



The Incoherence of the Interactional and Institutional Within Freire's Politico-Educational Project

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Abstract

In this paper I draw apart two different contexts of Freirean pedagogical practice that I label interactional and institutional. The interactional refers to the immediate learning environment with relation to the interaction between the students and the teacher. In contrast, the institutional refers to how the institutions of education are managed, constructed, and organised and how they relate to the individuals those institutions are composed of. I begin by presenting a brief overview of Freire's argument in favour of a revolutionary pedagogy. I then highlight how this project is represented at both interactional and institutional levels with a particular focus upon the practice of the revolutionary leaders and their role in the development of the humanisation of the oppressed. In presenting the interactional and institutional elements of Freire's pedagogy separately the tension between the individual and the state is made plain and the limitations of his politico-educational project are drawn out. I argue that due to an inconsistent application of the relationship between means and ends in Freire's politico-educational project an incoherence between the interactional and institutional levels of education is highlighted. In responding to this limitation of Freire's politico-educational project with a thoroughly interconnected relationship of means and ends I show that there remains a necessary conflict between the interests of the individual and the state. As a result of this a door is opened for the development of an argument in favour of the disestablishment of education and state from a Freirean perspective.

Keywords Paulo Freire · Means and ends · Democratic education · Critical pedagogy · Political philosophy · Educational theory

Introduction

In this paper I draw apart two different contexts of Freirean pedagogical practice that I label interactional and institutional. The interactional refers to the immediate learning environment with relation to the interaction between the students and the teacher. In contrast the institutional refers to how the institutions of education are managed, constructed, and organised and how they relate to the individuals those institutions are composed of. Paulo

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Freire, over the course of his life and career, wrote about and engaged in both the interactional and institutional realms. The interactional theory and practice of Freire is dominant in scholarship on his work and it is defined largely by the construct and practice of the revolutionary educator. However, for educators and theorists of Freirean pedagogy it is integral to place that interactional structure of education into some institutional context, whether this be a question of ideal theory and the institutional structure of education necessary for coherent Freirean practice, or a question of non-ideal theory and how to engage in Freirean practice within the constraints of existing institutional arrangements.

I begin by presenting a brief overview of Freire's argument in favour of a revolutionary pedagogy. I then highlight how this project is represented at both interactional and institutional levels with a particular focus upon the practice of the revolutionary leaders and their role in the development of the humanisation of the oppressed. In presenting the interactional and institutional elements of Freire's pedagogy separately the tension between the individual and the state is made plain and the limitations of his politico-educational project are drawn out. In consideration of these different aspects of his work I argue that there persists an unsatisfactory account of the relationship between means and ends within Freirean pedagogy. In responding to this limitation of Freire's politico-educational project with a thoroughly interconnected relationship of means and ends I show that there remains a necessary conflict between the interests of the individual and the state and conclude that the disestablishment of education and state may be the most promising avenue for the reconciliation of Freirean pedagogy.

Freire's Politico-Educational Project

Freire's politico-educational project is well-known and the literature on Freire is vast. In short, Freire aims to develop an educational theory and practice that can lead to the overcoming of deeply ingrained oppressor-oppressed relationships and, in turn, to the emancipation of all people. Freire practiced this revolutionary pedagogy working primarily with the illiterate and the poor across the world, most notably in Brazil, Chile and Africa (Irwin 2012, 8; Schugurensky 2014, 43). In *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* Freire argues that the vocation of the human animal is 'humanisation' and provides a theoretical and practical methodology for overcoming the corrupting and coercive state of affairs that persists. This is not euphemistic language but terminology which at once shows Freire's Catholic heritage, believing as he does that humans have become dehumanised, but also his Marxism because he places the source of that dehumanisation in the structure of society rather than within the human animal. Humanisation is a technical term of Freire's which means to become 'more fully human' and it acts as his normative goal (Freire 2017, 18). To become more fully human one is becoming less oppressed and in being oppressed one is dehumanised.

Freire speaks of the human animal's dehumanisation as a 'historical reality' (Freire 2017, 17). It is something that we have suffered and continue to suffer as a result of living in a society structurally supported by oppression. The inverse, humanisation, is 'constantly negated,' through injustice, exploitation, oppression, and violence (Freire 2017, 17, 18). Societies, through these practices, according to Freire, make humans less human. He describes the humanity of the human animal as stolen by this process of dehumanisation, but absent even in those that have stolen the humanity of others.

Freire perceives a society of corrupted individuals, corrupted by the power and desire of society, enslaved by fear and consent. Freire writes, ‘the oppressed, having internalised the image of the oppressor and adopted his guidelines, are fearful of freedom.’ (Freire 2017, 21) The fear of freedom results from the oppressed ‘having internalised the image of the oppressor’ and having ‘adopted his guidelines’ (Freire 2017, 21). Irwin writes, ‘This notion of a fear of freedom... is developed by Freire specifically in relation to the oppressed and their fear of overcoming the position of being oppressed’ (Irwin 2012, 35). This manifests in two ways, either the fear of freedom provides a motivation to remain oppressed or, in another, but equally damaging way, the fear of freedom may relate to one’s desire to assume the role of the oppressor. Both of these manifestations arise from the image of the oppressor as an authority in virtue of being an oppressor which is projected upon them by the oppressed.

The method by which Freire engages the oppressed in their own liberation is through his model of education. According to Freire it is through education, and not violent insurrection, that the oppressed will successfully overcome their position and achieve freedom. However, Freire is no pacifist. Violence is justified by Freire when dialogue is no longer an option and when motivated by love (Freire 2017, 102, 112). He writes, ‘[t]he only effective instrument is a humanising pedagogy’ (Freire 2017, 42). This humanising pedagogy Freire calls problem-posing education.

Problem-posing understands knowledge, not as a set of facts or values to be remembered but as a consequence of communal enquiry; and it understands human consciousness as being with the world and not something that can be separated from the world. Knowledge, Freire writes, ‘emerges only through invention and re-invention, through the restless, impatient, continuing, hopeful enquiry human beings pursue in the world, with the world, and with each other’ (Freire 2017, 45). It emerges through the enquiry of peers with each other, the results of which are understood as fluid and revisable. Wayne Au, an advocate of Freirean pedagogy, describes problem-posing education as a process for students and teachers to engage in through, ‘asking critical questions of the world in which they live, asking questions of the material realities both experience on a day-to-day basis, and critically reflecting on what actions they may take to change those material conditions’ (Au 2009, 222).

It is through dialogue that the students both learn and teach. It is through dialogue that the teacher both learns and teaches. In consequence of this Freire reformulates the role of both the student and the teacher so that we understand them dialogically (Freire 2017, 53). The teacher is a ‘teacher-student’ who learns through dialogue with their students in the same way that the students learn from their teacher.

Freire writes, ‘[p]roblem-posing education affirms men and women as beings in the process of *becoming*—as unfinished, uncomplicated beings in and with a likewise unfinished reality’ (Freire 2017, 57). Freire states that we are aware of this unfinished status, and this state motivates the learner to continue their enquiry and understand education as an ongoing activity. Problems are discussed, debated and challenged, and from these initial presented stimuli new problems arise that are, themselves, discussed, debated and challenged. There is not an end to education. It is, instead, a process. ‘Education is thus constantly remade in the praxis. In order to *be*, it must *become*. Its “duration” is found in the interplay of the opposites *permanence* and *change*’ (Freire 2017, 57).

Furthermore, it is through this dialogue that human consciousness is developed because it cultivates an environment of reflection of a person’s particular reality. The process of becoming conscious in a meaningful way is what Freire calls *conscientização* (Freire 2017, 41). Myra Bergman Ramos adds an instructive translator’s footnote in the English edition

of *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, she writes, ‘The term conscientização refers to learning to perceive social, political, and economic contradictions, and to take action against oppressive elements of reality’ (Freire 2017, p. 9). It is important to note here that the process of *conscientização* should not be understood as a process of consciousness-raising with a final end in mind, a person has not come to the end of their journey upon reaching critical consciousness because they do not participate absolutely or exclusively in this mode of consciousness. Roberts writes that *conscientização* is an ‘ever-evolving process’ in continual interaction with a changing world (Roberts 1996, 186).

There are two things that are being argued for in Freire’s problem-posing education which are seen as intimately connected; there is emancipation from oppression and the development of the individual. The former is achieved through the latter and this leads to people challenging the oppressive aspects of their world. The enquiries, which are both the stimulus of that challenge to the world and a consequence of previous challenges, and which develop the humanisation of the students-teachers, are led by the teacher-student or revolutionary leader.

The revolutionary leader, therefore, plays a central role in the liberation of the oppressed because it is through their role that the oppressed are given the opportunity to free themselves from oppression through the word. In the following two sections I shall focus on the interactional and institutional levels of Freire’s politico educational project. First, I shall focus on the role of the revolutionary leader in the context of the interactional structure of education. Then I shall focus on Freire’s work on the Guinea-Bissau literacy project and the Citizen schools initiated while he was the São Paulo Municipal Secretary of Education in the context of the institutional structure of education.

Interactional Structure of Education

As mentioned in the introduction, the interactional structure of education is a term that I employ to refer to the structure of the immediate learning environment. Translated into Freire’s theory the interactional structure refers primarily to the construct and practice of the revolutionary educator. In contrast to the traditional role of the teacher, who according to Freirean analysis acts as a tool of continued oppression by ‘filling’ students with fixed and unquestioned knowledge and thereby perpetuating the existing state of affairs, the revolutionary educator aims to cultivate new knowledge and new understandings of the world. According to Freire, the answer is not to replace knowledge that perpetuates oppressive society with the knowledge that perpetuates free society because the imposition of knowledge is itself an example of oppression. The role of the educator is never to inculcate or suppress even when the views of the students-teachers are in tension with the principles practiced by the educator themselves. Therefore, Freire reformulates the roles of the teacher and of the student. As noted in the previous section the teacher is understood as a teacher-student and the students as students-teachers. Freire writes,

Through dialogue, the teacher-of-the-students and the students-of-the-teacher cease to exist and a new term emerges: teacher-student with students-teachers. The teacher is no longer merely the-one-who-teaches, but one who is himself taught in dialogue with the students, who in turn while being taught also teach (Freire 2017, p. 53).

There are two important features of the student–teacher that must be noted at this point. First, they are not politically neutral; and second, they are in some ways directive. With

respect to political neutrality, Freire argues that this is not possible and that the attempt to be politically neutral is a political position itself. According to Freire, it is important not to conceal one's political and ideological viewpoints because these positions will ultimately still manifest in the teachers practice. However, they will manifest insidiously and therefore they will be manipulative and much more damaging as a result. In his recent book Schugurensky writes,

Freire's argument is that when teachers do not reveal their positions to the students openly and explicitly, they do so covertly and implicitly, and this can easily lead to deceiving and manipulating students under auspices of neutrality. Insofar as Freire argues that education cannot be neutral, it follows that it is as unethical for teachers to hide their positions from their students as it is to impose their ideas on them.' (Schugurensky 2014, 102)

The second important feature is more delicate. Reading Freire can give the impression that the reformulation of the teacher advocates non-directive education where the learning of the students is only facilitated by the educator but this is not the case. Freire attempted to walk the middle path between directive and nondirective teaching (Schugurensky 2014, 99; Guilherme and John Morgan 2018, 790)

To be a revolutionary teacher one must fulfil two criteria. Firstly, one must be genuinely committed to the revolutionary cause; and secondly, one must participate in the subversion of the role of the teacher by not assuming authority in virtue of their status as a teacher but to earn that authority through communication (Freire 2017, 83, 84). With respect to the former this means that the revolutionary educator must trust the oppressed to discover their oppression and seek to overcome it. Freire writes,

The correct method for a revolutionary leadership to employ in the task of liberation.... lies in dialogue. The conviction of the oppressed that they must fight for their liberation is not a gift bestowed by the revolutionary leadership, but the result of their own *conscientização*. (Freire 2017, 41)

The Freirean teacher-student, if coming from the oppressor class, must submit to a 'profound rebirth', they must be one with the oppressed and they cannot be so as long as they hold on to the identity of their privilege. In Freire's words, '[t]hose who undergo it must take on a new form of existence; they can no longer remain as they were' (Freire 2017, 35). If this is not done there remains a distinct risk that a person who was once oppressor may bring with them attitudes and assumptions exclusive to that class. Furthermore, they may, despite their genuine desire to bring about social justice, seek to do so on behalf of the oppressed rather than together with them. Freire writes that, '[a] real humanist can be identified more by his trust in the people, which engages him in their struggle, than by a thousand actions in their favour without that trust' (Freire 2017, 34).

The revolutionary leaders are sensitive to the particular circumstances and context of the students and illicit the learning stimuli from the community of the students, 'with an attitude of *understanding* towards what they see' (Freire 2017, 83). In doing so, the revolutionary leaders impose stimuli upon the students but cultivate that stimuli from the students. They are, therefore, sympathetic to the nuances and particularities of each community and the stimuli are presented to the students, not as answers to be remembered and adhered to 'but as problems to be solved' (Freire 2017, 96).

There is in this process a somewhat Deweyan understanding of the relationship between means and ends (Dewey 2008; Waks 1999; Livingston 2017). The unending process of humanisation is cemented by the problems being discussed and solved together by the

group, not with the end in mind of finding the answer but in finding answers that are then themselves problematised and are returned to the dialogical environment as new problems. In other words, the answers become means to further dialogue.

Although I perceive a stronger connection between the politico-educational projects of John Dewey and Freire than is commonly granted, it is not necessary to do so to recognise that within Freire there is a deep commitment to the interrelatedness of means and ends, a quality shared by Dewey.¹ Freire's commitment to the interrelatedness of means and ends is most evident in the centrality of self-enfranchisement in his pedagogical thought. According to Freire, there is no liberation at all if egalitarian change is enforced upon people. Freedom is not a forensic term; its legal proclamation is not an example of its practice. People will remain unfree and dehumanised until they perceive their own oppression and remove those chains themselves. Freire writes,

Conscientisation is never a kind of aspirin which we give or prescribe to the oppressed people. That is as if for example, I could sell twenty pills for the oppressed and twenty-five for the oppressors. The pills of conscientisation and then they get better tomorrow. No, no, it is not a medicine. It is an exercise of understanding much more rigorously how society works. This is the task of knowing, education as a process of knowing. (Quoted from Torres 2014, 42)

Freedom, for Freire, is defined by its negative relationship to oppression. To be free is to be free from oppression. This is made clear when he writes that, 'humanisation... is affirmed by the yearning of the oppressed for freedom and justice,' and '[f]reedom would require [the oppressed] to eject this image [of the oppressor] and replace it with autonomy and responsibility.' (Freire 2017, 17, 18, 21) The oppressed yearn for freedom to satisfy their desire for authentic living but they fear it. The oppressor has been internalised. Freedom, according to Freire, is that which results from a humanising education, but it is more than merely the removal of that which constrains. To be liberated through education is to be, 'no longer oppressor no longer oppressed, but human in the process of achieving freedom.' (Freire 2017, 23) In other words, the end of emancipation of the oppressed is inter-related with the means of achieving it. The ends do not justify the means, nor can one achieve an end without it being a part of the means for its realisation.

Problem-Posing education is designed to be emancipatory and enfranchising because it aims for the people to become, 'masters of their thinking by discussing the thinking and views of the world explicitly or implicitly manifest in their own suggestions and those of their comrades' (Freire 2017, 97). Freire placed significant weight on the idea that for an education to be emancipatory it must do more than bring freedom. A pedagogy of the oppressed must be such that the oppressed themselves are direct participants in its practice and design. Freire's resolution to the contradiction between the individual and the world is to empower the individual through a dialogical educational model. It is through the word that we transform the world.

In this section I have isolated the interactional structure of education in Freire's politico-educational project told through the lens of the revolutionary educator. In doing so I have suggested that a Deweyan conceptualisation of means and ends, where means and ends are understood to be interrelated, underpins problem-posing education and the relationship

¹ There does exist a theoretical thread between the works of Freire and Dewey. However, this thread is little explored. Muraro (2013) offers a rare and insightful exposition of the connection between these two great pedagogical giants.

between teacher and student. This interactional structure is itself interdependent upon and interrelated with Freire's institutional structure of education because the latter determines the conditions which the interactional operates within. Therefore, in the following section I shall present the institutional structure of education as it arises within Freire's politico-educational project.

Institutional Structure of Education

In contrast to the interactional structure of education is what I refer to as the institutional structure of education. This refers to the organisation and structure of the institutional bodies that provide and support the education of the members of society. Therefore, there are three levels of institutional structure. There is the internal structure of the school itself; the relationship and organisation between schools; and the authority of parents, professionals, and the state in schools and over the practice of schools. In this section I shall introduce two institutional endeavours of Freire which stand out as prime examples of attempts to implement Freirean pedagogical practices from a position of institutional authority. These instances are his work in Guinea-Bissau and as Municipal Secretary of Education in São Paulo.

Throughout his life Freire assumed a number of institutional positions and sought to implement significant social change from his position within the governmental apparatus (Collins and Freire 1977; Gadotti 1994; Irwin 2012). Two institutional endeavours interest me in particular. First, is his work in Guinea-Bissau. Freire was invited, as a member of the Institute for Cultural Action and the Department of Education of the World Council of Churches, by the revolutionary government of the recently independent Guinea-Bissau, through the Commission on Education, to 'visit in order to discuss the bases [*sic*] of our collaboration in the field of literacy education for adults' (Freire 1978, 7). The role that Freire played in Guinea-Bissau was intentionally dampened. He would not go as an expert but as a collaborator (Freire 1978, 73). Schugurensky notes that, '[Freire] made it clear that to provide help with the reconstruction process, he had to first familiarise himself with the national reality' (Schugurensky 2014, 79). This attitude tracks that which is expected of the revolutionary educator. They are not expected to bring the answers with them but to discover them through dialogue with the students. In order to do this authentically they must become one with the people who they wish to serve. Peter Mayo notes that in Guinea-Bissau, just like in his theory, Freire encourages class suicide. He writes, 'In doing so, the elitist intellectual is "reborn" as a revolutionary worker who identifies with the aspirations of the people' (Mayo 2015, 139). This therefore, further tracks the attitude expected of the revolutionary educator.

In Geneva Freire and his colleagues outlined their proposed work plan for Guinea-Bissau, this plan was then fleshed out in detail with the people coordinating the re-education effort in Guinea-Bissau. Freire perceived the time in Guinea-Bissau as being divided into three over-lapping and interconnected phases. He writes,

The first two, which I sought to characterise as times of seeking to see and hear, question and discuss, were actually analytical in nature. The third phase—synthesis—grew mechanically from them. In fact, this latter activity was taking place all the time even in the midst of analysis, from which it can never really be separated. (Freire 1978, 37, 38)

The desire of the new revolutionary government of Guinea-Bissau, under the leadership of Luís Cabral, was to remove all aspects inherited and imposed by their colonial oppressors. This is a significant undertaking since Portugal controlled Guinea-Bissau as a colony since the eighteenth Century and had established their language, culture, and values as the educational norm in this period. However, this overhaul was not limited to content, nor was it limited to method of teaching students, but also encompassed an overhaul of the teaching of teachers (Freire 1978, 46). This is significant because it represents an explicit attempt to implement Freirean practices into a post-revolutionary society.

The second institutional position that is of particular interest is his work as Municipal Secretary of Education after his return to Brazil in the early 1980's. In this role Freire was responsible for 662 schools with 720,000 students from early years to 13–14 years of age, in addition to leading adult education and literacy training. In 1989 he proposed a programme based on 5 objectives: '(1) to expand access to school; (2) to democratise school administration; (3) to improve the quality of education; (4) to provide education for young and adult workers, and (5) to develop critical and responsible citizens' (Schugurensky 2012, 51, 52). This was exemplified in Freire's *escola cidadã* or Citizen School. Schugurensky writes, '[t]hrough this project, Freire continued his proposals for popular education, but in the context of the public school and in relation to reforms in the school administration, pedagogical planning, curricular organisation, and school evaluation' (Schugurensky 2012, 52). Freire describes the Citizen School clearly in an interview in 2000. He said,

Citizen School is the one that considers itself a centre of rights and duties. It is characterised by education for citizenship. Thus, the Citizen School is the school that enables the citizenship of those who are in it and those who come to it. It cannot be a citizen school in itself and for itself. It is a citizen school in the same measure as it exercises the construction of the citizenship of those who use its space. The Citizen School is a school that is coherent with freedom. It is coherent with its educational, liberating discourse. It is a school that, as it struggles to be itself, fights for the educates-educators to also be themselves. And, as nobody can be alone, the Citizen School is a community school, a school for camaraderie. It is a school for common production of knowledge and freedom. It is a school that experiences the tense experience of democracy. (Quoted in, Schugurensky 2012, 52)

The Citizen School aimed to provide a model of dialogical education at both interactional and institutional levels through, 'more dialogical relations in the classroom and more democratic forms of management, including partnerships with local groups and with parents, with a view to participatory decision processes in terms of planning, implementation, and allocation of resources' (Schugurensky 2012, 52). It was thought that this would increase the level of autonomy of schools and the level of responsibility of the local community for their schools. Thereby ensuring a greater transparency of policies which were influenced by both school and government. This was achieved through policies such as the election of the principle and vice-principle of the school, where parents and children received fifty percent of the electoral weight and the teachers and staff the other fifty percent. Any elected administrator was then limited to a maximum of two terms in office (Gadotti and Torres 2009). Schugurensky notes that the Citizen School project in São Paulo created opportunities for other similar projects in Brazil (See, Apple and Gandin 2003). However, the project in São Paulo, after some modest accomplishments, stalled once a different party won the municipal elections (Schugurensky 2014, 38).

While Freire is most known for his work in adult education his activity in school education is significant. This overview of the institutional structure of Freire's pedagogy suggests

a vision of democracy and democratisation of education. Freire focuses on the breaking down of the barriers between the school and society, between the school and the family, between the individual and the external forces which arrest humanisation. Freire aims to develop democratic skills and a democratic society through the practice of the school.

I have now briefly introduced the interactional structure of education within Freire's politico-educational project and the institutional structure of education as it manifested in two key projects of Freire's mature practice. Over the course of the following two sections I shall argue that Freire's institutional theory and practice is in tension with the revolutionary nature of his interactional pedagogy. I shall draw out this tension through the manifestation of the relationship between means and ends in Freire's politico-educational project.

The Problem of Interactional Violence

Earlier in this paper I introduced the language of means and ends in offering an interpretation of Freire's interactional structure of education. In this section I shall introduce the role that violence plays within Freire's politico-educational project in order to illustrate the inconsistent application of Freire's conceptualisation of means and ends at this interactional level.

Freire's conception of violence is quite broad, it is not just an active and intentional harming through physical force. In *Letters to Cristina* Freire recounts his experience with hunger that results from poverty. He writes,

[a] hunger that, if it was not softened as ours was, would take over our bodies, molding them into angular shapes. Legs, arms, and fingers become skinny. Eye sockets become deeper, making the eyes almost disappear. Many of our classmates experienced this hunger and today it continues to afflict millions of Brazilians who die of its violence every year (Freire 1996, 15).

This extended sense of violence is apparent in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* also. At one point Freire writes,

[a]ny situation in which "A" objectively exploits "B" or hinders his and her pursuit of self-affirmation as a responsible person is one of oppression. Such a situation in itself constitutes violence, even when sweetened by false generosity, because it interferes with the individual's ontological and historical vocation to be more fully human. With the establishment of a relationship of oppression, violence has *already* begun (Freire 2017, 29).

It is clear from this passage that the very presence of exploitation and interference in the process of humanisation constitutes violence. At another point Freire writes, 'Any situation in which some individuals prevent others from engaging in the process of inquiry is one of violence. The means used are not important; to alienate human beings from their own decision-making is to change them into objects.' (Freire 2017, 58) Additionally, in reference to cultural invasion, Freire writes, '[w]hether urbane or harsh, cultural invasion is thus always an act of violence against the persons of the invaded culture, who lose their originality or face the threat of losing it.' (Freire 2017, 125) Therefore, it is clear that violence, for Freire, is not merely an act of physical force but any act that imposes upon an individual's process of humanisation. If this is the case then violence, by its very nature, is constituted by acts of exploitation and oppression.

Yet it cannot be the case that, for Freire, violence is *ipso facto* dehumanizing. Freire argues that acts which are performed by the oppressed to pursue the humanisation of all people when they are genuinely motivated for that end are ‘acts of love’ (Freire 2017, 19). An act of love is one of ‘true generosity’ that undermines the structure of oppression, it is a revolutionary act (Freire 2017, 19, 24). This is in contrast with ‘false generosity’ which are acts that appear egalitarian but in fact sustain the current power norms (Freire 2017, 18). According to Freire, it is possible for an act of love to be a violent act. Violence is justified by Freire when dialogue is no longer an option and when motivated by love (Freire 2017, 29–31, 102, 112). This is a consequence of the violence of the oppressors. Freire argues that, it is in virtue of the violence perpetrated by the oppressors over generations that the revolution is often performed in the same language. However, when performed by the oppressed for the right reasons that act of violence is an act of love.

It seems that for the revolutionary ends of Freire’s politico-educational project to be realised violence will be employed as a means. In a key passage on the role of violence Freire writes,

[y]et it is—paradoxical though it may seem—precisely in the response of the oppressed to the violence of their oppressors that a gesture of love may be found. Consciously or unconsciously, the act of rebellion by the oppressed (an act which is always, or nearly always, as violent as the initial violence of the oppressors) can initiate love. Whereas the violence of the oppressors prevents the oppressed from being fully human, the response of the latter to this violence is grounded in the desire to pursue the right to be human (Freire 2017, 30).

Mackie (1981, 113) defends Freire’s justification of violence. However, Noddings (1991) identifies a troubling aspect of Freire’s defence of the coherence of violence and ‘acts of love’. Noddings asks, ‘What in the history or in the experience of the oppressed leads us to suppose that they will be loving? Or is liberation an act of love simply by virtue of its result?’ (Noddings 1991, 161). Here Noddings is eluding to the fact that Freire is employing the end of freedom to justify the means of violence. This is problematic because, as I have argued above, Freire’s problem-posing education is deeply committed to a conceptualisation of means and ends as interrelated.

This is a real problem for Freire in two ways. Firstly, genuine acts of love are indistinguishable from perceived acts of love which are in fact acts of false generosity. Secondly, the employment of violence as a means for the realisation of *conscientização* is contrary to the spirit of humanisation in Freire’s work and shows a lack of consistency in his application of his conception of the relationship between means and ends.

The first problem is illustrated clearly when one considers the actions of the revolutionary leaders. According to Freire, ‘revolutionaries themselves become reactionary by falling into sectarianism in the process of responding to the sectarianism of the Right.’ (Freire 2017, 11) Therefore, they would be betraying their own humanisation by acting in the same manner as the oppressors, by internalising the oppressor. It would no longer be an act of love but an act to take the oppressors place and make them oppressed.

Therefore, the only thing that distinguishes the violence of the oppressed from the violence of the oppressors is that it is motivated by a genuine act of love rather than a perceived one. However, there is no way for a person, oppressed and oppressor alike, to identify which acts of violence are acts of love and which are not. They are indistinguishable. Despite this, the violence of the oppressed and the violence of the oppressors being indistinguishable is not, in itself, a refutation of Freire’s political project or his justification of violence. It could still be the case that there are genuine acts of

love which employ violence as the means for the realisation of the humanisation of the oppressed and oppressors alike. What is more problematic for Freire is that in this instance the means justify the ends and betray a fundamental feature of his resolution to the tension between the individual and society.

As has been shown above problem-posing education is the pedagogical method by which people are humanised through developing their conscious awareness. A central tenant of problem-posing education is that the people free themselves, that being led to freedom is no freedom at all. If this is the case of the oppressed it must be the case for all people because the oppressors too are oppressed and dehumanised and cannot develop *conscientização* through external imposition. As a result, the existing oppressors will not be able to undo their dehumanisation and will, through the revolution, become the new oppressed. Therefore, I interpret within Freire's politico-educational project a commitment to the interconnectedness of means and ends. A person must be subject to the means of realising humanisation and conscious awareness in order to enjoy those ends. Put another way, a person cannot develop *conscientização* without problem-posing education.

The inconsistent understanding of the relationship between means and ends presents a problem for Freire in two relationships. There are those 'acts of love' performed by the oppressed which affect the lives of the oppressors, and there are those 'acts of love' performed by the revolutionary educators which affect the lives of other oppressed persons. As explained above the acts of love performed by the oppressed will, according to Freire, most likely be violent acts because this is the language they have been taught by the oppressors and because the oppressors are unlikely to engage with them dialogically. In other words, acts of love performed by the oppressed will inform the state of affairs that result and if those acts are violent ones it is unclear how the revolution escapes the oppressive state of affairs that preceded it. Freire himself writes,

Once a situation of violence and oppression has been established, it engenders an entire way of life and behaviour for those caught up in it—oppressors and oppressed alike. Both are submerged in this situation, and both bear the marks of oppression. Analysis of existential situations of oppression reveals that their inception lay in an act of violence—initiated by those with power. This violence, as a process, is perpetuated from generation to generation of oppressors, who become its heirs and are shaped in its climate (Freire 2017, 32).

In this passage Freire argues that violence breeds violence, that violent means pursue violent ends. If this is true of the oppressors now will it not also be the case for any society established through a violent act? If a revolution is instigated by a violent reaction to the violence perpetrated by the oppressor then in what way and at what point is violence as a tool for change dismissed? At what point and in what way does the new regime differ from the old if its truths are enforced through the necessity of violence? How does Freire's political theory guard against the risk of new oppressors and new oppressed as a consequence of revolution rather than a dissolution of the dichotomous relationship?

With regard to the acts of love performed by the revolutionary leaders, these are designed to be acts that lead to liberation and they are acts of teaching. However, acts done supposedly in the name of love can be uncompromising and vicious. Noddings reminds us of the treatment of 'witches' by the Christian church in the name of love and the treatment of people by 'ordinary parents and teachers' that wish to control the lives of others through 'acts of love' (Noddings 1991, 165). This is a real problem for Freire because without greater clarification of what constitutes an act of love morally questionable acts

may be performed under its banner, but if a greater clarification is offered then the dialogical process may be undermined.

I have shown that at the interactional level Freire's justification of violence is inconsistent with the humanising pedagogy that he professes because it compromises the interrelatedness of means and ends. However, it is not only at the interactional level that these problems arise. Arguably more problematic still is the inconsistency between the revolutionary pedagogy and its institutional instantiation. I shall consider this concern in the following section.

The Problem of Institutional Freedom

In the previous section I highlighted an inconsistency in the understanding of the relationship between means and ends in the interactional structure of education of Freire's politico-educational project. Beyond this inconsistency however, there is a further, and more troubling, manifestation of inconsistency with respect to the application of means and ends—that of the continuing relationship between political power and revolutionary pedagogy. This conflict is one that Freire perceives and aims to provide a resolution for. The question is, if a pedagogy of the oppressed requires political power for implementation and the aims of a pedagogy of the oppressed are contrary to the aims of existing political power, then how is it possible to practice a pedagogy of the oppressed? (Freire 2017, 28).

While it is an open question what constitutes oppression and who is oppressed, that there is pervasive oppression supported by existing power norms is itself uncontroversial. Therefore, within the world as it is, freedom of the individual and the interests of the state are in tension with one another. Freire recognises this and writes, '[t]he oppressor knows full well that [...] intervention would not be in his interest. What *is* in his interest is for the people to continue in a state of submersion, impotent in the face of oppressive reality' (Freire 2017, 26). The existent state is unable to support a programme of freedom because it is both representative of and subject to the consequences of a 'fear of freedom'.

The fear of freedom is not limited to the oppressed. It is also found in those that oppress. The oppressors too have been dehumanised by the practice of oppression, although they suffer this fear of freedom in a different—and much less challenging—manner, it remains the case that they too are afraid; in Freire's words, they 'are afraid of losing their "freedom" to oppress' (Freire 2017, 20). From their position of power and privilege the oppressor has little motivation to perceive their participation in the oppression of others, nor to see their own 'dehumanisation' which grants them this privilege.

It is for this reason that Freire argues the burden of the fight for freedom is solely that of the revolutionary leaders with the oppressed. It cannot be performed by the dominant elites because it would mean, 'that they have relinquished power to dominate and joined the cause of the oppressed, or had lost that power through miscalculation' (Freire 2017, 99). Therefore, before the revolution there can be no state sponsored problem-posing education of true generosity. The education that occurs before the revolution which is humanizing is only conducted with the people by the revolutionary leaders.

It is only after the revolution has taken hold and the oppressors dissolved that revolutionary education can extend beyond these limited boundaries. This is complicated by the fact that there is no singular moment of revolution. Freire writes, 'In a dynamic, rather than static, view of revolution, there is no absolute "before" or "after," with the taking of power as the dividing line' (Freire 2017, 110). While this creates a space for the effective practice

of a revolutionary pedagogy in the period of transition from a dehumanised starting point, it also creates a space for the continuation of the power and influence of oppressor interests which will potentially inhibit the development of an emancipatory education. Therefore, it is a manifestation of the inconsistent understanding of the relationship of means and ends in Freire's politico-educational project.

The inconsistency in the application of means and ends is apparent in both the literary project of Guinea-Bissau and in the *escola cidadã*. It is drawn out quite clearly by Tim Budge who writes, 'the literacy programme [of Guinea-Bissau] was not value free but rather predicated on a particular view of society...' (Budge 2014, 191). This, in itself is not an issue for a pedagogical theory. However, within Freire's programme it becomes an insidious characteristic. The future is meant to be open but when the literacy project is in the hands of the established order then a conflict of interests arises between the furtherance of a humanising pedagogy and the furtherance of a particular world-view. Roskelly expresses this concern well in asking, 'How can students liberate themselves and indoctrinate themselves at the same time?' (Roskelly 2000, 123).

This tension is further highlighted by Budge's second problem. He writes, 'the [Guinea-Bissau] programme was based on the assumption that the new government was committed to a level of common participation and democratisation of all people with the new country' (Budge 2014, 191). This extends not just to the middle class who must join the struggle but the leaders and officials who, therefore, must be prepared to yield their power. According to Budge, a dilemma results because a coercive education can seemingly only be challenged by a strong leadership who are unlikely to perceive the coercive demands in virtue of the fact that they are the beneficiaries of this coercive approach to education.

An obvious manifestation of the imposition spoken of is with respect to the language of emancipation in Guinea-Bissau. Luís Cabral, following the lead of Amílcar Cabral, the spiritual head of the revolution, defended the use of formal Portuguese as the language for the literacy programme in Guinea-Bissau. Freire states that, 'Cabral was trying to use Portuguese as a unifying force to calm the friction between the competing linguistic and ethnic groups in Guinea-Bissau' (Freire and Macedo 2004, 77). Guinea-Bissau, like many African countries insensitively packaged and cut-up by European colonizers, is a country of many languages. Freire speaks of 30 different languages with Creole, a mixture of indigenous languages and Portuguese, operating as the *lingua franca*. Freire argued that Creole should be the language of the literacy movement, but that Cabral insisted that it should be Portuguese. The concern is that the language of the coloniser is an expression of oppression over the colonised. In discussion with Freire, Donaldo Macedo expresses this thought when he writes, 'to continue to use the language of the colonizer as the only medium of instruction is to continue to provide manipulative strategies that support the maintenance of cultural domination' (Freire and Macedo 2004, 82). However, what recourse does a person have once the voice of the revolution has been taken away by its institutionalisation, which then imposes new terms of their oppression.

These problems arise also within the *escola cidadã*. An example of the manifestation of the inconsistency of means and ends is found in the formation of the Movement of Literacy for Youth and Adults (MOVA). This group was established between popular groups and the Municipal Department of Education while Freire was the head. It was decided to name the group a movement instead of a campaign because both parties had a commitment to,

basic schooling of youths and adults incorporated to the struggle for a popular public school" and to the "issue of the continuity of the literacy process, proposing its sequence in postliteracy and creating the conditions for the participants in this move-

ment to engage in the struggle to claim that their basic schooling continued (Quoted from Schugurensky 2012, 243).

Therefore, it is a movement instead of a campaign. A very evident conflict of interests arises from this example because an official voice of the revolutionary pedagogy has been nominated and that voice has, as a consequence, been neutered. When the institutions of society assume the voice of protest and revolution, an authority is created with greater scope than the previous coercive power because it controls both voices in the conversation between power and freedom.

Peter Elbow translates this problem into the western educational situation. He argues that because the teacher is a teacher of an institution they are never truly on the side of the student. He writes, 'There is a crucial contradiction in the role of almost every institutional teacher that prevents our being genuine allies of the student: we are both credit giver and teacher' (Elbow 1973, 248). It is in presenting oneself as a genuine ally even though there are obvious and clear lines which prevent this within an institutional setting which then 'bamboozles' students. What Elbow means by this term is that the students are taught a contradiction by self-identified Freirean teachers which undermines the very foundation of Freirean pedagogy and leaves the path out of this confusion unclear. Therefore, there are authoritarian consequences of applying Freire's politico-educational project in the institutional setting because of this internal tension between the interactional and the institutional structures of education. It is why violence is justified and it is why the voice of the revolution is assumed within the new organisational structure. Ultimately, Freire's politico-educational project as written is inconsistent.

I have argued that within the Freirean politico-educational project there persists an inconsistency in the understanding of the relationship between means and ends that results in the incoherence of the interactional programme in conversation with the institutional. However, it seems clear to me that even if one reconstructs Freirean theory to present a consistent and clear application of the interconnectedness of means and ends the interactional and the institutional remain in irresolvable tension.

Despite appearances, this is not an argument in favour of abandoning the Freirean project. It represents instead the beginnings of an argument in favour of the disestablishment of education and state. The arguments runs: if a Freirean pedagogy is desirable at the interactional level; and that pedagogy is inconsistent within institutional arrangements of education; then one must either abandon Freirean pedagogy at the interactional level or cleave it from institutional influence. The problems that I have highlighted in Freire's politico-educational project offer a segue into a greater tension, one that persists in the relationship between the state the people under its dominion. I shall conclude this paper by outlining this problem.

Conclusion

I perceive the root of the tension between the state and the people under its dominion in the principle of self-preservation. The state has an interest in self-preservation that runs alongside its interest in the well-being of the people under its dominion and this interest in self-preservation will run into conflicts with its interest in the well-being of the people. A consequence of this tension is that the self-preservation of the state may be used as a principle to support the continued pursuit of the well-being of others by the state. A key method by which the state protect its continued power and dominance is through

education. Through education the values of the existing state of affairs are taught, alongside respect for the rule of law, and a vilification of radicalism. It is through education that the state is able to transmit the knowledge and the values that it holds as instrumental for the continuation of a state like this. This is explicit and defended in terms of protecting our way of life, our identity, and our shared values. Therefore, the state employs the assumption of the intrinsic value of itself to perpetuate the existence of itself, and as a result aims to shut down the development of knowledge, different values and a new identity that may emerge in the minds of those not subject to this educational conditioning.

However, it seems to me that to take education out of the hands of the state entirely is a recipe for an equally destructive coercion. The market contains the same tension within it that I identify within the state but explicitly so. In fact, the claim made against the market will serve to clarify the claim above. In order to maintain its stability, the market must prioritise the interests of the economy over the interests of those subject to that economic force. If the economy becomes unstable, interest rates, inflation, debt, and the availability of goods become unstable with it. Furthermore, and linking this directly to what I have written above, there is reason to believe that the political realm will become unstable in the face of an unstable economy. Therefore, economic decisions which are damaging, which cause harm to persons are justified on account of the instability that would result to the market if that decision had not been made. Therefore, the market's interest in self-preservation trumps the interests of those under its dominion and is, in light of this, necessarily coercive. The coercion felt in the market and in the state is a consequence of their pervasiveness in the lives of the people that exist within their dominion. They have both successfully manoeuvred into positions of dominating power and subject dependence similar to the role of the Catholic church for long periods over much of Western Europe. In this way the bamboozlement spoken of by Elbow above transcends beyond the revolutionary educator and the problematic relationships with the state and their students. The same bamboozlement occurs in the education of the liberal democratic state and in the relationship between the individual and the market.

In short, Freirean pedagogy is inconsistent with institutional structures of education that permit statist or market participation because it is revolutionary. It is designed to problematise the existing state of affairs. It is driven by the desire for change and continued humanisation. These qualities cannot be a part of any institutional arrangement, whether that arrangement be pre-revolutionary, during the revolution, or in the post-revolutionary stage of society. Even if the revolutionary leaders establish control over the institutional structure of education and express true generosity in line with Freirean thought, in virtue of being the then existing power they will assume self-preservation as a characteristic of that institutional arrangement. They may do so in good faith, but it will necessarily act as a competing interest in the pragmatic environment of politics.

Therefore, this paper reflects one part of a larger argument in favour of the disestablishment of education and state from the Freirean perspective. This is a proposal designed to be in the genuine interests of people, not one filtered through something else first but directly so. It is therefore, not unreasonable to suggest that the money for it should come from the people themselves through taxation and that, if it is to remain meaningful, that it remain outside of the control of either the state or the market. It is designed to be a people's education whatever results from it, whether that be the continuation of the liberal democratic state, a socialist revolution, or the dissolution of the state itself.

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