Esfarrapados: A Freirean Study

by

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Abstract

This thesis is a study of the *esfarrapados*, from Paulo Freire’s *Pedagogia do Oprimido*. It begins as a study of the ‘*esfarrapados*’ as a word, which unfolds both different linguistical and cultural meanings of the ‘*esfarrapados*,’ and Freire’s historical, philosophical, and theological heritages. Through the discovery of these heritages, this thesis progresses from the study of a word into the study of what the word discloses, human people. People with a history, with an ontological vocation, and a God given promise to be more. The aim of this study is to propose and prove the claim that whenever Paulo Freire writes regarding our “historical and ontological vocation to be more,” “to be more” is to be understood as “to be an *esfarrapado*.”
Lay Summary

In the dedication of *Pedagogia do Oprimido*, Paulo Freire offers the book to the *esfarrapados*. From the publication of *Pedagogia do Oprimido* in the early 1970’s up to now, academics who research Freire’s work in English or Portuguese have ignored the *esfarrapados*, and the role they have in Freire’s work. This thesis attempts to discover who or what the *esfarrapados* are, through the lenses of history, philosophy, and theology.
Preface

This thesis is original, independent work by Mateus Lorenço Hernandez.
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To the Word,
and to those who believe in the Word,
and comprehend His light.
1. Chapter One: First Words

In the beginning was the Word

_John 1:1_

1.1. Introduction

“Why is Paulo Freire so famous here?” This was one of the first questions I asked Samuel Rocha, my supervisor, on the day we met. I could not understand why Freire, who mostly wrote for people in misery, became so famous in the United States and Canada, places where, as a Brazilian, misery was not the perceived form of existence. Besides, Freire wrote _Pedagogia do Oprimido_ and his other most important works when Brazil, his home country, was under a brutal military dictatorship (1964-1985). For me, Brazilians who were forced to live under that regime were the people who Freire thought deserved freedom, people whose situation of oppression could cost them their lives. I was quite surprised when I found out that Freire’s work was used in “first world” countries to think of classroom practices, and other kinds of social engineering.

A critic could say that Freire wrote on the “banking model of education,” which seems to be classroom focused. My point is not on Freire’s work _per se_, but on how I perceived it. I knew that Freire had served as Secretary of Education in the city of São Paulo, and that he had indeed dedicated a lot of effort into reconceptualizing curriculum and schooling. I just had never focused on his work as a meditation on schooling when I read him. When thinking of public schooling in Brazil, my focus was always on the problems which seemed to be more urgent, such as the low salary of teachers, school violence, school evasion, child labor, and other external problems which have effects in Brazilian schools. Besides, I thought that Freire’s work spoke of education beyond the scope of the institution of modern schooling. For instance, as Walter Kohan writes in _Paulo
Freire: Other childhoods for childhood, Freire wrote on how he was taught to write and read by his parents in the backyard of his house, not in school:

The description of his own alphabetization is extremely beautiful, delicate and careful, especially when he narrates the moment in which he is taught to read by his mother and father in the backyard of their own house in Recife, under the shade of mango trees. Branches taken from the trees, used sometimes as chalk, draw the words and sentences on dirt that becomes a chalkboard. Freire is not alphabetized through the textbook but with words made of his world and he goes to school already able to read.1

In Rocha’s response to my question, he told me about Freire’s disciples, i.e., Critical Pedagogues, and about the Bergman Ramos translation of Pedagogia do Oprimido to English. According to Rocha, Critical Pedagogy, mainly represented by Henry Giroux and Peter McLaren, attempted a reconceptualization of curriculum and classroom practices based on Freire’s work. A reconceptualization that not only overdetermined the schooling aspects of Freire’s thought, but that also dismissed the theological and metaphysical aspects of his view on the human vocation.2

Indeed, if one reads Peter McLaren’s Life in Schools or Henry Giroux’s Schooling and the Struggle for Public Life: Democracy’s Promise and Education’s Challenge, one will notice they mostly cite Freire’s critique of the banking model of education. For instance, McLaren claims that Critical Pedagogy is “a Freirean approach to read the word and the world dialectically,”3 that “Freire’s approach to learning is based on genuine dialogue between students and teachers, who work as partners in a united quest for ‘critical consciousness’ leading to a humane transformation

1 Walter Kohan, Paulo Freire: Other Childhoods for Childhood (Belo Horizonte: Educação em Revista, v. 34, 2018), 7.

2 Samuel D. Rocha, “Third wheel thoughts on method and the shitty curriculum,” Journal of Curriculum and Pedagogy, 14:3, 2017, 273-285, accessed April 4, 2019, DOI: 10.1080/15505170.2017.1398699, “It is impossible to ignore that “being” for Freire need not be reducible to “being human” and, indeed, cannot be reducible to a secular sense of humanity. To “be more” refers to the notion of the perfection of being, a perfection that most metaphysical systems see as cosmic, not merely human.”

of, rather than a passive accommodation to, one’s world,” and that Freire “is compelled to take his critical pedagogy to the streets of the real.”

I do not necessarily believe that McLaren is offering an incorrect reading of Freire in relation to chapter two of Pedagogia do Oprimido. However, the critique of the banking model of education is in one of four chapters where Freire discusses what he understands the pedagogy of the oppressed to be. What seems to be lacking, I think, is an engagement with Freire’s larger project, expressed in the last paragraph of Pedagogia do Oprimido: “If nothing stays from these pages, one thing, we hope endures: our trust in people. Our faith in men and in the creation of a world where it is less difficult to love.” Otherwise, it becomes easy for one to overdetermine the Marxist tone that Freire is using to criticize alienation, which seems to be an unfair reading of Freire. It is not self-evident to me that Freirean love is necessarily only about schooling.

Henry Giroux reads Freire similarly to McLaren. He writes that Freire recognizes that “the political nature of education itself means that teachers have to take a position and make it clear to students, but at the same time such educators have to recognize that the fact of their own commitment does not give them the right to impose a particular position to their students.” Again, his argument is not absurd, but he also seems to overlook Freire’s larger project. I understand that a critic could object to both of my readings of McLaren and Giroux saying that I picked sentences

5 Ibid, 240.
7 Henry Giroux, Schooling and the Struggle for Public Life: Democracy’s Promise and Education’s Challenge (Colorado: Paradigm, 2005), 69.
from both their works without addressing their larger project, accusing me of doing to McLaren and Giroux what I claim they do to Freire. However, it seems to me that it is not controversial to claim that both McLaren’s and Giroux’s works are on schooling, as is Critical Pedagogy. The titles of the two books of theirs which I mentioned, for instance, have the words “schools” and “schooling” in them.

On the topic of the Bergman Ramos translation of *Pedagogia do Oprimido* to English, Rocha told me he believed that this translation contributed to the dismissal of Freire’s theological and metaphysical views in North America. Although Rocha and I agreed that a translator should not be held responsible for how the work of other people turned out to be, “ser mais,” i.e. “to be more,” one of Freire’s core ideas, became to be “more fully human” in the English translation, which is but one key example that does not seem to be the best possible translation. Although I understood the point Rocha was trying to make, I did not give the proper attention these issues in the translation of Freire’s work deserved, because I can read Portuguese.

I believe I dismissed Rocha’s initial claims on translation due to the training I received during my undergraduate studies in Brazil. I was taught one should avoid researching an author in translation. For instance, if one wants to write on Augustine, one should know Latin, or at least have a rationale for why one chose a specific translation. If one wants to criticize Jacques Le Goff’s writings on the birth of Europe, one should read and cite him in French. I believe, and this is just a speculative argument, that the Brazilian Academy works as it does to engage Brazilian students with foreign scholarship. After all, Brazil is already isolated in Latin America for being one of few countries where people do not speak and write in Spanish.

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8 Paulo Freire. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2017), 44
Another good example of this are the admission processes to pursue a PhD at the University of São Paulo and the Pontifical Catholic University of São Paulo. Many PhD programs in the humanities in these universities require proof of proficiency in at least two foreign languages as part of the minimum requirements. In the case of Critical Pedagogy, I honestly did not know how famous or important Critical Pedagogues were in North America, so I assumed two things. First, that they were working with Freire in Portuguese; and second, that Rocha was telling me something most people already knew.

Half a year later, I understood Rocha’s point more seriously, when he translated the dedication of Pedagogia do Oprimido from Portuguese to English. This translation was for his class I was taking in political theory. Although he can read Portuguese, he asked for help to translate one of the terms from the dedication, ‘esfarrapados.’ In the English translation, the dedication appears in the first pages of the book, between the copyright and the summary pages. It occupies the top right corner of a blank sheet, where one would probably expect to find an epigraph. The dedication goes as follows:

To the oppressed,
And to those who suffer with them
And fight at their side.  

The only group that seems to appear in the official translation of the dedication are the “oppressed.” For this reason, Rocha wanted to use his own translation of the dedication in class. He knew that “oppressed” in Portuguese is “oprimidos,” not esfarrapados. He considered the Bergman Ramos translation too loose with certain terms. Indeed, the Ramos translation seems to take some liberties which are not taken by the translator into Spanish, for example. Rocha knew the Spanish version had “desharrapados” to translate the esfarrapados, but he was not inclined to

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accept the Portuguese-Spanish equivalence at face value. In Spanish, a “desharrapado” is a synonym for “homeless person,” which seems similar to what the Portuguese-English dictionaries say. The Portuguese-English dictionaries translate *esfarrapados* to English as “tattered,” “ragged,” or “ragamuffin.”

I expressed my disapproval of all these translations to Rocha. Both the Spanish version and the dictionaries to some extent suggested that the *esfarrapados* were homeless people. By contrast, I was not sure if Ramos’s choice was an attempt to provide a word which universalizes the *esfarrapados*, (since the Portuguese dedication says “Aos esfarrapados do mundo,” i.e., “To the *esfarrapados* of the world”) or if it was just an overtly loose translation. It could be the case that she chose “oppressed” conscious of its generalist character, a choice that would speak on behalf of “do mundo,” from the Portuguese dedication. I cannot assert on why she made this choice of translation. Ramos did not leave a rationale, nor notes on this.

As Walter Kohan generously pointed out to me in a recent conversation, I cannot overlook the fact that Freire openly supported Ramos and her translation of *Pedagogia do Oprimido*. For instance, in *Pedagogia da Esperança*, a book Freire wrote more than two decades after the publication of *Pedagogia do Oprimido*, he claims that all the criticism which is directed at Ramos’s work should be aimed at himself. According to Freire, Ramos consulted with him before translating many of the passages in the book, which is for him enough proof of the high quality of her work:

> It is also interesting to notice that, some of the English critiques to the “difficult and snobby” language of *Pedagogia [do Oprimido]*, attributed part of the responsibility to Myra Ramos, my competent and serious friend, and translator of the book. Myra worked with the maximum professional correctness, with absolutely seriousness.¹⁰

This passage seems to illustrate the point Kohan made. It is undeniable that Freire supported the translation I am criticizing. But I wonder to what extent the agency of the author in the original language is transferable to the translated text. I am not sure if a translator is a “linguistical adapter,” one who adapts words from one language to another, or if the translator is an author, who has as much agency over the translated words as the original author. In Freire’s case, it seems to exist an additional complication attached to his endorsement of the Ramos’s translation. A few lines under the block quote from Pedagogia da Esperança, he says: “within the limits of my lack of authority in relation to the English language, I should say that I feel good with Myra’s translation.”

Usually, I would be suspicious of Freire’s humility. He is known for doubting his own knowledge of things. However, this does not seem to be the case. In a different passage from Pedagogia da Esperança, Freire writes about a talk he gave to an American audience, occasion in which he needed a simultaneous interpreter:

I had also thought about it some nights before, when translated by Carmen Hunter, one of the most competent North-American educators at the time, I spoke for the first time and for a long period about Pedagogia do Oprimido, which would only be definitely finished in the following year.

Since Freire claims to have finished Pedagogia do Oprimido in 1968, it seems that this talk took place in 1967. If this is the case, Freire needed a simultaneous interpreter almost four years before the publication of the English Pedagogy of the Oppressed. It is true that he could have learned English in these four years, but if that is the case, why then would he write in Pedagogia

11 Paulo Freire, Pedagogia da Esperança (São Paulo: Paz e Terra, 2016), 103, “Nos limites da minha falta de autoridade em relação à língua inglesa, devo dizer que me sinto muito bem na tradução de Myra.”

12 Ibid, 78, “Pensava também em algumas noites antes, quando, traduzido por Carmen Hunter, uma das mais competentes educadoras norte-americanas já naquela época, falei pela primeira vez longamente sobre a Pedagogia do Oprimido que só no ano seguinte estaria definitivamente pronta.”
da Esperança, finished in 1992, “within the limits of my lack of authority in relation to the English language”?

To the best of my knowledge, in Brazilian Portuguese esfarrapados means “people dressed in farrapos,” where “farrapos” means “ragged clothes.” In 19th century Brazil, it was a term used to refer to people who fought in a war, the Guerra dos Farrapos, which took place in the South of Brazil in the same 19th century. Thus, in my view it would be quite difficult for a translation of esfarrapados to bear truth without an explicit appeal to a sense of fight. Rocha agreed with me, and then chose to translate esfarrapados as “dogged soldiers.” I was not sure that it was the most adequate translation, but it certainly had the explicit appeal to violence I thought appropriate. On the following day, Rocha brought to class copies with the dedication of Pedagogia do Oprimido in Portuguese, its official translation to Spanish, the only available translation to English by Bergman Ramos, and his own translation.

Although “dogged soldiers” contained a sense of violence, I was afraid that the term esfarrapados, when taken out of its Brazilian context, would lose its historical Brazilian meaning. A “dogged soldier” could be Brazilian, Argentinian, Ethiopian, or even a gringo. In that sense, I believed Rocha was trying to universalize something I thought should be particular. After class, Rocha asked me how I would translate esfarrapados into Spanish or English. I did not know, nor was I sure that they should be translated at all, for I was not sure who or what the esfarrapados are or were. On that day, I decided to research both the term and the group.

A critic could say that I am arbitrarily deciding what is particular and what is not in Freire, and what are (and are not) the best translations of his prose. In the case of the esfarrapados, there are two reasons for why I believe they are a particular group. First, as I will show in this thesis, Freire mentions the esfarrapados five times in Pedagogia do Oprimido. In these five times, they
are portrayed doing things which only they are portrayed doing, which could suggest that a honest study of them seems to demand a study of how they act. Second, in the dedication, Freire writes “Aos esfarrapados do mundo,” i.e., “To the esfarrapados of the world.” If it was the case that the esfarrapados are a universal category, Freire would not need to write “of the world,” for it seems that their worldliness would be always already implied. An argument to prove this claim that some words have in themselves a universal character is the aforementioned official translation of the dedication to English, where Ramos writes “To the oppressed.” It seems that she understood the esfarrapados and the “oppressed” to be the same group, who acts similarly in the world, and that the word “oppressed” already contained in itself a universal sense. Ramos did not translate “to the oppressed of the world,” but simply “to the oppressed.” Perhaps Freire used esfarrapados in the attempt to universalize a category that is in itself particular, through an addition of the clause “of the world.”

On the objection to my claims on translation, it is true that I usually prefer more literal translations to those which take liberties. The only major exception to that is my favorite translation of the Bible to English. I use the New King James version, a version which is known for the superb English style, and unfaithfulness to the originals Hebrew and Greek. I will not deny that these choices of translation are somewhat arbitrary. But hopefully, I will able to show enough evidence to support my critique of the Ramos translation, and to propose my own translations, and their rationale.

Perhaps it is also worth mentioning that my critique of the Ramos translation is not based on how she chose to translate one term, the esfarrapados.\(^\text{13}\) The esfarrapados simply are, in my

\(^{13}\) In addition, it is important to note that Bergman Ramos did not translate chapters’ titles, entire paragraphs, and some entire pages. For instance, the final page of Pedagogy of The Oppressed in the original Portuguese was not translated into English. The Bloomsbury edition in English, as well as all the other translations to other languages, which were based on Ramos’s translation, do not contain the last page that Freire wrote.
opinion, the most compelling example of Ramos’s liberties in translation. For instance, in my own
translation of the same dedication, where I try to be as literal as possible, it reads as follows:

To the esfarrapados of the world and to those whom in them
Discover themselves and, in discovering themselves, with them,
Suffer but, above all, with them fight. 14

As one can see, I have not translated esfarrapados into English in the dedication, and nor
will I throughout this thesis. I thought it could be wiser to focus my study of the term esfarrapados
without an English equivalent. I feared the implications that a translation of the esfarrapados term
could have for our understanding of the esfarrapados, a fear I carry from my discussions with
Rocha. In other words, I feared that the meaning that the word traditionally conveys could limit
our ability to distance ourselves from the esfarrapados, to bracket them and remain objective, at
the same time in which a translation would universalize them. This is why I did not adopt Rocha’s
“dogged soldiers.” While I am certain that the esfarrapados and the “oppressed” appear in
Pedagogia do Oprimido performing different acts, which could indicate a certain degree of
difference between them, I cannot be certain that the esfarrapados and the “dogged soldiers” exist
in-the-world in the same way, performing the same kind of actions.

A critic could point out that my insistence in a distinction between the esfarrapados and
the “oppressed” is not convincing. Perhaps, one could say, Freire’s use of both words is a choice
of connotation, and that both words do not necessarily denote different things. As a consequence,
if the English version has “oppressed” instead of esfarrapados, it is not a proper mistake. Maybe
Freire is just using two words to talk about the exact same people, where ‘esfarrapados’

14 “Aos esfarrapados do mundo e aos que neles se
descobrem e, assim descobrindo-se, com eles
sofrem, mas, sobretudo, com eles lutam.”
‘oppressed’ are synonyms. This thesis in its entirety is an attempt to provide enough evidence to the existence of a somewhat denotative distinction between the esfarrapados and the “oppressed,” so I cannot provide a direct answer to such objection now. However, I do believe I can present an argument for why I believe the Ramos translation would be better if it contained this, at least, connotative distinction. In The Task of the Translator, Walter Benjamin discusses why the literal translation of a word is essential for a translation to be good:

A real translation is transparent; it does not cover the original, does not block its light, but allows the pure language, as though reinforced by its own medium, to shine upon the original all more fully. This may be achieved, above all, by a literal rendering of the syntax which proves words rather than sentences to be the primary element of the translator. For if the sentence is the wall before the language of the original, literalness is the arcade.15

In other words, even if it is the case that Freire was using two different words to talk about the same group, the translation, according to Benjamin’s reasoning, should still contain the two words. Anyhow, as the reader will see, I am no longer only seeking a better translation of one term, but this first aporia of translation led me to the questions I now hope to answer.

One could object to my refusal to translate the esfarrapados into English by saying I am being a hypocrite. After all, it seems that I am criticizing the Ramos translation without taking the risk she took of at least trying to translate the term. Depending on how one views translation, this is a valid critique. I have not given myself the burden that Ramos received. However, I truly believe that some words, in certain contexts, should remain untranslated. I can provide two clear examples of this. First, Critical Pedagogues use the word “conscientização” in Portuguese, for they believe the word carries more meaning than the English “conscientization.” Second, David Bentley Hart, in his recently published translation of the New Testament, chose to translate the first sentence of the book of John as “In the origin there was the Logos.” He kept the word “Logos” in Greek, a

word that most versions of the Bible to English translate as “Word,” or “Verb.” I honestly do not know if I agree with these two examples. All I wanted to say is that if one has a solid argument, a well thought through rationale as to why one is not translating a term, it is possible and acceptable to do so. There are examples out there of respectable translators, including Hart, who do it. I do believe that the esfarrapados are one of these words which one cannot translate, and I hope I am able to provide evidence of it throughout this study.

1.2. Esfarrapados

Esfarrapados, I claim, is a term Paulo Freire uses in Pedagogia do Oprimido to represent a group who experience oppression but seem to be somewhat distinct from those described as the oprimidos (oppressed). I am not claiming that they are necessarily different beings, or that they belong to different social classes. But, as I will show, it seems to be the case that the esfarrapados perform different kinds of actions, when compared to the so called “oppressed.” This thesis has as its main goal to prove that when Freire writes on our “historical and ontological vocation to be more,” “to be more” means “to be an esfarrapado.” Historically, the term esfarrapados carries a double meaning in Brazil. One meaning is similar to describing someone who is homeless, someone who is “ragged,” dressed in old clothes.

However, to the best of my knowledge this is a minor meaning. I have never heard, seen, or read anyone refer to homeless people as esfarrapados. Usually, Brazilians refer to homeless people using the terms mendigo, or morador de rua. Variations occur in different parts of the country, but I have lived in four different states, Rio Grande do Sul, Mato Grosso, São Paulo, and Goiás, in three different portions of the country, South, Mid-West, and Southeast, and esfarrapados is not a term that I have heard being used to refer to homeless people, in any of them. The other meaning is related to the farrapos, men who fought in the Guerra dos Farrapos, i.e.,
War of Farrapos, a war which took place in the state of Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil, from 1835 to 1845. The second chapter of this thesis is entirely dedicated to engage with this war, and the possible influences it had on Freire’s thought.

Freire did not provide his own definition of esfarrapados in Pedagogia do Oprimido, so I do not know to what extent he was aware of the details from the War of Farrapos. There is one negative reason and one positive reason why I discuss this war in this thesis. The negative reason is to expose a sense of esfarrapados in Brazil which seems to be incompatible to both a sense of homelessness, and a flattened sense of “oppressed,” as Ramos chose to translate. The positive reason is to provide a historical possibility, a hypothesis, for why Freire used the esfarrapados in Pedagogia do Oprimido. I named them “negative” and “positive” not in the sense of one being bad and the other being good. What I mean by “negative” is a reason which is justifiable but not productive of new meanings. It clarifies, but it does not introduce anything new. The “positive” reason, on the other hand, is also justifiable but productive of new meanings. As I will show, there are positive resemblances between the sense of fight of Freire’s esfarrapados and the Farrapos from the War of Farrapos.

One could object to this attempt to ground the esfarrapados historically as an overtly historicized reading of a concept Freire did not define. How do I know this should be read historically? Another critic could object that historical documents are not written as historical documents. They are letters, official forms, reports, and other kinds of written and non-written things of regular people and communities, which the researcher chooses to use as a historical document. They are not necessarily meant to be read or seen historically, they are made into documents in the hands of the researcher. In simpler terms, it seems that the historian decides what

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is a historical document or not, and what matters to History or not. Therefore, one could say that I need to justify why the *esfarrapados* need to be grounded historically. I do not have any rational presupposition on why the *esfarrapados* should be read historically in relation to the Farrapos. I have an intuition that they could, and documents which indicate my intuition might be correct.

As I will claim, Freire’s most clear concern with the *esfarrapados* was to present nuances to our understanding of oppression, which is expressed in *Pedagogia do Oprimido* through an existential distinction between the *esfarrapados* and the *oprimidos* (oppressed). I will better engage with this distinction in chapter three, but the existence of such distinction can be spotted when one pays close attention to the four excerpts where Freire mentions the *esfarrapados*. Since our ability to recognize these distinctions in English might be affected by the quality of the translation, I will introduce the first excerpt in relation to the Ramos translation and the translation of my own. In the next three excerpts, I will only refer to my own translations.

I have included my own translations for two reasons. First, because, as I will show, the Ramos translation does not seem to adequately portray Freire’s philosophical distinctions. Second, because since I decided to translate Freire’s excerpts to English, and this research is written in English, my method of thinking the *esfarrapados* is substantially influenced by my method of translation. To my earlier point on the agency of the author and the translator, when I think of how to translate a word or a sentence, I have to ask myself what is Freire trying to say. In that sense, what I think of Freire’s claims is always already imprinted in every word I translate, a conscious process that happens as I translate. I discover the *esfarrapados* as I translate Freire’s words.

Interestingly enough, I had already read *Pedagogia do Oprimido* in Portuguese during my undergraduate studies to be a History teacher, but I had never given much thought to the *esfarrapados*. At the time, I considered myself to be a Marxist, and since the book is titled after
the oppressed, I read it looking for what Freire had to say about them. I only realized it was an important category once I arrived in Canada and met Rocha, who showed me the effect of flattening of all the distinctions into “oppressed,” which will be further discussed in the chapters to follow. Hopefully, the necessity of my own translations will be made clear as the reader compares the Ramos translation to my own.

My method of translation is as follows. I first do a literal translation, keeping the punctuation as it appears in Portuguese, according to the sentence structure of the Portuguese language. In a certain sense, this first step of the translation is not proper English, but Portuguese written in English. If Freire writes bad Portuguese, I write bad English; if he writes a sentence that seems to have a stylistic decision implied, I try my best to honor the style. Then, I slightly adapt the literal translation to an Anglo-Saxon tone, with the intention of replacing false cognates. In this case, I also review my translation side by side with the Ramos translation and the Portuguese text. If we take a second and close look at the Ramos translation of the dedication, aligned with my translation and the original Portuguese, we will be able to notice some other nuances, which will be discussed in the paragraph to follow:

In the original Portuguese:

Aos esfarrapados do mundo e aos que neles se descobrem e, assim descobrindo-se, com eles sofrem, mas, sobretudo, com eles lutam.

Translated to English by me:

To the esfarrapados of the world and to those whom in them Discover themselves and, in discovering themselves, with them, Suffer but, above all, with them fight.

Translated by Bergman Ramos:

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To the oppressed,
And to those who suffer with them
And fight at their side.  

By choosing “oppressed” as an equivalent to *esfarrapados*, Ramos seems to have overlooked the experience of self-discovery that others have with the *esfarrapados*. Although her translation presents suffering and fighting, as the Portuguese does, the word “discover” seems to be lost in translation, as are the *esfarrapados*. The main concern I have related to this choice of translation is that, if I am correct and there are nuances between the oppression experienced by the *esfarrapados* and the “oppressed,” her translation allows the “oppressed” to take the *esfarrapados*’s place. The Portuguese dedication presents the *esfarrapados* in the center of a fight, but they do not stand alone. They fight with the oppressed, people who discover themselves with the *esfarrapados*, and fight with them. The “oppressed” are not supposed to be the protagonists, for they are not mentioned by name in the Portuguese dedication. As a result, the *esfarrapados* is a non-existent category in the English-speaking world, a potential mistake amplified by the dominance of the English language.

From now on, I will only refer to my own translations, for I do not want to turn this study into a petty critique of a translation which has been widely accepted. However, I do believe I can better portray these distinctions made by Freire. Early in chapter one, Freire says:

> This “generosity” will never be able to understand that true generosity is in fighting for the disappearance of the reasons for false love. False charity, which stems from the extended hands of the “exiled from life,” fearful and insecure, crushed and beaten. Extended and trembling hands of the *esfarrapados* of the world, the “condemned of the Earth.” The great generosity is in fighting so that, each time more, these hands, of men or people, extend less in gestures of supplication. Supplication of the poor to the powerful. And that they become, each time more, human hands, that work and transform the world. This teaching and this learning has to come, however, from the “condemned of the earth,” from the

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oppressed, from the *esfarrapados* of the world and those who are truly solidary with them.¹⁹ (My emphasis)

From this excerpt, let us focus on the words I emphasized, for they represent the nuanced characteristics that I claim to exist. In Portuguese, Freire categorizes people into four groups: “*demitido da vida,*” “*esfarrapados,*” “*condenados da terra,*” and “*oprimidos.*” Respectively in English: “exiled from life,”²⁰ “*esfarrapados,*” “condemned of the Earth,” and “oppressed.” Although all of these categories seem to be in a position of disadvantage in relation to the alluded oppressors (as the poor who supplicate to the powerful), it seems that the four categories experience oppression differently, since they have different names and are portrayed doing different things. For example, the “exiled from life” appear “fearful and insecure, crushed and beaten.” The *esfarrapados* appear supplicating for help. The “condemned of the Earth” and the “oppressed” are mentioned with the *esfarrapados*, without any particular activity attributed to them.

A critic could claim that my description only bears truth if we accept that we can grasp the existential character of the *esfarrapados* and the other oppressed groups mentioned in this study based on how we encounter them, on how they are portrayed by Freire. Indeed, I do not believe that we can understand Being through our mental and sensorial abilities, nor even the proper

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¹⁹ Paulo Freire, *Pedagogia do Oprimido* (Brasil: Paz e Terra, 2017), 42, “Não pode jamais entender esta “generosidade” que a verdadeira generosidade está em lutar para que desapareçam as razões que alimentam o falso amor. A falsa caridade, da qual decorre a mão estendida do “*demitido da vida,*” medroso e inseguro, esmagado e vencido. Mão estendida e trêmula dos *esfarrapados* do mundo, dos “*condenados da terra.*” A grande generosidade está em lutar para que, cada vez mais, estas mãos, sejam de homens ou de povos, se estendam menos em gestos de súplica. Súplica de humildes a poderosos. E se vão fazendo, cada vez mais, mãos humanas, que trabalhem e transformem o mundo. Este ensinamento e este aprendizado têm de partir, porém, dos “*condenados da terra,*” dos *oprimidos,* dos *esfarrapados* do mundo e dos que com eles realmente se solidarizem.” (My highlights and translation)

²⁰ A more literal translation of this category would be “fired from life,” because the Portuguese says “*demitidos da vida.*” I used “exiled” instead of “fired” because I believe it makes more sense to the English reader. However, it should be noted that it is not a literal translation of the term.
“being” of the oppressed categories discussed by Freire. I believe we can only understand “existence,” and that Being should be deduced by the absurdity of existence. As I see it, there are no fundamental rational reasons for the existence of the universe and the things within it, what can only point to the existence of a supreme Being, who is superior to reason. This Being, I believe, is the answer to the question “Why there is something instead of nothing?” the fundamental question of metaphysics. The answer, I believe, is because God is, and He is good. My attempt to understand “existence” is through phenomenology, as understood by Martin Heidegger. Therefore, as far as I know, one needs to study the phenomenon as it appears to us, the words as written by Freire.

Another example of Freire’s existential distinctions can be found later in chapter one, when Freire is discussing who actually creates violence in case of a revolution: “Those who inaugurate terror are not the weak, who are subjected to it, but the violent who, with their power, create the concrete situation in which are germinated the “exiled from life”, the esfarrapados of the world.” 21 In this excerpt, one can see two groups of people who experience oppression, the “exiled from life,” and the esfarrapados. In this case, oppression reveals itself as violence. This violence, which can be cross-referenced with the false love from the previous blockquote, seems to create the “exiled from life” and the esfarrapados. Although Freire seems to refuse a description of who the esfarrapados are, he clarifies where they come from, or at least what makes them into who they are. They are the product of violence, and as products of violence, they respond with terror. Again, the sense of fight from the Farrapos seems to be duplicated in Freire’s esfarrapados. They are not just oppressed, they have the will to fight in them.

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21 Paulo Freire, Pedagogia do Oprimido (São Paulo: Paz & Terra, 2017), 58, “Os que inauguram o terror não são os débeis, que a ele são submetidos, mas os violentos que, com seu poder, criam a situação concreta em que se geram os “demitidos da vida”, os esfarrapados do mundo” (my translation)
The fifth and last time Freire directly mentions the *esfarrapados* is in chapter four, where he tries to anticipate an objection related to the role he attributes to the revolutionary leadership in the case of a revolution. This objection was necessary to anticipate because Freire claims the *pedagogy of the oppressed* has to be created for and by the oppressed. Apparently, some could read it as a dismissal of revolutionary leadership. Thus, he writes:

> We do not want to diminish the value and importance of the revolutionary leadership. On the contrary, we are emphasizing its importance and value. And will there be major importance than conviviality with the oppressed, with the *esfarrapados* of the world, with the ‘condemned of the Earth’?\(^{22}\)

It is interesting to notice that, although Freire claims to believe in the importance of revolutionary leadership, he describes their value only as companionship. The revolutionary leaders only seem to be important if they serve the “oppressed,” the *esfarrapados*, and the “condemned of the Earth” with their objective, bodily presence.

As I see it, studying the *esfarrapados* is relevant for two different publics, and for two different reasons: a) For those who read Freire in Portuguese, a study of Freire’s *esfarrapados* has not yet been pursued in Brazil.\(^{23}\) I cannot claim to know the reason why the Brazilian Academy has not yet proposed this project, but if I was asked to speculate on that, I would say that perhaps current Freirean scholarship in Brazil is focusing on different kinds of problems, as the accusations and post-mortem persecution against Freire made by the Bolsonaro supporters; and b) for those

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\(^{23}\) I have looked into the website of the Paulo Freire Institute, accessed April 4, 2019, http://www.freire.org, and the University of Sao Paulo library system, accessed April 4, 2019, https://www5.usp.br/pesquisa/bibliotecas/ and I have not found any publications on Freire’s *esfarrapados*. All the publications I have found that contained a link between Freire and the *esfarrapados* are publications which the authors used the dedication of *Pedagogia do Oprimido* as an epigraph to their own research. In other cases, publications referred exclusively to the *esfarrapados* from the War of Farrapos.
who read Freire in English, the *esfarrapados* do not exist in the only translation to English. I believe this study can be used by those who want to, before all, advocate for the urgency of new translations of Freire’s work to English. It is quite rare for the work of a renowned foreign scholar to have only one translation to English, and I believe it is time for *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* to have a new critical translation, so that scholars can choose the one which most suits their interests, and the one they believe is closer to the original Portuguese text of 1968.

1.3. A Freirean Study

This thesis is a Freirean study of the *esfarrapados*. I have already pointed out my motivations to do this work, and the difficulties of working with the Ramos translation. What I have not explained yet is what do I mean by “Freirean,” and why this approach is necessary for this thesis. By “Freirean” I mean a study of Freire guided by his references, in an attempt to engage with the historical, philosophical, and theological lenses which seem to form Freire’s thought. This study will engage with these lenses through a developmental perspective, which I also understand as Freirean, in three different senses: a) a sense that resonates with Freire’s concept of the *vocação ontológica e histórica de ser mais*24, i.e., “the historical and ontological vocation to be more;” b) a sense of movement related to, and informed by, temporality; and c) an autobiographical sense of development.

The developmental sense is expressed in the division of chapters, in content and order. For example, in the first sense, we can break the sentence in four parts: The historical/and ontological/vocation/to be more. If we accept that “to be more” has in itself an idea of development, in the assumption that simply “to be” is not enough, we will find in the three first

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parts a sense of development which points to the “more.” Since I want to study the *esfarrapados* towards the “more,” “the historical” sense of *esfarrapados* is found in the history chapter, the “ontological” in the philosophy chapter, and the “vocation” in the theology chapter.

As we accept this division in Freire’s terms, we can also think in terms of temporality. History’s *métier* is the past. Philosophy deals with ideas, usually in an always already present. (Christian) Theology deals with the existence of God, but also with virtues, the soul, and with the promise of life after material death. If we use this sense in relation to the *esfarrapados*, the historical lens reveals their past echoes, which seem to be related to the War of Farrapos. The philosophical lens reveals those *esfarrapados* from the present, the always already present idea, and the theological lens reveals those *esfarrapados* who are yet to appear. One critic could object to this sense of development because it is imposing an idea of chronological temporality, where what is in history ceases to exist in the present. In other words, this sense of development seems to lack an awareness of historical continuities and ruptures, where it all seems to fall apart once “the present” or “future” arrive. Perhaps I should anticipate that this clean division of temporalities is used in this study for two reasons: a) it allows me to relate to the three traditions (History, Philosophy, Theology) in their own terms; And b) it is a phenomenological approach to the three dimensions of temporality, as described by Jean-Paul Sartre in *L’être et le néant*. What exist in the present, says Sartre, “se distingue de toute autre existence par son caractère de présence. […] Présent à quoi? À cette table, à cette chambre, à Paris, au monde, bref, à l’être-en-soi.”

In this sense, what is in the “past” is what consciousness perceives as “not present anymore,” and what is in the “future” is what the consciousness perceives as “not yet present.”

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The last sense of development, which is not as clear in the narrative as the two first ones, is the echo of my own academic development. I started my post-secondary education as an undergraduate student of history, yet in Brazil. I moved to Canada in order to study philosophy of education. However, my interests, as one will see in this thesis, have moved to the intersection of philosophy of education and theological considerations of pedagogy. There is not a clear division of where in this study one or another sense of development is being applied. The three senses are always already there.

1.4. Conclusion

Thus far this study has taken a linguistical shape. I began by explaining that the first questions I had related to the *esfarrapados* were restricted to the translation of the word *esfarrapados* for Rocha’s class. Then, I described my doubts related to the possibility of *esfarrapados* and *farrapos* being synonyms, considering that in Portuguese an *esfarrapado* is someone dressed in *farrapos*. I continued by explaining why I am using the *esfarrapados* in Portuguese instead of finding an English equivalent, and I finished by explaining that many different words and groups do not exist in the English translation of *Pedagogia do Oprimido*. As I understand it, Ramos seems to have translated all categories which are not “oppressors” as “oppressed.” This focus on the *esfarrapados* as a word is restricted to this chapter. From now on, both senses of the *esfarrapados*, word and group, are going to be intertwined in the study.

This thesis is organized into five chapters, following the aforementioned developmental sense. Chapter one introduces the main themes of the thesis and explains the thesis topic's motivations. Chapter two analyzes the *esfarrapados* through a historical lens, unearthing the historical sense of *esfarrapados* in Brazil. This chapter will engage with the history of this war and its characters, in an attempt to provide arguments to my claim that the *farrapos* might have served as inspiration to
Freire’s *esfarrapados*. Chapter three analyzes the *esfarrapados* through the lens of philosophy, focusing on the role “fear of freedom” and “attunement” have in the distinction between the *esfarrapados* and the “oppressed.” Chapter four engages with the theological sense of *esfarrapados*, focusing in the dialectical sense of “mundanity” and “transcendentality” the *esfarrapados* experience in Freire’s theology of love. Such understanding of theology links Freire’s claim that we have a vocation “to be more” with “love,” since according to Freire, one cannot “be more” in a world without love. Chapter five, conclusion, speculates on the *esfarrapados* as a frame for self-formation, proposing the concept of our “historical and ontological vocation to be *esfarrapado*.”

This chapter is entitled “First Words.” There are some reasons why I chose this title. First, it is the title of Freire’s introduction to the Portuguese *Pedagogia do Oprimido*, i.e., “Primeiras Palavras.” I thought it would be poetically interesting to begin my introductory chapter with the same two words with which Freire began his own introductory chapter. Besides, this title references the first words of this thesis, in a literal sense, since it is the introduction, and the content of the thesis, which also begins with a word, *esfarrapados*.

Apart from that, I think the Freirean “Primeiras Palavras” also alludes to Genesis 1 and John 1, two biblical accounts of creation. In Genesis 1:3, Moses writes that “God said, “Let there be light”; and there was light,” while in John 1:1, John writes that “In the beginning was the Word.” In the passage from Genesis, the spoken word is what makes Light possible. The creation of Light and of all things which metaphysically or chronologically appear to be created after that moment, is only possible because of the utterance of the command “Let there be light.” In the case of John 1, in the beginning, before all, was the Word. Perhaps Freire, in his introduction, was alluding to these two accounts of creation, where the “word” is not the only important thing, but it
is what needs to come first. This is the case in Scripture, in Freire, and in this thesis, where, in the beginning, was the ‘esfarrapados.’
2. Chapter Two: Freire’s Esfarrapados in History

And the Word became flesh

John 1:14

2.1. Introduction

As I mentioned in chapter one, I believe the esfarrapados were inspired by real historical characters from the War of Farrapos, a Brazilian civil war from mid-19th century. This chapter will briefly engage with the history of this war and its characters, in an attempt to provide arguments to my hypothesis that the farrapos might have served as inspiration to Freire’s esfarrapados. In the next section (2.2) I begin with such engagement with family memories and memories of experiences I had that included the history of this war. In section 2.3, I discuss this war in documented history, because I am aware that the existence of this war is not known in North America, which compels me to narrate it while I provide documents to prove its existence. In the conclusion (2.4) I will discuss the extent to which I can speculate on the awareness Freire had of this war. Then, I will bridge to chapter three, on Freire’s philosophical distinction esfarrapados – “oppressed.”

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26 I was born and raised in Rio Grande do Sul, where the war happened. Both when I asked my teachers in grade school and my family “Why they are called Farrapos?” I was told the same thing. For mockery purposes, the members of the Conservative Party who were in charge of the Central Government referred to the Liberal Farmers from the South as Farrapos. In Portuguese, “Farrapos” means old, ragged clothes. According to Pasavento, these were not rich farmers, so most of the work in their farms was performed by family members. Therefore, it was probably normal for those farmers to spend most of the time in ragged clothes. Slave work was not largely employed, primarily for the high price of slaves, but also because those who worked on the field needed to ride horses and carry guns to protect the herd. The farmers knew that providing slaves with horses and guns was not a good idea. Pasavento does not provide a formal explanation for why they are called “Farrapos.” To the best of my knowledge, the explanation which was given to me by teachers and relatives is generally accepted.
2.2. Oral History and the War of Farrapos

The most vivid memories of childhood I have are from the ages of seven to nine, when I lived in Dom Pedrito, a small town in my home state, Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil. It was in this town that both my parents were born, and where three of my grandparents, uncles, and cousins, live. It is certainly the town I think of whenever I am home sick, although my parents and I have moved out of town in 2004, exactly fifteen years ago.

It is a town that seems to have stopped in time. Throughout the years I have talked to my family and learned, little by little, their version of the town’s history, which tends to have completely different versions depending on who is telling it. For instance, every time my parents and I visit, my father says the same thing: “Apart from people getting older and the new street dogs, this town looks the same as it did 30 years ago.” I agree with him. Most people in the street where my grandparents live have been there for three or four generations. My grandfather, for instance, lives in the same house since the 1960’s. The kids who he saw riding their bikes in the street in the 1980’s are now teaching their kids how to ride a bike. However, my grandfather disagrees with my father and I. He believes the town is now worse than it was 30 years ago. He believes the town was a much better place during the military dictatorship, which lasted from 1964 to 1985.

My grandfather is an army veteran, which I understand could led us to dismiss his view at first glance. However, he does believe that the country was poorer and worse to live in the 1980’s compared to nowadays. His claim does not extend beyond the borders of our hometown, Dom Pedrito. His argument is actually quite simple. The town has an army headquarters, which before the political opening of 1985 was working at full capacity. As a result, every house in town had at least one of its members serving in the headquarters, which kept the town’s kids away from hunger.
and in school, considering that most of them would not need to work full time to help provide for their families. According to him, with the political opening, less soldiers were needed in the local army headquarters, which brought unemployment to the region up to this day, what drove and continues to drive many people out of town, including my parents and I.

My father disagrees with my grandfather on the claim that the headquarters was the major source of income for the town’s population during the military dictatorship. He reminded me that although the headquarters helped the region, agriculture was always the main economic activity in town, and that the unemployment is a result of the bankruptcy of local small farms in the 1980’s. According to my father, the political and economic opening allowed rich farmers from the Brazilian Mid-West to invest in farming technologies, a degree of investment (and productivity) that the farmers from my Southern home state could not match. My father only sees a sad coincidence that the Army stopped hiring new soldiers in the same decade that the local farmers began to fire their employees. The only point which both my father and my grandfather agree on is on the town’s historical military importance, which pre-dates the military dictatorship by more than a century. They both reminded me that it was in Dom Pedrito where the “Treaty of Ponche Verde” was signed, putting an official end to the War of Farrapos.

I remember I marched more than once in the yearly town’s parade which celebrates the beginning of the War of Farrapos, on September 20. I remember the kids from all the municipal and state schools would march carrying the State’s flag alongside the local headquarters’ soldiers, occasionally stopping to sing the State Anthem, which mentions the Farrapos. Actually, both flag and anthem refer to the War of Farrapos. The flag, displayed in the Appendix A, has three main colors, green, red, and yellow, which, according to the official website of the state of Rio Grande do Sul, might have three different meanings:
There is no consensus about what the colors of the Rio Grande do Sul’s flag represent. One version, possibly closer to the real version, says that the green stripe means the forests of the pampas, the red stripe the revolutionary ideal and the courage of the people, and the yellow represents the natural resources of the gaucho territory. Some sources, however, claim that the colors represent the green and yellow of Brazil separated by the red of war. Others mention that the red would be the republican ideal.27

What is most interesting about the colors is that, no matter the version, the element of violence seems to be always present. The same governmental website provides the explanation to the words written under the coat of arms, “Liberdade, Igualdade, Humanidade,” in English “Liberty, Equality, Humanity.” They say:

It is known that, as the motto - Liberty, Equality and Humanity – the symbols are directly connected to Positivism. At the time, the political and military gaucha elite, in its majority, was connected to the religion of Humanity, as it was also known Auguste Comte’s Positivism. The placement of the word Humanity was decided by Julio de Castilhos, governor of Rio Grande do Sul and author of its constitution, who was considered a great follower of the ideas of the French philosopher. 28

The reason why I mention these symbols which form the flag of my home state is that both the colors and the written words work as context for the actual protagonists in the flag, the farapos. Besides, the flag helps me to begin proving my claim that the war (existed and) is important to my home state history. Around the coat of arms, it says “República Rio Grandense – 20 de Setembro de 1835,” i.e., Rio Grandense Republic – September 20, 1835.” What I find most interesting about the explanation on the colors of the flag given by the official website for the government of Rio Grande do Sul is that they present the color red as a third last possibility for Republic, even with

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27 Retrieved from https://estado.rs.gov.br/simbolos, on Noveber 1, 2018, “Não há um consenso sobre o que representam as cores da bandeira rio-grandense. Uma versão, possivelmente mais próxima da real, diz que a faixa verde significa a mata dos pampas, a vermelha simboliza o ideal revolucionário e a coragem do povo, e a amarela representa as riquezas nacionais do território gaúcho. Algumas fontes, entretanto, alegam que as cores expressariam o auriverde do Brasil separado pelo vermelho da guerra. Outras mencionam que o vermelho seria o ideal republicano.” (my translation)

28 Ibid, “Sabe-se que tanto o lema- Liberdade, Igualdade e Humanidade - quanto os símbolos estão diretamente ligados ao Positivismo. À época, a elite gaúcha militar e política, em sua maioria, era ligada à Religião da Humanidade, como também era conhecido o Positivismo de Auguste Comte. A colocação do termo Humanidade coube a Júlio de Castilhos, governador do Rio Grande do Sul e autor da sua constituição, que era considerado um grande seguidor das ideias do filósofo francês.” (my translation)
the word “republic” written in the flag. I believe the color red represents the republic, not only because it is written in the flag, but because this flag was officialized in 1891, a couple years after the fall of the Brazilian Monarchy and the birth of the Republic, in 1889. The same royal family who fought the Farrapos (Orleans e Bragança) was the one deposed by the republican movement, a reason for celebration in my home state.

Another reason why I believe this flag is interesting is because it provides the first link between the Farrapos and Paulo Freire. The flag of the state of Rio Grande do Sul is the only of two state flags in Brazil which are formed with stripes in the colors green, yellow, and red. The only other one is the flag of the state of Pernambuco (Appendix C), where Paulo Freire was born and raised. To be honest, comparing the flags alone is not an argument. I have only included the flag of Pernambuco as one of the appendixes so that readers can see that indeed, they both have green, yellow, and red stripes. The most compelling symbolic argument I can use to link the history of the Farrapos to Freire’s esfarrapados is my home state Anthem, which combined with the flag produce convincing evidence.

The State Anthem attaches the idea of regional freedom as a product of the War of Farrapos. If we keep in mind Freire’s epigraph as we read the anthem, found in Appendix B, Freire dedicates Pedagogia do Oprimido to the “esfarrapados of the world,” and the Rio Grande do Sul anthem claims the farrapos’ exploits should serve as a model to the whole earth. Besides, Freire closes his book claiming his focus was not to only think about freedom, but imagining “a world where it is less difficult to love,”29 and the anthem claims “it’s not enough to be free, strong, and brave, people who have no virtue end up being a slave.” As we saw in chapter one, the

29 Paulo Freire, Pedagogia do Oprimido (São Paulo: Paz & Terra, 2017), 253, “um mundo em que seja menos difícil amar.”
esfarrapados are presented always getting beaten in four different passages of Pedagogia do Oprimido, and the anthem says “Let us show value, constancy, in this unjust war.” The similarities pile up, and this is why I believe Freire finds the inspiration to his esfarrapados from the War of Farrapos.

A critic could object to this comparison between my home state official symbols and Freire’s home state symbols and book by claiming I am attributing too much value to something that can also be a coincidence. After all, the same way that those who wrote the state anthem and designed the flag were influenced by Comte’s positivism, Freire could have found inspiration for those symbols in the Marseillaise, which also speaks of the fight against the Monarchy and the injustices of the powerful. If we think of who Freire was as a person, I do not think this is the case. I find difficult to believe that the same author who cites Marx, Lenin, and Marcuse would praise the revolution which brought the bourgeoisie into power. Besides, considering Freire’s close contact with extreme poverty in Brazil, especially in Recife, I do not believe Freire would need to look for inspiration related to oppression in France.

2.3. War of Farrapos in History

In 2009, the Historical Archive of the State of Rio Grande do Sul (Arquivo Histórico do Rio Grande do Sul) published a compendium of documents from the War of Farrapos. The compendium is formed with forty-seven letters written by Bento Manuel Ribeiro, a military commandant who fought on both sides, to leaders of the movement and members of the central government, and 13 appendixes of forms, reports, and other war documents from the most varied

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possible sources and forms. Ribeiro wrote the letters when he served for the Central government, so they are mainly reports of the ongoing battles. For instance, in one of the letters, Ribeiro writes:

Illustrious Friend and Sir,

Cassequi, October 7, 1835

I received the communication of Your Seignory in the day 5 of this month, and I congratulate myself for the reached triumph by the armed forces in the day 4 of this month under the command of Your Seignory in this village; and I have already placed Major Lima in Alegrete and São Borja. At 3pm I will continue marching to where Lieutenant Colonel Valle is, and there tomorrow I will be waiting for Your Seignory and for our Affonso, to plan what we shall do. In case judge Constantino D’Avil and the Captain of the National Guards Eulautherio Suares arrive today in that village, have the goodness of telling him to wait, because I have done my fast march [unclear], [unclear] and tomorrow I will deliberate on the strength they will command. With the upmost respect,

Yours,
True Friend,
Bento Manoel

This is 19th century Portuguese, hard to understand and quite difficult to translate into English. In this letter, we can see the commandant Ribeiro commenting with a member of the nobility (Your Seignory) on a victory against the Farrapos. We can also see that he is organizing a meeting with this member of the nobility and high-level officials, as a judge and a lieutenant colonel. I mention these letters and I have transcribed this one because they are not just words of

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31 Ibid, 17, “Ilustrissimo Amigo e Senhor,
Cassequi 7 de Outubro de 1835

Recebi a comunicação de Vossa Senhoria em data de 5 do Corrente, e me congratulo pelo trimpho alcançado no dia 4 do Corrente pela força Armada ao mando de Vossa Senhoria nessa povoação; e já fiz constar em Alegrete, ao Major Lima, e em São Borja. As tres da tarde sigo a marcha ate o Tenente Coronel Valle, e ali amanhã espero a Vossa Senhoria, e a nosso Affonso para combinarmos o que deveremos fazer. Em caso chegue hoje nessa povoação o Juiz de Paz Constantino d’Avil, e o Capitão das Guardas Nacionaes Eulautherio Suares tenha a bondade de dizer-lhe por cessar o motivo, que fazia minha acelerada marcha no cheguei hoje as horas, e no lugar destinado, [1v] e amanhã deliberarei sobre a força que elles commandão.

Sou com alta estima
De Vossa Senhoria.
Verdadeiro Amigo
Bento Manuel” (my translation)
historians about the existence of battles and a war, but they are actual historical documents, stored in the public archive of the state of Rio Grande do Sul, on details of this war, which I believe gives more credibility to my fundamental claim on the existence of this war, before anything else.

In economic terms, the war happened because the Central Government was charging higher taxes on jerky and leather produced in Southern Brazil than on the same products from the *platina* region, known today as Uruguay and Argentina. According to the historian Sandra Jatahy Pasavento, such anomaly of the Brazilian tax system was imposed by the Central Government for the following reasons:

A low selling price of this product in the domestic market was interesting to the jerky buyers, which they obtained through the imposition of low custom tariffs on the *platina* product. Thus, the *platina* product was placed in advantage in the Brazilian domestic market. However, this policy of lowering the import tariffs could not be followed in a systematic way by the Center, since it would low the customs’ revenue, base of sustenance for the monarchy. Consequently, those in charge of the central power opted for a discriminating policy: they established low tariffs for the entrance of foreign jerky, but charged determined supplies, as salt, with high importation tariffs. As a result, Rio Grande do Sul found itself doubly injured, once salt was an indispensable supply for the manufacturing of jerky.\(^{32}\)

In political terms, the war happened due to a dispute between the Conservatives and Liberals on the degree of centralization of power. The Liberal Party defended the creation of federal units (states) and autonomy to these units, while the Conservatives defended complete centralization. As a reaction to the authoritarian posture of the Central Government, the Southern elites organized a revolt against the central government. They declared Independence from the

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\(^{32}\) Sandra Pesavento, *A Revolução Farroupilha* (Rio de Janeiro: Brasiliense, 1990), 39–40. In Portuguese: “Aos compradores de charque interessava um baixo preço de venda deste produto no mercado interno, o que obtinham através da imposição de baixas tarifas alfandegárias sobre o produto platino, que conseguia assim se colocar com vantagem no mercado interno brasileiro. Entretanto, a política de redução dos impostos de importação não podia ser seguida de maneira uniforme pelo centro, pois com isso decresciam as rendas provenientes das alfândegas, base de sustentação da monarquia. Os detentores do poder central, com isso, optavam por uma política discriminada: estabeleciam baixos impostos para a entrada do charque estrangeiro, mas gravavam com altas taxas de importação determinados insumos, como o sal. Desta forma, o Rio Grande do Sul se via duplamente lesado, uma vez que o sal se constituía num artigo indispensável para a fabricação do charque.”
Empire and found in the territory where today is the State of Rio Grande do Sul, the “Republica riograndense,” a Republic. As a response, the Central Government sent the Royal Army to reintegrate the territory to the Empire. This is how the “Guerra dos Farrapos,” in a military sense, began.

During the duration of this war, historians do not agree on how many battles there were exactly, but they agree that the *Farrapos* lost the absolute majority. Pasavento, for example, does not even provide an estimate number of battles. What seems to be a consensus is that the *Farrapos* were quick to relocate their capital to different cities as the Royal Army approached. Such strategy made conditions impossible for the Central Government to actually exercise power over the region, and too expensive to protect the border against Uruguayan invasions and illegal imports.

The high costs of the war forced the Central Government to increase the tariffs on the Uruguayan imports, as the *Farrapos* originally wanted. Such measure brought an end to the war. The *Farrapos* did not win nor completely lose the military war. Anyhow, they were certainly able to win it politically, which was enough to immortalize the image of the *Farrapos* as brave men, who gave their lives for freedom, fairness and independence.

Pasavento’s work is quite useful to provide us with a clear and brief narrative of the War of Farrapos. However, her aim was to introduce the history of the war to non-academics. This book of hers is part of the collection *Tudo é História*, which has in Brazil a similar role to the Oxford collection “Very Short Introductions” in Canada, United Kingdom, and United States. This is precisely why I chose her book to base this historical part of my thesis, for she tells the story I grew up listening to. However, it should be noted that she does recognize the *Farrapos* as a discursive creation that presupposes a Southern homogeneity, where the entire province would be in favor and/or participating in the war, which is an invention.
Although valuable, these insights do not interest me in this thesis because they are a product of the 1980’s, two decades late to the publication of Paulo Freire’s *Pedagogia do Oprimido*. Therefore, it is most likely that Freire knew the more traditional and official version of such history. Besides, considering how much he valued people’s experiences and their immediate relationship with the world, it is more likely that Freire would be more attentive to the oral narratives of this war than academic revisions.

For instance, considering the epigraph of *Pedagogia do Oprimido*, discussed in chapter one, I believe Freire would feel more compelled to the poet Olavo Bilac’s homage to the Farrapos, published in the newspaper *Correio Paulistano*, October 16, 1935, celebrating the centenary of the War of Farrapos. There, in a short piece entitled “Olavo Bilac e os Farrapos”, it says:

This name [Farrapo], created by contempt was nobilitated by glory; the inevitable glory of the justice of Time, transformed the injurious epithet in title of supreme honor. They were disgraced, poor, ragged, those warriors who, to not starve to death, were content with a small piece of raw beef; they camped and slept in the open, with their faces staring at the stars; they had no money, no uniform, and they could not fix their boots and clothes that the dust of the road, bullets, and rain ruined and rot – but they zealad for their name of Farrapos, and they were proud of their poverty – and were richer this way, owning only their horse, spear and bravery.

33 Another alternative to the more traditional view on the Farrapos is presented in Maria Yedda Linhares, *História Geral do Brasil* (Rio de Janeiro: Elsevier, 1990), 233, “The War of Farrapos was a typical elite movement. Although it counted with large popular participation, these were always at the service of the rich ranchers and jerky producers, integrating the rebel forces commanded by them.” My translation of: “A Farroupilha foi um típico movimento de elite. Embora tenha contado com ampla participação popular, estiveram sempre estas camadas `a serviço de ricos estancieiros e charqueadores, integrando as forças rebeldes comandadas por estes.”

34 In Portuguese: “Esse nome, criado pelo desprezo foi nobilitado pela gloria; a inevitavel gloria da justica do Tempo transformou o epitheto injurioso em título de suprema honra. Eram desgraçados, sim, eram pobres, eram maltrapilhos, aqueles guerreiros que, para não morrer de fome, contentavam-se com um bocado de carne crua; acampavam e dormiam ao relento, com a face voltada para as estrellas; não tinham dinheiro, nem uniforme, e não podiam renovar as botas e os “ponches” que o pó da estrada, as balas, as cutiladas, as chuvas estraçalhavam e apodreciam; - mas prezavam o seu nome de “Farrapos”, e tinham o orgulho de sua pobreza: - e eram mais ricos assim, possuindo apenas o seu cavallo, a sua garrucha, a sua lança e a sua bravura.”
What I believe to be most interesting about this quote on the Farrapos and Freire’s esfarrapados from the epigraph is the always present glorification of the warriors’ character. This glorification, in my view, clearly overlaps with my home state stories of the Farrapos, and the claims that the most glorious times of the region were the times when it had a strong military presence. It is not absurd to say that the pride of the region is inspired by its military history. A say that I cannot speculate on what kind of narrative Freire was aware of or not, or that speculation does not fit within a historical study. Indeed, I only have two concrete evidences of Freire’s inspiration on the Farrapos. First, the fact Esfarrapado means “dressed in farrapos,” and the will to fight in battles they never win of both the Farrapos and the Esfarrapados. I am not denying that all the other claims which are built on these two pieces of evidence are somewhat speculative, but I find the act of raising hypothesis and trying to prove them to be a good way to think with the text.

2.4. Conclusion

I cannot provide any guarantees of Freire’s knowledge of the War of Farrapos, but it seems to be the best explanation I can provide for why the esfarrapados are portrayed. I mostly relied on the oral narratives I was told growing up, letters stored in the public archive of my home state, a newspaper article from 1930’s, and one book, by Pasavento. Although this combination might look overtly simple at first glance, we cannot forget that the main objective of this chapter was to find historical common ground between the farrapos and the esfarrapados. In other words, the focus was to engage with the narrative Freire would be aware of, while I tried to prove to the North American reader that the war indeed happened. Freire was in Chile at the time he wrote Pedagogia do Oprimido, so I do not believe he would have access to documented history on a war which had nothing to do with Chile, during a time when Brazil had limited communication outside its borders.
However, Walter Kohan’s *Paulo Freire: Other Childhoods for Childhood* gives us some light into why Freire would go to a Southern war to find inspiration for his *esfarrapados*. In this paper of his, Kohan attempts to conceive of a Freirean notion of childhood, through the analysis of a collection of Freire’s books. Among these books, he mostly returns to one, *Letters to Cristina*. This paper is quite interesting because it proposes the idea that for Freire, childhood is not only a chronological stage in our lives. According to Kohan, we can see in Freire’s letters examples of Freire being a 70-year-old boy, who urges his niece, Cristina, to never stop being the child who she is.

For this thesis, however, what is most interesting about Kohan’s paper is his description of how “Freire the man” returned to “Freire the boy” to better understand the course of his own life, thoughts, and interests. In a certain way, it seems like Kohan suggests that through childhood memories, Freire is able to anticipate himself, in the sense of using his personal history to explain his present. This quote from Kohan clarifies what I am trying to say:

> For Freire, revolving through his memories, through his chronological childhood, develops into an imperative to understand himself better, to establish an archeology, a historical continuity between his present as an internationally known educator and his past as a child, with all the contrasting yet specific marks of his childhood: The harshness of hunger, but also the intimacy of his relationship with nature; the inability to pay for secondary school, but also the intensity and voracity in which he studied and read, with the encouragement of his mother and father, when the doors of the school opened.  

As Kohan writes, going back into his own past helps Freire to build a continuity between who he is and who he once was. Although to a certain extent we all look into our past to understand who we are today, the reasons why we believe in certain things and not in others, Kohan teaches us that Freire consciously incorporates these regressions into his work, by an act of anticipating himself. For instance, Kohan writes:

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The first strong impression he [Freire] recognizes is a disposition toward a political rebellion of sorts, confronting the world in which he lives. This first mark is a species of dissatisfaction with the order of things. Freire registers in himself from the time when he was a young boy. In this way, Freire can anticipate in his thinking and his life during his childhood what will manifest itself more clearly later in adulthood.36

The reason why I mention this paper of Kohan is because it made me realize why Freire would get inspiration for the War of Farrapos to conceive of his esfarrapados. As I mentioned, the War of Farrapos is only relevant to those who were born in the state where it happened, Rio Grande do Sul. However, the war is known among the formally educated people across the country, as Freire was. It all becomes even more interesting if we remember that the esfarrapados are those who are always fighting, when we read Kohan’s description of authoritarianism for Freire: “Authoritarianism, for Freire is seen as a mark that inhabits those that take part and create a dominant culture which exploits and carries peasants into misery, even in contrasting or opposing social classes.”37

This is the interesting thing. We don’t actually know who the Farrapos are in terms of social class. They were poor farmers. Does it qualify them as “oppressors” or “oppressed”? I guess it all depends on who you ask. The same thing happens with the esfarrapados. The Marxist tradition of Critical Pedagogy framed them as “oppressed,” but as I am beginning to expose here, they do not seem to be the same for Freire. There are undeniable similarities between the farrapos and the esfarrapados, and although I cannot provide documental proof of Freire addressing such similarities, Kohan’s descriptive analysis of Freire’s recovery of past experiences to think on his work seems to be adequate.

36 Ibid, 5.
37 Ibid, 7.
Chapter two brought the discussion out of the realm of language into a historical discussion that intertwined autobiographical memories and official history. This chapter has shown that the discussion of translation is confined within the limits of chapter one, although the historical discussion served as basis for my argument on translation with Rocha. There seems to be a clear distinction between the themes studied in both chapters, although one could say that chapter two was only possible because of the questions on translation from chapter one that indicated that history could have the answer to the enigma that is the esfarrapados. Chapter three focuses on the distinction esfarrapados – “oppressed,” but I believe (and hope) the reader will be able to notice that the philosophical study of these distinctions, in the way I perform the study, is only possible because of the linguistic and historical discussions that already took place. After all, it would not be possible to see this distinction if I did not believe in a specific meaning of the esfarrapados as those who are willing to fight, a meaning which I was only able to properly understand through the historical discussion of the Farrapos, and the linguistical deconstruction of the ‘esfarrapados’ as those who are dressed in “farrapos.”
3. Chapter Three: Freire’s philosophical distinctions

Where is Abel your brother?
*Genesis 4:9*

3.1. Introduction

As I exposed in chapter one, the *esfarrapados* appear five times in *Pedagogia do Oprimido*, in four different passages. Through an analysis of the Ramos translation of these four passages, I tried to show that the *esfarrapados* seem to be portrayed as people who do things, who act, fight, and suffer with oppression. The reader of chapter one might ask if I am not overdetermining the distinction between the *esfarrapados* and the “oppressed,” since both struggle with oppression.

There seems to be a difference between being hungry and starving. If I am hungry now, I can go somewhere and buy a burger, so I do not feel “oppressed” by hunger. Meanwhile, someone who is starving has a different, more urgent and continuous relationship to hunger. On a similar line of thought, if we think of extreme poverty, manifested in urban centers through homelessness, there seems to be differences between how oppressed one feels being homeless in Vancouver or in São Paulo.

I could also mention some differences between the oppression one feels living in a *favela* ruled by drug cartels and other forms of organized crime, and the oppression one feels living in a *favela* that is not controlled by criminals. It is not always better to live in a *favela* that is not controlled by criminals, because in some cases they provide services to the community, doing the job of the inefficient or corrupted State. I only mention these nuances related to oppression and poverty because, as a Brazilian, Freire was aware of them, but some readers of Freire, especially in “first-world” countries, might not be.
A critic could object to my claims on poverty by arguing that I am ignoring the fact that there is extreme poverty in “first world” countries. Indeed, this is true, as it is also true that there are extremely rich people in “third world” countries. As far as I know, this might be true, but Paraisopolis, a favela where more than 100 thousand people live, still exists in São Paulo, Brazil, and not in Canada. Such attempts to bridge the gap between the “Global North” and the “Global South” are only useful to provide a romantic view that we from the South are not as poor as we think, or that it can be equally bad to live in a rich country. They seem to forget that more than sixty thousand homicides were officially counted in Brazil in 2016, which represents a particular kind of poverty in itself, where being poor means you might be killed.38 The theme of this chapter, the distinction between the esfarrapados and the “oppressed,” as conceived by Freire, is only going to be meaningful to those who understand that it is immoral to consider all kinds of oppression related to poverty to be the same.

3.2. Fear of Freedom

The esfarrapados fight. They are described by Freire in the middle of fights, getting beaten, and with no prospect of bringing a definitive end to oppression. It is quite easy to describe how they are portrayed because they only appear five times in Pedagogia do Oprimido. The “oppressed,” on the other hand, appear as oprimidos in the Portuguese text 208 times. It is quite difficult to frame or describe them in a few words, for they appear in many different situations of oppression. The one disposition that seems to be always already uniquely associated to the “oppressed” is “fear of freedom,” something that they experience but that seems unknown to the

esfarrapados. Freire provides many examples of how “fear of freedom” changes the life experience of the “oppressed.” As I see it, the most compelling one is the following:

While touched by the fear of freedom, they deny appealing to others and listen to the appeal that is made to them or that they make to themselves, preferring convenience to authentic conviviality.\footnote{Paulo Freire, \textit{Pedagogia do Oprimido} (São Paulo: Paz & Terra, 2017), 47, “Enquanto tocados pelo medo da liberdade, se negam a apelar a outros e a escutar o apelo que se lhes faça ou que se tenham feito a si mesmos, preferindo a gregarização à convivência autêntica.”}

As Freire writes, the “oppressed,” fearing freedom, prefer convenience over authentic conviviality. They do not fight, because they are afraid of being free. Why? According to Freire, “in the oppressed, the fear of freedom is the fear of assuming it.”\footnote{Paulo Freire, “footnote 9,” \textit{Pedagogia do Oprimido}, (São Paulo: Paz & Terra, 2017), 45, “nos oprimidos, o medo de liberdade é o medo de assumi-la.”} They fear freedom because in the process of fighting for it, they would need to confess to themselves and to the world that they are oppressed. To this extent, acquiring consciousness of oppression reveals a reality the “oppressed” are not willing to face.

In \textit{Moral Man and Immoral Society}, Reinhold Niebuhr provides an explanation to why the proletariat, even when self-conscious of their own oppression, often do nothing about it. Niebuhr is an author Freire cites three times in \textit{Pedagogia do Oprimido}. First, in chapter two, to denounce the incoherency of the oppressors who criticize the worker’s use of violence in a strike, while calling up the State to violently put down the strike.\footnote{Ibid, 92.} Second, in chapter three, to discuss educators who assume they share the same world view of their students.\footnote{Ibid, 158.} Lastly, in chapter four, to denounce the oppressors’ who do not want their workers to study, afraid the educated workers could question
the power relation. In a chapter entitled “The Ethical Attitudes of the Proletarian Class,” Niebuhr claims:

If we analyze the attitudes of the politically self-conscious worker in ethical terms, their most striking characteristic is probably the combination of moral cynicism and unqualified equalitarian social idealism which they betray. The industrial worker has little confidence in the morality of men; but this does not deter him from projecting a rigorous ethical ideal for society.

By politically self-conscious worker, Niebuhr means the worker who is a socialist. His entire argument, including the block quote above, presupposes that “socialism, more or less Marxian, is the political creed of the industrial worker of Western civilization.” Therefore, we should understand his critique as a critique of Marxist thought. In those terms, there are two important concepts in this quote which deserve a more sustained treatment: “moral cynicism” and “unqualified equalitarian social idealism.”

According to Niebuhr, these two concepts can help us understand the inabilities of the conscious working class to bring about the revolution they want. He describes “moral cynicism” as a product of Marxian determinism, since Marx wrote in his preface to his Critique of Political Economy that the political superstructures produce social consciousness. By implication, Niebuhr suggests, Marxists believe we live in an individualistic bourgeois society, where the industrial worker has little confidence in the morality of men, product of this society. However, the industrial worker needs to count on the morality of men to both idealize the perfect society, and fight at the side of others to turn the ideal society into their reality. Since it is impossible to do both, Niebuhr

43 Ibid, 177.


argues, the industrial worker projects the necessity for the good in politics, not in oneself or in one’s neighbor. Such projection is a form of “moral cynicism” for Niebuhr.

This projection of personal morality in politics is what Niebuhr named the “unqualified equalitarian social idealism,” which is “unqualified” because it claims one cannot believe in the morality of men as it also idealizes men as those who can carry the revolution they believe to be just. I wonder how much of Niebuhr’s idiosyncrasies influenced Freire’s understanding of “fear of freedom.” After all, fear of freedom does not only reveal itself as the preference of convenience over authentic conviviality. It also seems to manifest itself as a revolt against those who fight for their freedom. For example, the “oppressed” do not trust in the morality of individuals. Perhaps Freire is dialoguing with Niebuhr’s claim on “moral cynicism” when he writes, “as long as the oppressed are more the oppressor “inside” them than themselves, their natural fear of freedom can take them to denounce, not the oppressive reality, but the revolutionary leadership.”

Besides Niebuhr, Freire mentions Herbert Marcuse’s One-Dimensional Man, in chapter one. The reason I say “mentions” instead of “cites” or “quotes” is because Freire does not go farther than mentioning Marcuse’s work in a footnote, to provide additional references to those interested in learning about “dominant forms of social control.” According to Marcuse, the pursuit of progress disseminated by the industrial society in which we take part has absorbed ideology into reality, in such a way that we are all alienated by reality. He does not seem to be clear about what he means by “reality,” but it seems to me that he is talking about “material

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46 Paulo Freire, Pedagogia do Oprimido (São Paulo: Paz & Terra, 2017), 230, “enquanto os oprimidos sejam mais o opressor “dentro” deles que eles mesmos, seu medo natural à liberdade pode levá-los à denúncia, não da realidade opressora, mas da liderança revolucionária.”

reality.” For Marcuse, we are so grounded into reality, trying to improve it and update it every day, that it has become the only dimension we can conceive of.

As I understand it, Marcuse is criticizing the post-war intellectual mood which avoided imagining a new society, and dedicated its time and resources to improve the material world we live in. For instance, he mentions how the social and behavioral sciences have grown into prominence during that period. As a result, he claims, we are all one-dimensional men, the result of the rationality of technology: “the impact of progress turns Reason into submission to the facts of life, and to the dynamic capability of producing more and bigger facts of the same sort of life.”

Perhaps thinking one-dimensionally is one way in which “fear of freedom” reveals itself. If one thinks and lives one-dimensionally, it seems that one is refusing to live one’s full potential, to live the historical and ontological vocation to be more. The “oppressed” are not capable of imagining what a different way of life could be. They have settled with the life they have, and they are not even giving themselves the burden of imagining a different sense of reality. They fail to fight against the “oppressors,” and are willing to denounce those revolutionary leaders who try to fight for them. Those who experience “fear of freedom” seem to be alienated by reality.

Marcuse seems to be attentive to the production of “more and bigger facts of the same sort of life.” Such disposition allowed him to anticipate the problems that empiricism and the social sciences would bring to the table, where “the common feature is a total empiricism in the treatment of concepts,” and where “many of the most seriously troublesome concepts are being

48 Herbert Marcuse, One-Dimensional Man (Massachusetts: Beacon, 1991), 11.

49 Ibid, 12.
“eliminated” by showing that no adequate account of them in terms of operations or behavior can be given.”⁵⁰ Those who do conceptual study in faculties of education in North America know this problem well. I cannot even count on my fingers the amount of times I have heard from my social scientist colleagues (and professors) that a determinate author was “dated,” not useful for practitioners anymore. This seems to be a possible reason why Freire’s metaphysical and theological claims are considered secondary in comparison to his critique of the “banking model of education.” They are not “empirical,” in a social scientific sense, for they cannot be easily used to think schooling practices or policies, and “no adequate account of them in terms of operations or behavior can be given.”

A critic could say that I am dismissing the sociological angle in Freire’s work, who does write in the preface to the Brazilian edition of Pedagogia do Oprimido that part of the questions he raised in the book are the result of conversations he had with Chilean campesinos. Another critic could raise a simpler objection, saying that I am choosing to ignore the simple fact that Freire did write critiques of the “banking model of education.” I am not ignoring these objections, and I did not forget the sociological angle on Freire. My aim in the last paragraph was to raise the hypothesis that perhaps this is the only Freire who people seem to recognize because they are focusing in the production of “more and bigger facts of the same sort of life.” Perhaps we have been unable to recognize Freire’s metaphysical claims because we are, indeed, one-dimensional people. This prevents us from seeing a distinction between the esfarrapados and the “oppressed.”

If we consider Niebuhr’s and Marcuse’s claims in relationship to Freire’s “oppressed,” it almost seems as if, if let to their own devices, the “oppressed” are hopeless. They experience “fear

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⁵⁰ Ibid, 13.
or freedom,” or they are one dimensional people, or maybe both. Why then would Freire write a book about the vocation of hopeless people to be more? The simple answer is: because they are not hopeless. They are only hopeless in the form of “oppressed,” in the form of those who fear freedom and are one-dimensional, but they do not need to fear freedom forever. Philosophically, I believe that if we think of Freire’s claim of our “historical and ontological vocation to be more,” “to be more,” for the “oppressed,” is a mode of being where they lose their fear of freedom, contemplate other possible realities, and fight. In other words, I believe that the esfarrapados are simply the “oppressed” in a different mood, showing the disposition to fight, free from their fear of freedom. As I will claim in the next section, I do not believe that the distinction between the esfarrapados and the “oppressed” is a social class distinction, nor that they are different beings altogether. If one experiences material oppression, one can be esfarrapado or “oppressed.”

3.3. Esfarrapados and Dasein

For Freire, nobody is oppressed, oppressor, or esfarrapado, essentially. One might be oppressed, oppressor, or esfarrapado, in a certain time and context. One could simply arrive at this conclusion by remembering that Freire believes in Marxist revolutions and religious conversions, and that these kinds of turns, if successful, turn one into something else. Therefore, I do not think that Freire considered the “oppressed” and the esfarrapados distinct beings. I believe that, for Freire, among the people who experience oppression, some of them also experience “fear of freedom.” This fear freezes them, and helps them to accept their lives as they are. Those are the “oppressed” for Freire. However, there are other people who, when they experience oppression, fight back, and are not afraid of getting beaten and letting others know they are experiencing oppression. These people Freire named esfarrapados, and to them he dedicated the book. What I
believe to be of most importance is that it seems that one can choose to be one or the other. There is nothing in *Pedagogia do Oprimido* that seems to suggest that those categories are for life, or eternal.

I believe this is the case because Freire cites Edmund Husserl’s *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy* in the chapter two of *Pedagogia do Oprimido*. Freire cites Husserl to argue that, as the “oppressed” begin and continue to think of themselves and the world, they increase their field of perception. Freire does not use Husserl’s work systematically, he actually only mentions one expression of Husserl’s, “visões de mundo,” i.e., “world views.” According to Freire, “world views” are a sense of perception which needs to be acquired in the replacement of the banking model of education, a model that does not seem to work towards the increasing of the student’s field of perception. Since I am not discussing the banking model of education here, I do not feel convinced of the need to transcribe Freire’s quote on Husserl.

Even if he does not employ Husserl’s work systematically, Freire did cite his work, indicating that Freire was aware and made use of phenomenological accounts of being in his book. Phenomenological accounts of being are employed in spirit, not referenced as such by Freire. This is why I do not feel any restrictions to perform a phenomenological reading of the distinction between the *esfarrapados* and the “oppressed.” However, I will not use Husserl’s work in my reading. I had more interesting and productive ideas as I was thinking this distinction in relationship to *Being and Time* and *Introduction to Metaphysics*, works of Martin Heidegger. I

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believe Heidegger’s discussion of “Being and seeming” and Dasein are good ideas to help us understand this change of “mood” (in a Heideggerian sense) of the “oppressed” into esfarrapados.

Although this study of mine sometimes tries to imagine who the esfarrapados are in-the-world, as in the case of chapter two, one cannot forget that Freire’s esfarrapados first appear to us in Pedagogia do Oprimido. Therefore, since Freire did not define who they are, it seems that all we can do is study the esfarrapados in the four passages in which Freire talked about them by name, so that in studying how they act or do not act we can have a better grasp of who they are. Of course, one could object to that saying that there is no obvious one-to-one correspondence between how the esfarrapados appear in the text and their true being. In other words, one could say that how I perceive the esfarrapados speaks more of my ways of perception than of the “being” of the esfarrapados.

In Introduction to Metaphysics, Heidegger engages quite extensively with such a problem. He opens his argument claiming that although it seems obvious to us that “seeming” and “Being” are different things, where “Being” means the disclosure of beings as beings, the fact we can draw a proximity between what seems to be “X” and the actual “X” shows that to a certain extent there is a proximity between them. According to Heidegger, we see this proximity, simply put, because “the essence of seeming lies in appearing.” Yet according to Heidegger, this is something we know because, for the Ancient Greeks, especially Parmenides, Being opens itself up for us as physis, or nature. Not nature in a naturalistic sense of landscape, but in the sense of “what emerges from itself (for example, the emergence, the blossoming, of a rose), the unfolding that opens itself up, the coming-into-appearance in such unfolding, and holding itself and persisting in appearance

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– in short, the merging-abiding sway.” In other words, says Heidegger, if we understand Being as the Greeks did, Being means appearing. “Being essentially unfolds as appearing [...] Not-Being, in contrast, means to step up away from appearance, from presence.”

What that basically means is that, if I am to pursue a phenomenological study of the esfarrapados – “oppressed” distinction, I need to take into consideration how such distinction appears, since the way in which it appears is how such beings are disclosing themselves to me. In Being and Time, Heidegger proposes a phenomenological project that I find helpful to understand how this distinction between the esfarrapados and “oppressed” is disclosing itself to me. From his project, I picked four formulations to explain, or summarize, Heidegger’s thought:

a) “The “essence” [“Wesen”] of Dasein lies in its existence [Existenz]”

b) “Dasein is always its possibility. [...] And because Dasein is always essentially its possibility, it can “choose” itself in its being.”

c) “The fact that moods can be spoiled and change only means that Dasein is always already in a mood.”

d) “Attunement is an existential, fundamental way in which Dasein is its there.”

I chose these sentences because each of them deals with one concept that is both dear to Heidegger and implicitly employed by Freire. “Dasein” is a term used by Heidegger to explain how we experience Being. For Heidegger, not our essence, but the essence of how we experience

53 Ibid, 15-16.
54 Ibid, 111-112.
55 Martin Heidegger, Being and Time (Albany: Suny, 2010), 41.
56 Ibid, 42.
57 Ibid, 131.
58 Ibid, 135.
Being, lies in how we exist. This is how I understand the first sentence (a). Considering we can exist in different ways, I believe that sentence (b) is proposing we experience being as the possibility of being, as if existence is formed by how we choose how to experience being. Sentence (c) clarifies how we exist. We exist in a mood, or attunement. Sentence (d) shows that moods and attunements are synonyms, and that our moods define the way we exist experiencing Being. If I was to summarize, I would say that “Dasein” is a term used by Heidegger to explain how we are always in a mood, and that this mood influences how we choose to live, which reveals itself in the different ways we experience Being. If we use these sentences to think how the esfarrapados are mentioned in *Pedagogia do Oprimido*, one will see why I chose to perform a Heideggerian reading of Freire. In the dedication, Freire writes:

> To the esfarrapados of the world and to those whom in them
> Discover themselves and, in discovering themselves, with them,
> Suffer but, above all, with them fight.⁵⁹

As I claimed before, the esfarrapados are those who seem to have lost the fear of freedom. On the contrary to Niebuhr’s description of the proletariat, when the esfarrapados discover they are oppressed, they do not seem to fear fighting for their freedom. For them, knowledge is liberating. What I find the most interesting about Freire’s dedication is ‘those.’ If we think of who Freire is alluding to, it seems like he is talking about the oppressed, those who discover themselves with the esfarrapados. This image created by Freire reminds me of Plato’s Allegory of the Cave. It seems as if the esfarrapo is the first person to find a different mood and leave the cave, while those who are yet in chains, the “oppressed,” are yet in the cave. Then, the esfarrapo is able to

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⁵⁹ “Aos esfarrapados do mundo e aos que neles se descobrem e, assim descobrindo-se, com eles sofrem, mas, sobretudo, com eles lutam.”
bring the “oppressed” out of the cave, where the “oppressed” discover themselves with the esfarrapado, and as an esfarrapado, they walk together under the sun.

If we continue to play with the allegory, in Heideggerian terms standing up and following the esfarrapado is a change of mood. It is a different attunement that allows the “oppressed” to experience “Being” differently. When the “oppressed” discover themselves with the esfarrapados, they are choosing themselves, choosing authentic conviviality. If we extend this reading to other excerpt, early in chapter one, Freire writes:

This “generosity” will never be able to understand that true generosity is in fighting for the disappearance of the reasons for false love. False charity, which stems from the extended hands of the “exiled from life,” fearful and insecure, crushed and beaten. Extended and trembling hands of the esfarrapados of the world, the “condemned of the Earth.” The great generosity is in fighting so that, each time more, these hands, of men or people, extend less in gestures of supplication. Supplication of the poor to the powerful. And that they become, each time more, human hands, that work and transform the world. This teaching and this learning has to come, however, from the “condemned of the earth,” from the oppressed, from the esfarrapados of the world and those who are truly in solidary with them.60 (My highlights)

What I find most interesting about this quote is that the shift between hands in gestures of supplication into hands that transform the world is a shift that has to come from “the “condemned of the earth,” from the oppressed, from the esfarrapados of the world and those who are truly solidary with them.” In other words, they need to first change their moods, so that they can find a way to stop supplicating and begin to transform the world.

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60 Paulo Freire, *Pedagogia do Oprimido* (São Paulo: Paz e Terra, 2017), 42. “Não pode jamais entender esta “generosidade” que a verdadeira generosidade está em lutar para que desapareçam as razões que alimentam o falso amor. A falsa caridade, da qual decorre a mão estendida do “demitido da vida”, medroso e inseguro, esmagado e vencido. Mão estendida e trêmula dos esfarrapados do mundo, dos “condenados da terra”. A grande generosidade está em lutar para que, cada vez mais, estas mãos, sejam de homens ou de povos, se estendam menos em gestos de súplica. Súplica de humildes a poderosos. E se vão fazendo, cada vez mais, mãos humanas, que trabalhem e transformem o mundo. Este ensinamento e este aprendizado têm de partir, porém, dos “condenados da terra”, dos oprimidos, dos esfarrapados do mundo e dos que com eles realmente se solidarizem.” (My highlights and translation)
3.4. Conclusion

The main advantage I find in a Heideggerian reading of the *esfarrapados* is that we can more easily avoid overdetermining a distinction between the “oppressed” and the *esfarrapados*. Of course, it would also be the case in other kinds of phenomenological approaches. One could even say that they are not convinced by my choice of using Martin Heidegger instead of Edmund Husserl, a philosopher Paulo Freire himself cites. This is a fair objection, as it would also be if someone asked why I have completely ignored Karl Marx’s work in my analysis, an author who was dear to Freire.

As I understand it, Marx’s reduction around class struggle as the “engine” that moves history does not seem equipped to contemplate the nuanced differences between the *esfarrapados* and the “oppressed.” By Marxist accounts, since both groups experience oppression, they are “oppressed.” Husserl’s *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy* seems to be primarily concerned with the development of a phenomenological method in philosophy. Most of Husserl’s chapters discuss the nature of consciousness, as consciousness seems to be the “being” which he is trying to understand. Heidegger’s works, in contrast, are primarily concerned with employing the phenomenological method to understand “Being,” which he tries to understand through the study of people, which he gives the name *Dasein*, in order to avoid any preconceived idea of this thing which we are. This is why I chose his work as basis for the phenomenological part of my study.

A different objection would be on my phenomenological and existential reading *per se*. If we are supposed to accept the appearances as they appear, how can one “be more,” or change the mood? A phenomenological reading does not seem to give being a degree of latitude. This is why
I chose Heidegger’s sense of phenomenology instead of Sartre’s, an author Freire mentions in chapter two to create a parallel between his own critique of the banking model of education and Sartre’s critique of the digestive conception of knowledge, in Situations I\textsuperscript{61}. In L’être et le néant, Sartre claims that “l’apparition n’est soutenue par aucun existant différent d’elle: elle a son être propre.”\textsuperscript{62} As I understand it, Heidegger’s phenomenological project works around “Dasein,” but there is still a metaphysical notion of Being in his view, concealed by temporality.

Sartre, on the other hand, seems to accept the appearance as its own being, bringing Being into the realm of existence. Freire does cite one of Sartre’s early works, Situations I, a collection of Sartre’s literary reviews, but it seems to me that employing Sartre to explore metaphysics in Freire would force me to neglect Freire’s Christianity. However, I do not believe we can understand how the beings of the esfarrapados disclose themselves to us as beings through a study of essence. It is not true that all existentialist phenomenology dismisses Being or any sense of essence. For instance, Kierkegaard claims that “Man is Spirit.”

The epigraph to this chapter is from Genesis 4:9, where God asks Cain “Where is Abel your brother?” Before the day that God asked Cain this question, the book of Genesis tells us that, in a certain day, Cain and Abel were supposed to bring offerings to God. Cain, a firstborn and tiller of the ground, brought produce in general, nothing special. Abel, a sheep keeper, brought the first born of his flock and the fattest one, the best animals. Moses tells us that God received both offerings, but only respected Abel’s offering, for Abel brought the best animals he had. As a result, Cain was not happy that God preferred his brother’s offering to his, so he went and killed his brother Abel. Some time later God appeared, and asked Cain “Where is Abel your brother?”

\textsuperscript{61} Paulo Freire, Pedagogia do Oprimido (São Paulo: Paz & Terra, 2017), 88.

\textsuperscript{62} Jean-Paul Sartre, L’être et le néant (Paris: Gallimard, 2017), 15.
This chapter reminded me of this passage from Genesis, which is why I chose it to be the epigraph. As I argued throughout this chapter, when Freire wrote *Pedagogia do Oprimido*, the *esfarrapados* and the “oppressed” were supposed to fight together, shoulder by shoulder, to co-exist. The “oppressed,” (Cain) seem to be the most important group in the book, “the first-born,” but they are not the only, nor the more capable ones. Their “fear of freedom” stops them for offering their best in fights, while the *esfarrapados*, (Abel) who appear less times and to after whom the book is not titled, are always-already offering their best in fights against oppression. It seems to me that the English translation of *Pedagogia do Oprimido* “kills” the *esfarrapados* so that the “oppressed” can collect the benefits of being not only the “first-born,” but an only child. In the next chapter, we will see that the *esfarrapados* are also more able than the “oppressed” to offer their love to others, and God.
4. Chapter Four: Freire’s Theology of Love

And whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted. 
Matthew 23:12

4.1. Introduction

I recently read a paper Paulo Freire prepared for the 1970 Catholic Inter-American Cooperation Program (CICOP) Conference, entitled Education as Cultural Action – An Introduction. In the paper’s cover, he signed “Paulo Freire, Assistant Secretary of Education, World Council of Churches,” and at the bottom of the page he wrote “CICOP Working Paper 3/c/70.” It is a 15-page paper on education as cultural action, Freire’s way of responding to the conference topic, “conscientização.”

As he says in the cover, it is a work in progress, and after I read it, I had the impression that many of the ideas written in this paper are better developed in his 1976 Ação Cultural para a Liberdade e outros escritos, a collection of essays he wrote from 1968 to 1974. I believe that mentioning a paper Freire signed as a member of WCC for a Catholic Conference relieves me of part of the burden of proving that Freire’s Catholicism went beyond going to Mass. For example, he seemed to be engaged with the Church, he wrote for Catholic Conferences, and cites Gregory of Nyssa and John XXIII in Pedagogia do Oprimido.

Although it is not the topic of this chapter per se, I hope that the reader understands that I do not believe mentioning Freire’s religiosity in a footnote or a paragraph is enough for myself or anyone else to claim be doing a Freirean study. One really needs to engage with his Catholicism, with the same passion and depth one engages with his secular arguments. Otherwise, we are left
with a Creature Freire, where we, as Dr. Frankenstein, put together the pieces we most like and hope to not have created a monster. I say that because I am not claiming we should just be aware of Freire’s Catholicism, or to understand it as one among others dimension of his work. It is, as I understand, the most important dimension of his work, because it is the only one that accounts for the material and the transcendental. The other dimensions and secular concerns of his work are all contained within his Catholicism. For instance, the preferential option for the poor, the belief in God, the call to love others, those are all themes that Christianity deals with. If we try to make sense of Freire without the Catholic dimension, we will not make sense of the relationship between the material and the transcendental, and therefore, we will overdetermine the material and secular instances of his thought and work.

One could object to that saying that I am trying to impose my sense of Christianity into my reading of Freire. This is not the case. I am a Baptist Calvinist, so I am working with a different tradition of Christian thought. I have no personal or religious inclinations to promote Catholicism. Besides, there are more documental proof to prove not only Freire’s close relationship to Catholicism, but also his proximity with Latin American Liberation Theology. For instance, in the foreword to the 1986 edition of James Cone’s *A Black Theology of Liberation*, Freire writes:

> The prophetic nature of both these theologies [black theology and liberation theology] lies not merely in their speaking for those who are forbidden to speak, but, most importantly, in their side-by-side struggle with the silenced – so that the silenced can effectively speak the word that will revolutionize and transform the society that reduces them to silence.\(^6^3\)

From the quote above, what seems the most interesting is that one could read it and easily forget that Freire is writing about a work on theology. Cone’s book is undoubtedly a work on theology, but since Freire is focusing on topics as “revolution” and “silence,” one can more easily miss the theological aspects of the quote. Perhaps this is why some people struggle to see Freire

as a theologian. Perhaps his topics on freedom, schooling, fight, are perceived as topics which belong to the secular realm of things. In this chapter, I hope I am able to clarify that theology can deal and has dealt with a myriad of topics for millennia.

In *Pedagogia do Oprimido*, Freire cites Pope John XXIII’s *Mater et Magistra*, an encyclical from 1961 that reverberates most of Pope Leo XIII’s arguments on *Rerum Novarum*, from 1891. It is interesting to notice that both Pope Leo XIII and Pope John XXIII seem to provide arguments that clearly disagree with socialist ideals, which I believe exemplifies Freire’s outspoken Latin American tension between socialism and Christianity. Another example can be found in his last interview, two weeks before he passed away, where he says: “The more I read Marx, the more I found certain objective grounds to remain a comrade of Christ. The readings I did of Marx […] never suggested that I stop finding Christ in the streets of Favelas. I stood with Marx in mundanity while looking for Christ in transcendentality.” 64 These two senses of experiencing reality for Freire, mundanity and transcendentality, will be the topics of the next two sections, respectively.

Another example of Freire’s tension between socialism and Christianity can be found in his close relationship to Liberation Theology, a tradition *Pedagogia do Oprimido* seems to belong to. For example, if one compares Freire’s writing style, themes, and arguments with Gustavo Gutierrez’s in *Teología de la Libertación*, one will notice that both authors are dealing with the same kind of issues, and proposing similar methods to deal with those issues. In a passage from that book, Gustavo Gutierrez describes what he understands as Liberation Theology, a passage

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64 Paulo Freire, accessed November 28, 2018, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Uvdc2YlcZkE, “Quanto mais eu li Marx, tanto mais eu encontrei uma certa fundamentação objetiva para continuar camarada de Cristo. As leituras que fiz de Marx [...] não me sugeriram jamais que eu deixasse de encontrar Cristo na esquina das próprias favelas. Eu fiquei com Marx na mundaneidade a procura de Cristo na transcendentalidade.” (my translation)
that presents elements we can compare with Freire’s book. In the blockquote, one will find the text in its original Spanish, but I provide my own translations of the Spanish text in the footnotes. In *Teología de la Libertación*, Gutierrez writes:

Una teología que no se limita a pensar el mundo, sino que busca situarse como un momento del proceso a través del cual el mundo es transformado: abriéndose-en la protesta ante la dignidad humana pisoteada, en la lucha contra el despojo de la inmensa mayoría de los hombres, en el amor que libera, en la construcción de una sociedad, justa y fraternal-al don del reino de Dios.65

It is not difficult to see a comparison between Gutierrez’s concept of a theology that would allow us to transform the world, protesting the violence that crushed human dignity, and Freire’s description of a utopian world where the oppressed and the *esfarrapados* are free to transform the world with their hands, and stop supplicating for help. Besides, as I have mentioned, in the last paragraph of *Pedagogia do Oprimido*, Freire claims to be imagining the creation of a world where it is less difficult to love, a concern Gutierrez also seems to have. After all, as he writes in the quote above, love is what sets us free. The similarities continue to unfold as we continue with the comparison. For instance, when we think of Freire’s claim on our “historical and ontological vocation to be more,” we think of this vocation grounded in history and in Being, a vocation to be more, to be free, and to love. Interestingly, Gutierrez presents a similar view:

Concebir la historia como un proceso de liberación del hombre, es percibir la libertad como una conquista histórica; es comprender que el paso de una libertad real no se realiza sin una lucha - plena de escollos, de posibilidades de extravío y de tentaciones de evasión - contra todo lo que oprime al hombre.66

65 Gustavo Gutiérrez, *Teología de la Libertación* (Salamanca: Ediciones Sígueme, 2009), 72. Translated to English by me: “A theology that does not limit itself to think the world, but that attempts to situate itself as a moment in the process through which the world is transformed: opening itself - as protest against the crushed human dignity, in fighting against the spoliation of a large majority of men, in liberating love, in the construction of a just and fraternal society, to the gift of the Kingdom of God.”

66 Ibid, 87. Translated to English by me: “To conceive of history as a process of liberation of man is to perceive freedom as a historical conquest; it is to comprehend that the coming of real freedom is not realized without a fight – full of obstacles, of possibilities of misplacement and temptations of evasion – against everything that oppresses man.”
The reason why I quote Gutierrez is to show that Freire’s *Pedagogia do Oprimido* seems to belong to the tradition of Liberation Theology. Therefore, my arguments around Freire’s theology of love have to be understood as a “branch”, or a “development” from Liberation Theology, since I am trying to prove he belonged to that tradition. A critic could claim that my comparison is not enough to actually argue that Freire worked in Liberation Theology. One could also compare passages from Freire, McLaren, and Giroux, in an attempt to prove that Freire belonged to Critical Pedagogy. Those seem to be fair objections. In the next two sections, I will look into Freire’s text more closely, analyzing some passages in relationship to the encyclicals he cites and biblical passages. At the end of these sections, I will revisit this objection and respond to it, for now it is too early.

4.2. Mundanity

As I mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, both John XXIII’s and Leo XIII’s encyclicals make strong claims against socialist ideas and yet, Freire cited John XXIII in chapter four to criticize false generosity: 67 “The myth of their charity, of their generosity, when they do it, as class, it is assistencialism, which unfolds itself as the myth of false help that, in the plan of actions, deserved a second warning by John XXIII.” 68 Among the extensive list of examples of the claims against socialist ideas, I chose one of each for the purpose of illustrating my arguments. In *Rerum Novarum*, Leo XIII writes:

> It is clear that the main tenet of socialism, community of goods, must be utterly rejected, since it only injures those whom it would seem meant to benefit, is directly contrary to the


68 Paulo Freire, *Pedagogia do Oprimido* (São Paulo: Paz & Terra, 2017), 189, in Portuguese: “O mito da sua caridade, de sua generosidade, quando o que o fazem, enquanto classe, é assistencialismo, que se desdobra no mito da falsa ajuda que, no plano das ações, mereceu segunda advertência de João XXIII.”
natural rights of mankind, and would introduce confusion and disorder into the commonweal. The first and most fundamental principle, therefore, if one would undertake to alleviate the conditions of the masses, must be the inviolability of private property.\textsuperscript{69}

And in \textit{Mater et Magistra}, John XXIII writes:

History and experience testify that in those political regimes which do not recognize the rights of private ownership of goods, productive included, the exercise of freedom in almost every other direction is suppressed or stifled. This suggests, surely, that the exercise of freedom fits its guarantee and incentive in the right ownership.\textsuperscript{70}

Both authors speak of the natural right of man\textsuperscript{71} to own property, a right which they claim is recognized in the Christian Bible, Old and New Testament. The main argument of this section will be that as a Catholic, Freire’s theology of love in its mundane sense means the respect of private property, a respect which expresses the love of one neighbor for the other. The reader will notice that in this section, the \textit{esfarrapados} will not be mentioned. This happens because, as I will explain in the next section, I believe that the theological characteristics of the \textit{esfarrapados} only belong to the transcendental world. Therefore, I ask the reader to bear with me. In order to flesh out the roots of this argument, I will link both these encyclicals with passages from the Holy Bible. All the passages of the Bible I transcribe are from the New King James Version, which is the 1982 revised and updated version of the first translation of the Bible to English, from 1611.

In Genesis 1:28, Moses writes: “Then God blessed them, and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth.” This is the part of the book of Genesis where God is telling Adam and Eve about their purpose in Earth. When God says “fill

\textsuperscript{69} Pope Leo XIII, \textit{Rerum Novarum}, 1891, 5.

\textsuperscript{70} Pope John XXIII, \textit{Mater et Magistra}, 1961, 12.

\textsuperscript{71} Some of the authors I use in this chapter use the term ‘man’ to refer to “humankind,” or “people.” It seems to be more of a terminological convention than a restrictive use of gendered language. I do not feel comfortable changing the language the authors use, but I believe clarifying their use of terminology to be important. One should not understand the authors’ and mine use of the term ‘man’ as gendered oriented.
the earth and subdue it,” it becomes clear that private ownership is not something we received “ready-made” from God, but nonetheless it is a right we are told to exercise.72

One could object to this argument by saying that this is only true for the period when Adam and Eve were in the garden of Eden, before the fall of Man. This could be a valid point, had we not the rest of the Bible where God reinforces over and over again the rightfulness of private property. For instance, in Deuteronomy 5:21, Moses writes that God has revealed to him the following: “You shall not covet your neighbor’s wife; and you shall not desire your neighbor’s house, his field, his male servant, his female servant, his ox, his donkey, or anything that is your neighbor’s.” I did not italicize the “is,” it is written in such way in the version I use. However, this italicizing serves us well, since “is” is the verb which indicates the rightfulness of the neighbor’s property. What is also interesting is that the idea of private property at the time is even more radical than the one we believe in contemporary capitalist societies. It is the right to ownership of houses and fields, but also of servants. Although it is an extreme understanding of property, not applicable for our understanding nowadays, we should not dismiss it in a theological study, especially when all that I am looking for is for proof of the Christian duty to respect private property.

The third and last biblical passage I would like to introduce here is from Romans 13:9. I am including this passage not because I believe the last two are insufficient, but for two other reasons. First, because I believe it is important to include an example from the New Testament, and second because this passage presents a clear link between the rightfulness of respect for the owner of private property, and love for your neighbor. In this passage, Paul writes:

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72 In a recent conversation, Mona Gleason pointed out that it seems that I am assuming a one-to-one correlation between God’s commandment “fill the earth and subdue it” and the right to private ownership. Dr. Gleason made me realize that “subduing X” does not necessarily entail “ownership of X” in the modern sense of “ownership.” It seems to me as a reasonable and fair objection. After all, I did not state the premises for this correlation to be true. However, it seems to me as a convention within Christian theology, Catholic and Calvinist, to assume both terms to be synonyms.
For the commandments, “You shall not commit adultery,” “You shall not murder,” “You shall not steal,” “You shall not bear false witness,” “You shall not covet,” and if there is any other commandment, are all summed up in this saying, namely, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.”

By citing the encyclical and being a Catholic, who certainly was aware of these three passages I just transcribed, it seems that *Pedagoga do Oprimido*, in respect to the mundane, is the work of a Christian who urges that we work towards the creation of a world where we can love, a call which needs to be understood in Christian terms. As far as I know, this seems to be more of a call for religious conversion than a call for a proper political revolution, where the love for the other implicates respecting other’s property. Therefore, it does not seem self-evident that *Pedagogia do Oprimido* is specifically endorsing communist revolutions. After all, “freedom” for a Christian is not necessarily linked to material freedom, or to a political sense of freedom. One is free when one believes in the truth of Christ, as John 8:32 says: “And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”

4.3. Transcendentality

Apart from the biblical discussion which bases my argument on Freire’s religious and ideological conflict, there are arguments in these same encyclicals that throw us into the focus of this section, Freire’s theology of love in transcendentality and its relationship to the *esfarrapados*. I chose two of these arguments. In *Rerum Novarum*, Leo XIII says: “the things of earth cannot be understood or valued aright without taking into consideration the life to come, the life that will know no death. Exclude the idea of futurity, and forthwith the very notion of what is good and
right would perish,”73 and in *Mater et Magistra*, John XXIII claims: “The Church aims at unity, a unity determined and kept alive by that supernatural love which should be actuating everybody.”74

I want to use two ideas present in these quotes to better understand Freire’s broad sense of “transcendental” theology in *Pedagogia do Oprimido*. “The life to come”, in relation to futurity, and the unity of the Church, related to love. If we first keep in mind Leo XIII’s quote, the things of earth are only important insofar as they take into consideration the life to come. He does recognize the existence of the things of earth, but he also presents a sense of progression towards the life to come, mediated by a sense of futurity. This same sense, I believe, is present in Freire, when he speaks of our “historical and ontological vocation to be more.” “To be more” places the afterlife on the horizon, beyond mundanity, and throws our thoughts into transcendentality.

If we take the quote from John XXIII into consideration one more time, we are immediately dragged into Freire’s last sentence from *Pedagogia do Oprimido*, where he explains why he wrote the book. There, Freire claims he wanted to imagine “a world where it is less difficult to love.”75 As it seems, Freire can only imagine such a world because he believes people need to love, and that the world which is in front of us is not ideal for us to fulfil our vocation. John XXIII also writes on these kinds of demands of people. In *Mater et Magistra*, John XXIII says:

> Man is not just a material organism. He consists also of spirit; he is endowed with reason and freedom. He demands, therefore, a moral and religious order; and it is this order – and not considerations of a purely extraneous, material order – which has the greatest validity in the solution of problems relating to his life as an individual and as a member of society.76

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Since Freire cited this encyclical in Pedagogia do Oprimido, it seems he was aware of this
description of what John XXIII believed that humankind required. John XXIII describes a man
who demands more not just from the material world. He describes a man who demands more from
the spirit, more from moral and religious orders, as a necessity to solve earthly problems. One
could object to this reading of mine saying that I cannot assume that Freire was aware of such
description of the demands of humankind, and that he could be taking only what he needed from
the encyclicals. The only way I can respond to this objection is with another speculative argument.
Considering that Freire was a Roman Catholic, it seems that a Christian would to a certain extent
read the words of the Pope as the words of a priest or a pastor, as words of someone to whom God
reveals things. Therefore, I do not believe he would take what are seemingly the words of God in
a sense that is not its fullest.

When one reads John XXIII’s account of man, one begins to wonder what Freire means by
the phrase “the historical and ontological vocation to be more.” Is this vocation of the religious
and moral sort, a vocation to demand things of the spirit? According to Freire, man cannot be more
while the violence of oppression still exists. For Freire, oppression will only come to an end in
love, and this is why we all should rebel against oppression:

In the answer of the oppressed to the violence of the oppressors is that we will encounter
the gesture of love. Consciously or unconsciously, the act of rebellion of the oppressed,
which is always or almost as violent as the violence which created them, this act of the
oppressed, yes, might nourish love.77

The question that remains is what kind of love Freire meant in the last word of the quote
above. Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI presents an interesting discussion of love in his 2005

77 Paulo Freire, Pedagogia do Oprimido (São Paulo: Paz & Terra, 2017), 59. “na resposta dos oprimidos a
violência é que vamos encontrar o gesto de amor. Consciente ou inconscientemente, o ato de rebelião dos
oprimidos, que é sempre tão ou quase tão violento quanto a violência que os cria, este ato dos oprimidos,
sim, pode inaugurar o amor.”
encyclical *Deus Caritas Est*. In that letter, he thinks of “eros” in Scripture, its relationship to “agape,” “philia,” and our bond with the divine. Benedict XVI claims that for the Greeks, “eros” was celebrated “as divine power, as a fellowship with the divine,”78 “the overpowering of reason by a “divine madness” which tears man away from his finite existence and enables him […] to experience supreme happiness.”79 According to Benedict XVI, that specific sense of “eros” is problematic because an “undisciplined eros, then, is not an ascent in “ecstasy” towards de divine, but a fall, a degradation of man.”80 He makes such claim to clarify that the historical problem of the Church with “eros” is not because of its sexual sense, but because of the kind of relationship with the divine that this “divine madness” entails.81 Benedict XVI is clear when he says that if disciplined, eros could actually enable us to experience a love bond with God, which in theological circles “led us to consider two fundamental words: eros, as a term to indicate “worldly” love and agape, referring to love grounded in and shaped by faith. The two notions are often contrasted as “ascending” love and “descending” love.”82

In a recently published paper entitled *Strong as Death is Love: Eros and Education at the End of Time*, Samuel D. Rocha and Adi Burton discuss this encyclical of Benedict XVI in their analysis of a fragment from Songs of Songs 8:6, “Strong as death is love.”83 They write:

Benedict XVI carefully constructs his argument against the common view that places the ideal love of agape (amor benevolentiae) above the «worldly» love of eros (amor


79 Ibid, 3.

80 Ibid, 3.

81 2 Timothy 1:7 “For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.”


concupiscenciae) in a direct fashion (Benedict XVI, 2006, p. 23). First he notes «[t]he two notions of love are often contrasted as ‘ascending’ love and ‘descending’ love», (Benedict XVI, 2006, p. 23) but insists «[y]et eros and agape – ascending and descending love – can never be completely separated» (Benedict XVI, 2006, p. 24). Then Benedict XVI continues: «The more the two, in their different aspects, find a proper unity in the one reality of love, the more the true nature of love in general is realized» (Benedict, XVI, 2006, p. 24). 

What I believe to be the most interesting about this quote is that, in their reading of Benedict XVI, they suggest a unitary character of “love in general,” as the unity of “eros” and “agape.” When the esfarrapados fight, conscious that this is not “their war,” they seem to offer an act of love towards the oprimidos, an act of true solidarity, in this unitary sense. In a theological sense, I would say, they fight for the freedom we are endowed (agape) with, and offer love (eros). However, this fighting and this love do not have as its final goal the improvement of their earthly life. The esfarrapados know that they do not have any chances of winning the fight. The only thing that seems certain is that they will lose it. However, the esfarrapados do not possess “fear of freedom” as do the oprimidos. So, why do they fight? Theologically, they fight because in fighting for freedom, theirs and their neighbors,’ they get closer to God. Although the promise of bringing change is made by Freire to the oprimidos, the esfarrapados are those who are truly enacting the Pedagogia do Oprimido, for they fight. This seems to explain why the book is dedicated to them. This reasoning can be verified when we look, once again, to the four passages where the esfarrapados are mentioned. First, in the dedication, where Freire writes:

To the esfarrapados of the world and to those whom in them
Discover themselves and, in discovering themselves, with them,

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84 Ibid, 6.

85 Galatians 5:1 “Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage.”

86 John 13:34 “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another.”
Suffer but, above all, with them fight.\textsuperscript{87}

It seems that the \textit{esfarrapados} contribute to other’s self-discovery, and offer solidarity with those who suffer and fight. They are distinct but relate to others as equals. Considering that Freire’s last sentence in \textit{Pedagogia do Oprimido} asks for a world where it is less difficult to love, it seems as if the \textit{esfarrapados} fight for that world, alongside those who suffer and fight.\textsuperscript{88} Such appearance of the \textit{esfarrapados} in situations where the struggle for love seems to be evident is repeated in other passages. For instance, in chapter one:

This “generosity” will never be able to understand that true generosity is in fighting for the disappearance of the reasons for false love. False charity, which stems from the extended hands of the “\textit{exiled from life},” fearful and insecure, crushed and beaten. Extended and trembling hands of the \textit{esfarrapados} of the world, the “\textit{condemned of the Earth}.” The great generosity is in fighting so that, each time more, these hands, of men or people, extend less in gestures of suplication. Supplication of the poor to the powerful. And that they become, each time more, human hands, that work and transform the world. This teaching and this learning has to come, however, from the “\textit{condemned of the earth},” from the \textit{oppressed}, from the \textit{esfarrapados} of the world and those who are truly solidary with them.\textsuperscript{89} (My highlights)

\textsuperscript{87} “Aos esfarrapados do mundo e aos que neles se descobrem e, assim descobrindo-se, com eles sofrem, mas, sobretudo, com eles lutam.”

\textsuperscript{88} Matthew 22:39, “Thou shalt love your neighbor as yourself.”

\textsuperscript{89} Paulo Freire, \textit{Pedagogia do Oprimido} (São Paulo: Paz & Terra, 2017), 42, “Não pode jamais entender esta “generosidade” que a verdadeira generosidade está em lutar para que desapareçam as razões que alimentam o falso amor. A falsa caridade, da qual decorre a mão estendida do “\textit{demitido da vida},” medroso e inseguro, esmagado e vencido. Mão estendida e trêmula dos \textit{esfarrapados} do mundo, dos “\textit{condenados da terra}”. A grande generosidade está em lutar para que, cada vez mais, estas mãos, sejam de homens ou de povos, se estendam menos em gestos de súplica. Súplica de humildes a poderosos. E se vão fazendo, cada vez mais, mãos humanas, que trabalhem e transformem o mundo. Este ensinamento e este aprendizado têm de partir, porém, dos “\textit{condenados da terra}”, dos \textit{oprimidos}, dos \textit{esfarrapados} do mundo e dos que com eles realmente se solidarizem.” (My highlights and translation)
The first sentence is reaffirming. True generosity\textsuperscript{90} is in fighting against false love.\textsuperscript{91} A loving world is one where there will be no more supplication of man to man, but where man will be able to transform the world. It is difficult to read this passage and not be reminded of Romans 12:2, where Paul writes: “And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.” Again, what seems to matter for the esfarrapados is not the mundane in itself, but following the will of God.

This same kind of immediate correspondence between the writings of Freire and Scripture seems to happen when we take a look at the third passage where the esfarrapados are mentioned: “Those who inaugurate terror are not the weak, who are subjected to it, but the violent who, with their power, create the concrete situation in which are germinated the “exiled from life”, the esfarrapados of the world.” \textsuperscript{92} The situation of terror is created by those who initiate violence, as in Matthew 11:12, where Matthew writes “And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force.”

The last passage where the esfarrapados are mentioned bring us back into John XXIII’s encyclical, where he writes “The Church aims at unity, a unity determined and kept alive by that supernatural love which should be actuating everybody,”\textsuperscript{93} for Freire writes:

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\textsuperscript{90} 1 John 3:16-17, “By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us. And we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. But whoever has this world’s goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him?”

\textsuperscript{91} Zechariah 8:17, “Let none of you think evil in your heart against your neighbor; And do not love a false oath. For all these are things that I hate,’ Says the Lord.”

\textsuperscript{92} Paulo Freire, Pedagogia do Oprimido (São Paulo: Paz & Terra, 2017), 58. “Os que inauguram o terror não são os débeis, que a ele são submetidos, mas os violentos que, com seu poder, criam a situação concreta em que se geram os “demitidos da vida”, os esfarrapados do mundo” (my translation)

\textsuperscript{93} John XXIII, Mater et Magistra, 1961, 19.
\end{flushleft}
“We do not want to diminish the value and importance of the revolutionary leadership. On the contrary, we are emphasizing its importance and value. And will there be major importance than conviviality with the oppressed, with the *esfarrapados* of the world, with the ‘condemned of the Earth’?”

This sense of conviviality and unity seems to be dear to Christians, and therefore, to the *esfarrapados* as well.

### 4.4. Conclusion

As I was writing chapter four and reminding myself of Freire’s proximity with Liberation Theology, I began to ask myself if *Pedagogia do Oprimido* is a work on theology. Indeed, the similarities of style and arguments between Freire and Gustavo Gutierrez, as other Latin American Liberation theologians, seems to help my claim. The only problem with stating that this is a work on theology is that I would be making a claim Freire never made. Of course, one could say, that Hannah Arendt never claimed to be a philosopher, and yet it is not clear to us why she would not be read as one. I believe the same seems to apply to Freire. I see more reasons to claim he was a Liberation Theologian than reasons to claim he was not.

However, I need to respond to the objection I left open in the introduction to this chapter, where I mentioned that a critic could accuse me of assuming that Freire performed a particular reading of the two encyclicals, as what seems to be a Liberation Theology reading of them, without any hard proof of that. In the preface to the Brazilian edition of *Pedagogia do Oprimido*, Freire

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95 In 1964, Hannah Arendt was interviewed by Gunter Gaus for the TV show “Zur Person.” In that interview, he asks her “In spite of the recognition and respect you’ve received, do you see your role among philosophers as unusual or peculiar, because you are a woman?” to which she replied “I’m afraid I have to protest. I don’t belong to the circle of philosophers. My profession, if one can speak of it at all, is political theory.” Accessed February 2, 2019, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dsoImQfVsO4.
writes that “Christians or Marxists, even if disagreeing with our positions here, to a great extent, in part or in its totality, these, we are certain, will be able to finish the text.” We can understand this claim as directed to two different groups. First, to Christians, those who seem to be interested in discussions of perseverance, belief, and self-formation. Then, to Marxists, those who are interested in creating proper material conditions for a revolution. But if we do not want to understand this claim directed to different groups, the union of Marxism and Catholicism is what Liberation Theology is formed with.

What is the most interesting, I think, about understanding Freire as a Liberation Theologian, is that this sense of theology does not seem to dismiss at prima facie the Marxist elements of Freire’s prose. To be honest, to a certain extent it actually justifies his Marxism, and resolves all the existing tensions between Christianity and Marxism in his work. In the preface, it seems like Freire was giving a hint to the reader about how to read his book, as if he was pointing to the two possible entrance doors, the same thing he seems to do in the interview I mentioned, where he claims to stand with Marx in mundanity and with Christ in transcendentality. To the best of my knowledge, it is a convenient truth. However, if I was not able to provide enough evidence that Freire is a Liberation Theologian, I hope I was at least able to prove that he is not only a secular thinker.

In The Elements of Christian Philosophy, Etienne Gilson writes that theology is “a transposition into the language of reason of a truth that exceeds reason.” This is how I understand the transition between chapters three and four. I do not mean that chapter four is more “rational”

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96 Paulo Freire, Pedagogia do Oprimido (São Paulo: Paz & Terra, 2017), 34, “Cristãos ou marxistas, ainda que discordando de nossas posições, em grande parte, em parte ou em sua totalidade, estes, estamos certos, poderão chegar ao fim do texto.”

or that its reasoning has more depth than the philosophical discussion of chapter three, and even
the historical discussion from chapter two. This is not a point on method, nor on the hierarchy of
the disciplines. I believe the distinctive character of this chapter is its subject. If we try to
deconstruct the title of this chapter, “Freire’s Theology of Love,” we will find the following
formula: {Freire’s (Theo[God]+logy[study of]) Love}, or “Freire’s study of God of Love”.

In other words, it is the study of God by means of a study of “love”. It is ultimately the
study of God, who is this truth that exceeds reason, that Gilson writes about. Chapter four has a
subject that transcends the material and the rational, God, but that is accessible through the
discussion on love. This discussion on love, in relationship to Freire’s claim on the creation of a
world where it is less difficult to love is what makes this chapter fit within my larger project in this
thesis, the study of the esfarrapados in relation to our “historical and ontological vocation to be
more.”

One could object to this deconstruction of my title by saying that, if compared to what John
says in 1 John 4:8, “He who does not love does not know God, for God is love,” my title presents
an unnecessary repetition of words. It would be the “Freire’s study of love of love.” As far as I
know, the word John uses in that passage in Greek is “αγάπη,” the same word Benedict XVI
mentions in Latin as agape. The kind of love Freire is promoting, I believe, is the Greek “Ερως,”
in English, “Eros.” The title of the chapter is already pointing out the need for a clarification into
the kind of love we speak of when we speak of God and when we speak of Freire.
5. Chapter Five: Conclusion

I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after My own heart, who will do all My will. 
Acts 13:22

5.1. Introduction

In 1992, Paulo Freire published Pedagogia da Esperança: Um reencontro com a Pedagogia do Oprimido. It is a book Freire wrote more than two decades after Pedagogia do Oprimido was published, with the intention of rethinking the Pedagogia do Oprimido, to return to it and reflect on what had happened in the meantime. Although I am not going to discuss this book here, I would like to make use of this idea of a return to the Pedagogia do Oprimido. How can I enact the pedagogy of the oppressed? Or how can I be an esfarrapado? are the types of questions I would like to ask in this conclusion. The answers to these questions do not seem to be on the close horizon. But it is fine, it means there is more work to be done.

Throughout this thesis, we have seen that the historical esfarrapados are those who fight in a war they cannot win. Philosophically, they are the “oppressed” in the mood to fight and transform the world, so that we can live in a world where we can love. Theologically, they suffer because they practice the virtuous life taught in the Holy Scriptures, always keeping on the horizon the focus in transcendentality, in the afterlife. But how can I make sense of it? How does this study help me to enact Freire’s pedagogy? How can I “be more?” Am I living according to the vocation or Am I living a distortion of it? All these are valid questions, although I do not believe I can provide a prescriptive answer to any of them. What I can do is to propose philosophical exercises, or spiritual exercises, which could help us to make sense of these questions in relationship to the life of an esfarrapado.
5.2. To be an *esfarrapado*

In *Exercices spirituels et philosophie antique*, Pierre Hadot discusses how spiritual exercises were used in the Ancient Greece as a way of doing philosophy. According to him, in Ancient Greece, and particularly to the stoics, “L’acte philosophique ne se situe pas seulement dans l’ordre de la connaissance, mais dans l’order du <<soi>> et de l’être: c’est un progres qui nous fait plus être, qui nos rend meilleurs.” In that sense, philosophy has above all a therapeutic value, which is defined not only for the knowledge one has of things, but by one’s disposition to self-surveil, to acquire a constant consciousness of the self.

In the book, Hadot uses examples from, among others, Seneca’s and Marcus Aurelius’s writings to conceive of and propose these spiritual exercises. He mentions that these exercises are like dialogues one can have with oneself or with others, orally or written, or in other words, by any conventional method of dialogue. What matters is that one becomes able to conduct one’s thoughts in an orderly fashion so that one can rehearse, anticipate, and prepare for the encounter with the world. By “orderly fashion,” he mean “commencer à s’exercer dans les choses plus facile pour acquérir peu à peu une habitude stable et solide.”

In the case of our study of the *esfarrapados*, it seems that the definitive mark of the *esfarrapados* is their will to fight. It is the characteristic that crosses the three senses of this study (historical, philosophical, and theological). However, fighting in a literal sense as the *esfarrapados* do, does not seem to be “le chose plus facile” to begin with. What does seem as the easiest point of departure is to ground oneself historically. Nowadays scholars in the social sciences talk quite a lot about “positionality.” What does it mean if not grounding oneself historically, trying to understand your inner self based on the web

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99 Ibid, 33.
of relations, social class struggles, race, gender, and place in the world? The *esfarrapados* are not alienated from the world. They fight and enact the “historical and ontological vocation to be more” because they are aware of themselves, and of who they are historically, a sense of self-awareness that the “oppressed” do not possess. After all, if one is properly grounded historically, one will not experience “fear of freedom,” for one will know one’s role in the world. “Fear of freedom” only reveals itself to those oppressed who think as the “oppressors,” who are mistaken about their place in the world and in history.

The spiritual exercises in a theological sense become somewhat complicated. Is it just praying? Yes and no. One of these ways is undoubtedly through praying, but also through true charity, trying to help others so that they never more experience the situation of oppression they are now experiencing. This is for me the fundamental educational character of the *esfarrapados*, the core of the “pedagogy of the *esfarrapado*,” and the reason why Freire dedicated *Pedagogia do Oprimido* to them. They suffer, fight, get beaten, but they never give up on the other. In the end, this is why they are the only ones who are able to love, in the transcendental sense, and why Freire’s sense of pedagogy does not necessarily entail social engineering.

5.3. Conclusion

A critic could read this entire thesis and raise a seemingly crucial objection: “Are you saying that only Christians can fully understand *Pedagogia do Oprimido*?” Not at all. What I am saying is that one will not understand it if one is, in Marcusean terms, a one-dimensional man. Even within Marxist thinking there is a space for the “transcendental,” to “be more.” That space is called *utopia*. The only problem with a Marxist and secular reading of *utopia* is that one might understand it in terms of the “moral cynicism” that Niebuhr writes about, that deposits all belief in a collective transcendence without believing in the morality of the individual man. But of course,
if one wants to perform what seems to be a truly Marxist reading of Freire, one can do. After all, it is one of the “entrance doors” that Freire prescribes to his readers.

However, it seems that one will only be able to actually grasp the “transcendental,” the “to be more”, the utopian in Freire if one actually believes in conversion. Not necessarily a religious conversion, but nonetheless an individual conversion. But then, can an atheist be in the mood for conversion, can an atheist contemplate “the turn?” It seems to me that one does not need to be a Christian to understand Freire, but it becomes a lot easier if one is, for one would have an easier time understanding the Christian elements of his prose.

Returning to the point on spiritual exercises, what I believe to be the most interesting about this idea is that everyone can be a philosopher, and everyone can be an esfarrapado. I honestly believe that this is the sense of philosophy and Being that Paulo Freire believed in. After all, as he writes, the creation of a world where it is less difficult to love is his aim with *Pedagogia do Oprimido*, not a world where we are all intellectuals.
6. Epilogue: What does it mean to “return” to Freire?

The idea of a “return” to Freire is one that has occupied my mind, lately. It is a rhetorical device that I have used in this thesis and elsewhere to criticize the English translation of *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, and to justify my often immature criticism of Critical Pedagogy. However, I recently noticed that my use of the term is inconsistent. Sometimes I use it to mean reading and citing from the Portuguese text of *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, and other times to call attention to Freire’s Brazilian and theological heritages.

I find my inconsistence quite productive. After all, if I am making use of the term “return” to mean two different things, perhaps there are multiple ways to return to Freire. Could it be the return to his other books, his work with the World Council of Churches, or his biography? Could it also mean the return to his library in São Paulo, his footnotes, and even his Harvard lectures? I honestly do not know, but I do not see any reason to ignore any of these possibilities. In this epilogue, I would like to think beyond the “return” to Freire that I have performed in my thesis, and invite the reader to think with me of these and other ways to “return” to Freire.

Daniel Johnson-Mardones, in his book *Curriculum Studies as an International Conversation: Educational Traditions and Cosmopolitanism in Latin America*, has argued that curriculum arrived in Latin America as a cultural monologue, from the Global North to the Global South. It is necessary, he argues further, that we work to “develop international or transnational research on curriculum” as a presupposition for a “more comprehensive theory of curriculum and education.” If one takes into consideration that *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* was published

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101 Ibid, 9.
in English in 1970, and that the original Portuguese text was only allowed to be published in Brazil in 1974, scholarship on Freire arrived in Latin America from the North, which means that Johnson-Mardones seems to be correct. By 1974, Freire had already been to Harvard, and was living in Switzerland. His presence in the North was already established, which led Critical Pedagogy to be exported to Brazil.

I am certain that, after one has read my thesis, one can think of Americans and Canadians who belong to Critical Pedagogy. I invite you to try to think of known Critical Pedagogues from Brazil, who share the same publicity of Giroux and McLaren, for example. It will be a challenge, and I think I know why. It might sound controversial to say this, but Critical Pedagogy has colonized scholarship on Freire for decades, and established itself as the main authority on his work. Critical Pedagogy is not Brazilian, nor is Freire the Critical Pedagogue.

For instance, Brazilian scholarship on Freire has a different way of relating to Freire’s work than that of Critical Pedagogues. Walter Kohan, for instance, in the aforementioned *Paulo Freire: Other childhoods for childhood*, wonders on what Freire conceived “childhood” to be. From excerpts where Freire thinks of his and his niece’s childhoods, one also learns about Freire’s biography, and his relationship to his family. It is an interesting work because it presents a “new” Freire to those who only know him from *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. Kohan’s Freire wonders more than asserts, and asks questions, through a return to Freire’s autobiographical and conversational books.

Decolonizing Freirean studies is one of the ways I can think of returning to Freire. In this process, language is an important factor. As I have argued, it is nearly impossible to do good work on Freire with the current translation to English. Or we pressure Bloomsbury for new critical translations, in the plural, or we need to work with the Portuguese or Spanish text. A different
advantage of decolonizing Freirean studies is that it could pave the way for the Anglo-Saxon Academy to perceive Freire as more than a Brazilian John Dewey. I say this because Critical Pedagogy, in this case mainly represented by E. Wayne Ross, has compared Freire to Dewey.\textsuperscript{102} I invite you to think through this comparison with me. Freire made use of idealists, Marxists, existentialists, psychoanalysts, and Christians to make sense of the world and of the human person, which does not seem to match Dewey’s style. However, what most interests me about this comparison is how it Americanizes Freire. After all, nobody in North America needs to frame Karl Marx as a German or Prussian W. E. B Du Bois to better understand who Marx is.

Freire was trained in western philosophy, and he cites continental philosophers. Therefore, “The West,” in my view, is not to be blamed for the mistakes of Critical Pedagogy. There are many famous western thinkers who, when addressing Ancient Greek texts, or Latin texts, for example, read them in their original, ancient languages. Hannah Arendt is a good example, as also is Martin Heidegger. To be quite honest, \textit{exegesis}, close readings, the return to the “original” text are all techniques, or “methods” from the traditions of philosophy and theology of the West along with the East, the North and the South.

To a certain extent, my quest for decolonization is not anti-canonical. It is as canonical as it could be. I am trying to encourage others to take a step back, and try to understand who Freire is, what and why he is writing, in his own terms. In other words, we need to study Freire, we need to return Freire to the humanities. Although this request sounds silly and naïve at face value, I honestly mean what I said. Take my thesis as example. The title is \textit{Esfarrapados: A Freirean Study}. This is all that it is. A study. The institutional study of education often forgets the value of this

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simple and elementary thing. For example, in faculties of education across North America we talk
a lot about “research,” “research methods,” “teaching,” “learning,” but very little about “studying.”
I believe we will only be able to take a step back and understand what I am trying to say if we take
seriously Robert McCintock’s 1971 essay, *Toward a Place for Study in a World of Instruction.*
The centrality of study in education, aligned with the openness for democratic and international
dialogue in education and curriculum, is what I believe to be the groundwork for my future return
to Freire.

McCintock qualifies “study” as a place for the search of self. His work, however, is not
focused on conceiving of “study,” but rather of tracing back the history of “study” in education.
He argues that we have, over time, replaced “study” with “instruction,” which in his view, is
problematic. He writes that “one has to speak out against exaggerating the power of instruction.
But this criticism does not reject teaching; in place of a rejection, it is a quest for the mean, a
celebration of the Greek sense for nothing too much, an attempt to balance an inflated version of
the teacher's mission with a touch of reality.”

I really appreciate McCintock’s effort in detaching education from “instruction,” and the
focus on “study.” I appreciate it because *Pedagogia do Oprimido* is, in Freire’s words, a pedagogy
that has to be created with and by the oppressed. It is not meant to be taught to the oppressed. The
pedagogy of the oppressed is, as I understand it, a place for study, for the search of self, for self-
formation. Freire’s *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* refuses instruction.

This is what I believe to be the strength of my project. It is just a study of a word which we
do not know the meaning. The attempt to find meanings the word discloses is the way I try to
create the *Pedagogia do Oprimido,* which in my case, revolves around the *esfarrapados.*

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103 Robert McCintock, “Toward a Place for Study in a World of Instruction,” *Teachers College Record,*
1971, 73 (2), 204-205.
*Pedagogia do Oprimido* is, as I see it, a frame for self-formation, which is why I believe Freire does not tell the reader what the *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* actually is. It has to be created and enacted, by the reader.

This is why my thesis has four chapters to understand who or what the *esfarrapados* are, and a conclusion, where I propose the *esfarrapados* as a frame for self-formation. I see a dialectical relationship between understanding the text and self-formation in *Pedagogia do Oprimido*. Freire’s last words in *Pedagogia do Oprimido* already indicate to us how we can “return” to him. We must create a world where it is less difficult to love. That being the case, I failed, which is why I encourage you to find better ways to return to Freire.
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Pope Leo XIII. *Rerum Novarum*. 1891.


Appendices

Appendix A: Flag of Rio Grande do Sul

(Retrieved from https://estado.rs.gov.br/simbolos, on 11/1/2019)
Appendix B: Anthem of Rio Grande do Sul

Como a aurora precursora
do farol da divindade,
foi o Vinte de Setembro
o precursor da liberdade.

Mostremos valor, constância,

Nesta ímpia e injusta guerra,
Sirvam nossas façanhas
De modelo a toda terra,
De modelo a toda terra.
Sirvam nossas façanhas
De modelo a toda terra.

Mas não basta pra ser livre
ser forte, aguerrido e bravo,
povo que não tem virtude
acaba por ser escravo.

Mostremos valor, constância,
Nesta ímpia e injusta guerra,
Sirvam nossas façanhas
De modelo a toda terra,
De modelo a toda terra.
Sirvam nossas façanhas
De modelo a toda terra.

In English:

Like the precursor aurora
from the lighthouse of divinity,
it was the twentieth of September
the forerunner of freedom.

Let us show value, constancy,
In this unjust war,
Serve our exploits
As a model to the whole earth,
As a model to the whole earth.
Serve our exploits
As a model to the whole earth.

But it's not enough to be free
strong, and brave,
people who have no virtue
ends up being a slave.

Let us show value, constancy,
In this unjust war,
Serve our exploits
As a model to the whole earth,
As a model to the whole earth.
Serve our exploits
As a model to the whole earth.

(Retrieved from https://estado.rs.gov.br/simbolos, on 11/1/2019)
Appendix C: Flag of Pernambuco

(Retrieved from https://estado.rs.gov.br/simbolos, on 11/1/2019)