

BATTLE FOR MINDS. ELEMENTS OF CRITICAL PEDAGOGY*

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Abstract: *In my study, I concentrate my attention on some aspects of Freire's thought on pedagogy. I analyse some aspects of Freire's opposition between his model of pedagogy and the banking model of education, i.e. the oppressor pedagogy: the bank education's goal is to establish and conserve a hierarchical society; the problem-posing education aims to establish an egalitarian society and eliminate oppression forms. The concepts of anthropology which underlie the two pedagogical systems are quite different from each other: bank education views individuals as complete entities, i.e., as entities whose essence is given once and for all, whereas problem-posing education sees individuals as self-transcending entities and thus as entities who develop and change in history. I then analyse Freire's investigation on the mechanism of internalisation: internalisation is the process through which oppressed individuals are transformed into entities mentally directed by the oppressors. It corresponds to the complete assimilation of the mind of the oppressed to the mind of the oppressor. The oppressed are therewith transformed into replicas of the ideology of the oppressors. The text of Freire which I use for my investigation is Pedagogy of the oppressed.*

Keywords: Freire, critical pedagogy, banking model of education, autonomy, internalisation, freedom.

a) Introduction

In my study, I shall concentrate my attention on some aspects of Freire's thought on pedagogy. In particular, I shall analyse some aspects of Freire's opposition between his model of pedagogy and the banking model of education, i.e., the oppressor pedagogy². Through a comparison of some

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² A definition of the banking concept of education and a description of its effects can be found, for example, in the following passage of Freire:

principles belonging to the oppressor pedagogy and the problem-posing pedagogy we shall be able to observe that the two models of pedagogy present mutually incompatible interpretations of the educational aims. With the banking model of education, pedagogy should be an instrument to conserve the structure of the present society, whereas the problem-posing education's goal is to promote change in society. The two pedagogy concepts prove to be two reciprocally opposed proposals of models for society. The bank education's goal is to establish and conserve a hierarchical society; the problem-posing education aims to establish an egalitarian society and eliminate oppression forms.

The concepts of anthropology which underlie the two pedagogical systems are quite different from each other. Bank education views individuals as complete entities, i.e., as entities whose essence is given once and for all, whereas problem-posing education sees individuals as self-transcending entities and thus as entities who develop and change in history. Freire's pedagogy represents a programme of education that aims to bring the individuals to acknowledge the roots of power underlying the organisation of society. It aims to uncover the interests of social groups underlying the foundations of structures of society.

I shall then focus on Paulo Freire's analysis of the mechanism of internalisation. Internalisation is the process through which oppressed

'Narration (with the teacher as narrator) leads the students to memorize mechanically the narrated content. Worse yet, it turns them into "containers," into "receptacles" to be "filled" by the teacher. The more completely he fills the receptacles, the better a teacher she is. The more meekly the receptacles permit themselves to be filled, the better students they are.

Education thus becomes an act of depositing, in which the students are the depositories and the teacher is the depositor. Instead of communicating, the teacher issues communiqués and makes deposits which the students patiently receive, memorize, and repeat. This is the "banking" concept of education, in which the scope of action allowed to the students extends only as far as receiving, filing, and storing the deposits.' (1970/1992, p. 71-72)

Within the banking education a process of transformation of the individuals takes place: pupils are transformed into containers. They receive pre-formed contents without providing any active participation. Therewith they are annulled in their subjectivity and individuality; they can be finally filed away as mass-produced entities since their minds are fully indoctrinated by the oppressors' contents.

individuals are transformed into entities mentally directed by the oppressors. It corresponds to the complete assimilation of the mind of the oppressed to the mind of the oppressor. The oppressed are therewith transformed into replicas of the ideology of the oppressors.

The text of Freire which I shall use for my remarks is *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. I take full responsibility for the ideas I am going to express in my analysis.

b) Oppositions

As anticipated, banking education and problem-posing education develop reciprocally incompatible strategies for education. The key difference between the two, in my opinion, lies in the strategy of mythicization of reality adopted by the banking education and in the strategy of the demythologisation of reality adopted by the problem-posing education. The value of the two concepts of mythicization and demythologisation can be synthesised in the following way:

- mythicization of reality means conferring an aura of sacrality to the whole organisation of a society – while correspondingly concealing the concrete origin of the structures of society itself. Through the process of mythicization a society is transformed into an absolute entity, separated from any particular interest of particular individuals.
- demythologisation implies the process of discovering the concrete causes of the structure of society. Through the process of demythologisation the intents underlying a particular society are unveiled. Societies are never absolute entities; they are always the realisation of the interests and advantages of a dominating class.

In the following passage of Freire's *Pedagogy of the oppressed* we can see that the fight between the banking education and the problem-posing education corresponds to an authentic battle for the minds of the individuals. Within this battle, the banking education aims to transform minds with myths, whereas the problem-posing education aims to free minds from myths:

'Banking education (for obvious reasons) attempts, by mythicizing reality, to conceal certain facts which explain the way human beings exist in the world; problem-posing education sets itself the task of demythologizing. Banking education resists dialogue; problem-posing education regards dialogue as indispensable to the act of cognition which unveils reality. Banking education

treats students as objects of assistance; problem-posing education makes them critical thinkers.³

Banking education is characterised by the mythicization of reality, whereas problem-posing education is characterised by demythologisation. Mythicization is the ideological process through which reality is presented as given once and for all. Within this perspective, the actual structure of society is the only possible structure of society; there cannot be any alternative constellation. The notion of contingency as regards the structures of society is abolished. The order of society is unchangeable. Individuals are exclusively receptors of a pre-established social order. They cannot be creators of new realities. There is no historical development for individuals and society.

Mythicization is, therefore, an ideological manoeuvre through which a particular model of society, which is produced by particular forces, interests, influences, is presented as being absolute, as being separated from any historical development, as representing the only possible model of society. A particular and artificial order of society is presented as universal and eternal. The fact that the structure of reality is always a particular structure of reality due to particular interests of particular individuals is concealed by the oppressor pedagogy.

The very possibility of imagining an alternative reality should be avoided within the banking education. The reality as it is must be mythicised so that it appears unmodifiable. Any process of becoming aware of the particular power structures which lie at the basis of society should be immediately blocked. Reality, as it is given, cannot appear as something relative to particular power relationships. The structure of society must appear absolute, that is, not connected to and not depending on the interests of particular groups. The structure must be presented as an eternal truth. The organisation of reality in which individuals are living should appear as a structure corresponding to the only possible organisation of reality. It is not simply a possible order of society, it is the only possible order of society.

³ P. Freire, (1992). *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (Myra Bergman Ramos, Trad.). (Original work published in 1970) New York: The Continuum Publishing Company, p. 83.

The banking education refuses dialogue since the banking concept aims to impose contents on the individual: dialogue would be an obstacle for the strategy of imposition. Within this perspective, educational contents are given once and for all. Contents are given, they ought to be silently accepted and never discussed. As a consequence, within the banking model of education there is no free debate since it would have no sense whatsoever to have a free debate about contents that are given once and for all⁴.

Problem-posing education analyses the roots of reality and always unveils the power structures of reality. The problem-posing pedagogy aims to open the space of thought and imagination. The work of the problem-posing pedagogy consists in bringing individuals to the consciousness that the structures of society in which individuals are living are not without alternatives. The structures of society are not structurally given once and for all. The structures of society correspond to precise power structures and are imposed by particular interests. Problem-posing pedagogy is the action of uncovering power structures. Problem-posing pedagogy demythologises, creates awareness of the concealed power structures and uncovers them. Analysing the roots, origins, and causes of the structures of reality implies freeing the structures from any aura of immutability connected to society. Society is not an entity that, being beyond the intellect, cannot be discussed. Pedagogy has to lead oppressed individuals to awareness of the structure of society. A correct pedagogy ought to bring the oppressed individuals to become aware that they are dependent on the precise interests of precise groups of society. Problem-posing pedagogy ought to show that the order in which individuals live is not given once and for all. The order of society is the product of precise interests, it is not connected to any essence of reality whatsoever. The order of society is not eternal and can be changed. Alternatives to the present order of reality are, therefore, possible⁵.

⁴ An open discussion is meaningful only in the context in which reality is not interpreted as given once and for all.

⁵ The mutually opposed strategies of the banking education and the problem-posing education are clear in the following passage too:

‘Whereas banking education anesthetizes and inhibits creative power, problem-posing education involves a constant unveiling of reality. The former attempts to maintain the *submersion* of consciousness; the latter strives for the *emergence* of consciousness and *critical intervention* in reality.’ (1970/1992, p. 81)

c) Principles of critical pedagogy

A further quotation from Freire's *Pedagogy of the oppressed* synthesises many foundational aspects of Freire's meditation on pedagogy, like the connection between the problem-posing education, on the one hand, and the dimension of change, hope, historical dimension of mankind, self-transcendence of individuals, on the other hand:

'Problem-posing education is revolutionary futurity. Hence it is prophetic futurity (and as such, hopeful)⁶. Hence, it corresponds to the historical nature of

Freire attributes to the banking education a strategy of anaesthetisation and inhibition of creative power. He is attributing to the banking education the aim of submerging the consciousness, too. Banking education achieves its aims by destroying any creative power since any creative attitude whatsoever represents, as such, the danger of being a principle of change within society. The strategy of the problem-posing education consists in uncovering the power structures of society. It promotes the emergence of consciousness. The problem-posing education aims to have individuals recognise the ties between interests of particular groups of society and structures of society.

⁶ The problem-posing education is connected to the dimension of the future and the dimension of hope; the education aims to make individuals aware of their conditions and also aims to modify the conditions in which individuals are living. This presupposes the dimension of the future, of development, and of change. Problem-posing education is also connected to the dimension of hope. A programme directed to change is connected to a concept of active hope. Freire's interpretation of hope sees hope as an attitude that inspires activity. Hope does not coincide with passively waiting for the future. Hope cannot be interpreted as an attitude of inactive expectation of a change in reality:

'Nor yet can dialogue exist without hope. 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 others. Hopelessness is a form of silence, of denying the world and fleeing from it. The dehumanization resulting from an unjust order is not a cause for despair but for hope, leading to the incessant pursuit of the humanity denied by injustice. 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. As the encounter of women and men seeking to be more fully human, dialogue cannot be carried on in a climate of hopelessness. If the dialoguers expect nothing to come of their efforts, their encounter will be empty and sterile, bureaucratic and tedious.' (1970/1992, p. 91-92)

Hope is an active condition of mind. Hope is not the attitude of waiting that something comes by itself, without any intervention from the hoping individual.

humankind. Hence, it affirms women and men as beings who transcend themselves, who move forward and look ahead, for whom immobility represents a fatal threat, for whom looking at the past must only be a means of understanding more clearly what and who they are so that they can more wisely build the future.⁷

The passage has many points of Freire interpretation of individuals. The point which underlies the whole anthropology of Paulo Freire, is, in my opinion, that individuals transcend themselves. The essence of individuals is that they transcend themselves. Therefore, individuals are entities open for change. The fact that individuals transcend themselves means that individuals are not bound to the particular conditions in which they live. Individuals cannot be identified with and reduced to their position in reality and in society. Individuals are something else and something more than these particular conditions, even though they are not immediately aware of this, and even though, for each individual, the road to becoming aware of their being different from their conditions is long and difficult. Individuals are not essentially chained to a fixed dimension, to a fixed duty, to a fixed place in society. They are not assigned to a position in society once and for all. They may not and cannot be identified with the conditions in which they are accidentally living. There is no absolute order of society. The structure of society is always created by the interests of particular classes. The structure of society is, therefore, never natural, but always artificial. It is the product of particular interests of particular groups. Precise power relations lie behind the apparent naturality of the social order.

Self-transcendence as such constitutively means and entails the possibility of modifying one's conditions. It means the possibility and the legitimation of making plans for the future. The hope in a future of change

Hope is an attitude of the will to transform the world. The not-being complete of the individuals opens the space for the possibility of change and the awareness of this possibility; the possibility of change opens the space for hope. The action of the individuals, and the hope as the inspiring principle of this action, are the fundamental presuppositions of Freire.

⁷ P. Freire, (1992). *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (Myra Bergman Ramos, Trad.). (Original work published in 1970) New York: The Continuum Publishing Company, p. 84.

is therefore legitimated⁸. The problem-posing pedagogy aims to bring the individuals to the awareness of transcending the reality in which they are put by accidental life situations. Individuals are not complete entities; they can experience development⁹. The concept of reality which is presupposed in the quoted text is a reality that is in development. Reality is a process, it is in development, it is not a static entity. Reality changes and can be changed. The problem-posing education is revolutionary futurity: problem-posing education is connected to a programme of change of reality. The very essence of the problem-posing pedagogy is that it is a pedagogy for analysis and change of reality.

Immutability and conservation are not values within the problem-posing pedagogy. The past is a dimension that is considered only to understand the causes and roots of the present conditions; it is not a dimension that has to be venerated. Tradition ought not to be necessarily conserved. It is not something that has to be accepted without any criticism whatsoever¹⁰.

⁸ The self-transcendent essence of the individuals is a basic point. If individuals were not capable of transcending themselves, there would be no way of escaping given conditions.

⁹ Hope would be completely blocked if reality were considered complete, if men were regarded as complete entities, if the future were simply a replica of the present, and if knowledge were simply a transmission of already perfect contents.

¹⁰ The following passage gives an idea of the opposition between the banking pedagogy and the problem-posing education: banking theory denies the historicity of the individuals, whereas the problem-posing education sees individuals as developing entities.

'[...] banking theory and practice, as immobilizing and fixating forces, fail to acknowledge men and women as historical beings; problem-posing theory and practice take the people's historicity as their starting point.

Problem-posing education affirms men and women as beings in the process of *becoming* – as unfinished, uncompleted beings in and with a likewise unfinished reality.' (1970/1992, p. 84)

The concept of individuals as incomplete beings is the way to freedom and the promotion of freedom. If individuals are already complete, there is no development, no change, no history, no future as a field of possibilities. Completeness means the absence of change. If individuals are already complete entities, a thought which promotes change is simply phantasy. The incompleteness of the individuals paves the ways for the future as a field of possibilities.

d) The mechanism of internalisation

Internalisation means that the persons who undergo the process of internalisation are completely conquered as to their own minds. These persons experience an authentic substitution of their own mind with the mind of the oppressors. Through the process of internalisation, oppressors manage to substitute values, ideas, orientations of the oppressed with their own values, ideas, orientations. A particular, temporary order of the society, i.e., the order of the oppressor, is, therefore, presented through a whole ideological apparatus, as a universal, eternal, and unchangeable order of the society. The mind of the oppressed, understood as an autonomous mind, does not exist any longer. The oppressed is completely assimilated to the ideology of the oppressor and follows, without discussion or objection, the doctrine imposed by the oppressor¹¹. Thus, the oppressed who has undergone the internalisation will interpret the order of reality not as a particular order created by the oppressor, but as a universally valid order rooted in the very essence of things. Through the following passage of Freire's *Pedagogy of the oppressed* we can observe some aspects of the process of internalisation:

'The "fear of freedom" which afflicts the oppressed, a fear which may equally lead them to desire the role of oppressor or bind them to the role of oppressed, should be examined. One of the basic elements of the relationship between oppressor and oppressed is *prescription*. Every prescription represents the imposition of one man's choice upon another, transforming the consciousness of the man prescribed to into one that conforms with the prescriber's consciousness. Thus, the behavior of the oppressed is a prescribed behavior, following as it does the guidelines of the oppressor.

¹¹ For instance, as regards the psychological conditions of the oppressed individuals, Freire observes:

'They prefer gregariousness to authentic comradeship; they prefer the security of conformity with their state of unfreedom to the creative communion produced by freedom and even the very pursuit of freedom.' (1970/1992, p. 48)

The oppressed individuals, after having been assimilated into the ideology of the oppressor, appreciate their possessing a place in the hierarchical structure built by the oppressor. Through the process of conformation, oppressed individuals have received a new mind and a new nature from the oppressor. The conformity with the hierarchy gives them a feeling of security. Oppressed people see and discover a value in their being subaltern since hierarchy confers a position, a place in society, a social identity. They appreciate and valorise the condition of subalternity as such.

The oppressed, having internalized the image of the oppressor and adopted his guidelines, are fearful of freedom. Freedom would require them to eject this image and replace it with autonomy and responsibility. Freedom is acquired by conquest, not by gift¹². It must be pursued constantly and responsibly. Freedom is not an ideal located outside of man; nor is it an idea which becomes myth. It is rather the indispensable condition for human completion^{13, 14}

Through the strategy of imposition, an authentic transformation of the conscience takes place. The conscience of the individual who receives the imposition is transformed into the conscience of an individual who conforms to the conscience of the oppressor. The strategy of the oppressor consists in the progressive indoctrination of the oppressed until the autonomy of mind of the oppressed is completely destroyed. The mind of the oppressor is built on the basis of the contents of the mind of the oppressor. The strategy of imposition not only produces an attitude of submission in the oppressed individuals. The strategy of imposition completely transforms the oppressed individuals, depriving them of their autonomy of mind.

Oppressed individuals no longer exist as autonomous, independent individuals. They become merely a replica of the oppressor's mind. Oppressed are therefore annulled in their own personality, values, and personal autonomy. The oppressed no longer have independent contents and ways of thinking¹⁵. They become completely subaltern to the mind of

¹² Freire does not regard freedom as a gift. Freedom is not something which can be simply given to individuals who remain passive. Freedom ought to be acquired actively; it presupposes a process of becoming aware of the structures of reality. Moreover, freedom ought to be constantly pursued by the individual: freedom is not a definitive condition. Rather, it is a constant process.

¹³ The oppressed ought to learn autonomy and responsibility. This is the first step for achieving freedom. The oppressed, since they did not have any other contents available than those dictated and imposed by the oppressor, find themselves in the difficult situation of having to abandon the contents of their education without having, at least immediately, contents with which to substitute the contents of their traditional education.

¹⁴ P. Freire, (1992). *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (Myra Bergman Ramos, Trad.). (Original work published in 1970) New York: The Continuum Publishing Company, pp. 46-47.

¹⁵ The oppressor dictates everything: rules, contents, aims, interpretations of reality and society.

the oppressor, without being aware that they depend on the values of others. They think that the values of the society in which they live are the only possible values; they cannot think that those values presented by the oppressed as absolute values are, actually, the values of a particular part of the society. The particular interpretation of the reality of the oppressors becomes the only possible way of thinking. There are no alternatives to it. The oppressed mind absorbs a whole structure of thinking, which becomes, for them, the exclusive way of thinking. The oppressed individuals do not recognise the oppressor as an oppressor: they see the oppressor as the person who knows reality and who, therefore, ought to lead society¹⁶.

One of the consequences of the process of internalisation is the fear of freedom. The internalisation has provided determined contents for the oppressed individuals. In order to become free, the oppressed ought to free themselves, and ought to have the will to free themselves from all the contents which they have received. In order to become free, they ought to substitute the contents received from the outside with their own autonomy and their own responsibility, i.e., they ought to eliminate all the contents of their own education. They ought to acquire a completely new mind.

Oppressed individuals do not know what freedom, autonomy, and independence are, since they have been subjected to a process of assimilation through the oppressor's education. For these individuals, education has been nothing other than assimilation to the way of thinking of the dominant individuals. The universe of the oppressed does not know any content other than the contents of the oppressors. Spaces of mind have been and are closed. The very possibility of imagining an alternative reality is thereby eliminated. The oppressed are only able to reproduce the oppressors' way of thinking since they have exclusively, as contents of their minds, the way of thinking of the oppressors.

e) Effects of internalisation

Through the process of internalisation, oppressed individuals no longer exist as independent persons. Oppressed individuals are, at the same time, themselves and the internalised oppressors:

'They are at one and the same time themselves and the oppressor whose consciousness they have internalized. The conflict lies in the choice between

¹⁶ Only the work of the critical pedagogy can bring the oppressor to the awareness of their condition of being indoctrinated.

being wholly themselves or being divided; between ejecting the oppressor within or not ejecting them; between human solidarity or alienation; between following prescriptions or having choices; between being spectators or actors; between acting or having the illusion of acting through the action of the oppressors; between speaking out or being silent, castrated in their power to create and re-create, in their power to transform the world. This is the tragic dilemma of the oppressed which their education must take into account.¹⁷

The deepest and most dangerous form of oppression is that represented by the internalisation of the thought of the oppressor, by the conquest of the minds of the oppressed by the oppressors, by the transformation of the oppressed into beings who are for others, i.e., totally dependent on the mind of others, by the substitution of the mind of the oppressed with the mind of the oppressor.

The conquest of the mind is reached through the process of internalisation of the contents of the oppressors. The minds of the oppressed are so formed that they cannot imagine an alternative world, an alternative society, an alternative reality in comparison with the world, society, and reality in which they are living¹⁸.

The central point of the strategy of internalisation consists in depriving the oppressed individual of their own dimension, of the very possibility of having an own dimension which is separated from the dimension of the oppressor: the only interpretation of reality which exists is the perspective

¹⁷ P. Freire, (1992). *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (Myra Bergman Ramos, Trad.). (Original work published in 1970) New York: The Continuum Publishing Company, p. 48.

¹⁸ The organisation of society in oppressor and oppressed completely determines the minds of the oppressed individuals, as we can observe through the following passage:

‘It is a rare peasant who, once “promoted” to overseer, does not become more of a tyrant towards his former comrades than the owner himself. This is because the context of the peasant’s situation, that is, oppression, remains unchanged.’ (1970/1992, p. 46)

The case of the peasant who, if chosen as overseer, becomes a tyrant should not surprise at all. In fact, it is clear that, if individuals do not know any other scheme of reality than the organisation into oppressor and oppressed, they won’t be able to be something else than the oppressor, if they occupy power positions. Having power means oppressing; if individuals already have or acquire power, they oppress. They simply apply what they have learnt about the structure of reality.

of the oppressor. Oppressed individuals have duties which are determined by the oppressor; they are integrated in the system as subaltern entities. They receive a place in the system of the oppressed, and they can thereby have the impression of being accepted by the oppressed. The oppressed are convinced as a result of the education system of the oppressed, that there is a natural order of society, and that the place in society which they have received is the place which is appropriate for them: as inferior individuals, they ought to obey and remain subordinated.

Opressors are not seen by the oppressed as oppressors, but as people who have the needed knowledge to lead and organise society, whereas the oppressed do not see themselves as oppressed but as people who do not have the needed capacity to proceed autonomously within society. The order of society of the oppressor cannot leave people outside the system; the order should explain which duties the oppressed ought to accomplish and the places they ought to occupy¹⁹. An aspect of the internalisation is the self-depreciation. Freire talks about the mechanism of self-depreciation:

‘Self-depreciation is another characteristic of the oppressed, which derives from their internalization of the opinion the oppressors hold of them. So often do they hear that they are good for nothing, know nothing and are incapable of learning anything – that they are sick, lazy, and unproductive – that in the end they become convinced of their own unfitness.’²⁰

¹⁹ Those who have been grown up in an atmosphere of oppression will repeat the same behaviour:

‘Internalizing paternal authority through the rigid relationship structure emphasized by the school, these young people tend when they become professionals (because of the very fear of freedom instilled by these relationships) to repeat the rigid patterns in which they were miseducated.’ (1970/1992, p. 155)

No matter which position in society an individual has, in case of internalisation the individual will repeat what the doctrine says. The strategy of oppressor is to form the mind of the oppressed so that they become replicas of the doctrine itself. Internalisation is a kind of domestication of mind, so that the mind of the oppressed is perfectly conform to the doctrine of the oppressor. The mind of the oppressed has as its only content the doctrine of the oppressor: it cannot go out of it.

²⁰ P. Freire, (1992). *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (Myra Bergman Ramos, Trad.). (Original work published in 1970) New York: The Continuum Publishing Company, p. 63.

Freire's passage is particularly important for the comprehension of the strategy of the oppressors: the oppressor aims to destroy any sense of self-confidence of the oppressed. The oppressor destroys this sense by making the oppressed believe they are unable to do anything.

Self-depreciation is the very symbol of the victory of the oppressor over the oppressed. The oppressor has destroyed the oppressed up to the point that the oppressed cannot but despise themselves. Self-depreciation is imposed through constant manifestations of contempt directed towards the oppressed. The oppressed are subjected to the continuous expression of negative judgments made by the oppressors towards them. Oppressed people hear regularly that they are good for nothing, that they don't know anything, and that they are incapable of learning anything. Sickness, laziness, and unproductivity are the constant manifestations of accusation that are expressed by the oppressors towards the oppressed. Oppressed internalise the opinions of the oppressors to the point that they become mental slaves of the oppressors. The oppressed are therefore annulled in their own self-confidence.

Through the process of internalisation, the oppressed become convinced that they should be and remain subordinate, that they should follow the orders of the oppressor. Because they are unfit, they ought to remain in a subaltern, subordinated position in the society.

f) Fatalism

The common goal of all oppressive ways of thinking is to make believe that there is no alternative to a determined way of thinking. Of course, this way of thinking is presented as natural, whereas this way of thinking corresponds to the precise way of thinking of some interest groups:

'Fatalism in the guise of docility is the fruit of an historical and sociological situation, not an essential characteristic of a people's behavior. It almost always is related to the power of destiny or fate or fortune – inevitable forces – or to a distorted view of God. Under the sway of magic and myth, the oppressed (especially the peasants, who are almost submerged in nature) see their suffering, the fruit of exploitation, as the will of God – as if God were the creator of this "organized disorder".'

Submerged in reality, the oppressed cannot perceive clearly the "order" which serves the interests of the oppressors whose image they have internalized. Chafing under the restrictions of this order, they often manifest a type of

horizontal violence, striking out at their own comrades for the pettiest reasons.²¹

Fatalism, power of destiny, fate, fortune, will of God are all names used for the same strategy consisting in presenting the conditions of a social order, which actually is the product of particular interests, as absolute, eternal, and immutable. Society is presented as given once and for all. Society is not the artificial product of the interests of certain social groups and social classes, which can be changed with the proposal of a different society, with the affirmation of different interests. Society is presented as something already formed in all aspects and completely immutable.

g) Conclusions

Throughout this study we have seen the main characteristics of the banking education and the problem-posing education. Within the banking model of education, individuals are complete entities: their destiny is given, their roles in society are given, their duties are given. Individuals ought to acknowledge that their social place is the right place for them. They ought to accept the system of values in which they live as the only possible system of values. Individuals ought to accept reality as it is. No modification of reality is possible since the order of reality is an absolute order. There is no alternative to the given reality. Individuals are exclusively receptors, collectors of reality; they are spectators of reality, not creators of reality.

There are fixed roles and fixed duties in society for the members of society. Individuals ought to adapt themselves to the immutable order of society. Each individual is assigned a precise duty in society. Individuals are identified with the social duties they ought to perform, with the position of society they are assigned to, with the conditions of life which are designated for them. They are nothing beyond these conditions. They do not transcend either themselves or their living conditions. Another world is not possible.

Within the problem-posing education, individuals transcend themselves. They are essentially different from the conditions in which they live and from the duties they accomplish within society. Individuals are

²¹ P. Freire, (1992). *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (Myra Bergman Ramos, Trad.). (Original work published in 1970) New York: The Continuum Publishing Company, pp. 61-62.

incomplete entities. No individual is identifiable with or reducible to the role and duty they perform in society. The very essence of individuals consists in transcending themselves, in creating and re-creating their life state, in changing the structures of society. They are more than their mere concrete existence. Individuals are not reducible to their history, to their products, to their place in society. Individuals are always something more than what they do, what they live in, what duty they are accomplishing and so on.

The problem-posing education analyses the structures of reality to make individuals aware of the structures of reality, the causes of these structures, and the particular interests which are at the basis of these structures. This analysis reveals to individuals that they are not dependent on a natural, absolute order of things, but on particular interests of particular individuals. The work of the problem-posing pedagogy consists in making individuals aware that the structures of society are not something without alternatives, that they are not naturally given, but, on the contrary, correspond to precise power structures. Individuals are not complete: an alternative world is possible.

Through the process of internalisation, the mind of the oppressed individuals is substituted with the mind of the oppressor.

The strategy of the oppressor is to close the spaces of mind by imposing their own contents, values, ways of thinking. The oppressor is able to make the oppressed think that there cannot be any content, way of thinking, value outside the contents, ways of thinking, values the oppressed has received from the oppressor.

The condition of the oppressed is not simply a condition of an external being dominated; the condition of the oppressed is not comparable with a condition in which individuals could maintain their own identity and thought. The condition of the oppressed consists in the oppressed no longer having their own mind; only the mind of the oppressor exists. An autonomous mind of the oppressed does not exist; it is only a replica of the mind of the oppressor.

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