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THE ONTARIO INSTITUTE FOR  
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Parallels the thinking of Michael Rossman and Paulo Freire as they struggle to formulate systems of education for social change.\*

Both men agree that the new systems cannot develop within the old structures of what Rossman calls the totalitarian classroom and Freire designates as banking education. The old structure is the form through which Rossman's "authority complex which permeates our culture" and that which Freire perceives to be the fundamental theme of our epoch--domination vs. liberation--operate. Both believe the established system of education to be powerless to provide or create the learning tools to bring about needed social change because they must maintain the status quo in order to survive.

Rossman: "Higher education, as presently institutionalized, serves to create new knowledge, to transfer certain information and skills, and to impart certain kinds of social and cognitive conditioning. It is organized to serve these functions in the interest of the established structures and relationships of power (however one describes them). And it serves them in ways largely irrelevant or inimical to the learning needs of free people in a just society." (p.28)

Freire: "The banking concept of education, which serves the interests of oppression, is . . . Based on a mechanistic, static, naturalistic, spatialized view of consciousness, it transforms students into receiving objects. It attempts to control thinking and action, leads men to adjust to the world, and inhibits their creative power." (p. 64)

Broad educational purpose and goals of these men are founded in their mutual beliefs in progressive social evolution or revolution of man towards greater freedom and justice.

Rossman: "For each of us in some way, and together, (our alternative system) is the process of becoming new people, larger than the limits that we were taught bound us; and thus of creating an unknown and just society, and ultimately refiguring our way in the cosmos." (p. 33)

Freire: "Problem-posing education is revolutionary futurity. Hence it is prophetic (and as such, hopeful). Hence it corresponds to the historical nature of man. Hence it affirms men as beings who transcend themselves, who move forward and look ahead, for whom immobility represents a fatal threat, for whom looking at the past must only be a means of understanding more clearly what and who they are so that they can more wisely build the future." (p. 72)

\*These quotations are taken from Michael Rossman, "How We Learn Today in America," Saturday Review, August 19, 1972, pp. 27-33; and Paulo Freire, Pedagogy of the Oppressed, Trans. by Myra Bergman Ramos, (New York: Herder and Herder, 1970).

"This movement of inquiry must be directed towards humanization--man's historical vocation." (p.73)

"Freedom is not an ideal located outside of man; nor is it an idea which becomes a myth. It is rather the indispensable condition for the quest for human completion." (p. 31)

Ideas concerning curriculum and process:

Rossman: "The Curriculum is Transformation . . . The alternative system is precisely the social embodiment of the process of changing these established realities." (p. 33)

"For Transformation is the naked and underlying condition of the universe." (p.33)

"Need I say that the change is not random? It occurs in the light of visions dimly grasped but widely and powerfully felt about what we might do with who we are and what we have in the light of the potentials and real limits revealed in our time." (p. 33)

Freire: "Critical thinking is . . . thinking which perceives reality as process, as transformation, rather than as a static entity . . ." (p.80)

". . . since men do not exist apart from the world, apart from reality, the movement must begin with the men-world relationship. Accordingly, the point of departure must always be with men in the 'here and now,' which constitutes the situation within which they are submerged, from which they emerge, and in which they intervene. Only by starting from this situation--which determines their perception of it--can they begin to move. To do this authentically they must perceive their state not as fated and unalterable, but merely as limiting--and therefore challenging." (p.73)

Rossman: "What the last fifteen years have been about--the awakening of social consciousness among the young and its development through politics into counterculture and toward new community--is the growth of a new process of mass, on-going 'higher education'." (p. 28)

Freire: "Men will be truly critical if they live the plenitude of the praxis, that is, if their action encompasses a critical reflection which increasingly organizes their thinking and thus leads them to move from a purely naive knowledge of reality to a higher level, one which enables them to perceive the causes of reality." (p. 126)

Ideas about method and technique:

1. Rossman: "It (the alternate network) is not a single establishment doing predictable business, in fixed modes, endlessly duplicated. Rather, to map its workings, we have to understand it as a network that is diverse, mobile and evolving." (p. 29)

Freire: "In contrast with the antidiological and non-communicative deposits of the banking method of education, the program content of the problem-posing method--dialogical par excellence--is constituted and organized by the students' view of the world, where their own generative themes are found. The content thus constantly expands and renews itself." (p. 101)

2. Rossman: "The network includes the many sorts of groups that have organized to connect people directly with the learning and learning action they now feel they need." (p. 30)

"The small group is the essential vehicle and unit of learning and of life support (beyond the merely physical)." (p. 30)

"In free learning groups . . . . people joined by common interest and mutual design choose to commit themselves to come together extensively and intensively over an open-ended period. They meet each other on as many human levels as they can . . ." (p. 30)

"Thus each node is intense with the energies of transformation, and each person is impelled toward change from within and without." (p. 30)

Freire: "The important thing, from the point of view of libertarian education, is for men to come to feel like masters of their thinking by discussing the thinking and views of the world explicitly or implicitly manifest in their own suggestions and those of their comrades." (p. 118)

"Due to the cathartic force of the methodology, the participants of the thematic investigation circles externalize a series of sentiments and opinions about themselves, the world, and others, that perhaps they would not express under different circumstances." (p. 111)

"Thematic investigation thus becomes a common striving towards awareness of reality and towards self-awareness, which makes this investigation a starting point for the educational process or for cultural action of a liberating character." (p. 98)

3. Rossman: "The condition of the faculty is just as different, (from the established system) and not only in the sense that 'nonprofessional resources' are valued equally with 'professional'. . . Knowledge comes from practice through the practitioner: increasingly, our instruction comes from people engaged in work in the world. The specialist role of Teacher, as we have conceived it is fading; teaching will remain--everyone's birthright, used more flexibly and integrated into the action of life." (p. 30)

Freire: "In this communion (of leaders with the people) both groups grow together, and the leaders, instead of being simply self-appointed, are installed or authenticated in their praxis with the praxis of the people." (p. 124)

"The more sophisticated knowledge of the leaders is remade in the empirical knowledge of the people, while the latter is refined by the former." (p. 183)

4. Rossman: In his book On Learning and Social Change, (New York: Vintage Books, 1972) Rossman describes the creation of learning games requiring reflection on learning processes, which, in principle, are very much like the coding-de-coding technique Freire discusses.

Freire: "When an individual is presented with a coded existential situation (a sketch or photograph which leads by abstraction to the concreteness of existential reality), his tendency is to 'split' that coded situation. In the process of decoding, this separation corresponds to the

stage we call the 'description of the situation', and facilitates the discovery of the interaction among the parts of the disjointed whole. This whole (the coded situation), which previously had been only diffusely apprehended, begins to acquire meaning as thought flows back to it from the various dimensions." (p. 96)

5. Rossman: "Compared with the established system, the educational process in this alternative system is both more individualized and more collectivized, and also more concerned with persons. It is involved not so centrally with books, much less with writing, and only rarely with temporary accumulations of <sup>sheer</sup> data. Its mode is primarily oral. It depends on ephemeral media. Its tempo is both quicker and slower than that of the school, proceeding as fast as--and no faster than--people can accommodate their changes." (p. 30)

Freire: "For the dialogical, problem-posing teacher-student, the program content of education is neither a gift nor an imposition--bits of information to be deposited in the students--but rather the systematized, organized and developed 're-presentation' to individuals of the things about which they want to know more." (p. 82)

"This fusion (of leaders and people) can exist only if revolutionary action is really human, empathetic, loving, communicative, and humble, in order to be liberating." (p. 171)

*Cited*  
Quoting Che Guevara, Freire illustrates how the tempo of change can be very slow: "Complete lack of incorporation of the peasants, although they are losing their fear of us and we are succeeding in winning their admiration . . . is a slow and patient task." (p. 166)