**English 100B**

**California State University Long Beach**

**Rhetorical Analysis Essay**

Have you ever been told that if you did not go to school to gain knowledge and earn yourself a degree, you would have to suffer from being ignorant and dominated by others who actually did and worked their way up to a higher class than yours? It is true, but not completely. Ironically, schools do not always bring great potential for future. One of the people who acknowledged this issue is a Brazilian philosopher Paulo Freire. In “The Banking Concept of Education” written in 1968, he gives a warning about a destructive education system whose purpose is to produce obedient classes who will be ruled by the people at the top of the society. He argued that an ineffective education system, in which the students passively memorize and repeat the information given by the teachers, was dehumanizing and destroying the future generations of the world. By using productive rhetorical devices such as metaphor, diction, and contrast, Freire successfully developed his argument to convince the readers, especially the Brazilian authority in the 60-70s, to make necessary changes to their sinking education system.

First, the argument of Paulo Freire is mostly formed by his brilliant usage of metaphor. Before making any argument about the effect of a failed education system, he uses metaphor to give an explanation on what a “banking education” is. Speaking from his point of view, Freire expounds: “Education thus becomes an act of depositing, in which the students are the depositories and the teacher is the depositor. Instead of communicating, the teacher issues communiqués and makes deposits which the students patiently receive, memorize, and repeat” (257). His point is that in an outdated education system, students do not really learn but passively accept the information they are given. They are like banking machines without ability to think, just do their job as they are set up to do: collecting what is given, holding on to it, and releasing all at some point of time. By using metaphor, he links the passive learning system with how the banking system works, which is familiar with everyone’s daily life. It not only points out the similarities between these two, but also help the readers make connections with the problem he is mentioning. This unique metaphor creates such an impression in the readers’ minds and trigger their criticism about the issue.

Another example of metaphor that Freire utilizes in his argument is comparing students with stiff objects. In “The Banking Concept of Education”, Freire describes students as “containers” and “receptacles” (257), which are physical objects that can hold thing inside without the ability to absorb. The students who are human beings that have their own thoughts and the control on their bodies are compared with lifeless objects which anyone can use and take advantage of. This metaphor is powerful because it establishes the foundation for his argument. It helps to highlight the fact that the students passively receive the knowledge but do not carefully consider understanding its meaning. Moreover, this comparison expresses Freire’s attitude towards this problem. He alerts the audience to the dehumanizing aftermath of the banking education system causes on their future generations: students are brainwashed and become a tool of dominant leaders.

The second rhetorical device that Freire effectively uses in his argument is diction. He chooses words wisely to support his argument, as well as emphasize the devastating outcome of banking education. Freire states, “the banking concept of education, which serves the interests of oppression, is also necrophilic” (261). He mentions the concept of “necrophily”, which can be understood as an abnormal attraction and desire to control over dead people. Freire believes that banking education system is favored by the oppressors as it is a useful tool to take full control on the future generations, the students, who are considered dead as they do not have the ability to think and be creative. The meaning of “necrophily” itself already terrifies people. Therefore, when Freire links it with banking education, the readers would also develop sickened feeling toward the system and realize how dreadful it is when they think about this issue, hence, consider it more seriously.

In addition, Freire also applies diction in his argument by specifically using pairs of words such as the depositories – the depositor and the oppressors – the oppressed to discuss the role of each side in the society. By using these words, he explicitly points out one of the consequences of the banking education system which is splitting the world into two classes. The upper class would be in charge of ruling the society while the other one would have to be obedient and follow orders. And banking education is a tool helping the upper class to continuously keep their power over the lower class. Thus, this leads to the uneven distribution of power and justice in the society, which become a threat to the country development. As his intended audience is the authority who has power to change the system and not the students, his choice of vocabulary is very appropriate. It helps to emphasize the importance of the problem and also put pressure on the authority to make some urgent changes.

Last but not least, the main structure of Freire’s argument throughout the entire article is based on the contrast between banking education and problem-posing education. At the beginning of “The Banking Concept of Education,” Freire analyzes how dangerous the banking system would affect the students and the society’s future. Then, he discusses the benefits of the problem-posing education, which is the opposite of banking education. He mentions that in banking education system, the teachers have the absolute power to control the classes (257). A lesson would more likely be a monologue in which teachers speak and no responses from students needed. Students do not have a chance to express their own idea and their critical thinking is restricted. They can only assume what they are taught is right and accept it unconditionally (257). Meanwhile, in the problem-posing system, students and teachers make the equally important impact on each other. The teachers not only teach but also learn from their students through communication. The students can ask questions and contribute to classroom discussions. They can challenge themselves with problems coming from real life and fully understand the concepts through experiences. Eventually, the students would develop their own mindsets as well as their unique personalities and be involved in the world they are living in (262, 263). By using logic and supporting ideas to show the huge differences between these two education systems, Freire succeeds in making people realize the flaw in banking education which is the practice of dominance. Moreover, he also presents the problem-posing education as a future goal, a solution for the disastrous system.

In conclusion, Paulo Freire successfully constructs and reinforces his argument by effectively using different rhetorical devices such as metaphor, diction, and contrast. “The Banking Concept of Education” by Freire has made a huge impact on the innovation in the education system. In the last few decades, the system has improved from an outdated system to a better and more efficient one. Even though “The Banking Concept of Education” was written in the 60-70s, the problem Freire discussed is still relevant to modern days. It also serves as a guideline as well as a reminder for the people who work in the education system not to follow the same old path.

Citation

Freire, Paulo. Pedagogy of the Oppressed. 1. New York: Continuum Books, 1993. chapter 2. Print.