PART ONE: TEACHING AND LEARNING CONTEXT

The development of the theoretical typology and experiential exercise presented in this chapter took place gradually over my experience as a social activist, social work student, social worker, and social work educator. As a student at Columbia University School of Social Work, I was exposed to a number of readings relevant to social work across boundaries of race, class, and gender (1979; Reynolds, 1975; Solomon, 1976). After students issued an open letter calling for more content on knowledge of ethnic cultures, cross-cultural practice, and institutional racism (Arnold, Greenberg, Alston, Dover, & Sherman, 1979), the School adopted an infusion strategy rather than choosing a discrete course model that would have required a course related to oppression and/or diversity (Le-Doux & Montalvo, 1999). Later, while directing social work programs for union members in New Orleans, New York, and Philadelphia during the 1980s, I scheduled various exercises for use with agency staff and fieldwork interns. By the time I arrived as an adjunct at Fordham in 1989, content on oppression and diversity was infused throughout the curriculum, but the School had also adopted a discrete course requirement. The experiential exercise presented in this chapter was first developed in 1990 while teaching that required course, Oppression of Diverse Populations.

As I prepared to teach, I was struggling with the well-known difficulties of teaching about diversity and oppression (Garcia & Van Soest, 1999). Fortuitously, while assisting with the development of a master bibliography of the School’s curriculum (in conjunction with the self-study at the time), I discovered the textbook Direct Social Work Practice: Theory and Skills (Hepworth & Larsen, 1990; Hepworth, Rooney, Rooney, & Strom-Gottfried, 2006). The authors discussed the importance of empathic communication rooted in the social worker’s understanding of the client’s experience and of their inner feelings. They presented a list of over 250 words and affective phrases grouped into ten categories that included rejection/offensiveness and anger/resentment. Our class simply decided to generate words and affective phrases which we thought and felt were related to the experience of sexism, ableism, heterosexism, racism, classism, ageism, or other forms of oppression or discrimination. Employing a stack of 3x5 cards, we came up with nearly a hundred words and affective phrases.

In discussing the words and affective phrases we generated, we concluded that many of them characterized how the students felt at the very moment of a specific example of the lived experience of oppression. We labeled that set of words and affective phrases core emotions, or the feelings experienced at the moment of oppression. Some of these words and phrases described the subjective experience of the “direct psychological forces of oppression” produced by the individual experience of terror, humiliation, degradation, or objectification (Cudd, 2006, p. 175). Of the several dozen words and affective phrases coded as core emotions, several overlapped with the Hepworth/Larsen list, and all of those were found in the rejection/offensiveness category.

Many of the other words and phrases not coded as core emotions seemed to us to describe feelings which came seconds, minutes, hours, or days after those initial immediate feelings. We classified such words and affective phrases as reactive emotions. These words overlapped somewhat with the words and phrases found under anger/resentment and confusion/troubledness in the text. In addition to words and phrases we coded as core emotions or reactive emotions, we generated words and affective phrases that seemed to describe longer-term feelings and states, which we coded as adaptive and maladaptive evolved responses to oppression. We did not claim any social psychological evidence for the validity of such a typology. The list was developed strictly for use in classroom education, or as a supplementary list for those using the Hepworth and Larsen text. However, the typology seemed to resonate with the lived experiences of a very diverse group of students. This has continued to be
the case whenever the exercise has been carried out, including at the 2006 meeting of the Midwest Conference on Social Work Education (Dover, 2006) and most recently at Cleveland State University and the University of Akron.

At first, the exercise was restricted to generated words/phrases about oppression, without including dehumanization and exploitation. Some students found it difficult to participate, and usually contributed words/phrases describing how friends or clients felt after such experiences. This was an issue for the instructor as well. After all, this chapter was written by an author who is a straight, white, married, temporarily abled, upper middle class male. Cudd (2006) has pointed out that the privileged have a special obligation to fight oppression, and the author has been an ally of social movements against oppression. But I was concerned the exercise as initially designed was not inclusive enough. Later, in my work in the Doctoral Program in Social Work and Social Science at the University of Michigan, my preliminary examination involved the comparison of Weberian, Durkheimian and Marxian forms of organizational, institutional and class analysis. As I prepared to teach a macro HBSE course at Michigan, I realized that if the exercise could be about the experience of oppression, dehumanization or exploitation (traced roughly to those three theoretical perspectives), it would be more inclusive.

PART TWO: A TYPOLOGY OF THEORIES OF OPPRESSION, DEHUMANIZATION AND EXPLOITATION

This section briefly defends the rationale of this theoretical typology. First, I summarize the theoretical backdrop to three recent theoretical contributions. Next, I summarize each of them in turn, demonstrating the manner in which they reinforce the value of such a typology.

During the 1970s, the advent of dual systems theory produced a socialist feminist critique (Hartmann, 1976) of points of view which ascribed to capitalism the power which maintains the subjugation of women (Zaretsky, 1976). Subsequently dual systems theory was itself criticized for viewing class, gender and race as homogenous entities that at most interact externally with each other (Crompton & Mann, 1986). Deborah King (1988) defined racism, sexism and classism as interdependent control systems that constituted an interstructure of oppressions. Collins (1993) decried hierarchies of oppression and saw race, class and gender as interlocking categories for analysis. She concluded that building empathy requires understanding how our personal biographies have all been affected by our positions on the dominant or subordinate side of privilege. In recent years, dialogue about oppression has become an influential discourse within social work education’s curriculum, as demonstrated by a number of widely used publications (Anderson & Middleton, 2005; Gil, 1998a; Johnson, 2006; McIntosh, 1995; Van Wormer, 2004).

However, Van Soest and Garcia (2003) point out that it is important to critically challenge the assumptions of the prevailing academic approaches to diversity education. Arguably, social work education content about oppression and diversity has increasingly involved what might be called the privileging of privilege discourse over discourse rooted in the more concrete examination of the nature of racism, homophobia, ageism, ableism, sexism, heterosexism, etc., as well as such neglected concepts as misogyny (Gilmore, 2001), patriarchy (Johnson, 1997a; Lerner, 1986), anti-Semitism (Blumenfeld, 1997; Boyarin, 1997; Kivel, 1996), and anti-Arab chauvinism (Abraham, 1994; Faragallah, Schumm, & Webb, 1997; Ibish, 2001; Salaita, 2006; Weaver, 2005). For instance, Platt (2002) has argued that in celebrating multiculturalism, we have seen a shift away from studying the historical dynamics of racism. There has also been, Platt argued, an implicit point of view that sees it as being possible to overcome racism and other forms of oppression without any fundamental changes in the system of capitalism. As a result, there has been a diminution of discourse about the nature of exploitation, and the near absence of discourse on dehumanization.

For the theory of exploitation, I rely upon the recent theory of exploitation of Robin Hahnel (2006). Nick Haslam’s (2006) work is relied upon for his theory of animalistic dehumanization (which is consistent with Cudd’s theory of oppression). But most important for present purposes is Haslam’s theory of mechanistic dehumanization. For the recent theory of oppression, I utilize Ann Cudd’s Analyzing Oppression (Cudd, 2006).
Exploitation

There have been a number of recent developments in the Marxian and Weberian theory of exploitation (Hahnel, 2006; Lysandrou, 2000; Mayer, 2002; Nielsen & Ware, 1997; Roemer, 1986; Tilly, 1998; Wright, 2002). Tilly (1998) has developed a theory of inequality that posited mechanisms of group domination as well as economic extraction. David Gil (1994) has sought to incorporate exploitation and dehumanization into a theory of oppression. But efforts to theorize oppression and exploitation in ways which incorporate each other risk overstressing or underestimating the extent of the overlap between each other’s arguably distinct mechanisms. It is important to recognize, within any single oppressed group, not only similarities and differences but the nature of dialectical interdependence (Fine, 2006). By extension, it is essential to recognize how a similar interdependence may exist among oppressed peoples experiencing different forms of oppression, as well as the manner in which systems of oppression themselves interlock and reinforce each other. By further extension, there is value in analyzing the similarities and differences as well as the interdependence of oppression, dehumanization, and exploitation.

With respect to exploitation, one way this happens is through what has been termed super-exploitation (Nielsen & Ware, 1997; Omi & Winant, 1994; Perlo, 1975). Omi and Winant (1994) discussed super-exploitation as one of the historical characteristics of the internal colonialism they saw as part of the process of racial formation in the United States. Seen in this way, the practice of class exploitation is linked to the practice of social oppression in a way that exacerbates the exploitation of oppressed people.

Recent theoretical developments promise to further clarify the nature of exploitation. Robin Hahnel (2006), for instance, has sought to develop a modern theory of exploitation and economic justice. He concluded that employment relationships under capitalism lead to alienation and to economic exploitation and injustice. Hahnel recognized that exploitation can be analyzed in terms other than Marxian theories of surplus value. Assuming free markets for labor and credit, Hahnel demonstrated, based upon the analysis of a hypothetical economy, that even mutually beneficial, voluntary economic exchanges can worsen the degree of inequality. Exploitation is simply based upon unfair advantage.

Hahnel argued that what makes an outcome unjust or just, unfair or fair, depends upon one’s assumptions about the nature of justice. He presented three maxims of justice, that are expanded upon elsewhere (Hahnel, 2005a). Unjust outcomes necessarily follow from transactions between unequal parties tied to a formal social relationship within an institutionalized environment. In such a case, the outcome is a result of exploitation. However, according to Hahnel, unjust outcomes can happen outside the context of exploitation as well. This leaves theoretical room in Hahnel’s model of exploitation for consideration of the relationship of exploitation to oppression and dehumanization.

Dehumanization

Horton (1964) recognized early on the difficult intellectual problem associated with objectively evaluating the nature of the discontent produced by dehumanization. He linked dehumanization to Marxian alienation and Durkheimian anomie, both pervasive societal processes. Recent theoretical and empirical work on the question of dehumanization has distinguished between two forms of dehumanization: animalistic dehumanization and mechanistic dehumanization (Haslam, 2006). This is an important distinction, because it makes it possible to better recognize the relationship between oppression and dehumanization.

Animalistic dehumanization involves one social group denying that another social group has the same set of uniquely human (UH) attributes. This form of dehumanization is called animalistic dehumanization because it is often characterized by the explicit application to the other social group of animalistic characteristics. Animalistic dehumanization takes place primarily in an intergroup context, especially in the context of interethnic relations and with respect to groups of persons with disabilities. Animalistic dehumanization is typically accompanied by the
holding of emotions such as disgust and contempt for the members of the other social group. This form of dehumanization is consistent with the attitudes expressed towards the dehumanized group in earlier social psychological research (Bandura, Underwood, & Fromson, 1975). Animalistic dehumanization as a process is fully consistent with the mechanisms spelled out in Cudd’s theory of group-based oppression (Cudd, 2006).

Mechanistic dehumanization involves the treatment of others as not possessing the core features of human nature (HN). This involves, according to Haslam, a view of the dehumanized individuals or groups as being automata (not animals). This form of dehumanization is called mechanistic dehumanization because it is often seen as a characteristic of the application to human beings of “standardization, instrumental efficiency, impersonal technique, causal determinism, and enforced passivity” (Haslam, 2006, p. 260). Mechanistic dehumanization is consistent with the type of dehumanization identified by Thomas Szasz (1970) in his critiques of medical and psychiatric classification. Montagu and Matson (1983) linked dehumanization to large scale social processes such as industrialization, compulsive obedience, mechanized behavior, and the impact of the scientific revolution. This leads to technological dehumanization: the reduction of human beings to machines. Unlike the theory of animalistic dehumanization, these theories of biomedical, technological and mechanistic dehumanization don’t overlap with Cudd’s theory of oppression. Therefore, they provide additional theoretical support for the validity of the ODE typology introduced here.

**Oppression**

Cudd (2006) sought to avoid the pitfalls represented by Iris Young’s warning that if one seeks a single, unified theory of oppression, one might reduce all forms of oppression to a single type of oppression or end up not including some types of oppression (Iris Marion Young, 1990). But Cudd theorized oppression as a univocal concept. By univocal she meant that while the origins of different historical examples of oppression may differ and while the effect of oppression on various groups may diverge, oppression has a common set of features. Cudd provided a thorough review of the recent evolution of theories of oppression (Harvey, 1999; O’Connor, 2002; Wertheimer, 1987). She also discussed two contributions that strongly influenced her model (Clatterbaugh, 1996; Frye, 1983) and one which influenced her reliance upon the concept of the social group as a core element of her theory (Gilbert, 1989). Cudd identified four necessary and sufficient conditions for oppression: (1) A harm condition related to an identifiable institutional practice; (2) A social group condition that requires that the harm be perpetrated by a social institution or established practice on a social group that has an identity other than that stemming from the presence of the harm condition itself; (3) A privilege condition associated with the existence of a social group that benefits from the identified institutional practice; (4) A coercion condition consisting of the ability to demonstrate the use of unjust forms of coercion as part of the bringing about of the identified harm.

As may be apparent, this excluded economic classes per se, because classes may be considered to be creatures of a specific economic system. Furthermore, Cudd concluded from a rigorous philosophical analysis that coercion can’t be established as an inherent element of workplace participation under either capitalism or socialism. Therefore, Cudd carefully distinguished oppression from class exploitation.

Cudd identified both direct and indirect forms of material and psychological oppression. Material oppression takes place when one social group uses violence or economic domination to reduce the access of persons of another social group to material resources such as income, wealth, health care, the use of space, etc. Psychological oppression is seen as both direct and indirect in Cudd’s theory. Direct psychological forces are seen as producing inequality through the purposeful actions of members of the dominant group on people in a subordinate group (including the use of terror, degradation and humiliation, and objectification). Direct psychological forces also involve the imposition on the oppressed social group of cultural influence. However, indirect psychological forces contribute to inequality by influencing decisions made by oppressed people within the oppressive context in which they live.

In either direct or indirect forms of oppression, Cudd argued, there are subjective and objective dimensions. Cudd viewed subjective oppression as the conscious awareness that one is in fact oppressed. In other words, a person realizes they are being unjustly and systematically harmed by virtue of their membership in a social group. Cudd fully accounted for the roles of economic force, violence, psychological harm and institutional constraints in her theory of the mechanisms of oppression. But she explicitly excluded economic exploitation. And while her conceptions of degradation and humiliation are compatible with animalistic dehumanization, they are not consistent
with mechanistic dehumanization. In these two ways, Cudd left theoretical room for the compatible examination of mechanistic dehumanization and exploitation as significant additional theoretical tools for understanding the nature of injustice. The typology presented above was developed mainly for pedagogical and heuristic reasons. But recent developments in the theory of exploitation, dehumanization and oppression suggest the value of a further theoretical demarcation.

PART THREE: A CLASSROOM EXERCISE

The classroom exercise is discussed here in five parts. First, there is a phase of advance orientation and preparation for the exercise. Second, there is an educational introduction to the concepts of oppression, dehumanization and exploitation. Third, there is the introduction to the exercise itself. Fourth, there is the actual generation of words and affective phrases and the subsequent sharing with the class of the results of the exercise.

Orientation and Preparation

Early on in the course, I introduce Council on Social Work Education (2001) foundation program objective #4: “Understand the forms and mechanisms of oppression and discrimination and apply strategies of advocacy and social change that advance social and economic justice.” However, I break it down into three sub-objectives that facilitate the identification of course objectives and assignments (Council on Social Work Education, 2001; Munke & Dover, 2006). These include (1) understanding oppression and discrimination, (2) understanding the nature of social and economic justice and (by implication) injustice, and (3) applying strategies of advocacy/social change that advance social/economic justice. After all, injustice is inherent in all forms of oppression (Schlele, 2007). In fact, it is the epitome of injustice, as has frequently been argued (Cudd, 2006; Deutsch, 1985; Gil, 1994). Stressing these kinds of things early on in the course reinforces the relationships of oppression and social justice content.

However, student anxiety, particularly about oppression related content, is an expected element of the learning experience (Deal & Hyde, 2004). It helps to stress that oppression is a central preoccupation within all of the Abrahamic religious traditions. Please see the documents “Oppression in the Abrahamic Tradition – Quotations” and “The Golden Rule as the Ethic of Reciprocity Across Religious Traditions” on the author’s website at http://www-personal.umich.edu/~mdover/.

I also stress that concern with oppression and social justice are longstanding values within the profession the students are preparing to enter. I introduce the students to the work of Bertha Capen Reynolds, who I point out was the first to write a book on social work education, Learning and Teaching in the Practice of Social Work (Reynolds, 1965[1942]). I cite her as follows (Reynolds, 1963, p. 186): “Oppression produces the resistance which will in the end overthrow it....We shall learn how to struggle when we care most what happens to all of us, and we know that all of us can never be defeated.” I stress that the question of how to learn to “care most what happens to all of us” is one of the points of the oppression content in the course and of the compendium exercise, which will be addressed later in the course. Finally, I have a handout of excerpts from the NASW Code of Ethics related to oppression (see NASW Code of Ethics on oppression on the website). As the class session at which the exercise is to be done draws nearer, I give students advance notice of the nature of the oppression compendium exercise. This gives students who wish to do so a chance to reflect, remember, and prepare for the writing of their words and affective phrases. I don’t, however, ask them to do any advance writing.

Educational Introduction to ODE Content

I begin by selectively introducing definitions from a number of authors (see my website’s document Definitions of Oppression, Dehumanization and Exploitation and the Glossary of Key Terms). Next, I seek to discuss each component of ODE content in terms of definable mechanisms. For instance, beginning with oppression, I point out that there are several mechanisms of oppression (Wambach & Van Soest, 1997): (1) violence and the threat of violence, (2) rendering the oppressed group or their existence as an oppressed group as invisible, so that their status is taken for granted and not questioned, (3) ensuring that the group is ghettoized so as to be out of sight, out of mind, (4) Engaging in cultural oppression by treating the group as inferior, (5) Rationalizing or
excusing the oppression of visibly oppressed groups, (6) keeping oppressed groups divided within and between themselves.

Next, I discuss how these mechanisms can be seen as ways in which a fundamental aspect of oppression, known as closure, is sustained. Parkin (1979) defined closure as a "process by which social collectivities seek to maximize rewards by restricting access to resources and opportunities to a limited circle of eligible" (Parkin, 1979, p. 44). He defined three kinds of closure: (1) Exclusionary closure is the process by which a dominant exclusionary social group excludes another. Different kinds of exclusionary closure are in place in different kinds of societies. (2) Usurpatory closure involves efforts by an excluded usurpatory group to obtain resources from another social group. (3) Dual closure describes a social system in which groups simultaneously employ strategies of exclusion in one direction and usurpation in another. As a concept, dual closure helps to understand the source of social conflicts between the multiple social groups that may be simultaneously engaged in efforts at usurpation and at exclusion.

Next, I turn to a discussion of exploitation. I point out that a number of definitions of oppression incorporate exploitation. For instance, Iris Young (1990) contended that there are several forms of oppression: exploitation, marginalization, powerlessness, cultural imperialism, violence. Many definitions of oppression incorporate the concept of exploitation, and seek to define exploitation as merely one of the types of oppression. Thus, there is classism or capitalism, racism, etc. However, I point out that if one were to consider the exploitation referred to by Young as a form of super-exploitation, or exploitation combined with group-based oppression, then there is value in considering economic exploitation in its own right. There are certainly many forms of economic exploitation, but the most salient form for our consideration is that associated with the systems of capitalism and imperialism. Each of these systems has been analyzed from a variety of theoretical standpoints, including for instance both Marxist and Weberian analyses of class. I provide standard Marxist as well as Weberian definitions of class and of exploitation (see website), and rely upon Tilly’s (2000) work on inequality, which is consistent with both exploitation and oppression.

Finally, I explain the concept of dehumanization. Freire (1981) defined dehumanization as something that marks those whose humanity has been stolen. But Freire indicated that dehumanization also brands those who have robbed others of the ability to be fully human, since it distorts for them what it means to be human. However, for Freire dehumanization is a by-product of a more fundamental system of oppression, of an unjust order. Freire, in other words, subordinated dehumanization to oppression. Montagu and Matson (1983), however, linked dehumanization to large scale social processes generally, such as industrialization, compulsive obedience, mechanized behavior, and the impact of the scientific revolution. This leads to what they termed technological dehumanization (the reduction of human beings to machines). Such a conceptualization of dehumanization, much like Haslam’s (2006) more recent concept of mechanistic dehumanization, supports the introduction of dehumanization as a process that can be conceptualized differentially from oppression and exploitation. The literature review on ODE content presented in the previous section of this chapter contains substantial recent content which can be utilized to update and improve this presentation of oppression content.

**Introduction on the Day of the Exercise**

The day of the exercise itself, I engage in some further preparation for the actual generation of the words and affective phrases. This involves several aspects: examples from my own practice; emphasizing that cultural competence is a matter of degree and is a lifelong process; stressing the importance of figuring out things about ourselves first and foremost and only then about others, and emphasizing the importance of enhancing one’s ability to exercise empathy. I briefly summarize some of the content in key articles about empathy (Freedberg, 2007; Keefe, 1978; Pinderhughes, 1979). Most recently, I try to generate discussion about how Erin Gruwell, played by Hillary Swank in the film *The Freedom Writers*, first established her own empathy with the students, next taught empathy within a multicultural environment, and finally enabled students to teach empathy to each other (Freedom Writers & Gruwell, 1999).

I point out that the exercise involves the remembrance of significant personal events that can produce powerful emotions, albeit ones for which there is an outlet for safe expression (namely the writing of them anonymously on a 3x5 card). In other words, the students are warned that such an exercise may not be experienced as entirely safe, and that it can produce distress (Grant & Van Soest, 2003). I reassure students that the structure of
the exercise is designed to minimize the pain associated with remembering and expressing the feelings associated with past experiences.

Next, I promise that immediately afterwards students will be given a copy of the pre-existing version of the compendium. I also point out that by participating in the exercise, they are contributing to the further development of the compendium itself. I indicate that the names of the universities whose students have participated in the exercise will be acknowledged. Finally, just prior to the exercise, I typically show or display on PowerPoint some key examples of the words and affective phrase. Recently I have used several words beginning with the letter B: beaten down, being left behind, being used, beleaguered, belittled, and blamed. I read them slowly, pausing between each. I explain the difference between a single word and an affective phrase and point out that in the exercise, both are valuable. (See my website for a PowerPoint presentation.)

Next, I attempt to explain the difference between the four categories of words and affective phrases. I repeat that the primary goal is to try to identify the very first thing felt at the moment of experiencing oppression, dehumanization or oppression, as well as the reactive emotions that follow. The idea is that reactive emotions arise seconds, minutes, hours or days later, but that there is often a first, core emotion, one which is harder to be aware of at the time and harder to remember later. But I stress that each of us should do our best to reconstruct the sequence so as to tap into the core emotions as well as the subsequent reactive emotions.

I point out that what happened in the past might not have been thought of at the time as oppression, dehumanization or exploitation, but that that isn’t a problem. The idea is to think back retroactively about something that happened which the student now thinks was a product of oppression, dehumanization or exploitation. It also helps at this point to list a number of specific forms of oppression as well. Also, I explain that there is no need or desire on my part for students to identify whether the words or affective phrases were associated with oppression, dehumanization or exploitation. I often distribute Audre Lorde’s (1983) article, “There is no Hierarchy of Oppression,” in order to reinforce there is no hierarchy among the emotions experienced due to oppression, dehumanization or exploitation.

The Generation of Words and Affective Phrases

As we begin the exercise, I explain once again the sequence of the exercise itself. This involves repeating that the student will not be required to personally share with the class the words and affective phrases generated, only to pass in a 3x5 card with their words on it. At that time, the cards will be shuffled and redistributed randomly to the class for reading aloud, one student at a time. After the 3x5 cards are distributed, the exercise begins. Typically, 5-10 minutes is allowed for students to quietly reflect and think about the experiences they have had and to write their words, which vary from one or two to twenty. Arguably, the exercise would benefit from some standardization, or even from the use of a full sheet of paper with instructions and lines for writing, but up until now it has been done the old fashioned way, with 3x5 cards.

When everyone is done, the students pass in the 3x5 cards and I shuffle them and redistribute them to the class. Next, we simply take turns reading what is on the cards. Typically, I ask that each word or phrase be read slowly and clearly, and that the reader pause a few seconds between single words or between affective phrases, so that the impact of hearing the concept can sink in. After this, we have a class discussion about what these words and affective phrases say about the feelings produced by oppression, dehumanization and exploitation. Finally, the previously developed compendium of words and affective phrases is distributed and discussed. Discussion centers on the use of the exercise and the compendium in classroom learning and teaching and in the field by social workers seeking to be more sensitive to the feelings of clients. However, it is stressed that this is not a psychological instrument for use as a checklist with clients.

The final step involves the reporting to the students, at the next class session, of the number of newly identified words and affective phrases that have been added to the compendium. Typically, I read them one at a time, once again pausing between each word or each affective phrase. This is a good way to reinforce the learning, and it is often the case that there are some moving moments as we hear our own words repeated once again.
PART FOUR: A COMPRENDIUM OF WORDS AND AFFECTIVE PHRASES ASSOCIATED WITH OPPRESSION, DEHUMANIZATION AND EXPLOITATION

Core Emotions

Core emotions are primarily descriptive of the experience of a specific moment in which a person experienced oppression, dehumanization, or exploitation. The textbook *Direct Social Work Practice: Theory and Skills* referred to apparent and probably deeper feelings (Hepworth et al., 2006). The words *devastated, mocked* and *impugned* and the affective phrase *knifed in the back* are listed among the fifty words in the rejection/offensiveness category in the 2006 edition of the text, but are not found below. Of the fifty words or phrases in the text, 27 are among the approximately 300 words and affective phrases associated with the core feeling of experiencing oppression, dehumanization or exploitation provided below. The shared words/phrases include *crushed, slammed, discarded, devalued, taken for granted* and *let down.*

- abandoned
- abused
- accused
- affronted
- agony
- alienated
- alone
- always wrong
- as if I did something wrong
- as if I didn’t exist
- as though I didn’t matter
- attacked
- battered
- beat up
- beaten
- beaten down
- behind
- being left behind
- being used
- beleaguered
- belittled
- berated
- betrayed
- blamed
- blocked
- boot in the face
- booted out
- bound
- boxed
- boxed in
- bridled
- broke
- broken
- burdened
- canned
- cast out
- cast away
- categorized
- cheapened
- cheated
- cheated out of something
- circumscribed
- closed out
- closed up
- coerced
- cold
- commanded
- common
- confined
- constrained
- constricted
- consumed
- controlled
- convicted
- criticized
- crept out
- crushed
- curbed
- dead inside
- defenseless
- defined by age
- defrauded
- degraded
- dehumanized
- demeaned
- deprived
- derailed
- despised
- devalued
- dictated
- directed
- dirtied
- disadvantaged
- disappointed
- disbelief
- disbelieved
- discarded
- discounted
- discriminated
- disowned
- disparaged
- disregarded
- disrespected
- dissed
- distant
- dominated
- domineered
- don’t belong
- doomed
- door slammed in my face
- downtrodden
- driving while black
- drowned out
- emasculated
- emptiness
- empty
- enslaved
- estranged
- excluded
- expected to be different
- expected to be difficult
- diseased
- expected to fail
- expendable
- exploited
- exposed
- faceless
- failed by the system
- failure
- fake
- feel like a number
- feel like an idiot
- feel like dirt
- flim-flammed
- foiled
- forced
- forced to do what one is told
- forsaken
- frightened
- fucked
- futile
- gagged
- generalized
- gut-shot
- gutter trash
- hampered
- harassed
- having to prove that I did not represent the stereotypical Black
- held back
- held down
- helped to fail
- hindered
- hood-winked
- humiliated
- hurt
- I have no purpose
- I just take up space
- I’m not worth their time
- identified by age
- ignored
- immobilized
- impeded
- imprisoned
- in slavery
- inconsequential
- inhibited
- inhuman
- injured
- insecure
- insignificant
- insulted
interrupted
intimidated
invalidated
invisible
isolated
jerked around
judged
judged as an object
junked
just another number
kept down
kept out
kicked
kicked around
kicked out
labeled
lacking
left behind
left out
less than
less than my worth
let down
like I am less than nothing
like an ant that someone
could and would
uncaringly step on
like a piece of meat
like an object
like a nothing
like an outsider
like a slave
like I’m in a small corner
like my blood rushing to
my face
like my heart fell 1000
feet
limited
little
loneliness
lonely
looked down on
lost
lost in the shuffle
low
lowly
low class
made to feel unimportant
made small
maltreated
managed
manipulated
marginal
marked
marginalized
mastered
meaningless
minimized
mislead
mistrusted
misunderstood
misused
monitored
my adulthood was
disregarded
naked
negated
neglected
never-ending
no control
no fighting chance
no opportunity
no way out
non-existing
non-human
not believed
not belonging
not given a chance
not heard
not worth much
not to standards
nullified
objectified
obsolete
obstructed
oppressed
ostracized
out of place
out of control
outcast
outdone
overburdened
overcome
overlooked
overpowered
overprotected
overwhelmed
overworked
painful
part of the crowd
patronized
pedestalized
persecuted
picked out
pigeonholed
pitted
poor
powerless
pressured
probed
pummeled
pushed in a corner
put down
ranked always as 2nd best
raped
ready to give up
reduced
regulated
rejected
restrained
restricted
ridiculed
ruled
scared
screwed
scourned
second best
second-class citizen
second-class
segmented
sense of doom
separated
servile
set up for failure
shame
shunned
shut down
shut out
silent
singled out
slaughtered
slighted
soul-sucked
small
spat upon
squeezed
squashed
stabbed in the back
stamped out
stepped on
stereotyped
stifled
stomped on
strange
stressed
stripped
stripped of humanity
stuck in a hole
subdued
sucked dry
subjected to
subjugated
subordinate
subordinated
suffocated
supervised
suppressed
taken advantage of
taken away (from others)
taken for granted
targeted
taunted
terrified
terrorized
the other person
the outcast
they are not expected to
know my name
thrown away
tied down
tied up
tired
tokenized
tormented
trapped
trapped against a glass
ceiling
treated differently
treated like am inadequate
treated like an animal
played like incompetent
played like shit
tricked
tyrannized
unacknowledged
unappreciated
uncared for or about
under-appreciated
underclass
underestimated
underpaid
underrated
undervalued
unequal
unfair
unfulfilled
unimportant
unintelligent
unjustified
unrecognized
unsafe
untruthful
unwanted
used
useless
vanquished
viewed as a child
violated
vulnerable
walked all over
walked over
walked all over
want to crawl
washed up
wasted without any sense of worn out wronged
watched power worthless zapped
what did I do? withstrained worthless now zero
without a choice worked on wrong

**Reactive Emotions**

The textbook *Direct Social Work Practice: Theory and Skill* (Hepworth et al., 2006) includes a valuable list of affective words/phrases describing many of the reactive emotions people have to oppression, exploitation and dehumanization. The greatest level of overlap is with what the text refers to as anger/resentment. Of the 42 words under anger/resentment in the text, 10 overlap with the 98 words under reactive emotions found below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>adjective</th>
<th>adjective</th>
<th>adjective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>afraid</td>
<td>detached</td>
<td>grief</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>agitated</td>
<td>different</td>
<td>guilty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>analyzed</td>
<td>disappointed</td>
<td>heartbroken</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>anger</td>
<td>discouraged</td>
<td>helpless</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>angry</td>
<td>disengaged</td>
<td>hostility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>annoyed</td>
<td>disgusted</td>
<td>humiliated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>antagonized</td>
<td>dishonest</td>
<td>hurt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>anxiety</td>
<td>doubtful</td>
<td>in danger</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>anxious</td>
<td>embarrassed</td>
<td>in shock</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ashamed</td>
<td>closed</td>
<td>injured</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>baffled</td>
<td>endangered</td>
<td>injustice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bummed out</td>
<td>envy</td>
<td>jealous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>can’t believe</td>
<td>fear</td>
<td>lied to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>conflicted</td>
<td>fearful</td>
<td>loathing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>confused</td>
<td>feeling like shit</td>
<td>lost</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>deflected</td>
<td>fit or flight</td>
<td>made example of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>defensive</td>
<td>fragile</td>
<td>misunderstood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>defiant</td>
<td>frightened</td>
<td>mocked</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>deflated</td>
<td>frustrated</td>
<td>nervous offended</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>depleted</td>
<td>frustration</td>
<td>on-edge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>despair</td>
<td>furious</td>
<td>outraged</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Adaptive Emotions (Evolved Responses to Oppression)**

People who experience oppression find ways of not only reacting to oppression but adapting to oppression in ways calculated both to survive it and to overthrow it. In the textbook, please see words under sections on competence, strength; happiness satisfaction; caring, love (Hepworth et al., 2006).
Mal-Adaptive Emotions (Evolved Responses to Oppression)

After the experience of oppression, and after experiencing reactive emotions in response, more enduring evolved responses to oppression may develop. Above were some words coded by students and instructor as adaptive evolved responses. Below are some seen as maladaptive evolved responses. This is not to say that feeling this way is always a response to oppression, exploitation or dehumanization, and it certainly doesn’t imply that all those experiencing oppression evolve feelings such as this. In any case, the typology of these words and affective phrases into core emotions, reactive emotions, and adaptive and maladaptive emotions is not validated in any way by social psychological research. The compendium and typology were developed merely for heuristic purposes in order to facilitate the purposes of the exercise.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>adaptive</th>
<th>maladaptive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>actor</td>
<td>depressed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>aggressive</td>
<td>destruction of identity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>apathetic</td>
<td>diminished self-worth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>apologetic</td>
<td>disillusioned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ashamed</td>
<td>displacement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>assumed role</td>
<td>distrustful attitudes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bitter</td>
<td>drained</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>conquered</td>
<td>dutiful woman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>damaged</td>
<td>exhausted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dead</td>
<td>flattened</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>defeated</td>
<td>full of despair</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CONCLUSION

The compendium presented here suggests the value of social psychological research on the range of human emotions experienced in connection with the everyday experience of moments of subjective oppression, dehumanization and exploitation. However, when research related to the experience of oppression is done using data collected at the individual level, it can and should still be analyzed as the unit of analysis of the structures that impact on individuals (Fine, 2006; Opotow, 2002, cited by Fine, 2006).

More practically, however, the compendium may have value as applied according to the principles outlined in the textbook which inspired the development of the compendium (Hepworth et al., 2006). As such, it can be used in conjunction with that text for the purposes of classroom instruction and in order to guide practice informed by that text.

As for the exercise itself, the author of this chapter welcomes the collaborative further development of the compendium itself. The author can be reached as his permanent UM alumni email list of mdoever@umich.edu by any educators or practitioners wishing to collaborate in the further development of the compendium. He has also made available the latest version of the compendium on the previously cited website.

This chapter discussed recent developments in ODE theory. The theory of mechanistic animalistic dehumanization was found consistent with the theory of oppression. But theories of biomedical, technological and mechanistic dehumanization were seen as contributing to a complementary set of theories of oppression, dehumanization and exploitation (Haslam, 2006; Montagu & Matson, 1983; Szasz, 1970). Emerging theories of inequality and exploitation were shown to have value in theorizing injustice in terms of exploitation as well as in terms of group domination (Hahnel, 2005b; 2006; Tilly, 1998b, 2000). One theory of exploitation in particular left room for theorizing aspects of injustice not generated by exploitation (Hahnel, 2006). A new univocal theory of oppression was shown to differentiate group-based social oppression from mechanisms of employment-based exploitation, although it included its own theory of material oppression (Cudd, 2006). These theoretical developments support the value of the original theoretical typology of oppression, dehumanization and exploitation presented in this chapter. That typology has potential for providing a structure for further theory development and for the organization of ODE content for social work education.
Like recent developments in human needs theory (Dover & Joseph, 2008; Gil, 1998b, 2004; Noonan, 2006; Olson, 2007), Cudd’s (2006) theory of oppression represents the increasingly ambitious development of formal theories that respond to persistent problems with earlier theories of justice. For instance, Cudd pointed out that Rawl’s (1971) theory of justice had little conceptualization of injustice. Others have argued that the denial of human needs is at the core of injustice (Gil, 1998b, 2004; Noonan, 2006; Olson, 2007). As theory development proceeds, theories of human rights and human needs are increasingly being related to each other (Doyal & Gough, 1991; Reichert, 2003, 2007; Wronka, 2008), just as theories of oppression, dehumanization and exploitation are linked in this chapter.

Overall, this chapter provided one way of moving “beyond the isms” and connecting theory to the lived experience of our students. Based upon experience so far, the classroom exercise seems to enable students to get in touch with some of the feelings they have experienced in their lives and to become more attuned to the range of feelings experienced by our clients and communities who are affected by oppression, dehumanization and exploitation. It should be stressed that there is no reason why this exercise can’t be adapted for use in any number of different ways by the readers of this book. The exercise and compendium would benefit from ongoing utilization and collaboration, as would the continued development of the typology of ODE content.

References


Paris: Cambridge University Press ;
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