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Title	The Late Freire's Theory of Education from a School Education's Perspective
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Citation	北海道大學教育學部紀要, 78, 241-274
Issue Date	1999-06
Doc URL	https://hdl.handle.net/2115/29590
Type	departmental bulletin paper
File Information	78_P241-274.pdf

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The Late Freire's Theory of Education from a School Education's Perspective

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I) Introduction

Paulo Freire is one of the most important educators of the second half of this century. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970), a book translated into 17 languages remains his main theoretical work. In the books published in the 1980s and 1990s, Freire rethinks, restates his revolutionary pedagogy of the 1970s, emphasizing on the **social and political issues** of the complex modern society and the urgent need to democratize education in order to construct what he calls a **'popular public school'**.

During the period from the 1970s to the 1990s, Freire has not fundamentally changed his **political-pedagogical principles** as well as certain epistemological principles introduced in the book *Pedagogy of the Oppressed.* Influenced by some studies in sociolinguistics and psycholinguistics as well as contributions from Jean Piaget, Lev Vygotsky, Emilia Ferreiro, Georges Snyders, Antonio Gramsci, John Dewey, Jürgen Habermas and others, he improved his propositions taking into account the complexities of the modern society and the problems education faces nowadays. From the 7 books published in the 1990s, 5 are addressed to school teachers, putting emphasis on the teacher-student relationship and the educator's role in a democratic school. Consequently, Freire's readers nowadays are not limited to intellectuals or progressive educators, but rather address everyone involved in education, from primary school teachers to intellectuals.

This trend can be noticed in the North-American context where Freire's pedagogy has been rediscovered as an alternative to school education, increasing its range of followers. Until recently, North-American intellectuals and educators often simplified and misinterpreted Freire's ideas as a method for literacy programs in Third World countries, not taking into account its philosophical, sociological and political background and its implications. Nowadays however, Freire's ideas are finally being rediscovered and studied as a whole, and as a consequence, the number of research projects and books concerning Freire's pedagogy positioned as an alternative to the several problems school education is facing, have increased.

One reason for this renewed interest is that Freire's pedagogy has been considered to be applicable not only to Third World countries, but also to the inner cities of the First World. According to Donaldo Macedo (Frase, 1997), it is difficult to simply say that one country belongs to the Third World and the other to the First World since both have a little of each other. In other words, at the same time that 'Third Worldliness' can be seen in the North-American inner cities, 'First Worldliness' can also be seen in the oligarchies in countries like Brazil. Another reason is that, in the North

American context, the educational failures in the inner cities have created high levels of dropouts (50% in Boston and 70% in New York[1]) among the minorities in public schools. As an attempt to cope with this problem, strong emphasis was given to privatization of schools since it was found that private schools were the ones that were 'performing better' as compared to public schools. Consequently, stricter control was excercised on public school, resulting in enforced closing of many and a subsequent increase in the level of minority dropouts. Freire has been rediscovered as an alternative to the "conservative capitalist banking model of education"[2] to improve public schools. Still, despite the fact that many people call themselves critical educators, they in fact end up being the opposite by : 1) merely interpreting Freire as a 'set of methods' rather than trying to understand his theoretical and philosophical principles which would enable them to 'recreate' and apply them according to the context ; 2) claiming to put an end to oppressive educational practices, end up creating a new method of oppression ; 3) proclaiming the empowerment of the students, they only strengthen their own positioning. The problem with many North-American educators is that they end up creating a rigid methodological paradigm, not leaving space for dialogue, which in fact is one of the basic requirements of Freire's pedagogy. According to Stanley Aronowitz[3], the main mistakes of many North American educators is their tendency to reduce pedagogical theories to mere methods, to mere "aspirin practices", which is expected to solve their "headache as quickly as possible".

In Japan, different from the United States, there are very few works that analyse Freire's theoretical and philosophical principles. The best analysis of Freire's works were published by Nomoto Hiroyuki, assistant professor at Tokyo Metropolitan University — Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities, and the only representative of Instituto Paulo Freire (Paulo Freire's Institute — IPF) in Japan. In his articles published between the period of 1988 and 1990, he makes a thorough analysis of Freire's works published in the period between 1960s and 1970s. Nomoto's analysis divides them into two periods : before and after 1964, i. e., before and after Freire's exile[4]. According to Nomoto, in Freire's works published before 1964, the political aspect of education is unclear. As a consequence, the concept of conscientization did not exist because the people's naïve consciousness was not considered to be a result of the oppressive structure of the society, but rather as a consciousness in its early stage which had to be educated to its higher stage through education. These differences can be partly explained as a consequence of a stronger Marxist influence on his works after 1964[5]. Nomoto's most recent work is the translation of the book *Reading Paulo Freire*[6](1989) published in 1993, written by Moacir Gadotti, which is an introductory book of Freire's life and works with a brief overview of his late tendencies.

The books translated into Japanese are 4 in total : *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*[7](1970), *Cultural Action for Freedom*[8](1968), *Extension or Communication*[9](1969) and *Paulo Freire × Ivan Illich*[10] (1977). In addition, Minoru Satomi, professor at Kokugakuin University is revising the Japanese translation of the book *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, adding notes to help Japanese readers. In this way, in Japan, Freire's works published in the 1960s and 1970s are relatively known but there are almost no works or papers that analyze or refer to his late works which were published after his return to Brazil in 1980.

After his return to Brazil and the subsequent years known as the period of 're-learning' about

the country, in 1989 as a result of the electoral victory of the Workers' Party (*Partido dos Trabalhadores*, PT) in the municipality of São Paulo, Freire was appointed to the post of Secretary of Education. During the mandate of 4 years, he led the implementation of what he called a 'popular public school' developed on basis of democratic-socialist principles. This was a very important experience and achievement in a Brazilian context. Statistics show that its educational system had improved very little after the 1970s, and the problems Freire pointed out in his doctoral thesis, *Eduçacão e atualidade brasileira* (Education and Brazilian Actuality) written in 1959 and in the article "Escola Primária para o Brasil" (The Elementary School for Brazil) written in 1961 were as valid at the time of his appointment as in those days. After having held the post as the Secretary of Education, he felt the urgency to denounce the authoritarian character of the schools, and addressing as many educators and intellectuals as possible in order to unite all the people that deal with education and to fight for a democratic school. This means to fight for an education that forms critical, active citizens who will help in the construction of a democratic-socialist society.

In this paper, Freire's works will be divided into two periods :

Early period :

1) *Educação e atualidade brasileira.* (Education and Brazilian Actuality), 1959

2) "Escola Primária para o Brasil" (The Primary School for Brazil), 1961

3) *Pedagogia do Oprimido* (Pedagogy of the Oppressed), 1970 : referred as (Op)

Late period : works published after his return to Brazil

1) *The Politics of Education : Culture, Power, and Liberation,* 1985:(Politics)

2) *A Educação na cidade* (Pedagogy of the City), 1991 : (City)

3) *Pedagogia da Esperança* : um reencontro com a pedagogia do oprimido. (Pedagogy of Hope : Reliving Pedagogy of the Oppressed), 1992 : (Hope)

4) *Professora sim, tia não : cartas a quem ousa ensinar.* (Teachers as Cultural Workers : Letters to Those Who Dare Teach), 1993 : (Teachers)

5) *Politics and Education,* 1993 : (PE)

6) *Letters to Cristina : Reflections on My Life and Work,* 1994 : (Cristina)

7) *Pedagogy of the Heart,* 1995 : (Heart)

8) *Pedagogy of Freedom,* 1997 : (Freedom)

Freire's works were divided into these two periods in order to make a comparative study of the development of his theoretical and philosophical principles from the early period to the late one. Concerning the early period, emphasis will be given to *Pedagogy of the Oppressed,* since it is one of his main theoretical works. Freire is still known by many educators and intellectuals as the 'creator' of an efficient method of literacy program for adults to be applied in Third World countries. Nevertheless, when reading his works of the late period, it is impossible to keep looking at Freire's theory only from an adult literacy point of view. The late Freire clearly displays a preoccupation towards basic education, towards the educational practice used at schools that are in charge of 'forming' future citizens.

The focus and emphasis in Freire's early and late works are different since they are influenced

by their historical context. The early Freire lived in a period known as the 'Brazilian Miracle'[11] (1960s and 1970s), a time when everyone believed that Brazil would leave its state of 'underdevelopment' to be part of the 'first world'. To accomplish this goal, the importance of giving education to every Brazilian in order to modernize the country and secure its place among the developed countries was acknowledged. In the 1960s and 1970s, with the military in power, all government efforts concentrated on achieving national development, according to David Plank : "Since 1930 impatience for economic growth and an end to 'underdevelopment' has periodically led the military to dispense with democratic institutions in an effort to reduce political "interference" in the economy and accelerate growth"[12]. After the return of the civilian rule in the 1980s, the strong and steady economic growth stopped and in turn a cycle of unprecedented high inflation and recession set in. As a result, during the period between 1980 and 1990, economic growth stalled, and the gap between rich and poor widened, increasing poverty, violence and crime. It is considered the 'lost decade'[13]. In the 1990s, with democracy in its early stage and with a stagnated economy, people have lost faith that it is possible to attain their dreams and change their actual situation and nostalgic feelings towards the past have emerged, leading them to 'immobility'. Freire, back in Brazil in the 1980s, found the country drowned in disillusionment and felt the urgency to fight the strongly rooted fatalism and the authoritarian character of the educational system.

Freire faced with this new Brazilian reality, incorporates it into his works by updating and restating his philosophical and theoretical principles according to the needs of this new time. This however, made his writings go beyond mere techniques for literacy training to become one of the most important works on critical pedagogy worldwide.

So, what is the purpose of studying Freire in Japan ? From a Brazilian context, Japanese educational enrolment and achievements are an example deserving admiration : almost 100% of the population is literate, there is a low level of drop outs and school violence, well maintained and equipped schools, almost all children that start elementary school conclude high school and about 40% of the students go on to higher education ; moreover, Japanese children are known for their high scores in international competitions. Looking from a Brazilian educational point of view, Japanese schooling is representative of the "model" of a successful educational system which worked for the purpose of economical development, leading the country to be part of the 'First World'. Having lived in Japan for a while however, it became clear to me that this educational system that looked so perfect from 'outside' was also facing several problems. One fact that called my attention most was the excessive obedience and discipline of the children, leading them to be passive and afraid of expressing themselves. The children, somehow, lacked what ought to characterize them most : joyfulness, energy and creativity. In addition, this tendency worsens as the children go on to junior high school, which features many strict regulations such as 'hair checks' and clothing restrictions to name some. As a result of this paternalistic character of the educational system, children get on the one hand frustrated because they are not allowed to think and decide for themselves, and, on the other hand stressed in trying to fulfill the role of a 'perfect child'.

Freire with his passionate, enthusiastic and energetic words based on consistent philosophical and theoretical principles, encourages us to go on fighting for a 'joyful school' where students can tru-

ly learn; he makes us reconsider the real meaning and purpose of education.

II) Towards a Humanizing Pedagogy

1) Human beings are historical beings

Human beings, different from animals, should not simply 'live' by adapting themselves to the world; human beings, to fulfill their roles as such, have to historically, culturally and socially 'exist' *in* and *with* the world, which implies to be in a permanent 'process of becoming'. From this point of view, to exist humanly is to exist in transforming, interfering in the world ; consequently, history and our social reality are products of our intervention in the world. In *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Freire distinguishes 'men' and 'animals' in defining animals as being "ahistorical", therefore, "fundamentally 'beings in themselves'"(Op, 70). It basically means that animals are "unable to objectify either themselves or their activity...living 'submerged' in a world to which they can give no meaning, lacking a 'tomorrow' and a 'today' because they exist in an overwhelming present" (Op, 70). On the other hand, 'men', different from animals, "exist in a world which they are constantly recreating and transforming...because they are conscious beings...they can separate themselves from the world, which they objectify, as they separate themselves from their own activity, as they locate the seat of their decisions in themselves and in their relations with the world and others, men overcome the situations which limit them : the 'limit-situations'." (Op, 71) Moreover, because they are conscious beings, they are able to be conscious of their own 'unfinishedness'.

The late Freire, based on the same principles, improved this proposition with more precision and clearity : "The ability to reflect, to evaluate, to program, to investigate and to transform is unique to human beings in the world and with the world. Life becomes existence and life support becomes world when the conscience about the world, which also implies a conscience of the self, emerges and establishes a dialectical relationship with the world." (Heart, 34). Human beings as the ones who do not just adapt to the world but who are involved in the world, are in a "continual state of searching and investigating, curious about everything and everyone, and therefore historic, always preoccupied with tomorrow" (PE, 25).

History then, being the result of our interference with the world, cannot be something predetermined but it is a "possibility" ; it is constructed according to our everyday decisions. Consequently, future is not preset, it is problematic. The early Freire as well as the late Freire is precise in defining the role of "past" and "future", in which the past exists to be analyzed for the construction of a better future. As the early Freire states : "it affirms men as beings who transcend themselves...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." (Op, 57). Despite the late Freire's understanding of 'past' and 'future' being fundamentally the same, he improves the proposition by making clear the role of the *present*, which, similarly to future, is under construction : "It is in the concrete, dynamic, and contradictory present that the battle is waged from which the future emerges. Only the past, while lived time and available for our analysis and comprehension, cannot be transformed...It is not possible for us to intervene in it, but by understanding its contradictory movements, it is possible to perform better in the present. The present and the future are times under construction, transitioning into

the past." (Cristina, 153). Considering history as being the result of our actions, it is also valid to affirm that it is "a process of being limited and conditioned by the knowledge that we produce. Nothing that we engender, live, think, and make explicit takes place outside of time and history." (Heart, 32).

Thus, here lies the root for Freire's refusal to accept a fatalistic way of thinking. The early Freire placed fatalism as a usual phenomenon among the 'exploited', the 'oppressed people', as a result of lack of critical reflection upon reality : fatalism is "the fruit of an historical and sociological situation, not an essential characteristic of a people's behavior...Under the sway of magic myth, the oppressed see their suffering, the fruit of exploitation, as the will of God — as if god were the creator of this 'organized disorder'." (Op, 37). The late Freire addresses this phenomenon not only to the exploited or the "oppressed" but extends it to everyone who believes their life is predetermined, who accepts the unjust wealth and food distribution in the world without any protest, who accepts millions of people dying with hunger whereas tons of food are thrown away. To accept any unjust situation as not transformative, is fatalism and there is a need to fight against this fatalistic view of life : "The affirmation that "Things are the way they are because they cannot be otherwise" is hatefully fatalistic since it decrees that happiness only belongs to those in power...We are transformative beings and not beings for accommodation." (Heart, 36). The new version of fatalistic discourse is often held by the reactionary neoliberals with their 'mechanistic' and authoritarian way of understanding history as well as future, proclaiming the "death of history" and of ideologies. According to them, "*tomorrow* is the pure repetition of today, or that tomorrow is something "predated", or as I have called it, a *given datum*, a 'given given'." (Hope, 101). If history is predetermined, "Social struggle would be reduced to either delaying the inexorable future or helping it to arrive"(Heart, 53). For Freire, however, there can be no human experience that takes place outside history since history is constructed and constituted by us. Then, to proclaim "death of history" also implies our death.

In the process of making history, hope is an ontological need. In *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Freire defined the role of 'hope' as an indispensable factor to fight against the oppressor : "Hope is rooted in men's incompleteness, from which they move out in constant search — a search which can be carried out only in communion with other men...As long as I fight, I am moved by hope ; and if I fight with hope, then I can wait." (Op, 64). The late Freire, however, emphasized the need to have hope not only to fight against the 'oppressor', but also to be able to "humanly exist" and transform the society : "Dreaming is not only a necessary political act, it is an integral part of the historico-social manner of being a person. It is part of human nature, which, within history, is in permanent process of becoming...There is no change without dream, as there is no dream without hope." (Hope 90–1).

Once we assume ourselves as 'transformative beings', it also implies the assumption of the responsibility for our own acts, since society is 'molded' accordingly: "we recall that our awareness of our unfinishedness makes us responsible beings, hence the notion of our presence in the world as ethical." (Freedom, 56). In *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, although it is mentioned that human beings could be 'ethical or not', Freire does not stress the importance of each human being assuming 're-

sponsibility' for their own acts as much as the late Freire does.

There are no fundamental changes from the works of the early period to the late one concerning the historicity of human beings, but he definitely shifted his emphasis towards to the need to **fight against fatalism**, to **dream with hope**, and the need for each person to be **responsible** for their own acts. He believed all his life that human beings, as historical beings, are capable of constructing a future founded on democratic principles. In fact, this does not apply only to countries in development but also to the developed ones, since with the society over-institutionalized, people feel powerless in their ability to 'create and re-create' history. Consequently, future is often foreseen with no space to "dream with hope" in constructing their own future. By the same token there is no need to assume responsibility for their own acts since people only follow and respect the rules. This is also immobility, a sort of fatalism which is unacceptable for Freire. We are 'transformative beings', and we have the potential to make history with our own hands, and only by transforming reality human beings fulfill their existence.

2) To educate curiosity as a goal of education.

Considering history as the product of our interference with the world, in order to fulfill our role as the 'creator and re-creator' of history, we should develop critical thinking, which implies the ability to look at reality with critical eyes produced in the tension between action and reflection. The early Freire called this critical reading of reality conscientization. The concept of conscientization is one of the best known parts of his theory of education, and often the target of criticisms and misunderstandings. In *The Politics of Education* (1985) Freire criticizes the way conscientization was often misunderstood, seen either as a 'magic potion' for solving problems of class conflict, or, alternatively as a set of methods and techniques by which educators and students look at social reality. Since then, he stopped using the word conscientization, using it mostly to explain its criticisms and its misunderstandings. Instead, the late Freire approaches the concept of conscientization as the act of knowing, as the act of 'educating curiosity'.

In *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, conscientization was an educational tool to make the oppressed aware of the causes of their oppression by objectifying their concrete reality and reflecting upon it. Once the cause of the oppression is clear, people are able to act to transform it : "Men emerge from their submersion and acquire the ability to intervene in reality as it is unveiled...Conscientization is the deepening of the attitude of awareness characteristic of all emergence" (Op, 81). Similarly, the main purpose of conscientization has not changed in the late Freire. What can be noticed, however, is that for the early Freire conscientization was mainly used for the purpose of the oppressed revealing the oppressor's strategy to manipulate them ; nowadays the relation oppressor / oppressed has become more complex, since everyone experiences oppression of one kind or another. What is important today is to consider conscientization as a natural process in our continual search to 'become more' that cannot be avoided, something intrinsically human : "conscientization is a requirement of our human condition. It is one of the roads we have to follow if we are to deepen our awareness of our world, of facts, of events, of the demands of human consciousness to develop our capacity for epistemological curiosity. Far from being alien to our human condition, conscientization is natural to

"unfinished" humanity that is aware of its unfinishedness." (Freedom, 55).

Our need to develop critical consciousness, our need to be in a constant state of searching, is based on what the late Freire called as " our restless curiosity to know — the curiosity of those alone who, knowing that they know, know that they know little, and that they need and can know more." (Hope 190). Curiosity is understood "as restless questioning, as movement toward the revelation of something hidden, as a question verbalized or not, as search for clarity, as a moment of attention, suggestion, and vigilance, constitutes an integral part of the phenomenon of being alive." (Freedom, 37). Curiosity however, does not develop from its ingenuous state to a more critical one automatically ; it has to be "educated". The process by which it develops is very similar to the 'process of conscientization' described in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed.* Curiosity develops to a more critical state through the process of "'taking epistemological distance' [which] means taking the object in hand in order to get to know it ; in my 'epistemological encircling' of it, I seek to decipher some of its reasons for being in order to appropriate its substantiveness better." (Heart, 92); thus, to exercise curiosity is to reveal the raison d'être of the cognizable object by taking "epistemological distance" and approaching it by 'encircling' it.

On the other hand, to 'educate curiosity', from a 'guidelessness' to an 'epistemological' one, means to transform the 'quality of curiosity', which does not constitute a rupture, but a sort of further stage in the process of knowing : "This further stage, which is a continuity rather than a rupture, happens when ingenuous curiosity, while remaining curious, becomes capable of self-criticism. In criticizing itself, ingenuous curiosity becomes 'epistemological curiosity', as through greater methodological exactitude it appropriates the object of its knowing...It changes in quality but not in essence."(Freedom, 37). Similarly, in the book *Pedagogy of the Oppressed,* Freire was already conscious of the importance of educating knowledge to a more critical one : "They cannot sloganize the people, but must enter into dialogue with them, so that the people's empirical knowledge of reality, nourished by the leaders' critical knowledge, gradually becomes transformed into knowledge of the *causes* of reality" (Op, 104).

Consequently, education's goal should be to educate curiosity, which is to teach people how to "think correctly", respecting "common sense knowing" as it progresses to its higher stage. This was already clear in the book *Pedagogy of the Oppressed:* "The role of the problem-posing educator is to create, together with the students, the conditions under which knowledge at the level of the doxa is superseded by true knowledge, at the level of the *logos.*" (Op, 54). The late Freire, however, is insistent on this topic since 1) with the vast amount of information exchanged nowadays, we often do not have time to reflect the reason for their being 2) with the advancement of technology, education has giving emphasis to technoscientific training rather than educating a citizen who also fights for his or her rights. For Freire, to 'think correctly' is not to naïvely accept information without questioning it, it is to look at information with critical eyes, trying to find its raison d'être and its relationship with the world.

Brazilian society marked by its "corporatist, populist and authoritarian bureaucratic regimes"[14], does not have the tradition of developing critical education, and, for that matter, critical consciousness since the main objective of the education has been to educate people who **adapt** to the 'needs'

of the society, that is to say, to the needs of the elite rather than educating people who "think correctly".

3) Education for citizenship

a) Education is a political act

For Freire, educational practice is and has always been political. This is due to the directive character of education since any decision or option taken carries its political weight : "the *directiveness of education* — that, not allowing the neutrality of educational practice, demands from the educator the assumption, in an ethical form and in view of the individual's dreams, that it is political." (PE, 65). By 'political' Freire means the position one has to take when 'deciding' and 'opting' in the process of teaching and learning, which can never avoid the implications of political ideologies. Thus, for Freire, politics, power and education cannot be considered separately : "The comprehension of the limits of educational practice requires political clarity on the part of educators in relation to their project. It demands that the educator assume the political nature of her practice. It is not enough to say that education is a political act, just as it is not enough to say that political acts are also educative. It is necessary to truly assume the political nature of education...I cannot recognize the limits of the political-educative practice in which I am involved if I don't know, if I am not clear about, on whose behalf I work." (PE, 46) An education based on progressive ideologies should provide "technical training" as well as political knowledge since the latter is what will help an individual to think critically about what is learned, revealing the hidden truths and ideologies. On the other hand, those who insist on depoliticizing education proclaiming it as a matter of technical, scientific and professional development of the learners, imply not questioning the existent social structure but rather reinforce the maintenance of this structure which was built according to the interests of the "dominant class".

In *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Freire was conscious about the political character of education : "Political action on the side of the oppressed must be pedagogical action in the authentic sense of the word, hence, action with the oppressed." (Op, 42). Although he was clear about the political character, the directive character of education was only implied in the statements, which led to several misunderstandings and criticisms. In this sense, the late Freire is straighter and clearer in order to avoid making the same mistakes.

To assume the political character of education is to assume one's positioning towards education, towards the world, be it either progressive or authoritarian.

b) Education according to progressive principles

Progressive education is based on the principle that educational practice, being political, should not separate teaching of technical training from the moral, political and ethical formation of the learner. Consequently, as an educational practice that aims at participating in the formation of the learner, it cannot exist apart from an education of and for citizenship. To be a citizen means to be "an individual in pursuit of the civil and political rights of the State and that citizenship is related to the condition of the citizen, that is, to the use of these rights and the right to the duties of a citizen" (PE, 45). Citizenship, then, is a social invention, it is not something obtained by chance ; it de-

mands to be practiced based on a certain political knowledge in order to fulfill its requirements. Thus, progressive education acknowledges the right of the people to receive technical training as well as the knowledge to "know how their society functions, know their rights and duties," (Hope, 132) in order to be able to fulfill their role as a citizen.

In the information age, however, with the tendency of people depending much more on technical and scientific knowledge to survive, as a response to this 'need', the neoliberal reactionaries reduced educational practice to a mere 'training' practice, in which the development of the learner is only concerned on how much information he or she can 'absorb' in order to 'adapt' to the world and have a 'happy life'. From a progressive and democratic point of view, it is unacceptable to " transform the experience of educating into a matter of simple technique [since it] is to impoverish what is fundamentally human in this experience : namely, its capacity to form the human person...To educate is essentially to form" (Freedom, 39). To master technical knowledge is just as important for the learners as to master political knowledge is for citizens. In *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Freire also criticizes the 'mechanic' transference of knowledge in order to 'fill' the learners with information to adjust to the world : "Based on a mechanistic, static, naturalistic, spatialized view of consciousness, it transforms students into receiving objects. It attempts to control thinking and action, leads men to adjust to the world, and inhibits their creative power." (Op, 51). The main difference with the late Freire is that in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, to 'read the world' is to "unveil the world of oppression" (Op, 31), it is to demythologize reality in order to transform it, whereas for the late Freire, to 'read the world' is to have political knowledge in order to know 'how society functions' because only then, it is possible for every person to fulfill the duties as a citizen.

The late Freire however, is conscious that although education, when critically implemented, has an important role in the transformation of the society, it is not the only key to the transformation. The root for this consideration lies on the historicity of education : " Education as a possibility , in the sense that education is profoundly historical. When we understand education as possibility, we come to realize that education has limits. It is exactly because it is limitable and limited,...that education gains efficacy" (City, p.85). In *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, however, it is not clear whether Freire was aware of the limitations of educational practice, but it is rather described as the key to social transformation : "True reflection on their concrete situation leads to action" (Op., 41). This might be explained because in the 1960s and 1970s, Brazil was experiencing rapid economic growth and to improve schooling was one of the main requirements for the country to be part of the 'First World'. Involved in this climate of hope and euphoria, Freire also believed education to be the key to social transformation. The late Freire however, more mature, takes education as having its limitations in influencing the social transformation as a consequence of its historical character. This means that rather than idealizing education, he discusses its limits and potential for the construction of a more democratic society. This change was necessary since in the 1990s, living in a society drowned in disillusionment and with an educational system performing worse than other Latin American countries like Argentina, Mexico, Chile and Peru, it was necessary to recover people's trust in the potential of education, which would not work if it was too idealized.

In summary, a progressive, democratic educational practice is always political and directive and

the act of knowing cannot be reduced to the transference of information, reducing the practice into a mere training in order to 'form' people that 'adapt', 'adjust' to the society with no 'dream' of transforming it ; it is more than that : it should teach how to transform information into knowledge, transcending the act of receiving and becoming a subject in the process of knowing. It should "lead to critical knowledge, which implies the technical domain as well as political reflection, which asks the following : for whom, for what, against whom, and against what will these technical instruments work ?" (Cristina, 99–100). Educational practice, then, is an education to form citizen, to form people who at the same time learn 'contents' and are able to 'reflect' upon it. And an educational practice critically implemented "makes an indispensable contribution to this political struggle. Educational practice is not the only key to the social transformation required to gain human rights, but no transformation will take place without it. The greater clarity that education gives the popular classes to "read the world" may bring political intervention that advances the democratic learning process." (Cristina, 155).

In contrast to progressive and democratic principles, the Brazilian educational system, rather than 'educating citizens', educates people who adapt and help in the maintenance of the existing system with no dream or hope in transforming it. According to Alfred Stepan, " Brazil has long stood out as the major Latin American country where State power has most structured and controlled civil society, especially the popular sectors....Brazil still is a polity marked by an extremely weak sense of the rights of citizenship and by a degree of income inequality not found in any contemporary democracy."[15] Freire, back in Brazil in 1980, felt the urgent need to fight for the implementation of an educational practice that is rooted in progressive and democratic principles in order to "form" critical citizens actively participating in the transformation of the society.

4) Freire's progressive postmodern views of society beyond capitalist and authoritarian socialism

One characteristic of the late Freire is concerning in his insistence in explaining the complexities of the "modern" society, in which defining opposites such as left / right, socialism / capitalism, postmodernism / modernism are difficult since there are always positive and negative aspects to be considered. In contrast, in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed,* it was possible to position the 'oppressor', the dominant culture against the 'exploited', the 'oppressed'. In this way, although the late Freire positions himself as being leftist, he also criticizes the existence of 'dogmatic leftists', who are as authoritarian as the rightists are. Consequently, what becomes important for the late Freire, is to make clear the **principles** underlying one's beliefs, rather than simply positioning someone as 'leftist' or 'rightist'.

To be 'postmodern' from Freire's perspective implies to overcome 'modern certainties', which means that we should first, doubt any certainties and second, we should reflect upon them, never accepting any facts mechanically or as being inexorable. For the realization of it, there is a need to understand the relationship of human being and the world in a dialectical way : "What progressive postmodernism offers us is a truly dialectic understanding of confrontation and of conflicts — rather than a mechanistic intelligence." (PE, 21). Moreover, Freire is, as he calls himself, "progressively

postmodern" because to be postmodern does not necessarily mean to be progressive : there is a postmodernity of the Right and of the Left. The Right considers postmodernity as "an altogether special time that has suppressed social classes, ideologies, Left and Right, dreams, and utopias" (Hope, 198). On the other hand, the Left regards in the "the reinvention of power — and not its mere acquisition, as with modernity. (Hope, 198). In this case, to be the postmodern of the Left corresponds to being "progressively postmodern".

To be progressively postmodern is also to fight against all the authoritarian attitudes, either of the left or the right, of the socialists or the capitalists. The mistake of the authoritarian Left is that it "has almost always been their absolute conviction of their certainties, which makes them sectarian, authoritarian, and religious. The mistake today, or rather the risk, is that, stunned by all that has happened since the changes in the former Soviet Union, the Left may either reactivate the fear of freedom, the aversion to democracy, or apathetically succumb to the myth of capitalist excellence, thus wrongly accepting that political campaigns are not ideological." (Teachers, 14). And one of their worst mistakes, according to the late Freire, is in their disbelief in education's ability to transform society, being more elitist than the authoritarian right because the latter believes that in offering critical education to popular classes, it will increase their capacity to know the world, consequently, to change the world. As he stated : "Right-wing authoritarianism believes much more in education practice than does the left, or the authoritarian left. Therefore, the right represses, to varying degrees, projects and programs of progressive educators that view as threats to "democracy", referring of course to their version of democracy. There are certain left-wing people who consider progressive educators mere "managers of the capitalist crisis" or scared obstinate idealists." (PE, 93).

On the other hand, those who advocate the disappearance of ideologies, of class struggle, with no need to have utopia and dreams, proclaiming the definite victory of capitalism, also goes against Freire beliefs : "Reactionary postmodernity has had success in proclaiming the disappearance of ideologies and the emergence of a new history without social classes, therefore without antagonistic interests, without class struggle. They preach that there is no need to continue to speak about dreams, utopia or social justice...the postmodern reactionary triumphantly says, suggesting in his pragmatic discourse that it is now the duty of capitalism to create a special ethics based on the production of equal players, or almost equal players. Large questions are no longer political, religious, or ideological. They are ethical but in a "healthy" capitalist sense of ethics...What we need to do now, according to this astute ideology, is focus on production without any preoccupation about what we are producing, who it benefits, or who it hurts." (Cristina, 84). Freire's antipathy towards capitalism is not new. In *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, he is clear in denouncing the hazards of capitalism : "In their unrestrained eagerness to possess, the oppressors develop the conviction that it is possible for them to transform everything into objects of their purchasing power ; hence their strictly materialistic concept of existence. Money is the measure of all things, and profit the primary goal. For the oppressors, what is worthwhile is to have more — always more — even at the cost of the oppressed having less or having nothing." (Op, 34–5). As the late Freire states : "My struggle against capitalism is founded on that — its intrinsic perversity, its antisolidarity nature...It has produced scarcity within abundance and need within plenty" (Heart, 88).

Despite the breakout of the socialist system, Freire's 'socialist dream' is still alive in constructing a socialist society that is at the same time democratic, different from the "authoritarian socialist" with their "authoritarian distortions, its totalitarian repulsiveness, its sectarian blindness" (Hope, 95), destroying the real spirit of socialism. In this way, it is possible to say that one of the challenges in being 'progressively postmodern' is in confronting democracy and socialism and find a unity between these two ideologies. From a Freirean postmodern point of view these two ideologies, rather than existing as opposites, complement each other, and together they depict a society which is neither capitalist nor 'authoritarian socialist' but a society that goes beyond these two existing ones. This is not possible, however, from a mechanistic and domesticated view of the world, because then, democracy and socialism are going to be set as opposites.

In a Brazilian political scenario, the democratic-socialist and anticapitalist proposals are incorporated by the Workers' Party (*Partido dos Trabalhadores*, PT), yet it would be naïve to consider the PT as an homogeneous party since it "contains 5 different tendencies and up to 15 factions"[16]. When PT won the elections in 1989, under the leadership of Paulo Freire as Secretary of Education in the Municipality of Sao Paulo, they worked on the implementation of "Popular Public School" which aimed at empowering the popular classes by collectively participating in the construction of a school that truly attends to their interests ; it is a school based on "commitment and solidarity, in the formation of class consciousness"[17]. In contrast, during the following municipal election in 1992, PT lost against the conservative right wing Democratic Social Party (Partido Democrático Social, PDS). Their administration introduced a project called "Controle de Qualidade Total (CQT, Total Quality Control)" into the municipal schools. The CQT proposal is based on Japanese managerial models for industry"[18], which obliged educators to "participate in the 'molding of workers' in the interests of industry and capitalism"[19]. It aimed at protecting the ones in power and the reinforcement of the existent social structure.

Freire is a progressive postmodern man of the Left who believed in the construction of a society that goes beyond capitalism and authoritarian socialism, a society based on "democratic socialist" principles. This means putting an end to the wealth inequalities capitalist society created and constructing a democratic-socialist society by engaging the people in individual and collective processes of critical awareness and action.

Progressive Postmodern Pedagogy

It is a utopian pedagogy engaged in the denunciation of the injustices of the society in reflecting upon it, and the 'annunciation' of a society based on 'universal human ethic', which is not more than 'humanity's ontological vocation to be more'. In the 70s, Freire called this utopian pedagogy the " 'pedagogy of the oppressed', a pedagogy which must be forged with, not for, the oppressed (be they individuals or whole peoples) in the incessant struggle to regain their humanity." (Op, 25). In the 1990s, unfortunately, the main purpose of struggle is still the same, the struggle for human beings most basic right to be more.

Freire's criticism towards the traditional schools yesterday as well as today, is mainly towards the authoritarian relation between educators and learners, which is not more than a criticism of "the

authoritarian relations generated by the capitalist mode of production." (Cristina, 89). Today, the ethics based on capitalist principles got a position of excellence, as something 'untouchable', and all the societal structure was molded according to them. For Freire, however, these principles go against the most basic human principle that is 'the right of everyone to be more', that is, the right of every person to exercise 'humanity'. For every person to exercise the right to be human, there is an urgent need to rethink about 'ethics'. Ethics based on capitalist principles is dehumanizing, because it is the ethics of 'profits above all'. In contrast, Freire's ethics is "a universal human ethic in the same way I speak of humanity's ontological vocation, which calls us out of and beyond ourselves." (Freedom, 25).

Freire's progressive postmodern pedagogy is an utopian pedagogy full of hope, embedded in history, engaged in the denunciation of the injustices in society and annunciation of a more human society based on universal human ethic, which is humanity's ontological vocation to be more : it is a humanizing pedagogy. Thus, from this perspective, education is "seen as a powerful and necessary tool in the development of a critically conscious citizenry, active in the construction of a democratic-socialist society."[20]

III) The School Education

1) Popular education based on progressive and democratic principles

a) Education that respects human's ontological vocation to "be more"

In *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* as well as in his latter works, Freire is confident in defending an educational practice, whether to children or to adults, that considers human beings as historical beings, who are finite, unfinished, but conscious of this unfinishedness, not determined but beings that are programmed to learn. An educational practice that does not deny this human's ontological ability to learn, should not be an 'act of transference of knowledge', but an 'act of knowledge', which stimulates critical knowledge produced in the tension of action and reflection.

An educational practice that disregards human's ontological vocation 'to know more' is what Freire called in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* the 'banking concept of education', in which the act of knowing is reduced to an 'act of depositing communiqués' : "In a *narrative education*, education 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, filling, and storing the deposits" (Op,46). In this process, the students become passive and manageable beings because they are "filled" with fragmented "bits" of information. Subsequently, "The more completely they accept the passive role imposed on them, the more they tend simply to adapt to the world as it is and to the fragmented view of reality deposited in them." (Op, 47). To react against this authoritarian, dehumanizing education, Freire proposes what he called "problem-posing" education, in which the human's ontological vocation to 'be more' is respected : "Problem-posing education bases itself on creativity and stimulates true reflection and action upon reality, thereby responding to the vocation of men as beings who are authentic only when engaged in inquiry and creative transformation." (Op,

56). Consequently, whereas banking education suppresses creative power to maintain the submersion of consciousness, problem-posing education stimulates creative power "for the emergence of consciousness and *critical intervention* in reality." (Op, 54).

In the 1990s, a similar practice of what Freire defined as the 'banking concept of education' can be noticed in what he calls the 'bourgeois school' : "the bourgeois school is only concerned with the authoritarian teaching of content, hiding in the process, the reasons behind facts or talking about false reasons" (City, 49). The authoritarian stance reduces students to a passive position, leading them "to apathy, excessive obedience, uncritical conformity, lack of resistance against authoritarian discourse, self-abnegation, and fear of freedom" (Teachers, 40), yet some students at times, might "adopt rebellious positions, defiant of any limit, discipline, or authority" (Teachers, 40). Readers of *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* often criticized Freire as a result of them misunderstanding his pedagogy as being "the pedagogy of permissiveness, according to which kids can do whatever they want." (Cristina, 57). The late Freire however, makes clear that the pedagogy he pursuits is neither "the pedagogy of hitting (and) [or] of permissiveness, [but]let us hope that a new democratic practice will take root, one where authority does not surpass its limits and drown freedom nor is nullified by hypertrophied freedom. Let us hope, instead, that by limiting freedom we will limit authority." (Cristina, 57). Above all, the political and directive character of education does not allow it to be permissive, and the late Freire is clear in defining and explaining this complex relation between authority and freedom, which topic will be discussed in more detail in the section "The 'ideal' progressive educator and his / her role".

Another analogy that the late Freire uses for "banking concept of education" is what he called an "education of answers", and an analogy for "problem-posing education", is what he called an " education of question" : "An education of answers does not at all help the curiosity that is indispensable in the cognitive process. On the contrary, this form of education emphasizes the mechanical memorization of contents. Only an education of question can trigger, motivate, and reinforce curiosity. It is obvious that the mistake inherent in an education that forms only in giving answers does not reside in the answer itself but in the rupture between the answer and the question. The mistake lies in the fact that the answer is given independently from the question that triggers it." (Heart, 31). Educational practice should teach "how to know" through which a new knowledge will arise, transcending another one ; knowledge is a continual process, always in the 'process of being' ; only an education of question, which incites curiosity, if properly applied, is able to 'educate' curiosity.

The ultimate goal of developing critical understanding of the reality is to create *autonomous individuals* which is : "a process of becoming oneself, a process of maturing, of coming to be" (Freedom, 98). The process of becoming autonomous does not happen by chance, it is a result of the experience of 'deciding' ; in this sense, education should put effort in respecting the children's freedom to make decisions and take responsibility for their own decisions. This is applicable not only to adults but also to children : "it's preferable to emphasize the children's freedom to decide, even if they run the risk of making a mistake, than to simply follow the decision of the parents. It's making decisions that we learn to decide...However, it is essential to the learning experience of decision making that the consequences of any decision be assumed by the decision maker...Consequences are what make

decision making a responsible process...The participation of the parents is most opportune in helping the children analyze the possible consequences of the decision that is to be taken." (Freedom, 97).

Freire's progressive and democratic pedagogy aims at forming people that do not just live by adapting to the world, but a pedagogy that forms people that 'exist' in and with the world active in making history and that are not afraid of making decisions and assuming responsibility ; an education that allows every individual to 'be more' in order to become an autonomous individual.

b) Teacher and student relationship in a democratic pedagogy

To fulfill the requirements of a pedagogy based on progressive and democratic principles, it is indispensable that the relation between teachers and students be dialogical. It is only through 'dialogue' that teachers can talk 'to and with' the learners, different from just talking 'to' the learners, which is what happens in the 'banking pedagogy'. Moreover, a dialogic relation is always democratic since talking to and with the student neither minimizes the knowledge the students bring to school nor maximizes the teacher's knowledge as the absolute one.

Taking as a starting point the definition of "dialogue" as an " interchange and discussion of ideas, especially when open and frank, as in seeking mutual understanding and harmony" (Webster's New World College, 1994), it is clear that in the 'banking pedagogy' there is no space for dialogue, but rather, the mere imposition of one's ideas onto others takes place. In this kind of pedagogy, the teacher-student relationship has a "narrative character" : "This relationship involves a narrating Subject (the teacher) and patient, listening objects (the students)...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." (Op, 45–6). From a progressive point of view, there is no education without 'communication', because education can only be realized when both teachers and students assume an 'active' role in the process of 'knowing', in which both assume themselves as 'subjects' in search of knowledge. 'True knowledge' is something to be 'constructed' and 'produced' by subjects, and not something to be just 'reproduced' or 'given. The late Freire has to still insist on this point since the teacher-student relationship has not changed much during these 30 years :

> "to teach is not to transfer knowledge but to create the possibilities for the production or construction of knowledge. If, during the time of my education, which in any case should be ongoing, I begin believing that my teacher is the 'subject' in relation to whom I consider myself to be the 'object', then I put myself in the passive role of one who receives quantities of accumulated knowledge, transferred to me by a 'subject' who 'knows'...It is essential therefore, from the very beginning of the process, that the following principle be clear : namely, that although the teachers or the students are not the same, the person in charge of education is being formed or re-formed as he / she teaches, and the person who is being taught forms him / herself in this process. In this sense teaching is not about transferring knowledge or contents." (Freedom, 30–1).

There is one point regarding the teacher-student relationship that has often been misunderstood

by *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* readers : it is concerning the role of the teacher and the student. When Freire wrote "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." (Op, 53), it was understood that the 'teacher' should position himself or herself 'on the same foot' as the students, and in the worst case, that the role of the teacher ceases to exist as the one who teaches, leading education to 'permissiveness'. The late Freire is clearer in defining this complex 'teacher-student relationship' and makes sure that the same misunderstandings do not occur. In *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, dialogue was defined as "the encounter between men, mediated by the world, in order to name the world...it is an existential necessity" (Op, 61) and dialogical relation as "the capacity of cognitive actors to cooperate in perceiving the same cognizable object...Men teach each other, mediated by the world, by the cognizable objects which in banking education are 'owned' by the teacher." (Op, 53). The late Freire, however, is more concrete in explaining what a dialogical relation should be in a classroom situation and he also often refers to the different roles teachers and the students have : "Dialogue between teachers and students does not place them on the same footing professionally...A dialogical relation is completed and sealed in its correlative, the act of learning, and both become authentically possible only when the educator's thinking, critical and concerned though it be, nevertheless refuses to 'apply the brakes' to the educand's ability to think. On the contrary, both 'thinkings' become authentically possible only when the educator's critical thinking is delivered over to the educand's curiosity" (Hope, 117). Dialogue then, "is a synthesis between the educator's maximally systematized knowing and the learners' minimally systematized knowing .For dialogue to be a method of true knowledge, the knowing subjects must approach reality scientifically in order to seek the dialectical connections that explain the form of reality" (Politics, 55).

The early Freire as well as the late Freire defends an education that is essentially dialogical. Considering education as the pedagogy of knowing, and dialogue as a way in which people 'communicate' with each other, it is possible to affirm that there is no education without dialogue as well as there is no education without communication because there would be no construction of knowledge without communication.

c) The act of teaching and learning in a democratic relation

From a progressive point of view, the act of teaching is to critically exercise students' capacity for learning in order to exercise their capacity in achieving what Freire calls 'epistemological curiosity', without which it is not possible to achieve true knowledge. The refusal of the 'banking education' lies in the fact that it ignores the process of learning itself. In a 'banking system', the educator might recreate the knowledge when preparing the material to be taught but the problem is in the process of teaching , which ends up taking the narrative character ; the early Freire fights against this "dichotomized" way of looking at the process of teaching and learning : "The banking concept...distinguishes two stages in the action of the educator. During the first he recognizes a cognizable object while he prepares his lessons in his study or his laboratory ; during the second, he expounds to his students on that object. The students are not called upon to know, but to memorize the contents narrated by the teacher. Nor do the students practice any act of cognition, since the object

towards which that act should be directed is the property of the teacher rather than a medium evoking the critical reflection of both teacher and students." (Op, 53). The late Freire also denounces the same problems but he is also aware that it will still take a long time until the educational practice radically changes ; then, instead of negating the authoritarian practice completely, he suggests that even in a 'banking system', students should not give up being the ones who are subjects in search of knowledge : "What is essential is that learners, though subjected to the praxis of the "banking system", maintain alive the flame of resistance that sharpens their curiosity and stimulates their capacity for risk" (Freedom, 32). If we cannot change the school system or the teacher's attitude, let's hope for the resistance of the students in preserving their 'curious attitude' in the learning process. One truth that many teachers do not notice is that when suppressing students' 'curiosity', they are also suppressing their own 'creative' power in the process of teaching : "the educator who is dominated by authoritarian or paternalistic attitudes that suffocate the curiosity of the learner finishes by suffocating his or her own curiosity." (Freedom, 79). What is important is that both teachers and students, open and curious to the process of teaching and learning, assume their roles as agents of constructing critical knowledge. In a class where both assume the roles of agents, it "becomes a challenge and not simply a nest where people gather. In the environment of challenge, the students become tired but they do not fall asleep. They get tired because they accompany the comings and goings of the teacher's thought and open their eyes in wonder at his or her pauses, doubts, uncertainties." (Freedom, 81).

The process of teaching and learning, in which both assume the role as active agents in the construction and production of knowledge, is difficult and demanding, but the 'joy' lies in the fact that because it is difficult, it is challenging, it is 'beautiful'. In a dialogical relation, teaching and learning practice is filled with hope, "The hope that we can learn together, teach together, be curiously impatient together, produce something together, and resist together the obstacles that prevent the flowering of our joy." (Freedom, 69).

Freire aims at a school full of hope and joy in which students and teachers can truly learn.

2) The 'ideal' progressive educator and his / her role

a) the role of a progressive educator

From a progressive democratic point of view, educational practice is to critically exercise students' capacity for learning in order to exercise their capacity in achieving 'epistemological curiosity'. The act of teaching then, is when the students "learn to learn in learning the reason-for, the 'why' of the object or the content" (Hope, 81). In this type of education, the educator's role is to challenge the learner's naïve curiosity to be overcome by epistemological curiosity, so that both, teachers and students, in a dialogical relation, can share criticalness : "My role as a 'progressive' teacher is...helping the students to recognize themselves as the architects of their own cognition process...they assume the authorship of knowledge of the object known." (Freedom, 112). In *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, the role of an educator, or as he called it at the time, the role of a 'revolutionary' in a 'humanizing pedagogy', is to help the 'oppressors' to overcome situations which limit them ; this process of 'transformation' can only be achieved when they recognize themselves as the 'actors' of the

process : "his [the humanist, revolutionary educator] efforts must coincide with those of the students to engage in critical thinking and the quest for mutual humanization. His efforts must be imbued with a profound trust in men and their creative power." (Op, 49). In contrast, in the 'banking concept of education', the role of the educator is to merely "regulate the way the world 'enters into' the students. His task is to organize a process which already happens spontaneously, to fill the students by making deposits of information which he considers constitute true knowledge" (Op, 49). The modern version of this type of educator is embodied by the 'pragmatic reactionaries' with their fatalistic, anti-utopian ideology, "which proposes a purely technical kind of education in which the teacher distinguishes himself or herself not by a desire to change the world but to accept it as it is. Such a teacher possesses very little capacity for critical education but quite a lot for 'training', for transferring contents. An expert in 'know-how'." (Freedom, 126).

Thus, the role of the educator is to exercise students' capacity for learning by stimulating the development of 'epistemological curiosity', in which both teachers and students participate in a construction of knowledge that will turn into an instrument of struggle to transform reality.

b) Necessary qualities of a progressive educator to fulfill his or her role

To accomplish the role as a progressive and democratic educator in an educational practice based on a dialogical teacher-student relationship, there are certain virtues that are indispensable to the educator.

1) **Humility** : For dialogue to exist, a primary condition is to have humility. Humility according to Freire's understanding, is not the one that "carries the connotation of a lack of self-respect, of resignation, or of cowardice. On the contrary, humility requires courage, self-confidence, self-respect, and respect of others." (Teachers, 39). It presupposes a dialectical understanding of knowledge and ignorance, which implies that nobody knows or is ignorant of everything and in consequence, everybody knows or is ignorant of something ; without this virtue, it is not possible for the teacher to be humble to listen to the students. In contrast, the 'arrogant' only see the 'ignorance' in others but never perceive their own, therefore, they are not able to listen, to 'dialogue' with others. They take an authoritarians stance in which "Theirs is the only truth, and it must be imposed on others." (Teachers, 40). As the early Freire had already described : "dialogue cannot exist without humility. The naming of the world, through which men constantly recreate that world, cannot be an act of arrogance. Dialogue, as the encounter of men addressed to the common task of learning and acting, is broken if the parties (or one of them) lack humility. How can I enter into a dialogue if I always project ignorance onto others and never perceive my own ?...Self-sufficiency is incompatible with dialogue" (Op, 63). The late Freire adds "common sense" as a "fundamental auxiliary of humility", which based on our ethics, prevents us from getting lost in our attitudes. Thus, "Humility is not made of bureaucratic rituals. Humility expresses, on the contrary, one of the few certainties that I am sure of, namely, that nobody is superior to anyone else." (Freedom, 108).
2) **Lovingness** : Dialogue cannot exist without "lovingness" towards the students and the act of teaching, since there is no space for humility without love. The early Freire defined "love" as a

commitment to the "cause of liberation" and one of the main requirements for the realization of dialogue, since : "Love is at the same time the foundation of dialogue and dialogue itself...Because love is an act of courage, not of fear, love is commitment to other men." (Op, 62). For the late Freire, however, love, or, what he calls "lovingness" means love for the profession to be a teacher and love for the students : "without which their [the educators'] work would lose its meaning...I do not believe educators can survive the negativities of their trade without some sort of "armed love"...the fighting love of those convinced of the right and the duty to fight, to denounce, and to announce." (Teachers, 40–1).

3) **Courage** : This implies to "conquer" fear by 'educating' it. For Freire, to fear is something "very concrete" and "normal", nothing to be ashamed of, but it has to be educated, not allowing fear to "paralyze" us : "Thus I must neither, on the one hand, deny my fears nor, on the other, surrender myself to them. Instead, I must control them, for it is in the very exercise of this control that my necessiry courage is shared" (Teachers, 41).

4) **Tolerance** : This is the "virtue that teaches us to live with the different. It teaches us to learn from and respect the different."(Teachers, 42). Tolerance is the duty of respecting the right of others to be different and to live with others not considering ourselves 'superior' or 'inferior'. In a classroom situation, to be tolerant would mean to listen to the different positions, views, reading of the world that the students have, which are often different from ours. Teachers should learn how to listen to them rather than denying them only because they are different. Intolerance in contrast, goes against democratic principles, which is our tendency to deny differences : "We have a strong tendency to affirm that what is different from us is inferior. We start from the belief that our way of being is not only good but better than that of others who are different from us. This is intolerance. It is the irresistible preference to reject differences." (Teachers, 71). The early Freire did not use the term 'tolerance', but a similar concept can be perceived in the definition of what he called as 'cultural synthesis', which is a social invention, a 'phenomenon' that has to be 'created' by us, human beings : "In cultural synthesis — and only in cultural synthesis — it is possible to resolve the contradiction between the world view of the leaders and that of the people, to the enrichment of both. Cultural synthesis does not deny the differences between the two views ; indeed, it is based on these differences. It *does* deny the invasion of one by the other, but it affirms the undeniable *support* each gives to the other" (Op, 148). Although 'cultural synthesis' is defined as a phenomenon to be socially invented and 'tolerance' as a quality that an educator should have, both are based on the principle of 'respecting differences' in order to overcome class, race and cultural differences. The word 'tolerance' however, is more precise in depicting its meaning and at the same time has a wider meaning since it describes a human's virtue. The late Freire is definitely more mature in the way he views and defines this concept.

5) **Decisiveness** : This refers to the responsibility that the educator assumes in making decisions. To decide is not an easy task, it is difficult since it implies rupture, in making decisions, but it is impossible to live without deciding. Indecisiveness, on the other hand, is perceived by the students as "either moral weakness or professional incompetence" (Teachers, 43), which may affect the teacher's reliability.

6) **Patience and impatience** : Another important quality that a progressive educator must have is to live the tension between 'patience and impatience'. 'Patience' apart from impatience can lead the educator to immobility, to a state of 'inertia' whereas 'impatience' apart from patience may lead to "activism", a practice that is not based upon "reflection" : "Virtue, then, does not lie in experiencing either without the other but, rather, in living the permanent tension between the two." (Teachers, 44).

7) **Joy of living** : An educational practice that respects the ontological vocation of every human being to 'be more' in order to historically exist in and with the world, it could not put apart the virtue of 'joy of living'. It is a 'yes' to life and 'no' to death, it is to surrender to life and live it to its fullest potential.

The virtues of humility, lovingness, courage, tolerance, decisiveness, patience and impatience, and joy of living are all fundamental qualities that progressive educators should have in order to realize the 'democratic, progressive school', or as Freire calls it, a 'joyful school'. In addition to these virtues, progressive educators should be aware of the following attitudes :

1) They should be coherent in what they say and do : what is ethically required from a progressive educator is to be 'consistent' with their democratic choice, be coherent in what they say and what they do in order to be able to 'testify' their political choice, competence and tolerance, among other qualities. It is very common to find 'incoherence' among educators since many of them even consider themselves as progressives, while using 'reactionary practice'. In a teacher-student relationship, the disparity between the discourse and the practice may affect the student's confidence in the teacher, damaging their relationship. What the students expect from the teacher, is for them to be a 'testimony', i. e., that they can prove their coherence by practicing what they say, that they can testify that what they say is true : the students want the educator to confirm the authenticity of his / her testimony : "An educational practice in which there is no coherent relationship between what educators say and what they do is a disaster. ...the contradiction between words and deed, the learner tends not to believe what the educator says....Children are extremely sensitive to teachers who do exactly the opposite of what they say....One of the worst things in all this is the breakdown of the relationship between educator and learners." (Teachers, 55–6). It is also important that the students "perceive the teacher's struggle to be coherent. And it is necessary that this struggle be the subject of discussion in the classroom from time to time." (Freedom, 95)

For the early Freire, 'testimony' had a wider meaning, which main purpose was to 'organize', unite the people in order to struggle for the transformation of society : "leaders' pursuit of unity is necessarily also an attempt to organize people, requiring witness to the fact that the struggle for liberation is a common task." (Op, 143). For this purpose, "The essential elements of witness which do not vary historically include consistency between words and actions ; boldness which urges the witness to confront existence as a permanent risk ; radicalization (not sectarianism) leading both the witness and the ones receiving that witness to increasing actions ; courage to love...and faith in people, since it is to them that witness is made" (Op, 143–4). Please note : In the English translation

of the book *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, the Portuguese word 'testemunho' is translated into 'witness', and in the late books into 'testimony', whereas Freire is consistent in using the term 'testemunho' in all books.

The need for educators to be coherent between discourse and practice to be able to 'testify' their beliefs and earn the 'confidence' of the students, is an indispensable attitude on the part of the educators who believe in progressive and democratic principles and are eager to have the students' adherence in their mutual struggle for democracy.

2) They should live the tension between freedom and authority : in an educational practice, freedom without limit leads to a climate of "lawlessness", permissiveness which is as harmful as suffocated freedom characterized by authoritarianism ; thus, "The great challenge for the democratic-minded educator is how to transmit a sense of limit that can be ethically integrated by freedom itself. The more consciously freedom assumes its necessary limits, the more authority it has, ethically speaking, to continue to struggle in its own name." (Freedom, 96). For an educator to be able to manage this complex freedom / authority relationship in authoritative, democratic educational practice, one essential quality is to have "self confidence" : "It's a self-confidence that expresses itself in a firmness of action or of decision in regard to its respect for the freedom and autonomy of students, it's ability to discuss its own positions, and its openness to reviewing both itself and its previously held positions" (Freedom, 85). And self-confidence that arises from professional competence, is what Freire called the "self-confident authority", since it is not possible to teach authority without professional competence. Only educators that take their profession seriously, who study, who make effort to keep informed of events have moral authority to teach : "professional incompetence destroys the legitimate authority of the teacher" (Freedom, 86) The utmost goal of living the tension authority / freedom based on democratic principles, experiencing "coherently democratic authority" is "namely to persuade or convince freedom of its vocation to autonomy as it travels the road of self-construction, using materials from within and without, but elaborated over and over again. It is with this autonomy, laboriously constructed, that freedom will gradually occupy those spaces previously inhabited by dependency" (Freedom, 87). It aims at a construction of autonomous individuals, who can be ethically responsible in dealing with their freedom.

In *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Freire touches briefly upon the importance of living the tension between freedom and authority in a leaders-people relationship; at that time, more than putting this matter in a classroom situation, Freire focussed on how people could organize themselves and relate themselves to the leaders in order to overcome their state of oppression : "Freedom and authority cannot be isolated, but must be considered in relationship to each other...In the theory of dialogical action, organization requires authority, so it cannot be authoritarian; it requires freedom, so it cannot be licentious. Organization is, rather, a highly educational process in which leaders and people together experience true authority and freedom, which they then seek to establish in society by transforming the reality which mediates them" (Op, 145–6). The main idea was already very clear in the 1970s, but the late Freire incorporates new theories and explains this complex relationship clearer, focussing on a classroom situation.

3) They should be in constant state of development : a competent teacher is a person, who is open in continually rethinking his / her practice, revising his / her thought and positions. The teachers learn how to teach by the experience of teaching and improve it as they critically reflect on their practice, involving "a dialectical movement between "doing" and "reflecting on doing"." (Freedom, 43). Teaching, then, "requires constant preparation and development on the part of teachers." (Teachers, 18). To be constantly reflecting on the practice takes us to perceive things that before was not possible to perceive, leading this new perception to new knowledge ; this process is continuous, it never stops. For this reason, the constant evaluation of the teacher's practice is also very important because "1) to evaluate almost always implies readjusting and reprogramming. 2) to know how well they are achieving their objectives. The evaluation of practice represents an important and indispensable factor in the preparation of educators. Unfortunately, we almost always evaluate the teacher personally instead of his or her practice. We evaluate to punish and almost never to improve teachers' practice." (Teachers, 7). The evaluation Freire suggests here is one that will help in the professional development of the educators, one that in reflecting upon the practice, will teach how to think and practice better. Teachers should not teach without being prepared to the teaching practice, running the risk of reducing the practice to a mere transference of contents. The ethics of a democratic posture requires a professional, serious and competent attitude from the teachers, since their attitude may influence in the way "people" are "formed".

c) the teaching task is not a form of parental "coddling"

The task of teaching demands rigorousness and "scientific, physical, emotional and affective preparation" (Teachers, 3). It is a task that requires from those who commit themselves to the teaching task certain qualities and attitude. To be a serious and competent teacher and to fulfill the task of teaching requires a rigorous professional attitude which is something completely different from the act of "transferring information" or a "paternalistic nurturing that takes the form of parental coddling" (Teachers, 4). The teaching task "is above all a professional task that requires constant intellectual rigor and the stimulation of epistemological curiosity, of the capacity of love, of creativity, of scientific competence and the rejection of scientific reductionism. The teaching task also requires the capacity to fight for freedom, without which the teaching task becomes meaningless" (Teachers, 4).

The act of teaching reduced to the act of "transferring information" is often practiced by those who 'have knowledge', or are supposed to have knowledge about the content to be taught, but this reduces the act of teaching to an authoritarian or permissive practice. The virtues and attitudes required in order to fulfill the role of a progressive educator, such as humility, tolerance, coherence, to live the tension between freedom and authority, are not taken seriously by those, who feel 'happy' in "transferring knowledge" or at times, not even that.

On the other hand, it is also not acceptable to reduce the task of teaching to what Freire called a "form of parental coddling". This is a refusal to identify the task of teaching with that of parenting, which of course, does not mean to diminish the value of parenting. "Teaching is a profession (not the technical meaning of professionalization) that involves a specific task, a specific militancy (in the sense of advocating for students), and specific requirements for its implementation. Being a parent

involves mostly the relationship of experiencing parenting. Being a teacher implies responsibility to assume the demands of a profession, whereas parenting should not be viewed as a profession." (Teachers, 4). This might not be a problem in certain developed countries like Japan in which the status and the profession of a teacher is respected by the whole society. In countries like Brazil, the role of teachers (particularly women) tends to be devalued to a parenting role, taking away certain professional responsibilities like being engaged in constant professional development and political projects. Here lies the main problem : if teachers are considered as "good parents", how can they go on strike for better working conditions ? The refusal to identify teachers with a parenting role is on the one hand the refusal to accept distorted understanding of the task of teaching and on the other hand, it makes clear the ideologies hidden in such a concept.

To reduce the teaching role to a form of parental coddling or to transference of knowledge is a way of 'avoiding' to fulfill the rights and duties of the profession of being a teacher.

3) The Content Programme of Education

a) A content of education that problematizes the knowledge and experiences of the learner

In order to have a 'joyful school', the educator should bring 'life' itself into the classroom, in discussing and analyzing topics that are part of the students everyday life, rather than discussing 'bits of information' that are often 'alien' to them. The school should work with knowledge that is significant and important to the learner in order to develop 'epistemological curiosity'.

Freire defended the importance of taking into schools popular knowledge, which meant the use of materials that challenge the students : "The starting point for organizing the programme content of education or political action must be the present, existential, concrete situation, reflecting the aspirations of the people. Utilizing certain basic contradictions, we must pose this existential, concrete, present situation to the people as a problem which challenges them and requires a response — not just at the intellectual level, but at the level of action." (Op, 68). In *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Freire was often criticized that in defending popular knowledge, he suggested that educators ought to adjust themselves to the people's common sense knowledge , without any attempt to overcome it ; this is of course, a complete misunderstanding since he is clear in stating that the students' concrete reality is just the point of departure in developing common sense knowledge to a more systematized one : "By stimulating 'perception of the previous perception' and 'knowledge of the previous knowledge', decoding stimulates the appearance of a new perception and the development of new knowledge. The new perception and knowledge are systematically continued with the inauguration of the educational plan, which transforms the untested feasibility into testing action, as potential consciousness supersedes real consciousness." (Op, 87). The late Freire 'criticizes' the former criticisms and states in 'clear words' what he meant in respecting popular knowledge and how it should be used in an educational practice : "Popular education respects the learners, regardless of their class position, and takes into serious consideration their knowledge of lived experience, using this knowledge to develop closer approximation to objects"(PE,90) and it is "indispensable quest for a transcendence of the 'knowledge of living experience' in order to arrive at a more critical, more precise knowledge, to which these persons have a right" (Hope, 111)

When talking about 'valuing' popular knowledge, it is also often connected to negative ideas such as its 'superexaltation' or its complete 'rejection'. The latter is an 'elitist' posture whereas the former is 'basist'. Both are extremely sectarian, going against democratic principles. Another criticism in defending an education that takes as a point of departure the students' knowledge, is that knowledge might be reduced to a 'focalistic' position, which will fail to read 'totality' lost in 'partialities', or, in emphasizing the 'local' or 'regional' as a rejection of 'the universal' ; Freire defends his positioning that though the programs are developed based on 'local language', local reality, it does not mean that the teachers ought to be tied to local reality only ; as the late Freire states : "Before I could become a citizen of the world I was and am first a citizen of Recife. The more rooted I am in my location, the more I extend myself to other places so as to become a citizen of the world." (Heart, 39). Many readers failed to understand the totality that is implicit in 'locality' : only in understanding the 'here' and 'now' it is possible to go beyond it, it is possible to understand 'there' and 'then'. This means that if education takes into account students 'here' and 'now' in order to get 'there', its practice must never underestimate or reject the 'knowledge of living experience' with which the student come to school since it is from their own knowledge that students move to a more systematic knowledge taught at schools. This is possible, however, not in elitist, authoritarian schools but in popular progressive schools where the programme content is connected to the students' discourse and practice.

In addition, in order to construct a content program of education that respects students' knowledge and experiences, it also implies respect for the **language** the students bring to school. Language is socially created, we become linguistically competent as we experience language ; language then, is our thinking structures expressed in our concrete forms of acting, valuing, dressing and talking. Consequently, as language is socially created, ideologies, whether discriminatory or resistant are expressed in languages. "Language is one of culture's most immediate, authentic, and concrete expressions"(Politics, 183). In this way, to reject a discriminatory or sexist language, involves the re-creation of language : "The relationship language-thought-world is a dialectical, processual contradictory relationship. Obviously the defeat of a sexist discourse, like the defeat of any authoritarian discourse, requires of us, or imposes upon us the necessity, that, concomitantly with the new, democratic, antidiscriminatory discourse, we engage ourselves in democratic practices, as well. What would be intolerable would be simply pronouncing the democratic, antidiscriminatory discourse and maintaining a colonial practice" (Hope, p.68). Freire to be coherent in 'what he says', after being severely criticized in using sexist language in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed,* he 're-invented' the language replacing sexists terms such as "we, men" to "we, men and women". The need for the students to overcome their own language as they study and master the 'dominant language' in re-creating their own language, is not only to survive but also to enable them to fight for the transformation of the society.

In *Pedagogy of the Oppressed,* Freire was not that much aware of the ideological aspect of the language, since his own language used in the book was sexist. In the 1970s, language, as one of the manifestations of thought, was considered a tool to 'communicate' with the 'people' : "Often, educators and politicians speak and are not understood because their language is not attuned to the con-

crete situation of the men they address." (Op, 68–9).

Language is socially constructed in our concrete reality filled with our thoughts, aspirations and hopes. Consequently it carries the ideologies of the 'social structures' where 'it was constructed', and, it is the educators' role in respecting the learners' language, to help them to also master the dominant language that will enable them to fight for a better society.

b) refusal to accept prepackaged educational materials

In a progressive democratic education, the programme content of education is organized based on the students' knowledge, language and culture. Each school has its own 'unique' programme content since it problematizes students' everyday life ; from this point of view, it is not acceptable to use standardized educational materials that are 'carefully organized' by some 'specialists' 'inside four walls', not taking into account the different environments the students' live. To make a 'joyful school' there is a need to bring 'life' into schools, in order to analyze and discuss topics that students 'want to know more', topics that can stimulate their curiosity.

The refusal of prepackaged educational materials comes from the starting point that it refuses to take into account the knowledge, language and culture the students bring to school. On the other hand, it is also filled with the dominant ideology of the 'good man'. As the early Freire warns : "to give them 'knowledge' or to impose upon them the model of the 'good man' contained in a programme whose content we have ourselves organized. Many political and educational plans have failed because their authors designed them according to their own personal views of reality, never once taking into account (except as mere objects of their action) the men-in-a-situation towards whom their programme was ostensibly directed" (Op, 66).

Other important reasons for refusing prepackaged materials are firstly, the fact that it is an authoritarian practice since it is imposed from the 'top down', presupposing the use of a material prepared by some few specialists by the teachers, and secondly, that this authoritarian practice disregards the teachers' capacity to know and to create, and disregards the teachers autonomy to create their own teaching material, suppressing, consequently, their empowerment.

In a country like Brazil, one important topic is the empowerment of the teachers in order to fight for their rights, the right to have appropriate scientific preparation and political clarity. Empowerment includes also the teachers' refusal in following prepackaged educational materials organized by some 'experts', since to use them, is a way for the 'experts' to continue their authoritarianism, which is a lack of faith in the teachers' competence : "these packages disregard the critical capacity of teachers, their knowledge or their practice ; on the other hand, there is an arrogance in having a half dozen self-proclaimed specialists elaborate or produce a 'package' to be docilely followed by teachers who, to be in compliance, must follow the guides. One of the connotations of authoritarianism is the total disbelief in the potential of others" (PE, 67).

In *Pedagogy of the Oppressed,* Freire was aware of the importance in developing a programme content that takes into account the oppressors' concrete reality, since the effectiveness of the 'action' is different whether it is organized with the 'revolutionary leaders' view of the world or with the people's one. In contrast, the late Freire firstly, positions the problem more in a classroom situation,

and secondly, emphasizes the need to empower teachers in allowing them to be autonomous, in having the freedom in constructing their own educational materials. The early Freire and the late Freire statements may sound contradictory since the former alerts the 'revolutionary leaders' or the educators to not impose their own view of the world whereas the latter defends the right of the educators to make their own program ; having a close look at his works, it is clear that the late Freire rather than contradicting himself, complements the early ideas in including the teachers' empowerment, since in a country like Brazil, the profession as a teacher is disrespected, and is given low status and features bad working conditions.

Rather than training teachers to master the most effective method to use the 'packages', teachers' training programs should emphasize the scientific, pedagogical and political development of the educator.

c) method of problematizing students' concrete reality

One method of organizing a content programme that takes into account the students' view of the reality, their culture and language, is through the use of **generative themes**. They represent the people's view of the world, filled with people's aspirations, hope and doubts. Therefore, to investigate the generative themes is to investigate the people's way of thinking and acting. The more the students work in regard to the investigation of the thematics, the more they develop critical consciousness of reality. These thematics, as they represent the students' knowledge, "they are not static, they are occurring, they are as historical as men themselves." (Op, 79). Here lies another reason in the refusal of prepackaged materials : if knowledge is socially and historically constructed and reconstructed, if it is a continuous process, the 'knowledge' to be taught at schools cannot be 'a static one', or as Freire would call, 'bits of information' that are carefully organized in textbooks with teacher proof lesson plans ; the curriculum planning should be a creative process, "in which the teachers continually conduct research using new and varied sources of knowledge, bringing information into the classroom and structuring learning activities so that students also have opportunities to contribute their own knowledge sources"[21]. The curriculum should always be constructed and reconstructed according to the new thematics, new needs, new knowledge that is continually emerging.

It is easier and more convenient for the teachers to develop an educational practice based on a curriculum that is pre-established with all the guidelines clear for a 'perfect' class. The teacher is required only to accomplish the program as 'prescribed'. The curriculum that Freire proposes is much more uncertain and it requires a lot of disposition on the side of the teachers because it has to be constructed and continually reconstructed by them. During the period of 1989–1992, when Freire was appointed Secretary of Education of the Municipality of São Paulo, one of the main reforms introduced at schools was the curriculum reorientation program, which main project was the construction of an interdisciplinary curriculum via the generative theme. It aimed for establishing a relationship between the common sense knowledge that the students bring to school and the systematized knowledge learned in schools : "His [Freire's] notion of the generative theme as the basis for the development of a liberating educational praxis in the context of adult literacy training was seized and refashioned for the schooling of elementary children : hence, the interdisciplinary curricu-

lum via the generative theme."[22]

The project for the development of the curriculum was developed in 4 phases. 1st phase : to have the consent of the school staffs and mainly of the teachers in participating in the Project. 2nd phase : Study of the Reality — teachers, together with the students investigate the school's generative theme, collecting data and information through interviews and surveys. 3rd phase : Organization of Knowledge — the contents and methods are organized in their various disciplines based on the generative theme previously selected. 4th phase : Application / Assessment of Knowledge — teachers design exercises in which the students apply their knowledge. As a result, for the development of the curriculum, teachers had to be an active agent in the construction of the knowledge with the students in a dialogical relationship, not a passive agent in transferring knowledge to be memorized by the students.

The Interdisciplinary Project based the development of the curriculum on the theory presented in the 3rd chapter of the book *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*; indeed, the late Freire writes about the importance of developing a curriculum that respects the students' knowledge as well as it empowers teachers, but it does not show a methodology of how it could be practiced. This can probably be explained by his insistence in defending that "experiences cannot be transplanted but must be reinvented. In other words, I should discover, as a function of my rigorous knowledge of reality, how to apply, in different forms, the same valid principle, from the point of view of my political commitments" (PE, 47). He gave us the 'knowledge' and the basic guidelines of the 'method', and it is our duty to recreate it according to the reality to be applied.

4) The Process of Studying

To study is a demanding and difficult task which "requires a systematic critical attitude and intellectual discipline acquired only through practice." (Politics, 2). Our need to study comes from our curiosity, our inquisitive spirit, our creativity that continually seeks for 'more knowledge', that is continually in need to know what we do not know yet and also, to know better what we already know. Therefore, the process of studying is a continual process and it never ceases. In our continual process in search of knowledge, we are often faced with difficulties, that will demand a lot of effort to overcome, but because it is difficult, it challenges us and the pleasure when it is overcome, the sense of joy is what makes us going on in our search : "The act of studying, teaching, learning, knowing, is difficult, and especially, it is demanding, but it is pleasant, as Georges Snyders never omits to remind us. It is crucial, then, that educands discover and sense the joy that steeps it, that is part of it, and that is ever ready to fill the hearts of all who surrender to it" (Hope, 82).

The act of studying is full of challenges that require a response to overcome them ; in this way, it cannot be a passive activity of 'consuming ideas', but quite on the contrary, it is a critical activity in which ideas should be created and re-created. 'Critical study' is to unveil the contents to be studied, is to acquire its deeper meaning : "From a critical perspective, one that does not dichotomize between commonsense knowledge and the other more systematic, more precise knowledge but, rather seeks a synthesis of opposites, the act of studying always implies that of reading, even if it is not reduced to it. Reading of the word enables us to read a previous reading of the world...Reading is an

intellectual, difficult, demanding operation, but gratifying one...Reading is searching for, seeking to create an understanding of what is read ;..it is a creative experience around comprehension, comprehension and communication. And the experience of comprehension will be all the deeper if we can bring together...the concepts emerging from the school experience and those resulting from the day-to-day world. One critical exercise is...moving from *sensory experience*, which characterizes the day-to-day, to *generalization*, which operates through school language" (Teachers, 18–9). This critical attitude that is so important in the act of studying is what 'banking education' does not consider : it focuses on suppressing our curiosity and our inquisitive spirit, in which the student's "discipline becomes a discipline for ingenuity in relation to the text, rather than an essential critique of it" (Politics, 2).

Freire hopes to construct a joyful school where the act of studying is a challenging but pleasant activity, that the act of studying is a pleasant act of knowing and not an act that will eventually kill curiosity and will discipline students to become ingenuous, as the traditional school has been doing for generations. The act of study, is after all, an attitude towards the world.

IV) Freire's Popular Public Schools

The school Freire dreamed and fought for since his first publication *Educação e atualidade brasileira* (Education and Brazilian Actuality) in 1959 until his last book *Pedagogia da autonomia* (translated into English as *Pedagogy of Freedom*) in 1997, for almost 40 years, is a school "in which persons really study and work" ("A Primary School for Brazil",1961), a democratic school "that would stimulate the students' critical curiosity" (Cristina, 88 1994). It is a "serious, rigorous, joyful school, [where] they[the students] should never neglect the serious act of studying, that they should never neglect the serious act of studying, that they should never confuse the joyfulness with that of the not-doing. This way, they can prove that the traditional school was wrong about that too ; it isn't necessary to harden the desks more than their wood makes them naturally hard ; it isn't necessary to harden the children's posture ; it isn't necessary to dress the children in collars and ties...in order to make them learn....Knowing is a difficult process indeed, but the child has to learn that, because it is difficult, the process of studying becomes beautiful." (City, 89–90 1993). The mistake of traditional school today as yesterday is its authoritarian character : "But how can the child learn how to discuss and debate in a school where he is not used to discuss because ideas are imposed ? Ideas are dictated. We do not exchange ideas. Classes are lectured. There is no debate or discussion about the themes. We work on the students. We do not work with them. We give them orders and the students cannot agree or disagree, but they have to adapt . We do not teach the students how to think, because as we give them "ready made formulas", they only need to memorize them. The students do not "incorporate" what they learn because the act of incorporation requires a search for something, an effort of realization and search. It requires re-invention" (*Educação e atualidade brasileira*, 97 1959). Thirty years later, as the Secretary of Education of the Municipality of São Paulo in the period of 1989–1991, Freire fought against the same authoritarian character of the schools already described in 1959 and aimed for the construction of a school based on democratic-socialist principles, which means a new understanding of teaching and learning : in a democratic school, these

acts are viewed "as inseparable parts of the same process of knowing. Teaching involved the recognition that what the teacher already knows the student begins to know. The student learns to the extend that he or she apprehends the object of knowledge that the educator is teaching. Finally, I was proposing, along with my coworkers, to implement an administration that was fundamentally democratic, an administration open to the participation of workers and their families. Through this process, all would learn the meaning of democracy through the democratic practice of participation, the experience of decision making, critiquing, denunciating, and praising" (Cristina, 88). The need to decentralize education was not new either, since it was pointed out as a problem in his doctoral thesis in 1959 : "it is clear...that this school...should not be a school imposed by the center, but a result of the local and regional conditions, planned and made to suit the region's culture, that are very diverse in their ways and resources, but linked by the same objectives and aspirations" (*Educação e atualidade brasileira*, 11). In the reform implemented in the 1990s, Freire aimed at changing the "face of schools" in "listening to the children, to ghetto societies, parents, school directors, instructional coordinators, supervisors, the scientific community, janitors, cafeteria workers, etc. It is not possible to change the face of schools through an act of the secretary's goodwill." (City, 30).

Popular public school means public because it is the duty of the government to provide free education to every person and popular because it is an education established, constructed by the people in cooperation with and helped by the authorities. The school then, being public, " intended to transform itself into a popular space, and therefore demanded flexible, decentralized structures that could adapt to change, and to respond to governmental action rapidly and efficiently...Without a structural transformation, there was no way to think about community or popular participation. Democracy demands structures that democratize, not structures that inhibit the participatory presence of civil society at the command of res-public. "(PE, 70 1993). Democratic administration, however, have different connotations according to "who" defines it. " In general terms, from the point of view of the right, school administration is democratic if the teacher teaches, the student studies, the janitor uses his or her hands well, the cook makes a meal, and the director issue orders. The progressive perspective...It means that each of these tasks must be respected and accorded the proper dignity and importance for the purpose of advancing the school as a whole. Without running from the responsibility of intervening, directing, coordinating, and establishing limits, the director can use a truly democratic practice and should not be the proprietor of the will of the others." (PE, 93). Making school an autonomous institution coordinated by the local community has as its ultimate goal the construction and affirmation of citizenship.

It is sad to know that the school education problems were already clear 40 years ago, but no radical changes had occurred, keeping Freire's early works as valid today as they were then. The transformation however, is taking part little by little and it is the task of progressive democratic educators to believe that "the work of each person", the work of each educator when dealing with educational practice, if properly practiced, does help in "changing the face of schools". A proof that it is worth going on fighting for this cause, are the schools of the municipality of Sao Paulo during the period of 1989–1992. These radical changes were introduced and actually practiced by about 100 schools in such a short period. As Freire says : "Hope...does nor consist in folding 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" (Op, 64). Freire lefts us in May 1997, but left all his works for us, new educators to go on fighting with hope for a "more humanizing pedagogy", therefore, for a more humane society.

V) Final Considerations

Today as well as 40 years ago, there is a need to fight for a progressive democratic school, 'a serious, rigorous, joyful school' in which teachers and students can truly study and learn, in order to form autonomous individuals. Actually, this is nothing really new but the sad fact is that though the theory is not completely new, the practice is still decades behind. What distinguishes Freire from the other educators is that he never separates theory from praxis ; he himself, to be coherent in what he says and what he does, practiced his theory in several different 'realities' and one of the most significant experiences for this research is the one of the municipality of São Paulo with Paulo Freire as Secretary of Education. In the short period of 4 years, Freire fought for the realization of what he called "popular public schools" developed with a democratic-socialist orientation. My main concern in this experience is the way a teachers' training program was developed, since any educational practice depends on the seriousness and rigorousness with which each teacher develops his or her practice. From my point of view, democratization of the teacher-student relationship, may be the starting point for the democratization of the teaching practice in schools since it can be practiced even in an authoritarian structure. A progressive educator cannot just sit and wait for the structure to change in order to be democratic. It is practicing it, it is fighting for a democratic structure that someday it might change.

Many teachers usually sit and wait for the structure to change in order to change their practice, but rather than doing that, truly progressive educators should fight in their everyday with hope that someday their dream of a democratic school and as a result, a more democratic society will be part of the 'reality'. The late Freire is more than ever conscious about the importance of the teachers in an educational practice and the need for them not to give in to the authoritarian practices and fight for a 'joyful' school where students can 'truly learn'.

Freire left us a collection of about 80 books and several examples of practical applications of his theoretical and philosophical principles, to encourage us, new educators, to not give up fighting for a 'joyful' school that, based on democratic-socialist principles, educates and forms citizens who are autonomous individuals active in the construction of a society based on universal human ethics.

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