

Chapter 17 Power and Oppression Boal Exercise

It is important for Business College students and faculty to begin to alter mind-numbing *dumb and dumber* classes using mechanistic leadership pedagogy and move to a social change approach Paulo Freire calls *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* and Augusto Boal calls, *Theatrics of the Oppressed*.

What is Oppression? ([Augusto Boal](#) & Paulo Freire)

1. Being without power, when you can get power
2. Only doing what another wants you to do who has power over you due to their social position, rewards and coercions, their technical expertise or referent (attraction) that you lack.
3. Not being able to VOICE what you want because you do not believe in your voice
4. Not being conscious of the power game
5. Not being conscious of the resources you have to transcend oppression
6. Being temporarily without power (disempowered)
7. A conflict of power between the oppressors and the oppressed

Examples of Oppression

I did some brainstorming on kinds of oppressions I faced as a student, and since then. I want you to think of your own list, but here is a list of my types of oppression to get you thinking. Build your own!

1. Oppressive Interpersonal Relations

1. The Girl friend who wanted to run my life and make me a slave to her passion
2. A female student to kept missing classes because of bruises and black eyes her boy friend gave her
3. A female student whose boy friend had her living on a piece of Styrofoam behind his couch
4. A College Dean (not this one) who harassed a black female secretary into quitting because he refused to protect her from a university employee that was sexually harassing her.
5. A woman who tried to force me to have sex with her to keep my job

2. Oppressive acts of Discrimination

1. A racist Army Major who transferred a sergeant running a craft store to the gym to pass out jock straps because he hated blacks.

2. A segregated neighborhood I moved into where Jews and Blacks were at war, and I was in the middle
3. A death threat I received for daring to found a Vegetarian Club on an Aggie campus
4. Being the only postmodernist in a College of non-postmodernists
5. A friend I know who got beat up for looking like an Arab on September 12 (he was actually from India).

3. Oppressive Thought Control

1. The spectacle of 3,000 TV, Radio, Magazine and bill board ads I see each day telling me how to be happy, how material purchase make me happy, what a society should be (greedy), and how the world will progress (through biotech, genetically-modified foods, diamonds, and cosmetic surgery).
2. Nike executives who blocked my publication of a chapter critical of Nike sweatshop contracting practices
3. Being only postmodernist in a non-postmodernist College (again). I will add the story of the MBA who got pissed over getting an A- instead of an A (he did not merit) and while on the MBA curriculum committee lobbied to get my MBA course revised (and not one person asked me about it).

4. Oppressive Employment Relations

1. See story of black sergeant above
2. Being told as life guard in Vietnam, that Vietnamese soldiers could not swim in the pool with with American soldiers. Westmoreland's policy for a while.
3. Supervising college students in summer jobs to mow the grounds of a Navy base, after an alcoholic supervisor had let them become slackers.
4. Student in my class the works at Wal-Mart and Target for most minimum wage, part-time so they do not pay him benefits, and sleeps in my class because he is too tired to learn.
5. [Kukdong Factory](#) in Mexico I visited in spring, 2001 where young women were beaten and sent to hospital after daring to protest maggots in food, ask for bit of a raise, and organize an independent union action. Hey they succeeded and Nike and Reebok are scrambling to deal with the widespread student support for their effort. See <http://business.nmsu.edu/~dboje/usas/>
6. Lap Nguyen in Vietnam See <http://business.nmsu.edu/~dboje/nike/vietnam.html>
7. Tiger Woods earns millions each month in Big Corporate endorsements, but workers who make his Nike clothing in Thailand get to work in sweatshops to make him wealthy. Lek is a brave women who organizes new employment relations in Thailand <http://business.nmsu.edu/~dboje/nike/thailand.html>
8. I love stories about Saul Alinsky - Like time he had busloads of poverty-stricken people from Chicago guzzle gallons of water and pee and pee at the urinals so the Airport opening dignitaries had to hold theirs. Or the time he took a bus load of slum residents to the Slum-owners' church so

they could tell their story to his church (he also did this for Synagogues). See <http://web.nmsu.edu/~dboje/TDcommunityorganizing.html>

9. Wal-Mart has many examples of oppressive employment relations - How about that time Wal-Mart accounting auditors were deceived by sweatshop factory owners into assessing a dummy factory instead of the real one. See <http://www.cleanclothes.org/codes/00-10-02.htm> and more on monitoring as part of oppression see <http://business.nmsu.edu/~dboje/AA/monitors.htm>

5. Oppressive Corporate Moral Decay

1. Enron's series of scandals concerning insider trading by executives, hiding the facts from employees, cheating on their balance statements by hiding debt in off-the-balance-sheet partnerships headed up (some of them) by Enron executives, and all that purchase of political influence to change legislation and deregulate markets that Enron would monopolize. What is the oppression? The loss by investors, employees, communities.. Add Arthur Anderson, who got paid many millions to engage in creative accounting practices, tried to cop a plea by putting up hundreds of millions of dollars of no class action would be brought against them. This is moral decay, the preference for sticking one's head in the sand rather than saying, this is predatory behavior that oppresses others. See Cartoons if you still don't get it: see Mother Jones http://www.motherjones.com/web_exclusives/commentary/humor/kenny.html or 8 sets of cartoons at <http://cagle.slate.msn.com/news/EnronExtravaganza/main.asp> and [1](#) and [2](#) and [3](#) and [4](#) and [5](#) and [6](#) and [7](#) and [8](#); More [1](#), [2](#),
2. An executive I know took over leadership of a company that was so corrupt, managers were giving sales perks and prizes obtained from vendors to their wives instead of the salespeople who had made the sales.
3. A company I know had so much sex harassment, the VP of marketing got fired (well asked to resign) after caught fornicating with the sales manager on the CEO's new leather couch.
4. How about the new CEO I know who found out his VP's had some guy washing and parking their cars. He tore out the privileged parking signs for executives.
5. How about the sales manager in Las Vegas, who intimidated verbally and sexually all the ladies in his office.
6. See above on Wal-Mart and accounting auditors who sometimes are fooled, but other times are complicit in helping sweatshops not appear to be sweatshops, which helps consumers say, I know nothing about the conditions of the workers who make my clothing, toys, computers, etc.

6. Global Oppression

1. Kukdong again (a Nike/Reebok garment sweatshop in Mexico)
2. Wal-Mart again
3. Tiger Woods in Thailand again
4. I like the video, "Something to Hide" that shows students going to El Salvador to visit factories making sweatshop goods for Wal-Mart, Nike

and other corporations who claim not to be in the sweatshop contracting business.

5. Global racism of corporate executives and owners of the first world getting rich off the backs of workers from the third world. See Global Environmental Racism <http://www.wcc-coe.org/wcc/what/jpc/echoes/echoes-17-02.html>
6. Some 400 billionaire executives control more wealth than half the world's population - See <http://business.nmsu.edu/~dboje/In%20The%20News/population.htm> or Main site <http://business.nmsu.edu/~dboje/In%20The%20News/> Median U.S. hourly wages in an era of globalization have been steadily decreasing since 1973 (from median of \$11.61 in 1973 to \$10.82 in 1997 and still falling. So if globalization is NOT oppressive, how come more people are working in low-pay, no-benefit, part-time McDonaldized jobs. See http://business.nmsu.edu/~dboje/388/leadership_theatre_event.htm#image_theatre
7. Out of the top 100 economies of the world over half are corporations, not countries.
8. The top 20% of the U.S. population has 84.6% of the wealth, while the lower 40% live on half of one percent of the wealth
9. Sweatshop conditions persist in the U.S. because of the global oppressive practices of transnational corporations. See Root Causes of Global Oppression http://business.nmsu.edu/~dboje/usas/pages/page_14_rootcause.htm Main Site is <http://business.nmsu.edu/~dboje/usas/>

HOW TO CHANGE AN OPPRESSED WORLD?

Explore one your own situations of oppression.

Question 1: What are the types of Oppressions that you face at work (or in school)?

Question 2: Pick one that you can share in class (Does not have to be most severe one; pick one you could share with one other person in class; You will not be asked to share the situation with entire class) - Describe it briefly:

Question Set # 3: Answer following SEPTET - *Theatrics of Oppression* questions about the situation of oppression you picked - (If any question is not clear [See short definitions](#) or [Septet Table](#) that explains how questions relate to Aristotle & Burke):

1. **WHO?** (the agents or characters - antagonist and protagonist involved in the oppression; who is involved)

2. **WHAT?** (act or behavior that was oppressive; what)

3. **WHEN/WHERE?** (scene or spectacle situation of the oppression; when and where) _____
4. **WHY?** (What was their motive and your motive or purpose in the scene of oppression; why are characters acting this way)

5. **HOW?** (By what means or agencies/instruments were you being oppressed; how) _____
6. **DIALOG?** (Write down a dialog/script between you and your oppressor that happened in one scene of oppression; they said and you said, etc.)

7. **RHYTHM?** (Describe one body rhythm [like a dance movement] and one sound [not a word] that expresses your inner feeling and emotion of oppression during one moment/act/scene of oppression. Next what body rhythm and sound rhythm express the feeling and emotion of the oppressor during same moment).

8. **FRAME?** ([See Definition](#) - Describe the ideology/idea systems of the oppressor and the oppressed person; It can be a world view that legitimates the behavior of oppressor and another world view legitimating or rationalizing behavior of the oppressed person; Ph.D. students see [Grand Narrative](#))

Review the above list of oppressions and answer the following question:

QUESTION: What kinds of oppressive situations do you live in, work in, experience globally?

1. E.g. **position power** in hierarchy
2. E.g. others who hold **power of rewards**
3. Others who have **power to coerce/punish** you
4. Others who have **expertise power**, such as technical knowledge that you do not have

5. **Referent power** of their attractiveness or friendship that is held over you as power.
6. Other forms of oppression, such as a valued racial, age, gender where you are in the marginal category of power (what you described in previous section that is not in first five answers).