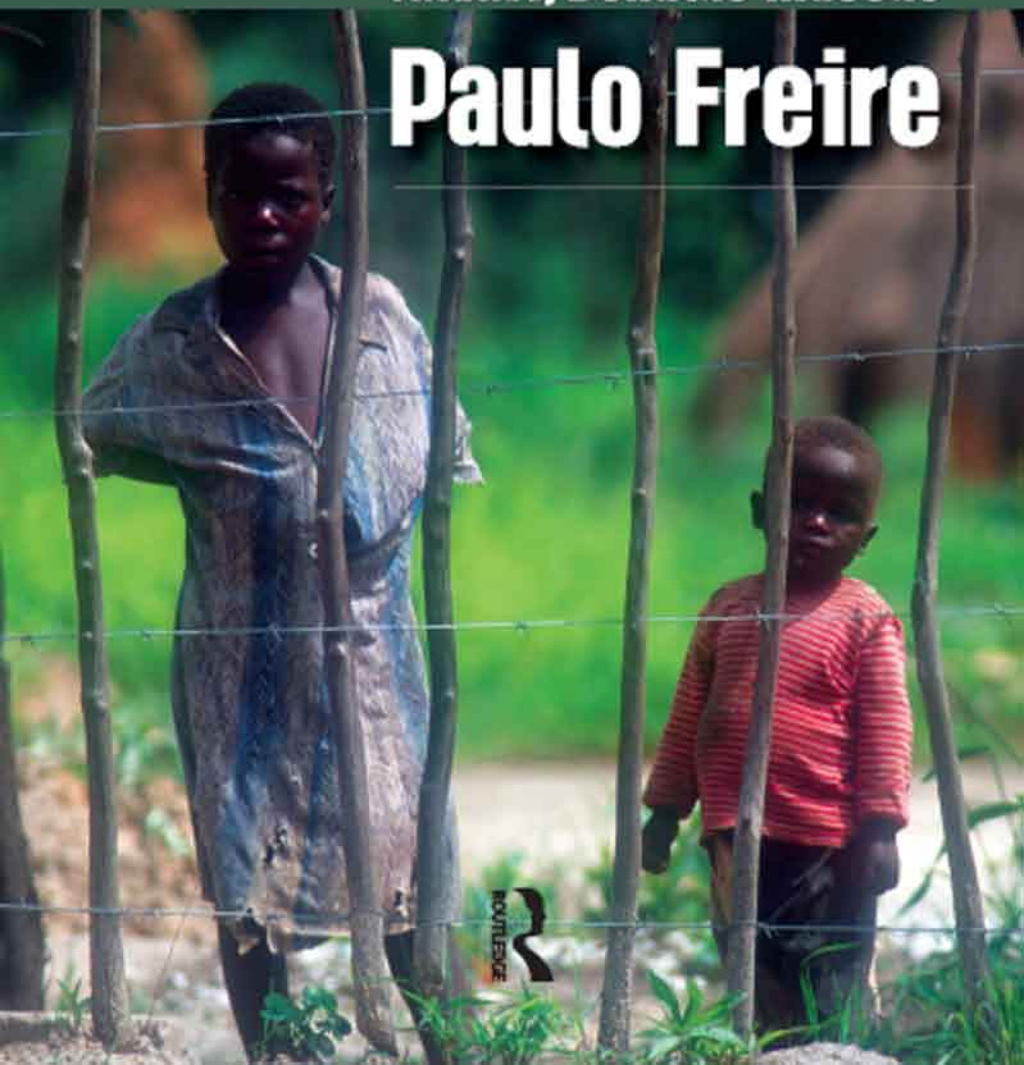


# Of Pedagogy Indignation

Foreword by **Donaldo Macedo**

**Paulo Freire**



ROUTLEDGE

PEDAGOGY  
OF INDIGNATION

## Series in Critical Narrative

Edited by Donaldo Macedo

*University of Massachusetts Boston*

### Now in print

*The Hegemony of English*

by Donaldo Macedo, Bessie Dendrinis, and  
Panayota Gounari (2003)

*Letters from Lexington: Reflections on Propaganda*

New Updated Edition

by Noam Chomsky (2004)

*Pedagogy of Indignation*

by Paulo Freire (2004)

*Howard Zinn on Democratic Education*

by Howard Zinn, with Donaldo Macedo (2005)

*Daring to Dream: Toward a Pedagogy of the Unfinished*

by Paulo Freire

*The Globalization of Racism*

Edited by Donaldo Macedo and Panayota Gounari

*Letters from Those Who Dare Teach*

by Sonia Nieto

PEDAGOGY  
OF INDIGNATION

BY

PAULO FREIRE

 **Routledge**  
Taylor & Francis Group  
LONDON AND NEW YORK

First published 2004 by Paradigm Publishers

Published 2016 by Routledge

2 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon OX14 4RN

711 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10017, USA

*Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group,  
an informa business*

Copyright © 2004 by Ana Maria Araújo Freire

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reprinted or reproduced or utilised in any form or by any electronic, mechanical, or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publishers.

Notice:

Product or corporate names may be trademarks or registered trademarks, and are used only for identification and explanation without intent to infringe.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Freire, Paulo, 1921–1997.

[Pedagogia da indignação. English]

Pedagogy of indignation / by Paulo Freire.

p. cm. — (Series in critical narrative)

Includes index.

ISBN-13: 978-1-59451-050-2 (cloth cover : alk. paper)

ISBN-13: 978-1-59451-051-9 (pbk. : alk. paper)

1. Critical pedagogy. 2. Popular education. I. Title.

LC196.F457 2008

370.11'5—dc22

2008014455

Designed and Typeset by Straight Creek Bookmakers.

ISBN-13: 978-1-59451-050-2 (hbk)

ISBN-13: 978-1-59451-051-9 (pbk)

## Obvious Song

I chose the shade of this tree  
to rest from all I will do  
while I am waiting for you.

One who waits and only waits  
lives out a time of waiting in vain.

Therefore, while I wait for you,  
I will work the fields, and  
I will talk to the men.

My body burned by the sun, I will drench it in sweat;  
my hands will become calloused hands,  
my feet will learn the mystery of the paths,  
my ears will hear more,  
my eyes will see what they did not see before,  
while I am waiting for you.

I won't await you only waiting,  
for my waiting time is  
a what-to-do time.

I will distrust those who shall come to tell me,  
in whispers and cautiously,  
“it is dangerous to act,”  
“it is dangerous to speak,”  
“it is dangerous to walk,”  
“it is dangerous to wait, in the way you wait,”  
for those ones refuse the joy of your coming.

I will distrust those too who shall come to tell me,  
with easy words, that you have come,  
for those ones, as they naively herald you,  
will first betray you.

I will be preparing your arrival  
as a gardener tends to the garden  
for the rose that shall come in the spring.

*Paulo Freire*  
Geneva, March 1971,  
from Ana Maria Araújo Freire's collection.

# CONTENTS

Foreword ix  
*Donaldo Macedo*

Prologue xxvii  
*Ana Maria Araújo Freire*

Letter to Paulo Freire xxxiii  
*Balduino A. Andreola*

## PART I

Pedagogical Letters I

### CHAPTER 1

First Letter: On the Spirit of This Book 3

### CHAPTER 2

Second Letter: On the Right and the Duty to Change  
the World 31

### CHAPTER 3

Third Letter: On the Murder of Galdino Jesus Dos  
Santos—Pataxó Indian 45

## PART II

Other Writings 51

### CHAPTER 4

The Discovery of America 53

### CHAPTER 5

Literacy and Destitution 57



Contents

CHAPTER 6  
Challenges to Adult Education Posed by the  
New Technological Restructuring 69

CHAPTER 7  
Television Literacy 87

CHAPTER 8  
Education and Hope 97

CHAPTER 9  
Denouncing, Announcing, Prophecy, Utopia,  
and Dreams 103

Index 123

## FOREWORD

*Donaldo Macedo*



The reading and rereading of Paulo Freire's last writings unleashed in me a complexity of emotions, beginning with the reconfirmation of a tremendous loss—a loss infused with “anguish, doubt, expectation, and sadness,” as his widow Nita Freire writes so poignantly in the prologue to this book. At the same time, she also announces that by publishing *Pedagogy of Indignation*, “we can celebrate in joy [Paulo's] return,” as he once again energizes and challenges us to imagine a world that is less dehumanizing, more just, less discriminatory, and more humane. However, as Paulo Freire so energetically insisted in his writings, the announcement of a more just and humane world must always be preceded by the denunciation of the dominant forces that generate, inform, and shape discrimination, dehumanization, and human misery.

Against a world backdrop of increasing human suffering, where a preemptive war based on a web of lies has killed thus far approximately ten thousand Iraqis, the reading of Paulo Freire's *Pedagogy of Indignation* challenges us

to courageously denounce any and all forms of authoritarianism. We might start with the atrocity of the Iraq war—an international travesty conducted in defiance of “a spectacular display of public morality [when] ten million people on five continents marched against the war on Iraq,”<sup>1</sup> but to no avail, since President Bush dismissed worldwide public morality by cynically declaring that he did not make policies based “on focus groups.” The ten million people united to express world outrage against a cruel and illegal war did not prevent Bush and his junta from launching their crusade against Iraq in the name of freedom, democracy, and civilization—a civilization that endorses human exploitation, murder, rape, humiliation, dehumanization, and the animalization of Iraqis, as was captured in living color when a young American soldier paraded a naked Iraqi man on a leash at Abu Ghraib prison.

The wanton killing of civilians in Iraq did not begin with the military invasion and Bush’s attempt to occupy and recolonize this oil-rich country. The killings began by using another weapon—the corporate greed and globalization that is part and parcel of “the project of New Racism [which leads invariably to] New Genocide.”<sup>2</sup> According to Arundhati Roy, the “New Genocide means creating conditions that lead to mass death without actually going out and killing people. Dennis Halliday, who was the United Nations humanitarian coordinator in Iraq between 1997 and 1998 (after which he resigned in disgust), used the term *genocide* to describe the sanctions in Iraq. In Iraq the sanctions outdid Saddam Hussein’s best efforts by claiming more than half a million children’s lives.”<sup>3</sup>

Unlike reactionary as well as many liberal intellectuals, who often view anger as a form of pathology that must be contained through a psychologized behavior modification, Paulo Freire in *Pedagogy of Indignation* sees anger as the

appropriate response to obscene violations of human rights and social injustices. Anger is a tool that will enable all those who yearn for social justice to recapture our human dignity and avoid falling into cynicism, even when confronted with the inescapable injustice and cruelty now unleashed under the banner of a “new world order” guided by neoliberal policies and ironclad globalization—a globalization that, for example in India, guaranteed “Enron profits that amounted to 60 percent of India’s entire rural development budget. A single American company was guaranteed a profit equivalent to funds for infrastructural development for about 500 million people!”<sup>4</sup> Paulo Freire passionately insists, for instance, in “Literacy and Destitution,” on his right to be angry—to feel a “just ire ... founded in my revulsion before the negation of the right to ‘be more,’ which is etched in the nature of human beings.” Freire further emphasizes: “I have the right to be angry and to express that anger, to hold it as my motivation to fight, just as I have the right to love and to express my love for the world, to hold it as my motivation to fight, because while a historical being, I live history as a time of possibility, not of predetermination.” Instead of falling prey to a form of cynicism that paralyzes, Freire reiterates the importance of anger as part of a constitutive matrix that must be combined with hope. Anger animates a form of “rebelliousness [which] is the indispensable starting point; it is the eruption of just ire, but it is not enough. Rebellion, while denunciation, must expand into a more radical and critical position, a revolutionary one, one that fundamentally announces. Changing the world implies a dialectic dynamic between denunciation of the dehumanizing situation and the announcing of its being overcome, indeed, of our dream.” Thus, before announcing that “another world is possible,” we must first denounce, for

example, the pillars of neoliberalism and globalization, of which Arundhati Roy says:

Its whole purpose is to institutionalize inequity. Why else would it be that the United States taxes a garment made by a Bangladeshi manufacturer twenty times more than a garment made in Britain? Why else would it be that countries that grow cocoa beans, like Ivory Coast and Ghana, are taxed out of the market if they try to turn it into chocolate? Why else would it be that countries that grow 90 percent of the world's cocoa beans produce only 5 percent of the world's chocolate? Why else would it be that rich countries that spend over a billion dollars a day on subsidies to farmers demand that poor countries like India withdraw all agricultural subsidies, including subsidized electricity? Why else would it be that after having been plundered by colonizing regimes for more than half a century, former colonies are steeped in debt to those same regimes and repay them some \$382 billion a year?<sup>5</sup>

According to Nita Freire's Prologue, Paulo Freire's keen understanding that "[h]ope ... is the very matrix for any dialectic between hope itself, anger or indignation, and love," not only makes his last book timely in view of the dehumanizing policies the world is now facing through neoliberalism and hot-button cowboy militarism, but it makes *Pedagogy of Indignation* an indispensable read for all those who claim to embrace Freire's leading ideas and view themselves as having an "ontological vocation for humanity" as they position themselves as agents of change. As Nita states, *Pedagogy of Indignation*, "perhaps more than [his] other books, is 'drenched,' as he might say, in his humanistic love and his political anger or indignation." Given his yearning for social justice and democratic ideals, Paulo himself was well aware that his pedagogical propos-

als would be rejected outright by reactionary educators, for, according to him, “only the ‘innocent’ could possibly think that the power elite would encourage a type of education that denounces them even more clearly than do all the contradictions of their power structures.”<sup>6</sup> In a dialogue we had concerning the challenges faced by progressive educators in the present world conjuncture, he lovingly cautioned me, “Donaldo, don’t be naive, the ruling class will never send us to Copacabana for a vacation.”

Paulo Freire would also caution us not to be at all surprised that schools of education as well as other disciplinary departments at universities, with a few exceptions, demonstrate an aversion toward critical theory and the development of independent critical thought. He would not be surprised that in a lecture at Harvard given by Ramon Flecha of the University of Barcelona, Spain, in which Flecha analyzed Freire’s theories, a Harvard Graduate School of Education doctoral student approached me and asked the following: “I don’t want to sound naive, but who is this Paulo Freire that Professor Flecha is citing a lot?” How could one expect this doctoral student to know the work of the most significant educator in the world during the last half of the century when the Harvard Graduate School of Education offers a graduate course entitled Literacy Politics and Policy that does not require students to read, critique, and analyze the work of Freire?<sup>7</sup>

This form of academic selective selection of bodies of knowledge borders on censorship of critical educators, and it is partly to blame for the lack of knowledge of Paulo Freire’s significant contributions to the field of education worldwide. Even many liberals who have seemingly embraced his ideas and educational practices often reduce his theoretical work to a mechanical methodology. According to Stanley Aronowitz:

In fact, in concert with many liberal and radical educators, some teachers have interpreted liberatory humanistic values in a non-repressive way. The school seems to be a massive values-clarification exercise ... Many read Freire's dialogic pedagogy as a tool for student motivation and cannot recognize that for him dialogue is a content whose goal is social as much as individual change. In Freire's educational philosophy the first principle is that the conventional distinction between teachers as experts and learners as empty biophysiological shells is questioned. Education takes place when there are two learners who occupy somewhat different spaces in an ongoing dialogue. But both participants bring knowledge to the relationship and one object of the pedagogic process is to explore what each knows and what they can teach each other. A second is to foster reflection on the self as an actor in the world in consequence of knowing.<sup>8</sup>

The vulgarization of Freire's leading ideas was denounced by Ann Berthoff, who pointed out that her colleagues at the University of Massachusetts in Boston "went on and on about the pedagogy of the oppressed without a clue about the role of dialogue, with no idea of the heuristic uses of syntax, to say nothing of the heuristic value of composing in paragraphs. Theory and practice remained alien to one another because the theory had not been understood."<sup>9</sup> Although Berthoff was correct in pointing out that many of those who claim to be Freirean often do not understand his theory, she was herself betrayed by her own ideological blinders, declaring that Freire's "writing is often graceless, suffering the effects of seeing things in both Christian and Marxist perspectives."<sup>10</sup> What she failed to realize is that one cannot understand Freire's theories without taking a rigorous detour through a Marxist analysis, and her offhand dismissal of Marx is nothing more

than a vain attempt to remove the sociohistorical context that grounds the *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. Perhaps for Berthoff, a more “heuristic use of syntax” would be to transform the Pedagogy of the Oppressed into the Pedagogy of the Disenfranchised—a euphemism that dislodges the agent of the action while leaving in doubt who bears the responsibility for the oppressive actions. This leaves the ground wide open for blaming the victims of disenfranchisement for their disenfranchisement. While the Pedagogy of Disenfranchisement may be more palatable to many liberal educators, it fails to unveil the dialectical relationship between the oppressors and the oppressed, in that if you have oppressed you must also have oppressors. The first title utilizes a discourse that names the oppressor, whereas the second fails to do so. What would be the counterpart of the disenfranchised? In addition to the “heuristic use of syntax” in the reading of the word, we must also require the “heuristic use of syntax” in the reading of the world. As Freire asserts in the “First Letter,” the reading of the world must embrace “methodological rigor ... founded in the possibility men and women have created along their long history to comprehend the concrete and to communicate what is apprehended [which] undeniably constitutes a factor in the improvement of language. The exercises of apprehending, of finding the reason or reasons for what is apprehended, of denouncing apprehended reality and announcing its overcoming, all are part of the process of reading the world.”

The misunderstanding of Paulo Freire’s leading theoretical ideas goes beyond the difficulty of “seeing things in both Christian and Marxist perspectives.” The misunderstanding, even by those who claim to be Freirean, is not innocent. It allows many liberal educators to appropriate selective aspects of Freire’s theory and practice it as a badge



of progressiveness while conveniently dismissing or ignoring the “Marxist perspectives” that would question their complicity with the very structures that created the human misery in the first place. It also allows maintaining their class privilege while slumming as defenders of the disenfranchised. In Freire’s own words, “Theoretical praxis is only authentic when it maintains the dialectic movement between itself and that praxis which is carried out in a particular context. These two forms of praxis are two inseparable moments of the process by which we reach critical understanding. In other words, reflection is only real when it sends us back, as Sartre insists, to the given situation in which we act.”<sup>11</sup>

The misunderstanding of Paulo Freire’s leading theoretical ideas is also implicated in the facile dismissal of Freire’s legacy and influence, which has actually shaped a vibrant field of critical pedagogy that has taken root throughout the United States and the world in the last two decades or so. It is precisely this vibrancy and energy that was conveniently ignored by Ann Berthoff when she stated,

To my knowledge, one place where Freire has not been misunderstood is in the field of ESL. I am thinking of the work of Elsa Auerbach and Nina Wallerstein. Patricia Laurence, Ann Raimés, and Vivian Zamel know very well what it means to say, “Begin with where they are”—as meaning-makers. Also in the field of composition pedagogy: Beth Daniel understands the importance of the spiritual dimension of Freire’s philosophy of education. ... The fact that all these teachers are women should give pause to anyone who has taken seriously the recent condemnation of Paulo Freire by obtuse feminists.<sup>12</sup>

By dismissing the critique of Freire by “obtuse feminists,” which he addressed with humility in “A Dialogue:

Culture, Language, and Race,”<sup>13</sup> Berthoff foreclosed the opportunity to engage critical feminists like bell hooks who, while critiquing Freire, acknowledged the depth of Freire’s contributions in shaping her theories regarding gender and race and how these factors are always cut across by class. Ignoring the enormous contributions of scholars such as Henry Giroux, Stanley Aronowitz, Michele Fine, Antonia Darder, Linda Brodkey, and Peter McLaren, among others—all of whom have, in various ways, been influenced by Freire and who write about his theories—creates spaces where the misunderstanding of Freire is guaranteed and vulgarly reproduced. In other words, after reading Berthoff, one is left with the false idea that Freire’s leading ideas are taken up seriously only in the fields of ESL and composition—fields that, by and large, suffer from a lack of the critical reflection and democratic radicalism espoused by Freire. Although Freire inspires some individuals in the field of English as a Second Language, they are often reduced to SIGs (Special Interest Groups) that operate largely in the margins. To a large extent, the presence of Freire’s theories has done little to alter the highly racist composition of the ESL field, which continues to exhibit racism in the markedly white ESL teacher population that serves a markedly nonwhite student population. If one attends the annual conference of Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL), one will find oneself in a sea of whiteness sprinkled with islets of nonwhite teachers of English as a foreign language (EFL), given the international nature of the conference. However, if one moves to conferences in the United States sponsored by state ESL organizations, the islets are almost totally submerged by the all-white composition of the ESL field. Contrary to Ann Berthoff’s assertion, the field of ESL is largely atheoretical and acritical. Most ESL teacher training programs