bad,
I learned about the great ones we have had,
We've fought in Germany and in France,
And someday I may get my chance.

That's what I learned ...⁽⁶⁷⁾

⁶⁷ Freire, Politics of Education, p.117.

Another characteristic of banking education is what Freire refers to as 'marginalization.' By promoting myths about reality and maintaining an oppressive order the bank clerk educators force the learners to be marginalized; to be on the fringe of, or outside of reality. LADOC⁽⁶⁸⁾ associates marginalization with hunger, disease, pain, mental deficiency, death, crime, promiscuity, and desperation. Unfortunately, marginalization does not simply re-position the students to the 'outside' of the present structural reality, it moulds them into 'beings for another.' As Freire suggests,

In fact, however, the social structure as a whole does not 'expel,' nor is marginal man a 'being outside of.' He is, on the contrary, a 'being inside of,' within the social structure, and in a dependent relationship to those whom we call falsely autonomous beings, inauthentic 'beings for themselves.'⁽⁶⁹⁾

⁶⁸ See LADOC, September - October, 1975, p.28.

⁶⁹ Freire, Politics of Education, p.48.

2. PROBLEM-POSING EDUCATION

In contrast to 'oppressive, dehumanizing banking education' Freire describes a humanistically libertarian education which he calls 'problem-posing education.' It draws upon the tradition of John Dewey and relates also to the work of Jean Piaget.

In the Introduction to Politics in Education Giroux reflects upon the relevance Freire places on the life experiences of the student.

... he(Freire) argues that educators have to work with the experiences that students, adults, and other learners bring to schools and other educational sites... making these experiences... the object of debate and confirmation.⁽⁷⁰⁾

For Dewey experience is the basis of education.

... there is an intimate and necessary relation between the process of actual experience and education.⁽⁷¹⁾

⁷⁰ Ibid., p.xxi.

⁷¹ John Dewey, Experience and Education (New York : Macmillan publishing Company, 1938), p.20.

... education in order to accomplish its end both for the individual learner and for society must be based on experience - which is always the actual life experience of some individual.⁽⁷²⁾

Dewey's position on experience and the learning process is akin to the views of Piaget ⁽⁷³⁾ who, like Dewey, saw learning as a self-initiated experience. Piaget would probably concur with Dewey that 'the only true education comes through the stimulation of the child's powers.'⁽⁷⁴⁾

Freire's thoughts on problem-posing education are similar to ideas presented by other philosophers and educators. According to Beck 'education for life' implies that 'schooling is not an end in itself : it's purpose is to serve life, both within the school and beyond it.'⁽⁷⁵⁾ He reflects on Dewey and education.

⁷² Ibid., p.89.

⁷³ See S. Modgil and C. Modgil (eds.), Jean Piaget : Consensus and Controversy (New York : Praeger Publishers, 1982). Also refer to H. Gruber and J. Jacques (eds.), The Essential Piaget (New York : Basic Books, 1977).

⁷⁴ John Dewey, My Pedagogic Creed (New York : Putnam, 1940)

⁷⁵ Beck, Better Schools, p.3.

For Dewey, education had to be tied to life if it was to be effective. And schooling found its justification in serving all areas of life, not simply the narrowly intellectual and cultural.⁽⁷⁶⁾

The 'organic concept' of educational activity, as proposed by the Superior Council of Education of Quebec reflects both Freire's problem-posing education and Dewey's philosophy of education. It emphasizes the initiative and responsibilities of the learner.

The concepts which belong to the second model consider learning as an active experience which takes place entirely within the inner life of the student, and advocate that the student possesses the dynamism and resources to perform this experience, carry it out and give it an authentic character.⁽⁷⁷⁾

Problem-posing education is the *raison d'être* for oppressed learners. It begins with a reconciliation between the teacher-student contradiction whereby both are simultaneously teacher and student; both are learning and teaching. The role of the teacher becomes one of engaging the students in critical thinking and a mutual quest for

⁷⁶ Ibid., p.4.

⁷⁷ Superior Council of Education of Quebec, Educational Activity (Annual Report 1969/70), p.34.

humanization.

Humanization is developed by the oppressed when they struggle for freedom, justice, and the recovery of lost human dignity. It is the 'emancipation of labour,' 'overcoming of alienation,' the 'affirmation of men as persons.'

According to Freire problem-posing educators do not consider people being independent of and unattached to the world. Through problem-posing education people are encouraged to perceive critically the way they exist with the world. The world is not regarded as 'something out there' but a changing reality in constant interaction with people.

E.ROLE OF THE EDUCATOR

"Until very recently the schools have offered equal opportunity for all to receive one kind of education, but what will make them democratic is to provide opportunity for all to receive such education as will fit them equally well for their particular life work."

Superintendent of Boston Schools, 1908

The studies by Coleman⁽⁷⁸⁾, Jencks⁽⁷⁹⁾, and others⁽⁸⁰⁾ suggest that teachers, at best, contribute modestly to the intellectual motivation and academic attainment of students. Goodlad presents more encouraging evidence regarding the role of teachers.

... able teachers, under favorable circumstances, do make an important difference in students' learning, especially in those areas not likely to be attended to in the family.⁽⁸¹⁾

⁷⁸ James Coleman, et al., Equality of Educational Opportunity (Washington, D.C. : U.S. Government Printing Office, 1966)

⁷⁹ Christopher Jencks, et al., Inequality (New York : Basic Books, 1972)

⁸⁰ For instance, see M. Dino Carelli and John G. Morris (eds.), Equality of Opportunity Reconsidered : Values in Education for Tomorrow (Third European Colloquy for Directors of National Institutes in Education, Hamburg, 1978)

⁸¹ John I. Goodlad, A Place Called School, p.167.

For Lonergan the teacher's role is one of communicating insight. The teacher 'throws out the clues, the pointed hints, that lead to insight.'⁽⁸²⁾ Curtis reflects on the polarized views of teaching; teaching as passing on knowledge and teaching as leading or guiding the experiences of the learners.

The skilled teacher is the person who has learnt when he ought to use his prestige, greater knowledge and experience and more mature personality and adopt the role of a leader, and when his teaching ability can be employed to greater effect by allowing his students the untrammelled exercise of their freedom and creative impulses.⁽⁸³⁾

Freire dichotomizes the role of educators. He regards educators as either liberators or domesticators.

Liberating educators are engaged in authentic dialogue with students. They practice a humanizing pedagogy which encourages critical thinking. Freire suggests,

⁸² Bernard J. F. Lonergan, Insight : A Study of Human Understanding (San Francisco : Harper & Row, Publishers, 1978), p.174.

⁸³ S. J. Curtis, Introduction to the Philosophy of Education, 2d ed. (London : University Tutorial Press Ltd., 1965), p.121.

... the pedagogy we defend ... is itself utopian pedagogy. By this very fact it is full of hope, for to be utopian is not to be merely idealistic or impractical but rather to engage in denunciation or annunciation. Our pedagogy cannot do without a vision of man and of the world. It formulates a scientific humanist conception which finds its expression in a dialogical praxis in which the teachers and learners together, in the act of analyzing a dehumanizing reality, denounce it while announcing its transformation in the name of the liberation of man.⁸⁴

Liberating educators 'problematize' the natural, cultural and historical reality in which they are immersed. Freire defines problematization as an act of subjecting an entire populace to the task of associating reality with specific symbols. These symbols generate critical consciousness and empower the masses to alter their relations with natural and social forces.

Domesticating educators 'adapt' the learners to specific pre-defined forms of reality. Through adaption the learners are unable to make individual choices. Freire regards an adapted person as oppressed; being subjected to the choices of others.

Domestication embodies the violence associated with anti-dialogical education. It imposes silence and passivity.

⁸⁴ Freire, Adult Literacy Process, p.220.

It restricts the development of open and critical consciousness. In this sense domesticating education is not education, it is simply an act of persuasion.

Persuasion suggests a Subject who persuades and an object on which the act of persuading is exercised. The Subject is the educator, the object represents the learner. For Freire a domesticating and persuading educator promotes mechanistic learning. Learning becomes nothing more than taking, transferring, or depositing pre-formulated knowledge. This mechanical model of pedagogy is used to preserve the docility of the learners.

F. DIALOGUE

"Pray for the dead and fight
like hell for the living."

Mother Jones

Turn-of-the-century labour organizer

Liberating education takes place in dialogical praxis. For Freire the 'word' is the essence of dialogue. The word encompasses both reflection and action. It acts as a transforming agent against the world. Words create dialogue. Freire refers to dialogue as the 'encounter between men, mediated by the world, in order to name the world.'⁽⁸⁵⁾

According to Collins Freire approaches dialogue in different ways. Sometimes he regards dialogue as an intrinsic component aimed at developing a more fully human way of life for the oppressed. At other times he sees dialogue as an inevitable result when people promote certain fundamental human values.

His(Freire) descriptions of dialogue at times are coldly philosophical (stressing it as a condition for men to become subjects), while at other times his praise of dialogue is lyrical, almost visionary, as he insists upon attitudes of trust, faith, humility, willingness to risk, and love without which dialogue is not possible.⁽⁸⁶⁾

⁸⁵ Freire, Pedagogy of the Oppressed, p.76.

⁸⁶ Collins, Life, Works and Thought, p.70.

1. CONDITIONS FOR AUTHENTIC EDUCATIONAL DIALOGUE

There are five conditions which must be present in order for true dialogue to occur. These conditions are love, humility, faith, hope and critical thinking.

First, dialogue is not possible without a profound love for the world and for others. Revolutionary change will not occur unless the masses work for a more loving world in which to live. Love is the 'foundation of dialogue and dialogue itself.'⁽⁸⁷⁾

Second, dialogue cannot exist without humility. Freire suggests,

The naming of the world, through which men constantly re-create that world, cannot be an act of arrogance... Dialogue ... is broken if the parties (or one of them) lack humility.⁽⁸⁸⁾

Third, faith in people and their power to create and re-create is essential for dialogue to occur. Freire suggests,

Faith in man is an a priori requirement for dialogue; the dialogical man believes in other men even before he meets them face to face.⁽⁸⁹⁾

⁸⁷ Freire, Pedagogy of the Oppressed, p.77-78.

⁸⁸ Ibid., p.78.

⁸⁹ Ibid., p.79.

Without faith in each other the oppressed will share a common bond of faith solely with the oppressive leaders of society. This will quickly eliminate any transformative action.

Fourth, dialogue cannot exist without hope. Hope acts as a catalyst for the search of a more meaningful life.

Hope is rooted in men's incompleteness, from which they move out in constant search - a search which can be carried out only in communion with other men. Hopelessness is a form of silence, of denying the world and fleeing from it... Hope, however, does not consist in crossing one's arms and waiting. As long as I fight, I am moved by hope; and if I fight with hope, then I can wait.⁹⁰

Finally, true dialogue requires critical thinking. Through critical analysis the masses perceive reality as a process, as transformation rather than a static entity. Critical thinkers disregard any dichotomies between people and the world. They vision reality as something in constant transformation. Freire quotes Pierre Furter.

⁹⁰ Ibid., p.80.

The universe is revealed to me not as space, imposing a massive presence to which I can but adapt, but as a scope, a domain which takes shape as I act upon it.⁹¹)

By making reference to the above components of dialogue Freire differentiates between what he calls 'antidialogical action' and 'dialogical action.'

2. ANTIDIALOGICAL ACTION

Freire analyzes the theory of antidialogical action perpetuated by the dominant elite. This theory incorporates four characteristics; conquest, divide and rule, manipulation, and cultural invasion. He sees the latter three characteristics as divisive tactics which all serve the ends of the first.

The principal characteristic of antidialogical action is conquest. Freire uses the term 'conquest' to refer to the subjugation of masses of people to keep them passive in order to exploit them. It implies one who is a conqueror and the many who are conquered.

The second characteristic of antidialogical action is divide and rule. The oppressive minority divides the

⁹¹ Pierre Furter, Educacao e Vida (Rio, 1966), p.26-27 in Freire, Pedagogy of the Oppressed, p.81.

subordinated and dominated majority in order to remain in power. Any activity which may threaten the power of the elite, such as unity, organization or struggle, is labelled as dangerous.

Freire introduces what he calls a 'focalized' view of specific problems. To 'divide and rule' the elite will present a view of society relevant only to the specific community occupied by the oppressed. The occupants regard this image as a totality. It is not viewed as part of a larger totality. Continuously focalizing upon smaller, more specific communities encourages alienation among the oppressed. The more alienated the people are, the easier it is to divide them and keep them divided. This focalized way of life does not permit the oppressed to perceive reality critically. It keeps them isolated from the problems of oppression in other areas.

In addition to enforcing a restrictive view of reality upon the alienated masses the oppressors present themselves as saviours of those they dehumanize and divide. Freire suggests,

This messianism, however, cannot conceal their true intention: to save themselves. They want to save their riches, their power, their way of life; the things that enable them to subjugate others.⁽⁹²⁾

⁹² Freire, Pedagogy of the Oppressed, p.142.

The third characteristic of antidialogical action is manipulation. For Freire the term 'manipulation' means an attempt to 'anaesthetize' the people so they cannot think for themselves. It involves conforming the masses to the objectives of the oppressors. Freire stipulates that manipulation is only necessary when the oppressed begin to realize their state of oppression. Prior to this is total suppression by the oppressors. He suggests,

When the oppressed are almost completely submerged in reality, it is unnecessary to manipulate them. In the antidialogical theory of action, manipulation is the response of the oppressor to the new concrete conditions of the historical process. Through manipulation the dominant elites can lead the people into an unauthentic type of organization and can thus avoid the threatening alternative: the true organization of the emerged and emerging people.⁹³)

The fourth characteristic of antidialogical action is cultural invasion. Cultural invasion refers to an invasion by the oppressors into the cultural context of another group and imposing their values, standards, expectations and views of the world upon those they invade. Freire suggests,

⁹³ Ibid., p.145. Freire refers to 'an unauthentic type of organization.' Through organization, which is a product of manipulation, the manipulated people adapt to the objectives of the manipulators. This is also known as 'massification.'

The invaders mould; those they invade are moulded. The invaders choose; those they invade follow that choice.⁽⁹⁴⁾

3. DIALOGICAL ACTION

In contrast to the dominant elites' role as perpetrators of antidialogical action, Freire explores the role of revolutionary leaders whose task it is to undo the effects of antidialogical action on the people. This is accomplished through dialogical action which consists of four characteristics: cooperation, unity for liberation, organization, and cultural synthesis.

The first characteristic of dialogical action is cooperation. For dialogue to exist and transformative action to take place the oppressed masses must be open to new ideas and be willing to work together as a group. Freire suggests,

Cooperation leads dialogical Subjects to focus their attention on the reality which mediates them and which - posed as a problem - challenges them.⁽⁹⁵⁾

⁹⁴ Ibid., p.150.

⁹⁵ Ibid., p.168.

The second characteristic of dialogical action is unity for liberation. While the unity of the ruling class elite derives from it's antagonism with the people, the unity of the revolutionary leadership grows out of communion with the people. The leaders must dedicate themselves to an effort for solidary unity among the oppressed to achieve liberation. Freire suggests,

In order for the oppressed to unite, they must first cut the umbilical cord of magic and myth which binds them to the world of oppression.⁽⁹⁶⁾

Unity involves 'de-ideologizing' reality; coming to know the why and how of their understanding of reality. This understanding will act as a base for the liberatory struggle.

The third characteristic of dialogical action is organization. Organization is a natural development of unity. The united people become an organized force for the struggle for liberation. These people oppose the manipulation exercised in the antidialogical theory of action.

Organization is, rather, a highly educational process in which leaders and people together experience true authority and freedom, which they then seek to establish in society by transforming the reality which mediates them.⁽⁹⁷⁾

⁹⁶ Ibid., p.175.

⁹⁷ Ibid., p.180.

The fourth characteristic of dialogical action is cultural synthesis. Through cultural synthesis the contradiction between the world view of the leaders and that of the people is resolved. The two world views are united to create an accurate picture of reality.

Cultural synthesis is thus a mode of action for confronting culture itself, as the preserver of the very structures by which it was formed. Cultural action, as historical action, is an instrument for superseding the dominant alienated and alienating culture.⁹⁸

⁹⁸ Ibid., p.182.

G. LITERACY CAMPAIGN

"Education is the property of no one. It belongs to the people as a whole. And if education is not given to the people, they will have to take it."

Che Guevara, 1964

An elitist may regard an illiterate as a proverbially lazy person who shows absolutely no desire or ability to learn. Freire considers illiteracy differently. He suggests,

Critically speaking, illiteracy is neither an 'ulcer' nor a 'poison herb' to be eradicated, nor a 'disease.' Illiteracy is one of the concrete expressions of an unjust social reality. Illiteracy is not a strictly linguistic or exclusively pedagogical or methodological problem. It is political, as is the very literacy through which we try to overcome illiteracy. Dwelling naively or astutely on intelligence does not effect in the least the intrinsic politics.⁹⁹)

For Freire literacy involves a process of searching and creating. The learner constantly searches the unknown world and creates more significant meanings of life.

Freire regards traditional literacy campaigns as overly moralistic and naive. They present the reader with a

⁹⁹ Freire, Politics of Education, p.10.

distorted and 'mythical' picture of the present social reality.

Freire's literacy campaign is an act of knowing. The learner assumes the role of a knowing Subject in dialogue with the educator. As an act of knowing this literacy process demythologizes reality. The learner becomes critically aware of any imposed myths . Conscientization occurs simultaneously with the literacy process. The learner participates critically by analyzing specific words used in relevant existential experiences.

The underlying aim of Freire's literacy campaign is to help the learner differentiate between what is given in society and what is created; the world of nature and the world of culture. When this difference is identified the learner, as a Subject, will act in the world and with the world. As Freire suggests,

He would discover that culture is just as much a clay doll made by artists who are his peers as it is the work of a great sculptor, a great painter, a great mystic, or a great philosopher; that culture is the poetry of lettered poets and also the poetry of his own popular songs - that culture is all human creation.⁽¹⁰⁰⁾

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., p.22.

Freire presents his literacy campaign in five phases. Unfortunately his description of the methodology is very confusing. For Cesar Jerez and Juan Hernandez-Pico⁽¹⁰¹⁾ Freire's literacy method may be collapsed into two stages; the literacy and post-literacy stage. The literacy stage contains the following components:

1. Identifying a geographic location in which the literacy stage will take place. The teacher-coordinators survey the area to identify the 'universe of words' - words used by the community dwellers to describe their everyday life experiences.

2. Selecting 'generative words' commonly used in the community. Generative words are 'words that seem to you to be keys to areas of knowledge or life that you want to open up.'⁽¹⁰²⁾ They reflect a phonetic richness and contain social, political, economic, or cultural implications. Such examples would include the words 'strike,' 'slum,' 'politics,' and 'education.'

¹⁰¹ Cesar Jerez and Juan Hernandez-Pico, Paulo freire, Brazilian Adult Educator : A Literature Review (University of Wisconsin - Extension)

¹⁰² Linda Shaw Finlay and Valerie Faith, "Illiteracy and Alienation in American Colleges: Is Paulo Freire's Pedagogy Relevant?," Radical Teacher 16 (December 1979), p.30.

3. Identifying typical daily living situations, referred to as existential situations, which will be used by the group coordinators. Such situations are normally identified through films, photographs, slides, or books.

These situations are 'codified' and 'decodified' under the direction of the coordinator.

Codification refers to the imaging, or the image itself, of some significant aspect of the learner's concrete reality, such as a slum dwelling. As such it becomes both the object of the teacher-learner dialogue and the content for the introduction of the generative word.⁽¹⁰³⁾

Decodification refers to a process of description and interpretation, whether of printed words, pictures, or other codifications.⁽¹⁰⁴⁾

In other words, a codification is the presentation of the visual image, a decodification is a discussion of it involving descriptive questions such as "What do we see?" or "What are the people doing?" Such questions lead to more interpretive or problem-posing questions.

4. Developing specific guidelines for the group coordinators to follow.

¹⁰³ Ibid., p.16.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., p.17.

5. Preparing cards with the phonetic families corresponding to specific generative words. For example, the word 'favela', the Portuguese word for 'slum', is richly phonetic and evokes themes for future discussions such as housing, clothing, health, poverty, or education.

The syllabic divisions (fa, ve, la) are presented to the group of participants. They are encouraged to form other words using the associated phonetic families (fa, fe, fi, fo, fu, etc.) This is the very heart of the literacy process. One starts with a word which evokes strong feelings and reactions. The word is divided into its syllabic components and new words are generated from its components. The participants learn to read and write and develop the ability to critically analyze words which represent their daily living situations.

The post-literacy campaign focuses on generative themes, as opposed to generative words. Generative themes are topics which are identified within a world-wide context. Examples would include poverty, education, politics, power, and domination.⁽¹⁰⁵⁾

¹⁰⁵ Domination may be a fundamental theme of our own epoch. It also implies its opposite - the theme of liberation. In this case, liberation would be the objective to be achieved during the campaign.

The post-literacy campaign is summarized in five stages.

1. The coordinators acquaint themselves with the geographic location.
2. The coordinators devise an educational program which responds to the needs of the community. Local people are invited to act as co-investigators.
3. The coordinators and local co-investigators evaluate the program. Possible generative themes are introduced and discussed.
4. Specific generative themes are introduced into, and act as a basis for, the educational program.
5. The actual post-literacy program is put into practice through contexts similar to those used in the literacy campaign.

CHAPTER THREEREACTIONS TO THE WORKS OF PAULO FREIRE

"The ruling classes have always thought of the common people as animals. The privileged minority lives with the subliminal fear that 'they will come down out of the mountains and kill us all.' Nothing is more terrifying for the wealthy than the idea that the urban and rural poor, totally proletarianized for centuries, are acquiring a class consciousness.

Gary MacEoin
 Revolution Next Door :
 Latin America in the 1970's

The number of critics who have reviewed the works of Paulo Freire easily exceed the volumes of work he has produced. The critiques reflect both an excoriating and admiring attitude towards Freire's ideas.

Many critics highly respect the works of Freire. Illich⁽¹⁰⁶⁾ admires the way in which Freire has consistently pursued his dream of a humanizing and liberating pedagogy even though he has moved from exile to exile. Farmer⁽¹⁰⁷⁾

¹⁰⁶ Ivan Illich, Deschooling Society (New York : Harper & Row, 1971).

¹⁰⁷ James Farmer, "Adult Education for Transiting," in Paulo Freire : A Revolutionary Dilemma for the Adult Educator, ed. Stanley M. Grabowski (Syracuse University : ERIC Clearing House on Adult Education, 1972), p.1-12.

respects Freire's impassioned identification with the oppressed and the way his anger towards systems of oppression are reflected in his writings. Rivera comments on Freire's style as an educator.

Paulo Freire is a committed teacher. He is also one of the outstanding political philosophers and educators in the world today.⁽¹⁰⁸⁾

Kneen proclaims,

A great many Christians still claim that there is an irreconcilable conflict between Marxist analysis and methodology and the Christian faith ... They should read and meditate on Freire's Pedagogy of the Oppressed ... In reading Freire, one begins to suspect ... that there is a much deeper bond between Marxist methodology and Christian faith than we have really begun to admit, East or West.⁽¹⁰⁹⁾

A critique to which almost any reader of Freire can relate deals with his style of writing and use of rhetoric. Comments offered by Foy⁽¹¹⁰⁾, Friedenbergl⁽¹¹¹⁾, Knudson⁽¹¹²⁾ and

¹⁰⁸ William M. Rivera, "The Changers : A New Breed of Adult Educator," in Paulo Freire : A Revolutionary Dilemma for the Adult Educator, ed. Stanley M. Grabowski (Syracuse University : ERIC Clearing House on Adult Education, 1972), p.55.

¹⁰⁹ Stanley M. Grabowski, ed., Paulo Freire : A Revolutionary Dilemma for the Adult Educator (Syracuse University : ERIC Clearing House on Adult Education, 1972), p.110.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., p.109.

Collins⁽¹¹³⁾ suggest Freire's approach to writing envelopes vagueness, redundancies, boredom and inconsistencies. Boston recommends Freire pay some attention to how his ideas are expressed if his works are to gain popular exposure.

It ill behooves an educator for liberation to present himself to interested readers cloaked in such an obscure, convoluted, dull, overly metaphysical style, devoid of the real human experience which generated such provocative ideas.⁽¹¹⁴⁾

Freire's penchant for obfuscation and his intemperate use of words such as 'revolutionary,' 'scientific,' the 'people,' 'ideological' give unloving critics the opportunity to attack for all the wrong reasons.⁽¹¹⁵⁾

Another commonly found critique relates to the way Freire polarizes specific themes. He frequently refers to the dominator-dominated, oppressor-oppressed, Subject-Object and domesticator-domesticated. This polarization, or what Boston

¹¹¹ Ibid., p.109.

¹¹² Ibid., p.110.

¹¹³ See Collins, Consciousness, Conscientization, Cultural Action and Education in Paulo Freire (Department of History and Philosophy in Education, OISE., 1972).

¹¹⁴ Bruce O. Boston, "Paulo Freire: Notes of a Loving Critic," in Grabowski (ed.), Revolutionary Dilemma, p.86.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., p.86.

refers to as Subjection⁽¹¹⁶⁾, does not encompass any intermediary buffer⁽¹¹⁷⁾. For Freire a person must be either an oppressor or an oppressed. He does not consider the possibility of that same person being an oppressor in one situation and an oppressed in another situation.

This element of critique is reflected in the way Freire regards adult education. He depicts two extremely polarized views - banking education and problem-posing education. Freire forces the reader to implicitly ask the question : Which type of education is better? He avoids the question : When is it appropriate to use banking education or problem-posing education?⁽¹¹⁸⁾

Banking education may be more beneficial for the learner than problem-posing education in particular situations. An example would be when motivated adults wish to obtain specific bodies of knowledge within a paradigm with which they are already familiar and knowledgeable. Problem-posing education would be more effective when motivation is lacking

¹¹⁶ For Boston the word 'Subjection' suggests there are no other styles of relationships in Latin America, or the Third World, except those dichotomized views presented by Freire. See Boston's article Notes of a Loving Critic, p.88.

¹¹⁷ Boston does commend Freire for his refusal to dichotomize action and reflection. The action-reflection dialectic invites people to become more fully human.

¹¹⁸ The issue of polarization between banking education and problem-posing education is uniquely dealt with in Crowe's Old Things and New : A Strategy for Education (Atlanta, Georgia : Scholars Press, 1985).

on the part of the learner or prescriptive types of education have failed.

Many critics (¹¹⁹) assail Freire's theme of conscientization. They suggest he gives the impression that once the process of conscientization has been initiated and a clear break with the past has been effected, the past is left behind in the name of a revolutionary future. But, we can have no more future than we have past and vice-versa. This point may be missed in Freire's works. In addition, Freire fails to explain what will happen after conscientization has occurred and how to avoid a return to past forms of oppression. This shows the vulnerability of conscientization.

For some critics Freire offers absolutely nothing to the field of liberatory education. Griffith, a most vehement critic of Freire, suggests,

¹¹⁹ For instance, see E. Epstein, "Blessed be the Oppressed - And Those Who Can Identify with Them: A Critique of Paulo Freire's Conscientizacao." A paper presented at a meeting of the American Educational Studies Association in Chicago, 1972. Also, see T. Sanders, "The Paulo Freire Method: Literacy Training and Conscientization," West Coast American Series, Vol. XV, No. 1 (Chile), 1968.

Freire's criticisms of education, based primarily on his assumptions about the relationship between teachers and students, are neither new nor particularly useful in bringing about an improvement in the process.⁽¹²⁰⁾

For Griffith, Freire simply reiterates the philosophy proposed by Dewey. Freire asserts education is suffering from 'narration sickness' because narrating teachers present 'lifeless and petrified' content to patiently listening students. Dewey called for a learning process which included the life experiences of the child and seeking solutions to practical problems. Griffith continues,

Despite Freire's impassioned preaching on the topic (adult literacy), his notions about the necessity for making the student an active, questioning, thinking participant in the formal education process ... are neither new nor revolutionary.⁽¹²¹⁾

Freire's writings have been accused of promoting violent revolutionary action. Griffith acclaims Freire's only justification for conducting literacy training programs is 'the preparation of the learners to participate in the revolution to overthrow the oppressive elites.' Harman suggests,

¹²⁰ William S. Griffith, "Paulo Freire: Utopian Perspectives on Literacy Education for Revolution," in Grabowski (ed.), Revolutionary Dilemma, p.67.

¹²¹ Ibid., p.68.

The insistence, throughout the book, upon violent revolution as the only solution to oppression tends to obscure some of the more salient ideas pertaining to education and pedagogy... This book should not be read as a 'revolutionary pedagogy' but, rather, as a pedagogy for revolution.⁽¹²²⁾

It appears that Griffith and Harman have entirely missed the profound implications of Freire's thought on educational theory and practice. Freire does not use literacy campaigns as a means to justify revolutions. He feels that revolutions will be the result of conscientization, of passive objects becoming Subjects, of people taking control of their lives. This will lead to radical social change. This is his understanding of revolution.

Stanley⁽¹²³⁾ questions the universality of Freire's literacy method. He feels a systematic study should be conducted of the method's efficacy in various settings outside Latin America. This will determine whether Freire's ideas are applicable to highly industrialized democracies such as the United States and Canada.

Criticism has also surfaced related to Freire's utopianism. Critics suggest that Freire uses the concept of literacy as 'the' key to liberation and he does not pay attention to the complexities of the notion of liberation

¹²² Ibid., p.110.

¹²³ Manfred Stanley, "Literacy: The Crisis of a Conventional Wisdom," School Review (May, 1972) : 374.

itself.

A handful of critics commend Freire for his insistence on the non-neutrality of education(¹²⁴). This point, while overlooked by many critics, reminds us that education may function in two ways : as an instrument to indoctrinate in the domain of the ruling class or as a process used by people to deal critically with their own reality.

No doubt many critics of Paulo Freire will continue to either dismiss or praise his work for one reason or another. Some will regard his work on education as too political. Others will admire him for his devotion to oppression and adult illiteracy. In either case, it is evident that Freire's contributions to education and schooling have made an impact equalled by few others. Collins suggests,

Americans are familiar with educators like George Counts, John Dewey, Theodore Brameld and scores of others who stressed the anthropological concept of culture and developed the social implications of education... Freire joins them with a directness and immediacy that can only come from his third world perspective and experience. (¹²⁵)

¹²⁴ See Bruce Boston, "Notes of a Loving Critic," in Grabowski (ed.), "Paulo Freire : A Revolutionary Dilemma for the Adult Educator," Nov. 1972.

¹²⁵ Denis E. Collins, Life, Works and Thought, p.87.

CHAPTER FOUR**IMPLICATIONS FOR EDUCATION IN NORTH AMERICA**

"Man is born free, and yet we see him everywhere in chains. Those who believe themselves the masters of others cease not to be even greater slaves than the people they govern. How this happens I am ignorant..."

Jean Jacques Rousseau
The Social Contract, 1762.

Many teachers in North America are dismayed with the present form of pedagogy found in schools. They suggest that the standard syllabus is uninspiring, for both teachers and students, with dull texts, rote memorizing, abstract subjects and questionable testing methods. Teacher and student mediocrity is inevitable if patterns in the teaching profession do not change.

Many teachers are desperately searching for alternative ways to create an enriching and remunerating teaching and learning environment. To them, Freire's pedagogy offers hope. It encompasses a theory of learning and social change along with practical teaching techniques.

As Freire's primary concern is with education of illiterate adults in the Third World of Latin America, the question arises as to the importance and applicability of his

methodology in areas where illiteracy is not so severe a problem⁽¹²⁶⁾. Freire agrees with Mannheim that he 'would not restrict his definition of ignorance to illiteracy, but would include the masses lack of experience at participating and intervening in the historical process.'⁽¹²⁷⁾ Reflecting on the role of education in the industrialized West, Reimer suggests,

Education for these people does not consist primarily in learning to read, but in learning to understand and do something about their miserable situation. This may involve learning to read, but it must obviously include other things, without which the ability to read would not be of any value.⁽¹²⁸⁾

In this chapter we will identify the implications of Freire's philosophy for education in North America. First, we will consider some general implications of his thought on formal educational settings. Second, we will review some

¹²⁶ This implies that illiteracy is relatively low in North America as compared to Latin America. Illiteracy still remains a problem in industrially advanced countries. According to Frideres, the current estimates of the number of illiterates in Canada are as high as 8 percent of the total population and 60 percent of the Native population. See James S. Frideres, "Native People and Canadian Education," in Terry Wotherspoon (ed.), The Political Economy of Canadian Schooling (Toronto : Methuen Publications, 1987), p.283.

¹²⁷ Freire, Education for Critical Consciousness, p.41.

¹²⁸ Everett Reimer, School is Dead, Alternatives in Education, (New York : Anchor Books, 1970), p.106.

case-studies which envelop Freire's methodology. Through these studies we will reflect upon the value of his work for both formal and nonformal educational settings.

A. GENERAL IMPLICATIONS

Educators in North America have modified and effectively applied Freire's philosophy to specific projects in education. In many cases these projects are aimed at improving literacy skills. The philosophy of education presented by Freire has other implications.

1. IMPROVED TEACHING SKILLS

Teachers often believe there is a universal method of pedagogy. In many cases this method incorporates the characteristics of banking education. Goodlad suggests,

The data from our observations in more than 1000 classrooms support the popular image of a teacher standing or sitting in front of the class imparting knowledge to a group of students. (¹²⁹)

¹²⁹ Goodlad, A Place Called School, p.105.

This popular image promotes passivity and harms the classroom learning environment. Goodlad continues,

No matter how we approach the classroom in an effort to describe and understand what goes on, the teacher comes through as coach, quarterback, referee, and even rule-maker. But there the analogy must stop because there is no team. There is, instead, a loosely knit group. Each student/player plays the same position, with varying degrees of skill. There is no inherent opportunity or reason to admire performances in other positions and how each contributes to effective team accomplishment.⁽¹³⁰⁾

... three categories of student activity marked by passivity, written work, listening, and preparing for assignments - dominate in the likelihood of their occurring at any given time at all three levels of schooling.⁽¹³¹⁾

Problem-posing style pedagogy invites constant interaction between the teacher and students. Through dialogue the teacher comes to know the strengths and weaknesses of each learner; the way each person approaches life - mentally, physically, socially, and spiritually. The teacher becomes flexible enough to change teaching strategies at any given time to accommodate the variances between the learning abilities of students.

¹³⁰ Ibid., p.108.

¹³¹ Ibid., p.195.

A teacher practicing problem-posing pedagogy will encourage conscientization in the classroom. All participants are guided through a dialogical exploration into the deepest significance of the issue at hand. This exploration involves critical questioning, forming opinions, testing hypotheses, and making decisions. Students begin to see reality clearly and critically.

When conscientization is promoted in the classroom the fruits of reward can be plentiful for both teacher and students. These rewards include;

- a) An improved teacher-student relationship.
- b) A positive teaching and learning environment.
- c) A sincere appreciation for the value of learning.
- d) Improved classroom management.

2. FUNCTION OF SCHOOLING

Often teachers rigidly adhere to routines set forth in teaching manuals and unquestionably follow the expectations defined by school administrators and board members. Overburdened with paper work, supervision duties, and meetings, they may overlook their primary role as teachers - to teach. Apple refers to this phenomenon as 'intensification.' It represents one of the most effective ways to eliminate the work privileges of teachers.

Intensification ... has many symptoms, from the trivial to the more complex - ranging from being allowed no time at all even to go to the bathroom, have a cup of coffee or relax, to having a total absence of time to keep up with one's field.⁽¹³²⁾

... in my general discussion of the effects of intensification ... getting done became the norm. There is so much to do that simply accomplishing what is specified requires nearly all of one's efforts. 'The challenge of the work day (or week) was to accomplish the required number of objectives.' As one teacher put it, 'I just want to get this done. I don't have time to be creative or imaginative.'⁽¹³³⁾

Pedagogues can be naive and regard schools as neutral institutions. Teaching becomes the honourable profession of passing on wisdom and sharing the 'truth' with inexperienced youth. Teachers must be fully cognizant of their political influence. They are political by the very fact that they either serve the values of those in power or explore viable options. Beck makes reference to Apple.

¹³² Michael W. Apple, Teachers & Texts : A Political Economy of Class & Gender Relations in Education (New York : Routledge, 1988), p.41.

¹³³ Ibid., p.44.

He maintains that schooling 'is not a neutral enterprise'; we inevitably transmit certain values to study because they are 'already embedded in the design of the institutions we work in.'⁽¹³⁴⁾

Livingstone identifies the socializing effects of schooling.

Formal schooling has become the central instrument of socialization and selection in the reproduction of differentiated labour power and the general class structure in advanced capitalism. Schooling is also the major institution currently providing the basic knowledge that all people require not only to work effectively, but to participate politically and live meaningfully in a complex technological society.⁽¹³⁵⁾

Freire's pedagogy, as represented through the dialectical relationship between critical reflection and action, would permit teachers to escape the restrictions imposed by intensification and mythification. Conscientization would invite teachers to take a step back and view the schooling process as a whole. By asking questions they could critically explore the many dimensions of schooling.

¹³⁴ Beck, Better Schools, p.66-67.

¹³⁵ D. W. Livingstone, "Crisis, Classes and Educational Reform in Advanced Capitalism." In Wotherspoon (ed.), The Political Economy of Canadian Schooling, p.60.

- a) What is the function of schooling? Are the aims of schooling directed toward developing the mental, physical, social, and spiritual well-being of students or are they formulated to 'create and recreate forms of consciousness that enable social control to be maintained...'?⁽¹³⁶⁾
- b) What are the moral implications to indoctrination? Beck submits that 'indoctrination is, by definition, always wrong.'⁽¹³⁷⁾

... where it involves transmitting false or unfounded beliefs, indoctrination is usually harmful because students are left with beliefs which are not a reliable basis for judgement and action in the real world. They are likely to make mistakes in their interaction with other people and the environment generally, and be hindered in their pursuit of 'the good life' for themselves and others.⁽¹³⁸⁾

¹³⁶ Michael W. Apple, Ideology and Curriculum, (London : Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1979), p.3.

¹³⁷ Beck, Better Schools, p.75.

¹³⁸ Ibid., p.75.

- c) Do schools promote sexual discrimination? Curriculum material such as textbooks, magazines, posters, and films often use sexist language. This language is implicitly assimilated and employed by teachers and students.

Hanrahan suggests,

Teachers treat female children differently from male children. Almost inevitably if a boy asks the teacher for help, the teacher will show him how to perform the task; if a girl asks for assistance, the teacher will often complete the job for her, cultivating dependence rather than initiative.⁽¹³⁹⁾

If what Apple suggests is true, that 'education acts in the economic sector of a society to reproduce important aspects of inequality,'⁽¹⁴⁰⁾ then it is likely that discrimination occurring in schools carries through to other social settings. This is identified in some statistics related to class structure in Ontario⁽¹⁴¹⁾ and allows us to use as an example the discrimination still prevalent regarding women in our society.

¹³⁹ Maura Hanrahan, "Producing the Female Reserve Labour Force: Women and Schooling," in The Political Economy of Canadian Schooling, ed. Terry Wotherspoon (Toronto : Methuen, 1987), p.295.

¹⁴⁰ Apple, Ideology and Curriculum, p.3.

¹⁴¹ D.W. Livingstone, Social Crisis and Schooling (Toronto : Garamond Press, 1985), p.52.

- (i) The dependent population includes more than 40 percent of Ontario adults over 18 years of age; half of this total represents full-time homemakers.
- (ii) Over 90 percent of Ontario's corporate executives are males.
- (iii) Most part-time workers are women.

Hanrahan reflects on the role of women in society.

Like women the world over, most Canadian women are characterized by a socio-economic status that is inferior to men's.⁽¹⁴²⁾

Many of the jobs women do are seasonal whose unemployment rate is high, whose labour force participation is low, and whose choices are limited...⁽¹⁴³⁾

¹⁴² Maura Hanrahan, Political Economy, p.291.

¹⁴³ Ibid., p.294.

B. CASE-STUDIES

The following case-studies identify some of the ways Freire's philosophy has been implemented in North America. The studies were conducted in different geographic locations: University of Wisconsin, College of Staten Island, University of California, and schools in Metropolitan Toronto and in other areas of Canada. They deal with various areas of concern: classroom structure, adult education, literacy, codification, conscientization, and mathematics education.

1. APPS STUDY

A seminar on Philosophy of Adult Education was conducted by J.W. Apps⁽¹⁴⁴⁾ at the University of Wisconsin. The purpose of the seminar was to investigate the philosophical positions held by people within the field of adult education and to encourage these individuals to further formulate their personal philosophies of adult education. To achieve his objectives Apps formed a culture circle.⁽¹⁴⁵⁾

¹⁴⁴ See Chere S. Coggins, "Application of the Freire Method in North America : An Exploratory Study with Implications for Adult Education," (M.A. Thesis). Available through O.I.S.E.

¹⁴⁵ Freire uses the term "culture circle" when making reference to a group of participants and a coordinator involved in dialogical action.

The culture circle was composed of twelve individuals; ten North Americans and two Nigerians (two professors and ten students). The twelve members were all in the department of Agriculture and Extension Education, University of Wisconsin.

Apps began the seminar by examining the existential reality of the participants and assigning them readings from Freire's Pedagogy of the Oppressed. The generative theme was 'our life in this academic community.' This theme, broad in scope, was directed toward students and professors alike, and served as a starting point for dialogical action.

Dialogue was structured around six questions.

- a. What brought you to this community?
- b. What disappointments have you experienced in this academic community?
- c. What dynamic, historic forces do you see in operation?
- d. What is your current mood?
- e. What contradictions, conflicting forces, limit situations do you see?
- f. What limit acts can be taken to transcend the limit situations?

The six questions were critically and dialogically explored during weekly meetings. Opinions were shared and recorded on a large flip chart. Apps directed the latter portion of the seminar to question six. The group examined the existent department philosophy and requirements at the graduate level.

The group decided to elicit the interest and assistance of the remainder of the staff and students to actively involve them in isolating and dealing with the contradictions inherent in the department. Several committees were formed.

The methodology practiced by Apps was congruent with the basic philosophical tenets of Freire. He did not simply replicate Freire's Latin American method. He implemented it in a way which suited his particular group of participants.

2. CLASSROOM STUDY

For Freire education must be free of all manipulative, alienating, and authoritative relationships between the teachers and students. The learning environment ought to be adaptive, flexible, and transformable to the needs of the individual.

The implications of Freire's philosophy of education

were witnessed by Lewis⁽¹⁴⁶⁾ in a small school on the western fringes of Metropolitan Toronto⁽¹⁴⁷⁾. The curriculum was presented as work units which integrated the skills and concepts necessary for understanding the cultural, social, political, and economic context of the students and the teacher. Specific projects encouraged the students to examine the socio-historical forces which shaped the development of their environment.

The structure of the classroom invited critical dialogue. The room was arranged in work areas, each area devoted to a specific approach to the environment; historical, scientific, cultural, or geographical.

Basic skills, language and mathematical aptitude were integrated into the cultural and socio-historical aspects of the program. For example, reading and writing proficiency were an integral part of the history and socio-cultural units; mathematical skills were part of the scientific and geographical units.

Lewis identified two significant aspects of this approach to learning. First, the classroom activities were student-oriented. The students were invited to examine their social, political, and economic environment. Second, the

¹⁴⁶ Magdolna Lewis, "Some Implications of Paulo Freire's Philosophical and Pedagogical Approach for Canadian Education," (M.A. Thesis, University of Toronto, 1977).

¹⁴⁷ Lewis did not mention whether this school was at the elementary or secondary level.

process was adaptable to any level at which the students were capable of functioning.

In addition to creating an adaptable and student-oriented learning environment, Lewis also noticed that each student learnt to work as part of a team.

The process also encouraged a cooperative and helping relationship among the students since they were no longer pitted against each other in a pursuit to outdo one another, but rather were united in their struggle to understand and come to terms with the results of their socio-historical investigations, and the basic skills necessary for understanding the concepts.⁽¹⁴⁸⁾

3. CODIFICATION STUDY

For Freire codification means 'the representation of typical existential situations of the group with which one is working.'⁽¹⁴⁹⁾ It represents 'familiar local situations - which, however, open perspectives for the analysis of regional and national problems.'⁽¹⁵⁰⁾

¹⁴⁸ Lewis M.A. Thesis. p.194.

¹⁴⁹ Freire, Education for Critical Consciousness, p.51.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., p.51.

The codification process was implemented in a Canadian elementary (joint grade six and seven class) school¹⁵¹). Freire's method was used by the students to help them analyze their urban environment from a social and historical perspective.

The curriculum was based upon the life situations presented by the students. The teacher and students codified their own situations by various means - photographs of the city, collections of data from registrar offices and newspaper articles. Throughout the year the students compiled a comprehensive view of the historical foundations of their environment and of the relationship between various social, political, and economic concerns which affected their own lives.

The class became aware of the forces which shaped their urban environment and the structures which have been built to support these forces. They developed the ability to critically question their socio-historical conditions and propose solutions to existent social and political problems.

¹⁵¹ See Lewis thesis, p.183-185.

4. CONTACT STUDY

A study¹⁵² was implemented in Toronto to help functionally illiterate people learn to read and to become increasingly aware of their personal and social life situations.

The participants were a group of teenagers who came primarily from the inner city area of Toronto, who had dropped out of school, and who, despite the fact that they had reached some level of high school, were functionally illiterate.

The co-ordinator gathered a series of words commonly used by the students. The students were asked to use these words in any way they pleased. Some students used specific words in sentences, others wrote stories, and a few wrote poems. They were invited to share their work with the class. This encouraged dialogue among the students and the co-ordinator. Together they explored numerous personal and social problem and ways to deal with these limiting situations.

The program co-ordinator witnessed the positive value of cooperative learning, that is, simultaneous learning by the teacher and the students. The teacher used the life

¹⁵² Ibid., p.156-158.

experiences of the students as the basis for the curriculum. This gained and preserved the attention of the class. The team dialogically searched for the significance of specific themes.

Freire's emphasis that the meaningfulness of the themes comes from the fact that it is the student along with the teacher, not the teacher alone, who organizes and assigns meaning to his own reality, was adequately demonstrated in this experience.⁽¹⁵³⁾

5) IDAC STUDY

A seminar was conducted in Wisconsin by four co-ordinators from Geneva's L'Institut d'Action Culturelle⁽¹⁵⁴⁾. The purpose of the seminar was to permit individuals to more fully understand and appreciate the value of Freire's methodology. The group was composed of thirty-four members; a widely diversified group of individuals from the United States, Canada, Brazil, Germany, and Switzerland.

The co-ordinators began the seminar by asking each member to introduce themselves to the group. Introductions included reflection upon life experiences, ideas about

¹⁵³ Lewis M.A. Thesis, p.158.

¹⁵⁴ From Introduction to IDAC Seminars - Workshops, unpublished paper, Geneva, Switzerland, date unknown.

education and pedagogy, and socio-political contradictions.

The co-ordinators identified three groups of questions from the introductory session.

- a) What is the relationship between the co-ordinator and the other members of the group?
- b) How does one start a group?
How is reflection translated into action or mass movement?
- c) Where should the conscientizing process take place; inside or outside the existing social structure?

These questions were used by the co-ordinators to present a general analysis of Freire's philosophy. Four major themes were isolated.

- a) Unity between the co-ordinator and the participants.
- b) Unity of reflection and action.
- c) An understanding of the totality of problems.
- d) Identification of the gap between perception of oppressive reality and a clear, critical awareness of it.

The dialogue which ensued was more oriented towards a clarification of the points rather than seeking definitive answers.

The group viewed a series of slides representative of those used in literacy campaigns in Brazil. Participants discussed the implications of visual codifications in a mass media saturated North American culture.

The seminar produced some positive results. People reflected on their lives and a few members, such as the Womens' Center's Meat Awareness Program, took action based upon those reflections. Several participants made an attempt to meet again and continue the consciousness-raising movements in specific communities. One negative outcome was identified by the co-ordinators.

... what did seem incongruous however was the attitude, at least initially, of the participants. They had come to hear how to raise consciousness from individuals who were closely aligned with Paulo Freire in Brazil. The co-ordinators did not allow this type of banking to occur, they stimulated critical thinking rather than dependency. The problem was not totally solved, but at least this incongruity was identified and attempts were made to deal with it.⁽¹⁵⁵⁾

¹⁵⁵ Coggin's Thesis, Chapter 4, p.26.

6. FINLAY & FAITH STUDY

Finlay and Faith⁽¹⁵⁶⁾ taught a Philosophy of Education course to university students using Freire's philosophy and methodology. The primary objective of the course was to improve the language skills of these students. The course texts were Freire's Pedagogy of the Oppressed, Cultural Action for Freedom, and Education for Critical Consciousness along with other reference material⁽¹⁵⁷⁾.

Twenty-seven students participated in the course. These students represented all social classes and a wide variety of university majors. Nineteen were selected because they or their teachers perceived linguistic inadequacies. Several students were, or had been, on academic probation due to an unwillingness or inability to complete acceptable written course work.

Finlay and Faith began the course by asking each student to produce a list of words that represented areas of life

¹⁵⁶ Linda Shaw Finlay and Valerie Faith, "Illiteracy and Alienation in American Colleges: Is Paulo Freire's Pedagogy Relevant?" in Ira Shor, (ed.), Freire for the Classroom: A Sourcebook for Liberatory Teaching (New Hampshire, Heinemann Educational Books Inc., 1987), p.63-86. Also found in Radical Teacher No.16, December 1979, p.28-37.

¹⁵⁷ Valery and Faith also made reference to Collins's Paulo Freire: His Life and His Works, Vygotsky's Thought and Language, and Berger & Luckmann's The Social Construction of Reality.

they wish to explore. This provided the co-ordinators a list of 'key' words. These words were later arranged by students in whatever groups seemed appropriate to them. The grouped words revealed a clear dichotomy; the 'Left Group' of words included 'injustice,' 'government,' 'education,' 'oppression,' and 'systems,' while the 'Right Group' of words included 'emotion,' 'love,' 'God,' 'happiness,' and 'music.'

The co-ordinators discussed the grouped words with the students. One student considered the Left Group words to represent things over which they had no powers while the Right Group reflected things they controlled. Two students in dialogue suggested,

We control the things in the right-hand group.
Yeah, they are personal things, emotional. You have to analyze, intellectualize to understand the one's on the left. But you can't define the words on the right; they have a personal meaning.¹⁵⁸

From these key words the co-ordinators identified a generative theme: a profound distrust of and alienation from major cultural institutions. Finlay and Faith reflect on the behaviour of the students.

¹⁵⁸ Shor, Freire for the Classroom, p.69.

What had appeared on the surface to be laziness, apathy, or a lack of motivation was this depression marked by silent passive resistance with a potential for anger.⁽¹⁵⁹⁾

The students were asked to read specific passages from several of Freire's books, write a definition for each level of consciousness and describe the thought process of a person at each level. They associated definitions with objectivity and descriptions with subjectivity. Finlay and Faith discussed Freire's view on the relationship between subjectivity and objectivity, and the students acknowledged, as Freire does, that knowledge is both objective and subjective; it is something that is given and something that is constructed⁽¹⁶⁰⁾.

The students understood that to use language unreflectively implied accepting cultural definitions blindly, and to use language critically meant analyzing cultural definitions and perspectives. They realized that their inability to read and write was connected to their sense that language belonged on the left-hand list of key words; words they distrusted.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., p.71.

¹⁶⁰ I suspect reference was also made to Berger & Luckmann's The Social Construction of Reality and their extensive discussion on society both as objective and subjective reality.

With further readings and continuous dialogue, the students acknowledged the fact that their level of social understanding was semi-intransitive rather than critical. Reflecting on the works of Berger and Luckmann helped the students realize that institutions were made by humans and that these institutions could be reformed to accommodate their needs and beliefs.

Finlay and Faith encouraged the students to write about any anger or anxiety they experienced. Through these writing episodes the co-ordinators understood why these students found it difficult to write. The students used run-on sentences or incomplete sentences. This revealed to Finlay and Faith that the students could present topics for consideration but were afraid to take responsibility for asserting their own judgements on these topics.

The value of this course, and more generally the effectiveness of Freire's philosophy in North America, is reflected in a statement offered by a student.

The Philosophy of Education course meant a great deal to me. I found a way to overcome a growing feeling of alienation from my fellow men and women, my cultural relatives. Before I studied the work of Freire, Vygotsky, and Berger and Luckmann, I'd have been at a loss to explain the isolation I was feeling. This shows that I was suffering not only a lack of cultural awareness but also a lack of self-awareness. I feel now that developing one's understanding of self and developing one's understanding of culture go hand-in-hand. I further feel

that the means of this development is an ability to use language, to communicate, clearly, and from a position of self-worth. With this understanding I can begin the task of understanding the world and constructing a place in it for myself. I no longer feel alone or afraid.⁽¹⁶¹⁾

Others have successfully incorporated Freire's methodology in a North American context. For example, Frankenstein⁽¹⁶²⁾ demonstrated how Freire's ideas invite mathematics teachers to probe the meaning of mathematical knowledge, to identify the importance of quantitative reasoning in the development of critical consciousness, and to discover that mathematics anxiety sustains hegemonic ideologies. Another case-study⁽¹⁶³⁾ shows how the Wisconsin based Meat Boycott Awareness Group used Freire's methodology to raise the awareness of individuals regarding the rising cost of meat, and the politics integrally related to this situation.

These case-studies indicate that Freire's philosophy, derived through existential situations in Latin America, can be implemented in North America. Even though cultural

¹⁶¹ Shor (ed.), Freire for the Classroom, p.84.

¹⁶² Marilyn Frankenstein, "Critical Mathematics Education: An Application of Paulo Freire's Epistemology," in Shor (ed.), Freire for the Classroom, p.180-210.

¹⁶³ Coggins M.A. Thesis, Chapter 4, p.31-33.

experiences differ between, say, Recife, Brazil and Ontario, Canada, education is similar. It is a political act in all educational institutions. Freire suggests,

... it would be incorrect to say that Latin American education alone has a political nature. Education worldwide is political by nature... politics is the soul of education, it's very being, whether in the First World or in the Third World. (¹⁶⁴)

Education also involves the process of knowing. This invites many epistemological questions. What is the relationship between objective and subjective knowledge? Do we own knowledge? How do we know something? Do we distribute knowledge to students? Do we use knowledge to inspire students to want to know, or is knowledge used to feed and pacify them. These questions are relevant in both Recife and Ontario. Freire reflects on the implications of his work.

Throughout my life, especially after Pedagogy of the Oppressed was published in the United States, and after travelling all over the world, I have observed many educational practices that seem to be influenced somewhat by my thinking. I would say, then, there is a universal dimension to what I have been writing about education. (¹⁶⁵)

¹⁶⁴ Freire, Politics of Education, p.188.

¹⁶⁵ Freire, Politics of Education, p.190.

C. SOME QUESTIONS CONCERNING IMPLEMENTATION

When attempting to implement Freire's philosophy in North America, we need to remind ourselves that he developed his own educational methodology within a particular cultural situation; a situation very different to any in North America. Boston suggests,

Already there are a number of groups of people at work among oppressed classes and groups in the United States, (and even among the middle class), who have experienced the frustrations of trying to impose Freire like a grid on vastly different situations.⁽¹⁶⁶⁾

A number of questions must be addressed when implementing Freire's method in North America. These issues, considered in question form, may offer direction for further research and study at the doctoral level.

¹⁶⁶ Bruce O. Boston, "Paulo Freire : Notes of a Loving Critic," in Grabowski (ed.), A Revolutionary Dilemma, p.91.

1. GEOGRAPHIC AREA

- a) Freire applies his literacy campaign to peasant groups in rural communities. Can his methodology be considered in large urban areas?
- b) When recruiting participants for the campaign, should we concentrate our efforts on one geographic location, or should we recruit people around a specific issue or concern which may not be restricted to a geographic area?
- c) If a specific locale is selected, how large an area should this encompass?

2. CULTURE CIRCLES

- a) How large is a culture circle?

Freire does not stipulate an ideal figure, nor a range within which the ideal number lies. Bales et. al.⁽¹⁶⁷⁾ found that as group size increased more individuals provided less input, and many individuals psychologically migrated to the fringe of the group.

¹⁶⁷ R.F. Bales, F. Strodbeck, T. Mills, and M.E. Rosenborough, Channels of Communication in Small Groups, Amer. Sociol. Rev., 1951, 16, 461-468).

b) What are the effects of dividing larger culture circles into smaller, more practical sizes? On what basis should one subdivide; interest, sheer numbers, religion, race?

c) Are homogeneous groups more effective than heterogeneous groups?

In homogeneous groups similar personal, philosophical, and ideological stances may prevail. Arriving at a common goal or area of concern may be simplified. With heterogeneous groups opinions and attitudes will vary greatly.

d) Would confidentiality and trust be affected in larger culture circles?

Maintaining a sense of unity, trust and faith is paramount to the success of Freire's methodology. Dialogue cannot exist without trust among the member of the group and a profound love of each other and the world.

3. LEADERSHIP

a) What is the role of the co-ordinator of a culture circle?

b) Should co-ordinators express their personal opinions?

- c) The majority of the co-ordinators Freire refers to are those who have emerged from outside the community in which the participants of the culture circle reside.

Would co-ordinators selected from within the community be more effective?

- d) How should co-ordinators be trained?

4. THEMES

- a) An investigating team of specialists from outside the community, as well as members from the community explore the existential reality of the participants in an attempt to create a series of themes, or a thematic universe.

Could these themes evolve from within the culture circles; from the participants themselves rather than from a select group of specialists?

5. ACTION

- a) For Freire critical reflection and dialogue within a culture circle will generate specific socio-political contradictions.

How are these contradictions resolved for action?

CONCLUSION

"Universal education is the power, which is destined to overthrow every specie of hierarchy. It is destined to remove all artificial inequality and leave the natural inequalities to find their true level. With the artificial inequalities of caste, rank, title, blood, birth, race, color, sex, etc., will fall nearly all the oppression, abuse, prejudice, enmity, and injustice, that humanity is now subject to."

Lester Frank Ward, Education c. 1872.

Throughout Paulo Freire's philosophy of education reference is consistently made to the importance of developing human consciousness to the level of critical thinking. Whether considering literacy campaigns, liberatory education or dialogue, Freire uses critical thinking as a base from which to begin.

In a conversation with Donald Macedo, Freire reflects upon the importance of critical thinking. He suggests,

Whether it be a raindrop (a raindrop that was about to fall but froze, giving birth to a beautiful icicle), be it a bird that sings, a bus that runs, a violent person on the street, be it a sentence in the newspaper, a political speech, a lover's rejection, be it anything, we must adopt a critical view, that of the person who questions, who doubts, who investigates, and who wants to illuminate the very way we live.¹⁶⁸)

¹⁶⁸ Freire, Politics of Education, p.198.

For Freire critical consciousness is not achieved by one person alone. It is a social phenomenon. The masses reflect upon the socio-economic, socio-cultural and political order of reality and act upon the oppressive elements in an attempt to discard authoritarianism for democratization.

This democratic reality permits human freedom. It allows people the freedom to explore the world, to question what is not understood, and to understand what is questioned.

It is fitting to close this thesis with a poem by John Ohliger on freedom. It is a collection of words with which Freire would agree.

What is freedom?
Freedom is not being ruled by ideas
 you don't believe in.
Freedom is not having to put other people down
 in order to feel valuable.
Freedom is learning.
Freedom is listening.
Freedom has to be fought for.¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁹ A presentation by John Ohliger, "Adult Education for Social Action," to the Central Ohio Adult Education Association, Columbus, Ohio. March, 1971, p.8.

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