PAULO FREIRE

IN

ANN ARBOR

VOL. 2

edited by:

VALERIE SURANSKY
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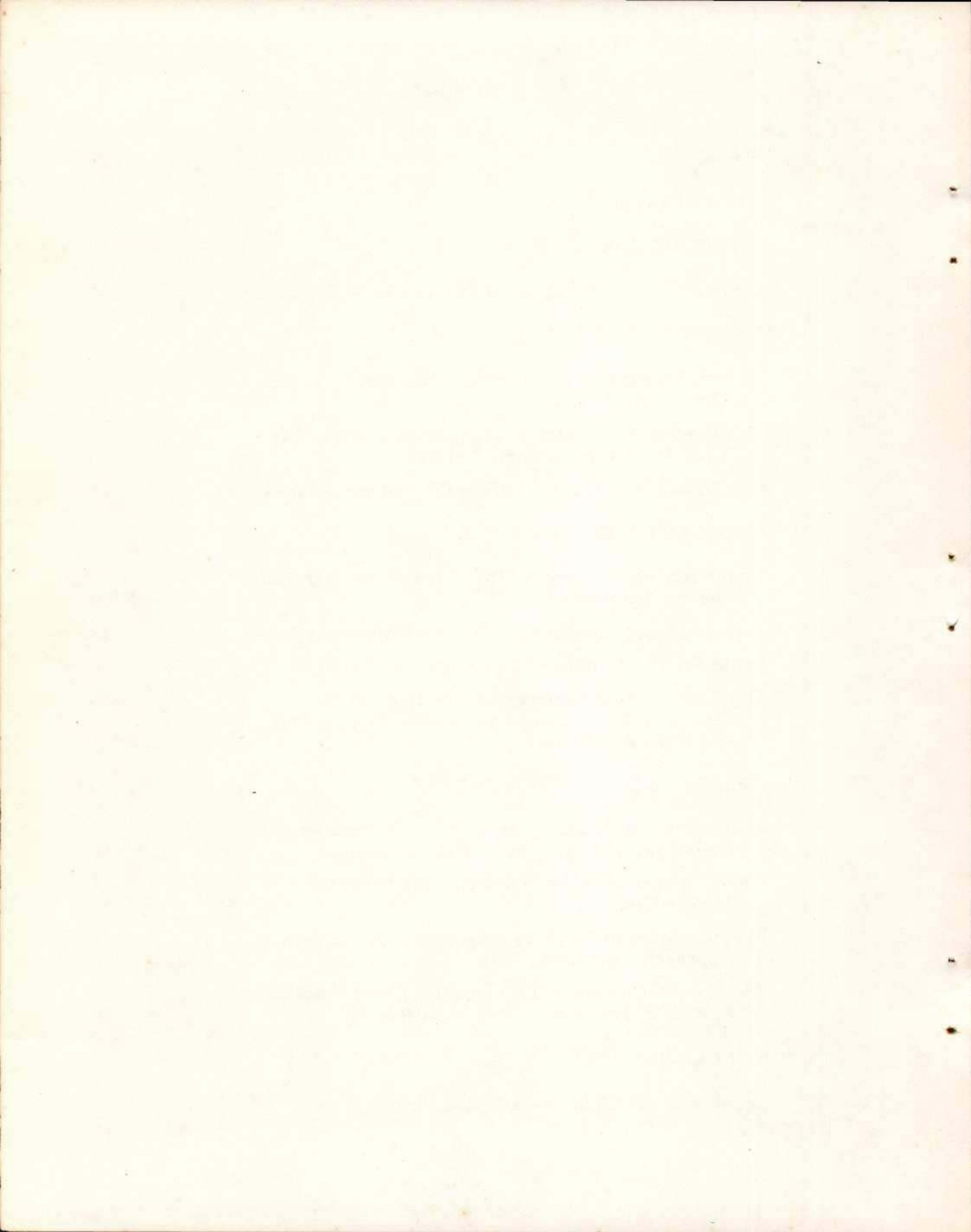For further information contact:

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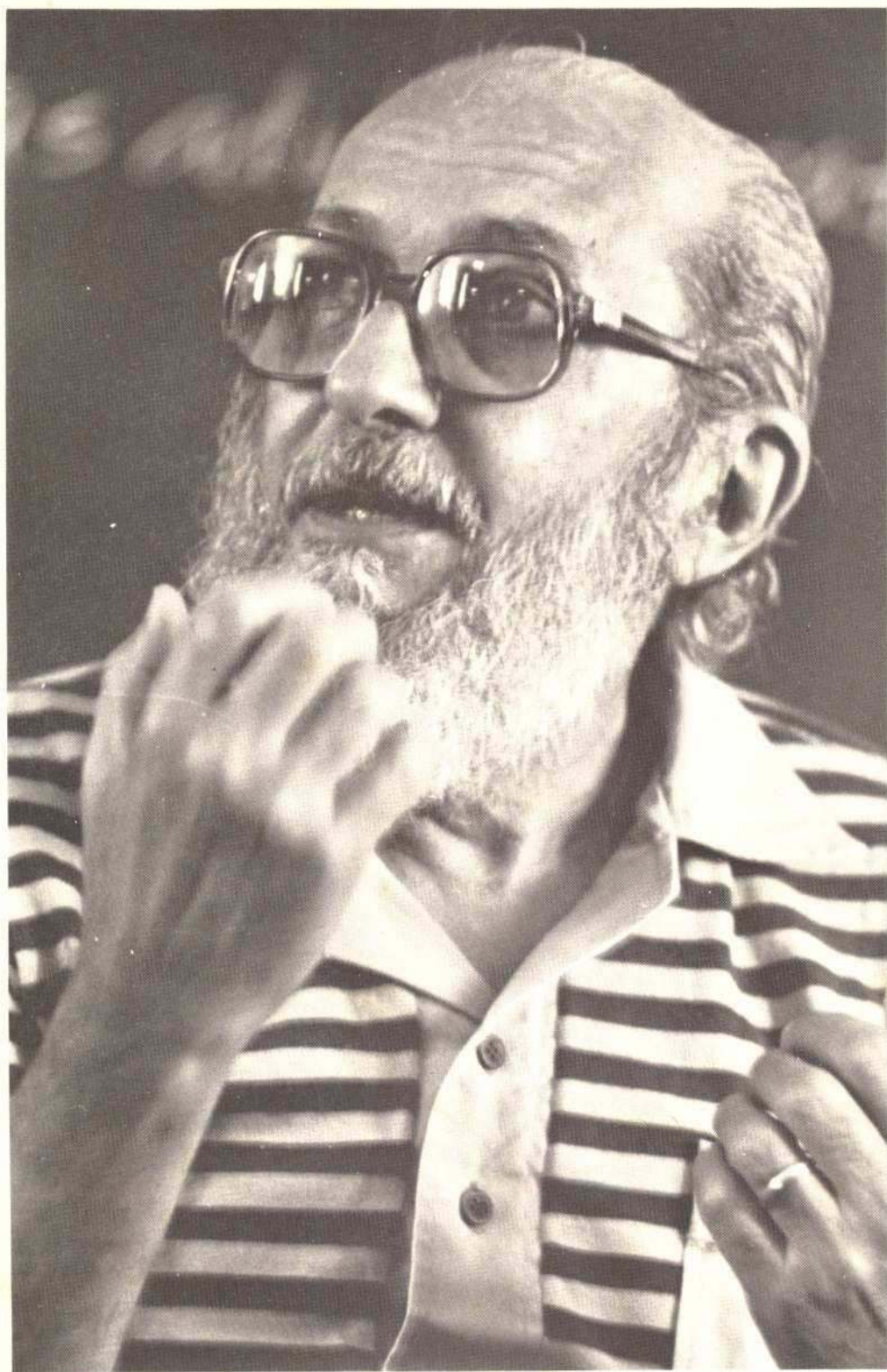
Photographs by Michael Day

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PREFACE

Paulo Freire in Ann Arbor. This phrase has a nearly magical evocation. In less than four years this extraordinary person has permanently placed his stamp on the consciousness of an entire university community--students, faculty, staff and townspeople. All have been touched and moved by his presence.

During a brief visit in the spring of 1978 Paulo Freire was awarded an honorary degree by the University. His seventy-two hours in Ann Arbor were but a foretaste of what was to follow. He literally had to be protected from the incessant appeals, even demands, of those who wished to see him, speak with him, consult with him, be close to him, and, yes, even to touch him.

But Freire is not a saint. As he would say of himself, merely mortal, wanting only for himself, as well as for others, an opportunity to engage in serious and sustained critical conversations about those issues which matter for people's lives. Conversations which, at their heart, represent education in its most fundamental form--an education which is capable of transforming all who participate.

In 1979 Freire spent the entire month of July in Ann Arbor. The generous support of the Vice-President's office and many other University and community agencies made this extended visit possible. During this time we were able to see Freire "work." He conducted a course, led a seminar, interacted with the community, consulted with any and all who could be fitted into his schedule. His capacity to listen was infinite, his tolerance of every point of view was astounding, his gentle advice was unerringly to the point and his instinctive humor was always turned on himself. Never did we hear the word "no" asserted, nor did we ever see him turn away from difficult or unpleasant situations.

Throughout the entire visit those qualities which have characterized Paulo Freire were always present. He compelled us to examine our values and beliefs; he led us to consider the consequences of both our thoughts and actions; he pressed us to be skeptical of the status quo; and he shared with us the unerring conviction that we can change the conditions of our lives through the self-conscious application of our intelligence.

The essays in this monograph capture the experiences of some of those who engaged in dialogue with Freire in the summer of 1979. They reveal the rich diversity of interest and experience which many brought to their encounter with him and they reflect, each in a particular way, the broad applicability of Freire's ideas.

While Freire would make no claim for the utilitarian value of his approach to education; he would on the contrary, I am certain, argue that the utility lies in the doing or the act. His legacy in Ann Arbor has been profound. His moral presence remains and sustains many. His writings are widely known and read. His approaches to education and social change are closely studied and hotly debated. And his current activities are followed and extensively reported.

There is no question that those of us who were privileged to be associated with Paulo Freire were in some indefinable way changed. As the

Socratic injunction reminds us "The unexamined life is not worth living." Freire compels us to examine life--in fact we live better in knowing that he has shown us ways to think and act together.

The faculty of Adult and Continuing Education was honored to have hosted and supported Paulo Freire's visit to The University of Michigan in 1979 and to sponsor this second volume of "Paulo Freire in Ann Arbor."

L. S. Berlin, Chairperson
Department of Adult and
Continuing Education

EDITORIAL INTRODUCTION

"It is essential that educators learning and learners educating make a constant effort to refuse to be bureaucratized. Bureaucracy annihilates creativity and transforms persons into mere repeaters of clichés. The more bureaucratized they become, the more likely they are to become alienated adherents of daily routine, from which they can never stand apart in order to understand their reason for being."

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from Pedagogy in Process:
The Letters to Guinea-Bissau
(p. 12)

</div>

In July 1979 Paulo Freire visited The University of Michigan campus for the second time—leading two seminars and a weekend retreat. The dialogue of meaning that ensued during his month long residency, was imbued with "words that shape the world" as participants from all over the country and abroad came to share in these activities. For our students and faculty alike, who were fortunate to spend four challenging weeks with Paulo, the visit formed one of those rare moments in our personal and professional lives—a liberating encounter with profound implications for our future educational and social praxis. The articles that comprise the Paulo Freire in Ann Arbor Monograph, Vol. II depict a diverse set of perspectives from both the U.S. and Third World written by educators, community organizers, field practitioners faculty and students—all of whom attempt to explicate and critically reflect upon his work. This monograph is also a collection of writings dedicated to Paulo Freire—the man—a revolutionary humanist, an educator, a liberator, and a humble, warm, passionate human being.

In Part I—The Introduction, Valerie Suransky places Paulo Freire's work in a socio-historical context and discusses central themes of his life and work. She analyses the relationship between Gramsci, Cabral and Freire and relates Freire's most recent political-pedagogical activities in Guinea-Bissau.

Part II—Liberatory Education in Process includes articles by Thomas Heaney, Ronnie Goldman and Diane Cottrell in which they discuss the practice of education for liberation in different institutional settings. Here we view their attempts to engage themselves in a series of critically reflexive applications of Paulo Freire's pedagogical approach.

In the third section entitled Part III—Critical Reflections, four writers reflect on central issues that became 'generative themes' during their involvement in the July 1979 activities. Heidi Ross uses Walter Benjamin's storyteller metaphor and Freire's 'dialogical encounter' to examine the role of the teacher and researcher. Ann Wood explores the dialectic of arrogance and humility in the classroom context and develops a critical analysis of the 'arrogance of power' and compares this phenomenon to Freire's advocacy of humility. Michael Day's article depicts Paulo Freire—the human being—his humanness and his passionate involvement with others and with the world, and

deplores the lack of awareness and recognition accorded to him by several mainstream adult educators. Finally, Mark Chesler and James Crowfoot develop an incisive critique of the "concept of the enemy" in our contemporary academic environment and the structures of power that inhere in the enemy 'class' which are in need of demystification.

The articles in Part IV--Cross-Cultural Perspectives describe practical applications of Paulo Freire's work in both the Third World and a U.S. sub-culture. Dale Jerome offers a retrospective analysis of her involvement with the Peace Corps in Ecuador, and contrasts this experience with her current critical perspective eighteen years later influenced by the teachings of Paulo Freire. Lucille Teichert writes a personally reflective narrative anticipating, as a community worker, the struggles and challenges that will confront her on the eve of her departure to Botswana. Emilia Rojo gives an account of her participatory research with a Latin community of Mexican-Americans and attacks the culturally invasive social and educational practices imposed on these people. Musa Nsibande, from the Swaziland Ministry of Education, concludes this section, with a discussion of his government's attempt to put into practice aspects of Paulo Freire's liberatory pedagogy as opposed to the traditional colonial model of 'banking education.'

In the Conclusion, Leonard Suransky offers some concluding reflections on the current life and work of Paulo Freire, and, based on the central themes of July 1979, poses some generative questions for the future.

This introduction would be incomplete without several notes of apprecia-tion to those people who played an integral role in the July 1979 visit and the production of the Monograph:

-to Bill Cave, Larry Berlin, Fred Bertolaet and the faculty of the Adult and Continuing Education Department;--Biff Barritt and Bob Dixon from the Educational Psychology Department—all of whom assisted and worked in various ways to make the July 1979 visit a reality.

-to Maria Garcia who transcribed the tape-recordings of many seminar sessions and helped select the quotes that appear on the introductory page of each section.

-to Addie Harris, a superb typist, who patiently tolerated the disorganized mess of papers she was given to transform to printed word, which she did with efficiency and great aplomb.

We hope this monograph will convey our appreciation of the July Dialogues, demonstrate the tranformative nature of Paulo Freire's praxis in our lives and re-iterate the significance of his words for the liberation of all people.

The Editors
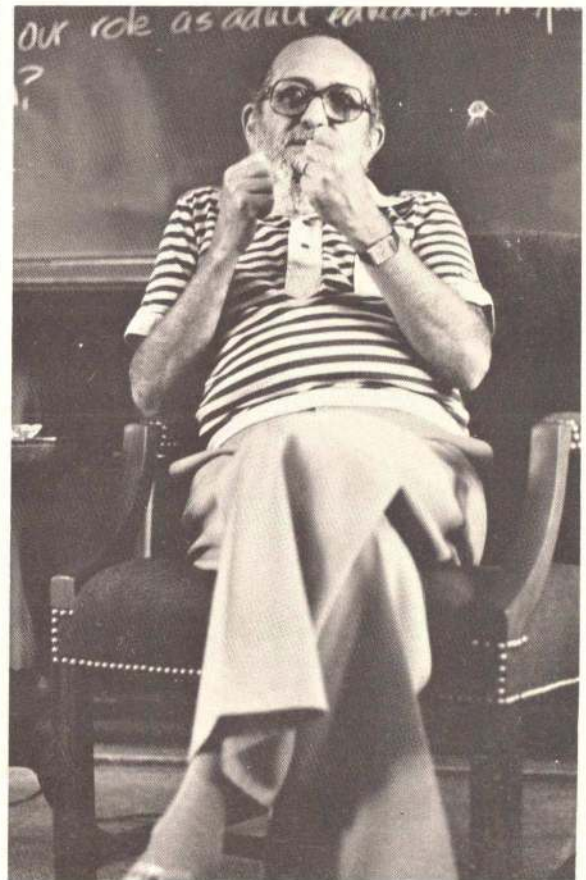
> . . . the best criteria is praxis--action based on
> interpretation of reality. That is, my action, in the
> last analysis, is the most important element for telling
> me about the efficiency of my epistemological position.
> Research and action are together, in a dialectical rela-
> tionship. To the extent that academics don't do this
> dimension of research, the practice they organize, based
> on the knowledge they get in the process of research,
> will fail. Once again, action is the epistemological
> criteria for my epistemological way of discovering.

PAULO FREIRE: A PEDAGOGY OF PRAXIS

Valerie Suransky

University of Michigan

In the revolutionary perspective, learners are invited to think. Being conscious, in this sense, is not simply a formula or a slogan. It is a radical form of being human. It pertains to beings that not only know, but know that they know. The act of learning to read and write, in this instance, is a creative act that involves a critical comprehension of reality. (1a) ... where acquiring literacy does not involve memorizing sentences, words or syllables--lifeless objects unconnected to an existential universe--but rather is an act of creation and recreation, a self transformation producing a state of intervention in one's context. (1b)

The way in which Paulo Freire has integrated the development of a critical consciousness of "the people" with the transforming power of active intervention in their existential context, has redefined the meaning of pedagogy and radically altered the contemporary structures of our socio-historical understanding for, following Sartre: "To understand is to change, to go beyond oneself." (2) It is this radical thematization of the educational process in terms of a dialogical encounter provoking our critical consciousness into awareness of action, into the possibility of reflecting upon and transcending one's "limit situations," that has created Freire's "pedagogy of praxis." While it was Marx, who in the Eleventh Thesis on Feuerbach, wrote: "The philosophers have only interpreted the world in various ways; the point is to change it," (3) it took a man such as Paulo Freire, over a hundred years later, to restore to Marx's statement a meaning grounded in the culture of modernity which has been warped by an alienating objectification, by a dichotomy of thought and action and by the massive onslaught of a technological consciousness upon our everyday life experiences. In such an era, Freire's "pedagogy of praxis" offers a new critique and telling vision for both the First and Third World. We need ask ourselves then: what is it about this revolutionary humanist that makes him a unique voice, not only in his native Latin America, but globally? In order to attempt to answer the above question, it becomes necessary to probe some of the central themes of Paulo Freire's life and work.

A Brief Contextual Background

Born in 1921 in Recife, Brazil, a center of illiteracy and poverty, Freire was, from an early age, committed to the struggle of the poor in his country. His startlingly successful literacy campaigns which sought to demystify the concept of literacy as the mere mechanical mastery of technique and alphabetization of the peasantry, instead restored literacy to the existential

universe of the people by exploring the ways in which the culture and consciousness of the people had been invaded, and by reflecting on the possibilities for action upon a reality defined by the people. This rapidly resulted in the development of a social literacy, embedded in the concrete conditions of oppression and domination, which characterized the social relationships of the society.

Immediately prior to the military takeover of Brazil in 1964, Freire was working as the general coordinator of a National Plan of Adult Literacy--the remarkable success of this plan culminating in the political mobilization and social literacy of thousands who had previously resided in a "culture of silence." During 1964, Freire was arrested and later exiled from his native Brazil. He spent a brief period in Chile, followed by work at Harvard's Center for the Study of Development and Change, and in 1970, he went to serve as Third World advisor and consultant to the World Council of Churches based in Geneva, Switzerland.

It was during this decade, 1970-80, that Freire, whose commitment to work side-by-side with those engaged in the struggle for liberation, has spanned both pre-and post-revolutionary societies, "re-encountered" himself in Africa where in 1975, a year after Guinea-Bissau gained its independence from 500 years of Portuguese colonial domination, Mario Cabral, brother of the assassinated revolutionary leader Amilcar Cabral, invited the education unit of the World Council of Churches and IDAC (Instituto de Accion Cultural) to assist in the development of a national literacy program. Paulo Freire headed this IDAC team and his latest book, Pedagogy in Process - The Letters to Guinea-Bissau, is a reflective account of that experience where he describes

> ... stepping on African soil and feeling as though I were returning somewhere rather than arriving. This sense of being at home on African soil was repeated, sometimes accentuated, when in September of 1975, accompanied by the team from the Institute for Cultural Action (IDAC), I visited Guinea-Bissau for the first time, that is, when I 'returned' to Guinea-Bissau. (4)

At this historical moment Freire was confronted by the challenge of transforming his "pedagogy of the oppressed" into a pedagogy of the liberated and this demanded working with the people to create and reconstruct an educational system which would contribute to the social and economic transformation of the newly liberated state. These liberatory goals had also to be pragmatically situated in the post-colonial legacy of Guinea-Bissau, for with a population of just under a million, comprising twenty ethnic groups, ninety percent of whom were subsistence-level farmers, the levels of illiteracy were extremely high, and once again literacy had to be understood as embedded in the concrete reality of the people set against the backdrop of the transformation of a society. Hence literacy education for adults becomes

> ... one dimension of cultural action for liberation. It cannot, for this reason, be thought of in isolation, but always in relation to other aspects of cultural action taken in its totality. To discuss it,

was to discuss also the social, economic, and cultural politics of the country. (5)

Here education, as a commitment to the implementation of a new praxis, forms the major theme of the Guinea-Bissau experience where the recognition of the centrality of a people's culture in the reconstruction effort becomes in Amilcar Cabral's words, "a cultural fact and also a factor of culture." (6)

The Peoples' Culture and the Problem of Cultural Invasion

The problem of intellectual elitism and the resulting "anti-dialogical" theory of action which results when the struggle for a people's liberation is forged for them by the distant theories of an intellectual elite, is critically examined by Freire as an issue that belongs both to the oppressor class and to those engaged in a sectarian or paternalistic radicalism, for

any invasion implies of course an invading subject. His cultural-historical situation which gives him his vision of the world is the environment from which he starts out. He seeks to penetrate another cultural-historical situation and impose his system of values on its members. The invader reduces the people in the situation he invades to mere objects of his action. (7)

How then do we commit ourselves to the liberation struggle without invading the cultural integrity of the peasants, the poor and the oppressed, when we are members of another class, culture or race? Freire talks of the necessity of "class suicide" but in his letters to Guinea-Bissau, speaking from the post-revolutionary perspective, he concedes,

In the last analysis, I am convinced that it is easier to create a new type of intellectual—forged in the unity between practice and theory, manual and intellectual work—than to re-educate an elitist intellectual. (8)

In his critique of the notion of intellectuals as forming a distinct social category, Freire is influenced by the work of Antonio Gramsci, the Italian Marxist, whose Prison Notebooks, written in Mussolini's prisons, address the problem of alienation between the people and the intellectual elite. Hence, Freire attempts in his own praxis, not only to deal with the "declassing" of the intellectual, but also with the cultural invasion that, historically, has been perpetuated by the oppressor upon the oppressed reducing the latter to objects, not subjects, of their world. Furthermore, during the process of social change, the people are often threatened by another form of invasion, "leftist sectarianism," where Freire insists that propaganda, sloganizing and mass manipulation cannot be the instruments of rehumanization. A humanizing and liberatory pedagogy demands a permanent relationship of dialogue between the people and the revolutionary leadership, for "both types of sectarianism (right

and left) end up without the people—which is another way of being against them." (9)

We need to recognize, claims Freire, that we are all intellectuals, and that the struggle for the material transformation of a society must of necessity be grounded in a people's culture. At this point we note the further identification with Gramsci:

> There is no human activity from which every form of intellectual participation can be excluded. Homo Faber cannot be separated from Homo Sapiens. Each man, finally outside his preferred activity, is a philosopher, an artist, a man of taste, he participates in a particular conception of the world, has a conscious line of moral conduct and therefore contributes to sustain a conception of the world or to modify it, that is, to bring into being new modes of thought. (10)

Gramsci's emphasis on the "power of the will" to change oneself and to transform one's surroundings presents a clear paradigm for action based on an analysis and a critical understanding of one's historical situation which leads to the dialectical conception of the "man of action" as the true philosopher and the philosopher "of necessity" as the "man of action."

It was Gramsci who, according to James Joll (11) went further than any other Marxist thinker in recognizing the importance of the superstructure and the force of ideas in producing historical change. His "philosophy of praxis" (Gramsci's term for Marxism, so-called to mislead the prison officials) articulated a theory of philosophy as method where one's task was to interpret the world in order to act. In this framework, the role of the individual, the consciousness and intentionality of the human being as a member of a cultural milieu, was elevated to a central position which contrasted with the so-called vulgar Marxism which Gramsci associated with Bukharin—where the super-structure (ethics, law, philosophy, art, etc.) was directly conditioned by the economic system. Gramsci saw historical change in far more complex terms, ascribing greater significance both to the influence of ideas and to the role of the individual human being as a cultural actor in the historical process.

Freire, frequently acknowledging Gramsci's influence upon his own work, has taken this notion of the centrality of culture and further refined and developed the "philosophy of praxis" through a "scientific understanding of the everyday world." Conscientization, the learning to perceive social, political and economic contradictions and to take action in order to transform one's context, ascribes to the oppressed members of a "culture of silence" a vital power—they are active, knowing subjects! They too are intellectuals; they are not passive, objectified masses whose futures are waiting to be manipulated by the radical intellectual elite. But rather, claims Freire, it is a question of communion with the people—of a dialogical encounter where "as educators we must be constantly engaged with the people." It is in the necessary "class suicide" of the revolutionary elite and the critical decoding of reality by the oppressed that an authentic democratization of learning takes place—grounded in the life-world of the people where the development of a critical

consciousness involves the perceiving of historical contradictions—of understanding not only my history, but also how to assume a decision against history. Praxis involves a transformation of the present in order to create a future through a critical understanding of the past which cannot be changed, but which must be critically understood "in order to make possible a different tomorrow." (12)

Hence, the struggle for liberation cannot be waged by mere "activism" lacking a critical understanding of the historical-cultural dimensions of the people and their cultural immersion in the structures of oppression; nor can it be waged by mere "verbalism," for,

> There is no true word that is not at the same time a praxis . . . to exist humanly, is to name the world, to change it. Once named, the world in its turn reappears to the namers as a problem and requires of them a new naming. Men are not built in silence, but in word, in work, in action-reflection. (13)

A Pedagogy of Praxis as Naming and Transforming the World

The political character of the educational process must be critically unveiled, claims Freire, and the social organization of knowledge which defines what it is we must know, in order to adapt, understood as related to the design of the society and the material conditions which underlie those hierarchies of power. Once the myth of neutrality of the educational process is shattered and the political character of the curriculum unveiled, the possibility for inventing "new knowledge" and new modes of knowing emerges, correlative with the social practices of both the educator and the educatees, mutually committed to the transformation of their context.

The objectives of the educational process should not be to foster "banking education" which serves to anaesthetize consciousness and to adapt the educatee and covert him/her into a pliable member of the world as is, where issues and problems are particularized, atomized and compartmentalized so as to sever their connections with the larger macrosocial milieu from whence they are generated. Rather the purposes of a liberatory education involve participating in a "dialogical" encounter with fellow human beings, where the learners define their content and program by critically analysing the parameters of the social world. The learner is therefore perceived as an active creative being, who, in order to acquire the techniques of reading and writing, must acquire a concomitant understanding of the tools of the dominant culture which has maintained him/her in a state of de-alphabetization. Thus, reality is not viewed as a closed door from which there is no exit, but a limit situation capable of transformation.

In Brazil, Freire's synthesis of literacy with an emancipatory pedagogy revolutionized the meaning of literacy and transformed literacy education into a cultural action for liberation; and it is this transformation of both the theory and practice of education that, during the past sixteen years, has led to the global importance of Freire's own life and work as a fine exemplar of the unity of theory and action where

> . . . acquiring literacy does not involve memorizing sentences, words or syllables—lifeless objects unconnected to an existential universe—but rather is an act of creation and recreation, a self transformation, producing a state of intervention in one's context. (14)

Pedagogy in Post-Revolutionary Guinea-Bissau

In Guinea-Bissau the challenging re-encounter with literacy in a post-revolutionary society posed an entirely different set of problems: in Guinea-Bissau the task was not one of finding free spaces in which to sow the seeds of conscientization amidst the repression, but rather how to put education at the services of a new society—to invent <u>with</u> the people both new knowledge and new modes of "knowing" and "being" which denied and superceded the colonial model of domination. The problem of the colonial legacy of "banking education" captured the dilemma posed by Mario Cabral and the new Ministry of Education. Did one close the schools down totally or attempt to introduce fundamental reforms into the existing system which would be capable of accelerating the process of radical transformation of the society? What path did one take vis a vis adult education and literacy when Portuguese, the language of colonial domination, was the medium of instruction? As Freire correctly and, perhaps, in the light of recent events, prophetically pointed out, the process of liberation of a people does not take place in profound and authentic terms unless the people reconquer their own word, the right to speak it, to "pronounce" it and ultimately to "name" their world, so that to speak their "word" is a means of liberating their own language from the supremacy of the dominant language of the colonizer. Hence literacy education in another form and context once again occupies a central dimension of cultural action for liberation.

It was with this perspective that Freire and his IDAC team entered the African context, not as "foreign specialists," but as persons committed to the cause of Guinea-Bissau, as "comrades" and as "militants." The fundamental challenge that confronted them was to establish a coherence between the society being reconstructed and the education developed to serve that society without imposing a form of cultural invasion by the leadership upon the people. Hence, it was necessary to create new conditions for the unity of theory and practice forged in participative productive labor for,

> The challenge for such a society is not to continue creating elitist intellectuals so that they can commit suicide, but rather to prevent their formation in the first place. The preparation of cadres with a popular, rather than an elitist orientation can be carried on not only outside, but inside the country. (15)

Re-africanization demanded re-education together with the co-intentional involvement of the learners, defining their own life themes in fundamental relationship to a society undergoing a social rebirth.

The establishment of a "University of the People" at Có is one such

center which has put into practice a different conception of education. The people at Có, involving the neighboring populations, are attempting to bridge the gap between manual and intellectual labor, between teaching and learning. Both the educational teams and the local people take their own daily lives as a starting point for critical reflection upon reality for, claims Freire,

> When people are able to see and analyse their own way of being in the world of their immediate daily life, including the life of their villages, and when they can perceive the rationale for the factors on which their daily life is based, they are enabled to go far beyond the narrow horizons of their own village . . . to gain a global perspective on reality. (16)

It is precisely this political-pedagogical activity, which involves taking a distance from one's "dailiness" in order to critically understand and transform one's social context that has made of Freire's "pedagogy of praxis" a living philosophy—dedicated to transforming, not maintaining, the structures of our consciousness and our life-world.

Postscript

Several weeks after the above essay was written, the face of Guinea-Bissau's reconstruction plan was jarred and its populist credibility thrown into question by a coup; for on November 14, 1980, President Luis Cabral was deposed and accused of massacring his political opponents. Clan and ethnic divisions amongst the Cape Verdian-born leadership and the indigenous black Guineas were cited as underlying causes for the people's disaffection with the leadership controlled by the PAIGG Independence Party founded by Amilcar Cabral, the assassinated revolutionary leader who led the struggle for liberation.

At the time of writing, the success or failure of the populist social reconstruction of Guinea-Bissau is an open question falling beneath the ominous weight of popular disaffection. Paulo Freire's own assessment of the situation is as yet unknown and perhaps, in time, one can best judge the authenticity of the Guinea-Bissau revolutionary experiment by the yardstick of history. At present the recent events hover under the shadow of Amilcar Cabral's prophetic words—

> The liberation movement must, on the cultural level just as on the political level, base its action in popular culture. . . . If that does not happen then the efforts and sacrifices accepted during the struggle will have been made in vain. The struggle will have failed to achieve its objectives, and the people will have missed an opportunity for progress in the general framework of history. (17)

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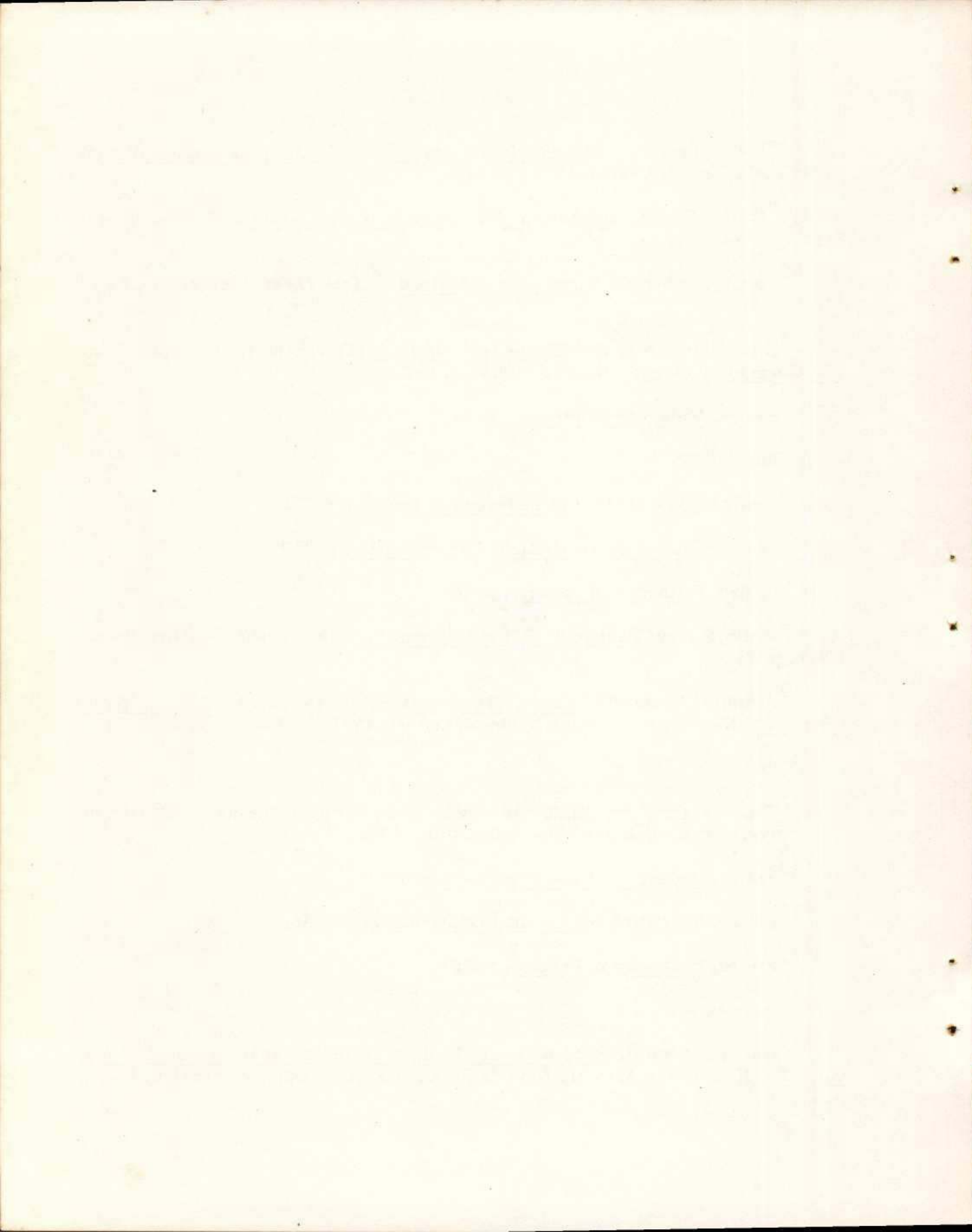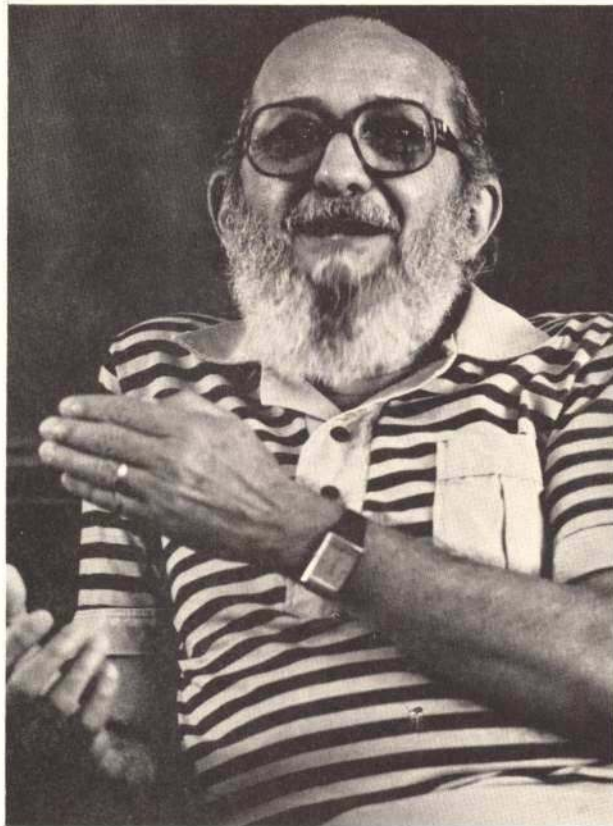
　　　*Let us ask ourselves about the act of knowing and
about the act of unveiling reality, recognizing the ideo-
logical influences and conditions; let us ask ourselves
what to do and if it is possible to do something inside
the university in a different way from what has been done
--that is how to take education as a mediation for knowing
reality in a critical way.*

ACTION, FREEDOM, AND LIBERATORY EDUCATION

Thomas W. Heaney

Northern Illinois University

We need have no fear that our choices or actions restrict our liberty, since choice and action alone cut us loose from our anchorage. . . Freedom flounders in the contradictions of commitment, and fails to realize that, without the roots which it thrusts into the world, it would not be freedom at all. Shall I make this promise? Shall I risk my life for so little? Shall I give up my liberty in order to save liberty? There is no theoretical reply to these questions. But there are things which stand, irrefutable, there is before you this person whom you love, there are these men whose existence around you is that of slaves, and your freedom cannot be willed without leaving behind its singular relevance, and without willing freedom for all.

-M. Merleau-Ponty- (1)

Nobody has a freedom problem until he tries to do something.

-William Birenbaum- (2)

Almost all American adult educators are employed by large, bureaucratic, public-supported institutions. This recent development, more than any other factor, has given adult education its unique characteristics. Learning, education, and schooling have merged into the dull gray homogeneity of training for employment, from high status continuing education for professionals to adult basic education.

Many of us who gathered around Paulo Freire at the invitation of the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor were functionaries in a system of education in which we did not believe. A contradiction between a hoped-for democratic and egalitarian future, on the one hand, and the social conformism and elitist pretensions of the institutions employing us, on the other, had produced reactions ranging from anger to frustration. Paulo was well known to us through his writings and most of us had struggled to learn from his reflections on liberatory education in developing nations and to apply our learning to the American scene. Those of us who did so within the context of traditional schooling, have not overcome the contradictions or the resulting frustrations.

Of the many ideas generated during our three-day retreat with Paulo, one held special promise for my own praxis. That idea was the humbling notion that education is not the critical factor in the struggle for liberation. That critical factor is direct action upon the world. The frustration and frequent failure of liberatory education to liberate in the American context derives in

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large measure from inflated expectations of education as a specialized and isolated enterprise. We have often hoped that action would flow from learning and that "conscientized" learners would move on to change the world. But, because adult education has been situated in institutions which specialize in organized learning and which eschew direct action, the action of adult learners upon the world has largely been left to individual initiative outside of, and usually after, the learning experience.

While learning accompanies struggles for social change, education does not of itself produce freedom. It accompanies action for freedom, informs it, provides the critical perspective from which such action can proceed. The understanding of freedom is linked to its practice. But equally, the practice of freedom is linked to a lifelong process of reflection and dialogue with others similarly engaged in the struggle to be free.

Liberation is an ongoing, historical process by which one passes from oppression to freedom. This process can only be understood in relation to the terms which it places in apposition: oppression and freedom. These terms are dialectically related in that each is defined in relation to the other. Freedom is both the condition of human existence and a project. It is the uninterrupted power which underlies every human act, whether it be an act of submission or rebellion. For even submission is an affirmation of my existence—a decision either to hold onto values despite consequences to my life, or to foresake those values in order to preserve my life. But freedom is also a project; it exists in action which plunges me into the future. Freedom is doing. Freedom is cultural action. Freedom is the ability to act without restraint, but at the same time, restraint is only perceived from the vantage point of freedom. It is only when I decide to do something that freedom becomes an issue. Merleau-Ponty gives an example of the mountain as a limit to the climber's freedom:

> An unclimbable rock face, a large or small, verticle or slanting rock, are things which have no meaning for anyone who is not intending to surmount them. . . There is, then, ultimately nothing that can set limits to freedom, except those limits that freedom itself has set in the form of its various initiatives. (3)

It is only in the determination to climb the mountain that the restraints to freedom come into being and are perceived.

Not all restraints are oppressive. There are restraints which derive from the human condition. I am not free to fly unaided, to be eight feet tall, to live on the sun, or to digest steel. To live is to live in a world, and both the world and my own body prescribe parameters of my freedom. I am restrained from yelling fire in a crowded theater or from dropping lead weights from tall buildings in the central city, but these restraints are not oppressive. They are consequences of living in a society in which other subjects, like myself, are also acting out their freedom. Oppression is unlike these restraints. The perception of oppression—already the beginning of liberatory learning—involves a judgement of legitimacy, ultimately a moral judgement which is violated by acts of oppression. Oppression is one group's manipulation, control, exploitation, and mystification of another. But such generic and abstract

definitions are less than useful, for the meaning of freedom and of all the limits which it posits is found in the ethical assumptions underlying all cultural action. The determination of what counts for freedom, in opposition to oppression, is already ethically defined; that is, the concrete identification of freedom already perceives and names legitimate modes of being. The control which one group exercises over another might be legitimized by the controlled group's ethical standards. In such instances, control is not <u>perceived</u> as oppression—and may, in fact, not <u>be</u> oppressive. However, it should be noted that an effective and widely used instrument for oppressive control is the manipulation of attitudes toward right and wrong behavior through media and other forms of propaganda. Freedom as a project, therefore, is not only a dialectical process by which limits to freedom are transcended, but more importantly is a dialogical process by which ethical values are clarified.

Not all cultural action is legitimate and some restraint of human activity is appropriate. It is simplistic to say that one person's freedom ends where another's begins, and the practice of case law with thousands of volumes of precedents gives witness to the complexity of determining the point at which my freedom to act infringes on the freedom of another. Of course, law itself is a social sub-system which, like all elements of culture, embodies values and assumptions independent of the personal values and assumptions of lawyers and judges. Therefore, "legitimacy" is not an appeal to law, but invokes an ethical dimension which will have to be argued in each case by the proponents of freedom against the conscious or blind interests of the alleged source of oppression. The power to determine the legitimacy of an action is the power to establish boundaries within freedoms; this power is a political power which, in an institutionalized or systemic form, is law. While the oppression-freedom dialectic is always related to specific boundaries, it is not the boundaries which are immediately at issue in a liberatory praxis, but rather the process by which boundaries are determined in the first place. The liberatory focus is therefore not law, and liberation is generally not pursued through litigation. The focus is rather on ethical judgement, a moral determination of right and wrong. Freedom as a project assumes a moral judgement must be made and the violation of ethically legitimized boundaries must be verified. The goal of critical consciousness is an ethical and not a legal judgement about the social order. Further, because the judgement is "of boundaries" between two or more subjects, each with their own "freedoms" to defend, the act of judging is thereby a social and political act involving two or more persons. Liberatory action, flowing from critical consciousness, is always socio-political action involving an ethical judgement of legitimacy.

Critical reflection on our freedom—that is, on our action upon the world—reveals previously unexplored areas of restraint and frustration. The perception of our freedom opens us to an exploration of the limits to that freedom. There is, in other words, not only a dialectical interplay in the definitions of oppression and freedom as concepts, but also in the process by which these concepts are actualized and perceived in history. Freedom is the recognition of both potential and necessity. We move toward freedom in relation to a now-perceived restraint upon that freedom; from the vantage point of newly attained freedoms we are able to observe and further articulate

in specific terms other areas of restraint, which in turn lead to yet another motion toward freedom. This historical and dialectical process is liberation. As a historical event, liberation is the means by which restraints are overcome and by which new potentialities for cultural action are perceived and mobilized.

Liberatory education is one component integral to that historical and dialectical process. It provides for the reflection and analysis of lived experience through which the limits to freedom, and thus freedom itself, are discovered. It brings to consciousness both restraints and potentialities and then derives from these the agenda for further action. Liberatory education is "cultural action for freedom," in Freire's term, because it transforms the oppressive reality of the world into a reality less oppressive and more open to further cultural action. Reflection, which produces thought and insight, is not temporally distinct from or sequential to such action. The dialectic of liberation is in reality unified and best understood in the word "praxis." Praxis combines reflection and action in a reciprocal and dynamic interaction. It is similar to the Hebrew word "dabar," which signifies both "word" and "deed." Liberatory education is one aspect of a liberatory praxis which is inexoribly linked to political and social objectives having consequences for the lived world. Thus, liberatory education is situated in the current, historical-political struggles of the people engaged in its practice.

The communality of purpose in various programs of liberatory education derives from a judgement concerning the legitimacy of an egalitarian, participatory, democratic social order. Corresponding judgements are made about the illegitimate—and thus oppressive—nature of existing social systems and technologies which restrain egalitarian, participatory, and democratic action. Social systems and technologies are not neutral; they can limit freedom in ways that are not directly subject to human volition. Opponents of racism and sexism correctly direct their energies toward systemic rather than attitudinal change. The products of human action upon the world—that is, the elements of culture: books, banks, nuclear generators, schools, the Concorde, and so forth—embody values which are in part derived from, but not limited to, the values of the human agents who created them. Environmentalists have been most vocal in articulating the unintended, unanticipated consequences of human action. All human action is cultural action which, like a stone thrown over a wall, only dimly foresees its consequences. Mass culture imposes a view of good and evil which is personalized and polarized. Whether in the pages of Time or on the evening news, the actors are clearly identified as good or evil and their actions are the cause of a "never ending battle for truth, justice, and the American way." But liberatory praxis may reveal sources of oppression for which there are no villains, only victims. Systems can operate independently of the persons who appear to guide them. In such cases, it is more important to change the system than to attempt to influence the bosses.

The purpose of liberatory education is to bring the personal and systemic roots of oppression into consciousness through action and reflection. We are prevented from reflecting upon our oppression by inaction. Students who are tracked into terminal, vocational education by community colleges do not attempt to act like musicians or physicists and are thereby prevented from

reflecting on the oppression of tracking within the school system. Workers who do not organize or who accept "sweetheart contracts" might experience personal frustration, but this is most likely to be interpreted as a personal failure. Only in the act of organizing can the clash of class interests be perceived. Only in action is oppression known. Consciousness of oppression cannot be the object of instruction, it must be discovered in experience—even if it only be an experience of another's experience shared, as frequently occurs in peer group learning. The submergence of potential beneath the level of consciousness is the most common mechanism by which oppression maintains itself, hence the importance of Black studies and Women's studies for liberatory action against racism and sexism. This submergence is what Freire has called the "internalization of oppression." Oppressed people become their own oppressors, ignoring their potential, because historical circumstances prevent these potentialities from becoming action upon which reflection can take place. Action, either engaged in or observed, is an essential first step in developing a consciousness of oppression. Liberatory education must always be part of a liberatory praxis, so that an appropriate object (that is, action) for critical reflection can complete the dialectic.

And herein lies the bane of many attempts at liberatory education within the "developed" nations. The segmentation of learning and action into discrete times and places is a well known characteristic of schooling, and it is in the context of schooling that many have attempted to develop liberatory education. In the United States, adult education has increasingly come under the sway of large, formal institutions as a result of the burgeoning growth of universal schooling from the late nineteenth century onwards. The economy of development leaves few adult educators, whether they be committed to a liberatory praxis or not, outside the employ of these institutions. The question facing these educators is: can and to what extent can institutions of schooling provide support for a liberatory praxis? This is especially problematic for at least three reasons:

-schools create an environment isolated from and often antecedent to action (principally employment) in the world,

-schools are servants of the dominant social order and adapt (socialize) learners to the economic and political roles required by that order of the "good citizen,"

-and schools build upon motivations (credentialing, meritocratic advancement, employability) which are frequently antithetical to a liberatory praxis.

Clearly, if liberatory learning must accompany and be integral with liberatory action—that is, with action designed to challenge and change the world—then such learning goes against the interests of the traditional school system. That system is subservient to the corporate and governmental powers that sustain it and that provide its revenues. Myles Horton, founder of the Highlander Folk School in Tennessee, said:

You can't give control to a community if you don't have it yourself. There is no democracy in the schools. . . We must be honest with students about their situation. They have no power. Unless education is built on that consciousness the results will be further alienation from power. (4)

Liberatory education seeks to create an agenda diametrically opposed to that of the schools. Contrary to pragmatic, technocratic programs, liberatory education is not aimed at employment, although its participants might get jobs. Its aim is not adaptation to the mainstream of American society, although a limited and strategic social conformism may result. Liberatory education, to the extent that it is successful, carries a potential challenge to all business and economic interests in that it specifically aims to heighten critical consciousness of the systemic premises upon which these and all vested interests are based. Liberatory education challenges the "givenness" of all reality, and seeks to view experience historically, giving it a beginning, a present, and most importantly a future. It awakens in adult learners the expectation that the power to create the future is theirs--a power which, once awakened, seeks continued expression in transforming actions that threaten the permanency of all institutions, including schools.

As long as liberatory education is perceived by the purveyors of traditional learning as methodologically distinct, but not different in its social and cultural consequences, then it can be tolerated as a variation within the system. There is every likelihood that liberatory education will be viewed in this way by traditional educators who tend to interpret all approaches to learning as variations in pedagogical technique. Such interpretations are encouraged by programs that promote themselves by appealing to the rhetoric of schooling and the marketing of credentials. Bureaucratic systems impose their own logic on liberatory structures and managers of education express great difficulty in understanding the need for special and exceptional procedures in relation to "alternatives." But the incongruencies are acceptable on both sides until the praxis developed within liberatory programs so transforms the program's outward form that it can no longer maintain an uncritical stance in relation to the sponsoring system.

This is not just a possibility; it is probable if liberatory education actually occurs. First, participants in liberatory education will take an increasingly critical view of economic, political, and academic elites. Second, transforming initiatives against red-lining by banks, discrimination in unions, back-room deals in politics, or economic exploitation by commercial business will force the academic elite to take an increasingly critical view of liberatory education. And finally, empowerment within liberatory education will be effectively blocked by economic sanctions imposed by the institutional sponsor. The long-term cost of survival in the system might be that liberatory education ceases to be liberatory--which is not survival.

The programs which most easily survive are the ones that are not qualitatively different from, just better than, traditional adult education programs. That is, the survivors do the same things that all other programs do, only they do it more effectively. Effectiveness in this case means that

enrollments, retention rates, and success rates (measured in terms of graduates, GED recipients, etc.) are significantly higher than in other programs within the system. This form of success not only makes survival possible, it usually means that incentives and other forms of encouragement will be provided to improve "effectiveness" even more. This is because funding for most school systems is tied into a numbers game, with annual budgets determined by the number of FTE (full-time enrolled) students multiplied by the number of hours these FTEs are present in a classroom. A liberatory program might be able to get away with training "terrorists" if it enrolled enough students, so important have these numbers become to the administration of large city and state systems. The pressure for growth is uniformly imposed on all programs within public-supported education, and private systems now openly compete for the non-traditional student to compensate for flagging undergraduate admissions. Growth becomes the basis of economic security and acceptability to the sponsoring system. This pressure for growth has been one common way in which large systems co-opt liberatory programs and neutralize their ability to engage in collective, transforming action.

In circumstances such as these, the likelihood of liberatory education surviving, much less effectively aligning itself with struggles for change, is remote. The failure of such education to be liberatory is found in the decontextualization of learning, in the separation of education and action, and in the promotion of learning as liberatory in and of itself without reference to liberatory action. Where Paulo Freire's efforts on behalf of literacy have succeeded, strong movements for change were underway or at least the mechanisms for populist action were in place. Where he failed--as he did in Brazil after 1964--it was bcause action for change, which accompanied the development of literacy, became impossible under the dictatorial powers of an oppressive regime. In either case, the critical factor was not the pedagogy or even the educator, but rather the historical expression (or repression) of revolutionary action.

To be free is to act, and in action we know the limits to our freedom. Liberatory education is reflection on this lived paradox. When it occurs, liberatory education is less likely to be known as education and more likely to be identified as community action. Its practitioners are not teachers and students, but activists. The trained incapacities of formally educated educators frequently prevents them from engaging either themselves or others in liberatory learning, just as the traditional purposes of schooling prevents educational institutions from supporting such learning. But alternative models aligned with local initiatives for change and not built on the tradition of schooling are possible. (5) Education for the new social order is not an academic task, or even a specialized one. Such education will continue to develop in the midst of struggles for non-technocratic, non-patronizing, non-bureaucratic, non-governmental solutions to the problems of life in America. It is here, in these struggles, that liberatory education begins.

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[5] Highlander in Tennessee, Ryegrass in Washington, Red Feather Institute in Colorado, Solidaridad Humana in New York, the Participatory Research Group in Toronto, and Basic Choices/Chicago are examples of alternate models built outside the control of formal institutions. The latter group, Basic Choices/Chicago, evolved in part out of discussions begun at the retreat with Paulo Freire sponsored by the University of Michigan—Ann Arbor in 1979. Information on this group can be obtained from the author at 3838 No. Greenview, Chicago, IL 60613.

THE TEACHING OF RHETORIC:

HELPING STUDENTS TO SAY THEIR OWN WORD

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Introduction

Paulo Freire has written a complicated set of theoretical works about his educational efforts in Latin America and Africa. Many of us who have been stimulated by these works have wondered whether they have any application to education in the United States and Europe. One of the first questions asked of Freire when he visits this country is: how should we apply your work to the problems we face here? And his answer is always the same: "it is impossible for me to say, because I cannot speak intelligently about the critical issues that face you."

Freire challenges us here not to adopt his work in any mechanistic way. The particular methodology he has adopted is not necessarily applicable. However, the theoretical mode out of which his methodology has developed may indeed be very applicable. But two critical steps must be taken before any educator can work intelligently on the basis of Freire's theory.

The first is that Freire's theory must be understood in its context: that is, as a fundamental critique of mechanistic, empiricist social science and methodology—the mode of thought and practice that is in complete dominance in education departments and classrooms throughout the United States. A "Freirean" educator must be able to recognize how this mode of thought is expressed, and must be able to see in what ways it fails to prepare people to live wisely in the modern age. The entire argument in this regard cannot be laid out. These points can only serve to challenge the serious educator to get to work and to risk his or her current way of living and thinking. For, to take on Freire seriously means to recognize that thought and action cannot be bifurcated, and thus to become a Freirean educator means to change fundamentally.

The second step must be an effort to interpret the age in which we live. Education does not take place in isolation from a society, and this society is faced by enormous challenges and difficulties. The mode of thought and action that have carried it to great successes are now under severe strain. "We have been cursed to live in an important time" said a Chinese seer about another important time. And in every transitional era people have been faced with the difficult challenge of finding new modes of thought and action that respond to the real dilemmas of the age. Every educator who wants to be a "true Freirean" must show that he or she has made a far reaching effort to name the problems facing western society. By a far reaching effort I mean he or she must show that the debate amongst theories is clearly understood, that the problems of heading down one theoretical path or another have been considered, and that a genuine commitment to a particular position has been

adopted. The principles underlying this commitment will inform the kind of Freirean style education that is appropriate to the western world.

Much of Freire's work addresses the problems of oppressed peasants. These peasants had no word and were at the mercy of their world. Our young middle class students have the word, and seen from a distance seem to have the world at their mercy. But, the fact is that for them words have become bureaucratized and the world deproblematized. Thus, educators must try to help them regain the power of the word--help them "say their own word", to use Freire's powerful phrase--and educators must help young people recognize the challenges that do face them in the modern world.

The following short essay depicts my efforts to achieve precisely these goals with young, middle class students attending a large state university. I do not quote Freire at length, or point out in any detailed way what constitutes his thought and what mine. In a sense, those parts of his work that have influenced me deeply are now mine. Thus, this essay and the mode of education it describes are my efforts at saying my own word.

The Teaching of Rhetoric - A Freirean Approach

Typical freshmen courses often fail at precisely what they most need to achieve: to awaken the desire amongst students to know more. Many students register for these courses because a professional school requires them to do so. The hope is that these students will be encouraged to experiment with additional liberal arts courses so that their university education is not a narrow specialized one. Yet most introductory courses are introductions to specialized disciplines, and do not set out to persuade students that the reflective life is the one worth living. What follows is a description of the principles and practices adopted for teaching a required Rhetoric course at a large state university. Those of us teaching the course had considerable success in encouraging students to continue to explore the liberal arts; the reason their interest was aroused was because they had come to understand how much they did not know, and that knowledge about the nature of human interaction was ultimately a very practical kind of knowledge--not just a luxury.

A basic undergraduate course must attempt to encourage an understanding of the subject at hand from an historical, economic, philosophical, psychological, and aesthetic point of view. The aim of a basic course should be to awaken the students' passion to know. This means, on the one hand, problematizing the world, and on the other, providing an intellectual vision, a sense of educational purpose for students. The student must begin to grasp the profound differences between appearance and reality, and the ways in which the two are dependent upon each other. In Brecht's terms the familiar must begin to appear strange to the student. This will inevitably be experienced as disintegrating and confusing to many, meaning that a second important responsibility is to make clear how the world of knowledge can, to some extent, help address confusion and lack of freedom. In addition, a basic course must help to demonstrate the relationship between thought and action: the two cannot be thought of as bifurcated but rather as dynamically and

dialectically related. Neither can there be a sharp conceptual separation between thought and ethics: "What is the moral action in a particular situation?" must become the question that students recognize as important to ask, no matter what their career goals might be. They must also grasp, however, that the question will not even occur to them unless they begin to penetrate appearances in order to understand reality. Such a process of reflection upon action is a <u>necessary</u> lifelong task for all—not just a luxury for the few. The effort to persuade students that this is a worthy and necessary life mission should be the purpose of a basic undergraduate course, regardless what subject is the focus for study.

Prior to my present position, I taught for three years in the Rhetoric program at the University of Massachusetts, a program that employs graduate students to teach basic writing courses. My students and I had focussed on developing self-consciousness about the act of writing, a subject that is too often taught as if it were a technical skill to be developed rather than part of a human endeavor to think more clearly about the human condition. Even when considered from the point of view of helping to develop better thought, the teaching of writing is too often conducted in an abstract fashion—it is dealt with as if it were unrelated to human action and the development of a sense of moral responsibility. Most of the students we taught were at the beginning of their intellectual careers and often in need of some understanding of the world of knowledge as a whole. In my view, it is a responsibility of all who teach basic courses to address "the whole", and to show how the particular subject under consideration (in this case writing) is related to the whole. I can only explain what I mean here by explaining in some depth how I approached the teaching of writing.

The course (ideally held for two semesters) is best understood as analogous to a spiral. A few basic concepts are the focus of our attention throughout. In each loop of the spiral we look at these basic concepts from another perspective in order to comprehend how important it is to understand in depth. The basic concepts are those that lie at the core of any system of knowledge, and that are studied in depth in various specialized disciplines. Examples of the questions that the students and I attempted to address include, What is the nature of being human, of the human mind? What is the relationship between nature and culture, appearance and reality, thought and action? One question that always arose for students was, Why bother to ask these "abstract questions"? A central aim of the course was to show how absolutely necessary it was that we do ask the questions and attempt to answer them—a process that can be furthered and nurtured by a student's college career. The following is a description of how we moved through three stages of the spiral.

I wanted the students to understand the nature of theory (understood broadly as interpretations of the relationship between natural, historical and psychological forces); I wanted them to <u>know</u>, literally to experience, what it means to be acting on the basis of an unreflected body of knowledge. I have found that one very good way to do this is to elicit the students' unreflected assumptions. A writing course that has no other pre-established content is the ideal vehicle for this crucial first stage to occur.

Students were asked to write and speak in response to specific questions I asked them about their lives at the university. First, as the students described what Paulo Freire has termed their "thought-action" they began to discover what it is they do, in fact, think; their convictions and assumptions began to emerge as objects for reflection, and through this distancing they began to develop perspective about how they think and act. Second, as the students' thoughts emerged, I showed how the pattern of their thinking takes the form of a whole system of knowledge, of a full-blown theory. I talked about theory in general and showed how, in all theories, there is a logical connection between opinions and actions, and the implicit assumptions which underly them. At the root of every system of knowledge lie assumptions, which have implications for the ways in which the basic questions, such as the relationship between mind and world, thought and action, are answered. In our age these questions have literally to be rediscovered as important ones to be asked. To the students these apparently abstract questions were slowly seen as anything but abstract, and were understood as being in dynamic relationship with the way one thinks about and acts upon reality. They began to see how probing to the root helps one comprehend the whole and, as a result, helps one to make choices based upon a firmer understanding of the nature of reality. Further, students come to understand that they have in some mysterious way incorporated a whole system of knowledge.

It is possible at this stage to raise the question of how the mind takes in knowledge: how do we know what we know? Almost always the students' basic assumptions about the relationship between mind and world, for example, are empiricist in nature, and it is possible to introduce them to the works of John Locke and John Stuart Mill; the study of these philosophers is then not seen as an abstract intellectual exercise, but rather as a form of developing self knowledge. Once it is understood that one's assumptions about the world are not natural and immutable phenomena, but rather are cultural in origin, it is possible to consider competing views in the mind-world relationship. It is at this point that I introduced the psychoanalytic theory of mind—the theory that, in my view, stands in radical contrast to the empiricist conception. As a result of these reflections, students came closer to understanding how the study of social theory, psychology, and history are imperative for the study of self knowledge.

During this first stage the task was to elicit the "thought-action" from the students and then to re-present it to them in the form of problems to be solved, rather than part of a natural taken-for-granted reality. While we were engaged in this process we were also focused very closely upon the act of writing in an effort to develop self-consciousness of how this act compares to closely related actions—reading, listening, and speaking. Our aim in this section of the course was the word. My aim was to find ways to restore the power to words that have become bureaucratized; a constant point of discussion revolves around what it means to "say your own word". Apart from responding to specific words, phrases and concepts that students use in unreflective ways, it was my specific aim to attempt to restore power or meaning to the words "research", "think", "knowledge", "work",—all of which have suffered severely as a result of the gradual bureaucratization of the

world in general and academia in particular.

At the appropriate moment of the course we entered the second stage of the spiral, and many of the same themes that emerged in the first section were reexamined in a more systematic fashion. The word must be understood from the perspective of the world, and must be understood as one form of human work. Our discussions focussed upon the human being in a state of nature, and we speculated upon what could have ever driven humans to emerge from a state of nature. As part of this discussion we investigated at length how we conceived of the differences between the human being and the animal. Students generally held a basic assumption about this distinction, namely, that man/woman can only be considered a more complex version of animals and that this relationship to nature is one of a powerful symbiotic attachment. Students were asked to reflect upon an alternative proposition: what differentiates humans from animals is that human beings are creatures of culture, beings of praxis, but that this capacity is always threatened by the cultural forms themselves. This discussion became very concrete for the students when we discussed whether their approach to the work they are doing --reading, writing, reflecting--is carried on in an alienated bureaucratic fashion, or whether there is real excitement and commitment to what they are doing. Students were asked to consider the proposition that one current force threatening to cause a general regression to animal-like existence is the overwhelming drive for specialization. The implications for action that result from these reflections were always addressed; specifically, students were asked to consider their educational plans in the light of the class discussions.

In the context of these discussions the act of writing once again became the center of attention. While in the first section of the course we compared writing to reading, writing, and speaking, in this section we considered writing as it compares to human action in general. Writing is one form of human work. What distinguishes work from random activity is that it is a conscious transformation of nature into a work of culture. When students think about the work they are doing within this framework the enterprise in which they are engaged is lifted to the status it deserves, rather than being reduced to the level of a development of a skill or to "doing assignments". We were engaged in a mutual effort to unveil reality in order to take wiser, more informed action, and came to understand how writing helps us to achieve this.

The development of aesthetic and imaginative sensibility was inextricably tied into the course. At the end of the semester, reflection allowed us to see the course itself as a whole, and we come to understand that concentrating upon form (as we do specifically in the third stage of the course) was not divorced from content; on the contrary, the two were radically intertwined. Aesthetic appreciation is enhanced when it becomes possible to sum up the entire course in two sentences that are presented to the students, in the form of a problem, upon which to reflect and write or as Freire suggests:

> To say your own word is to transform the world is the same as saying that, humans are different from animals and trees precisely to the degree that humans are potentially makers of culture.

CAN DIALOGUE REPLACE "THE WORD"?

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Teachers actually were, at one time, bearers of "The Word." In the Middle Ages, books were terribly scarce; those who possessed them conveyed their contents to others, becoming teachers. Unfortunately, the invention of the printing press did not result in a significant alteration of that teaching style. As Margaret Mead observed a few years ago, pedagogy is still suffering from a tragic case of arrested development: professors still pretend that their students don't possess written documents, that they must convey to them the "truth" in dry, pedantic lectures from notes yellowed around the edges. Educators, for many reasons, refuse to relinquish the role of "Word-bearer"; consequently, true dialogical encounters in the classroom occur infrequently.

Paulo Freire's central criticism of education is based upon the premise that education is never neutral. It serves, in most societies, as a means of perpetuating the value system of the power structure, thus maintaining the "culture of silence" of the oppressed. Students learn to adapt to what is often portrayed as a static reality rather than to make choices and to transform their world. "Those who use cultural action as a strategy for maintaining their domination over the people have no choice but to indoctrinate the people in a mythical version of reality." (1) In presenting these myths, Freire says, educational practices "mirror oppressive society as a whole."

According to Freire educators often see themselves as sole possessors of "The Word," or the truth, which they are obligated to convey to their students. "Enjoying the narcissistic pleasure of the sound of their own words, they lull the critical capacity of the educatee to sleep." (2) Freire calls this system of conventional education the "banking approach," in which teachers engage in the act of depositing knowledge into student receptacles, thus solidifying their role as passive, domesticated beings: "Implicit in the banking concept is the assumption of a dichotomy between man and the world: man is merely in the world, not with the world or with others; man is spectator, not re-creator." (3)

Freire's solution is "co-intentional education," in which students and teachers are simultaneously teachers and students, both subjects with the object of understanding and changing the world. As Sartre in Search for a Method has asserted, "To understand is to change, to go beyond onself!" In Freire's classroom, knowledge is something everyone seeks together, not something absolute that is transmitted to those who are assumed to be less able to comprehend. To accomplish this, dialogical, problem-posing education must take place, resulting ultimately in conscientization--an awareness of self, situation and the world that will manifest itself in critical intervention. As Clasby suggests, in an article entitled "Education as a Tool for Humanization and the Work of Paulo Freire," "The new dimension which Freire adds . . . is a philosophical anthropology--a view of man as creator as well as carrier of culture." (4)

A person's discovery that s/he can, in fact, change her or his world is an exciting one, a liberating perception that can eliminate a defeatist, fatalistic attitude. At the point of critical consciousness, Freire says, "Society now reveals itself as something unfinished, not as something inexorably given; it has become a challenge rather than a hopeless limitation." (5) Also exciting to the conscientized learner is that s/he knows, and is not just a passive recipient of someone else's definition of knowledge where the practice has been for teachers to regulate the way that the world enters into the student. As Freire envisions it, "Men teach each other, mediated by the world, by the cognizable objects which in banking education are 'owned' by the teacher." (6)

My own conscientization, which occurred during the Freire seminar in Ann Arbor in the summer of 1979, made me reexamine my role as teacher during the fifteen years that I had taught high school English. Had I been guilty of practicing banking education? Clearly, it is difficult to do otherwise in the American public school. The school board prescribes a curriculum, areas of knowledge or skills to be "covered" by teachers, who must grade students on the basis of their mastery of these concepts. Society pressures the schools to emphasize the "basics," to prepare their children for jobs or for the next level of education. Teachers are judged by their students' performances on standardized tests, not on the quality of classroom dialogue.

More importantly, the socio-cultural power structure does not view critical thinking as a desirable trait in students. In fact, a large majority of middle and even lower class parents have so incorporated the values of the oppressor that they want the same for their children; "Don't rock the boat-- just try to get a piece of the pie. The American Dream lives on." Certainly upper class parents would not encourage critical thinking that might result in a transformation of a system clearly advantageous to them.

Do students themselves want to think critically? A difficult question, the answer to which is affected both by their parents' influence and, for high school students, by eight or nine years of exposure to "banking-style" education. Teachers may refuse to use dialogue in their classrooms because they insist that students don't want to participate. But as Freire says of his experience with peasants, they may refuse to dialogue because "Their existential experience is constituted within the limits of anti-dialogue." (7) Students have been subjected mainly to vertically structured relationships. Like the illiterate peasants, they may suspect their own ability; they may be, and often are, influenced by the myth of their own ignorance, perpetuated so effectively by past teachers. Thus, they are often afraid to take the risk of thinking critically and are even more afraid, as we all are to some degree, of risking actual change. I find this to be most true of lower middle class students who actually do have the most to lose because they have so little, yet just enough to whet their appetites. Thus, they often resist critical thinking, attempting instead to pursue the obstacle-ridden course of upward mobility and its attendant images of consciousness. They have, although unknowingly, internalized the oppressor. Can a teacher provide a climate in which they can perceive their reality through critical thinking, without committing cultural invasion?

A more important question, perhaps, is whether or not teachers want to

facilitate the conscientization of their students. Mixed messages may be sent out to students: "During our discussion of this problem, think critically, but be sure to give the _right_ answer (i.e., the truth according to me) on the test." We may challenge our students to view the world as a problem in need of solutions, but we rarely can accept solutions in conflict with our own. Why not? To understand, one must look at the factors which often imprison teachers in their role of oppressor.

In the past, teachers were frequently the first in their families to complete college and transcend a lower or lower-middle class upbringing. The profession brought them a middle-class respectability that was difficult to reject by committing "class suicide," as Freire suggests the liberating teacher must do. No matter what his or her background, however, a teacher's choice of profession clearly reflects a love of knowledge, an appreciation of culture, which s/he is anxious to convey to others. Teachers often view the need to 'fill' their students with knowledge about the subject as a mission to be achieved at any cost. Resistance to this force-feeding is perceived as a problem in the student's digestive system rather than an inappropriate choice of teaching techniques. In addition teachers may fear the possibility of insurrection if they allow too much student input into the learning experience. It's entirely possible, in fact, that many teachers bask in the glory of their power over students, and are reluctant to surrender it.

Another obstacle to dialogical education is the reluctance of many teachers to view their own education as incomplete ("After all, I'm the one who has the degree here.") As Freire has said, "Those who are called to teach must first learn how to continue learning when they begin to teach." (8) Pressures of time, of the job, of the family, of the economy—all may combine to prevent growth in teachers, to lull them into a state of lethargy about learning which closes their minds to any new concepts.

Finally, however, we are products of our experiences, having learned to teach by exposure to antidialogical teaching situations. It is terribly difficult to overcome this conditioning, even when we again assume the role of learner. I was surprised to find that a number of participants in the Freire seminar were frustrated by his insistence on being true to his philosophy. He conducted the meetings in a truly dialogical manner, yet many resented his unwillingness to impart "The Word" to us. Others had so thoroughly incorporated the banking approach that they felt compelled to convey their Word to us themselves, again an obstacle to real dialogue. Yet our very participation in the seminar testified to our belief in dialogue; we, of all learners perhaps, should have been pleased with this opportunity. Apparently we did not trust the validity of our contributions (and of each others'). We, too, believed that there was a Truth out there somewhere that Freire could explain to us, even after he told us, "Reality is contradictory—accept it." The dialectic is ever-present—and should be.

A final possibility is that teachers may never have been exposed to the concept of problem-posing education, though they may even have incorporated some aspects of it unwittingly. A fine example is a history teacher I know who always introduced an event to her classes by asking them to play the role of the participants: "If you were Napolean, what would you have done here?"

There is no right or wrong answer because students haven't yet read the chapter. Their projection into the role of the actor allows them to be subjects, to do some creative thinking and then to test their predictions against the account of the actual events. An excellent presentation of practical applications of Freire's pedagogy may also be found in Ira Shor's Critical Teaching and Everyday Life. (9) If it were required reading in all methods courses, we might someday make progress in the battle to eliminate "The Word" from the classroom.

Unfortunately, true dialogical education rarely occurs today for lack of Freire's prerequisites: love, humility, hope, faith, and mutual trust. We as teachers must surrender our narcissism which may have served us well in the performance-oriented banking approach to learning. Why is it so threatening to accept the fact that students may in fact have something to teach us, to teach each other, to teach themselves? In an age when facts will be readily available from a computer only an arm's-length away, we must come to a realization that education is valuable only to the extent that it teaches us all to think critically. Such a revolutionary stance may not be easy for us, but as Freire says, "Education is an act of love, and thus an act of courage." (10)

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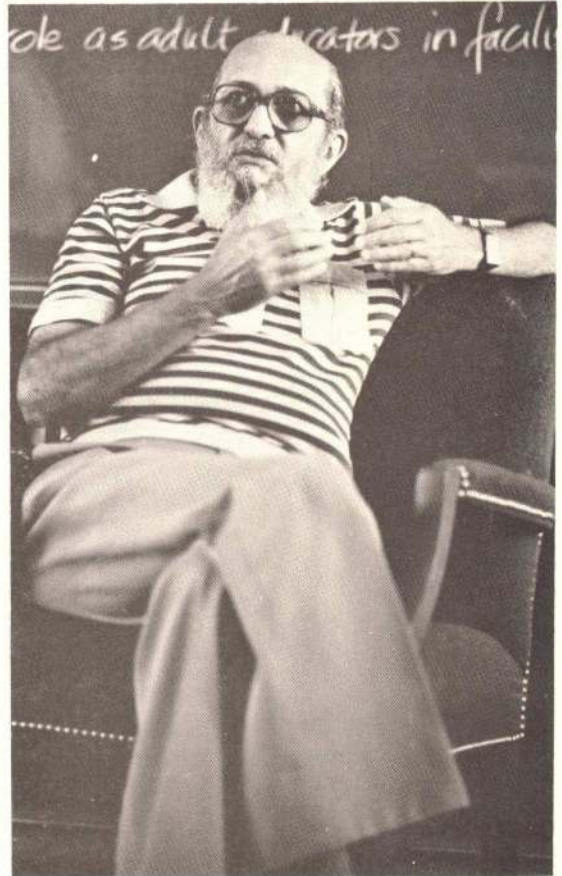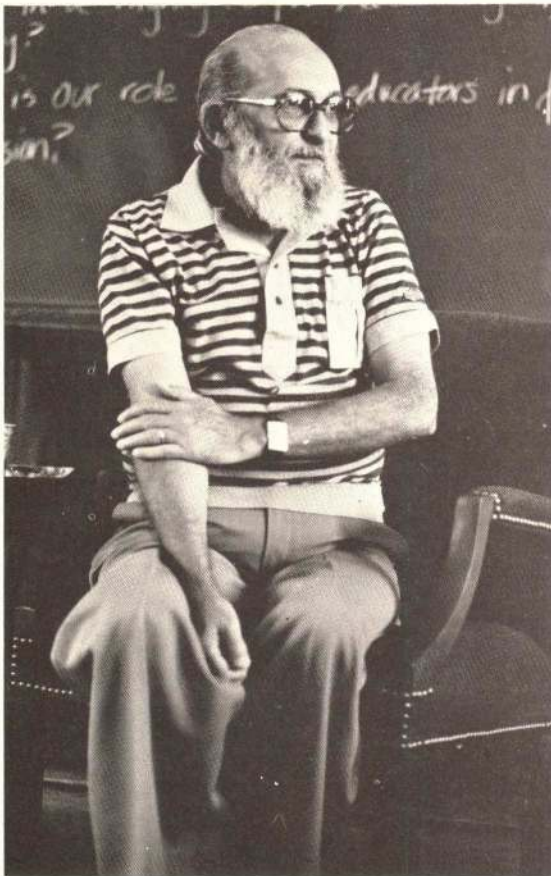
*When we think of science we have to discover in it
the history of the evolution of ideas, of the thought
of human beings and insert that in the very concrete
conditions of society in time and space. Science has
to reflect the process of development of the productive
forces of any society. Because of that, we cannot trans-
plant science and technology . . . It is incredible how
people from Europe and from the States are not able, in
spite of their Ph.D.'s, to recognize these cultural dif-
ferences. The ideological background, into which the
science they learned is inserted, makes them believe they
are both scientist and neutral beings. It's fantastic
the strength of this ideology . . .*

UNDERSTANDING PEDAGOGY:

THE WITNESS, THE STORYTELLER, AND THE TEACHER

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The value of information does not survive the moment in which it was new. It lives only at that moment, it has to surrender to it completely and explain itself to it without losing any time. A story is different. It does not expend itself. It preserves and concentrates its strength and is capable of releasing it even after a long time.

Walter Benjamin in "The Storyteller"

I. Introduction

I read Pedagogy of the Oppressed for the first time in 1974 in a sociology class at Oberlin College. I was a Chinese language and literature major--and was struck by the resonance between Freire's discussion of education for liberation and several writings by Mao Zedong. The margins of my book are punctuated with the enthusiasm of that first encounter.

As a graduate student in education I have come to appreciate Freire's work for different reasons, particularly how the concepts dialogue and empowerment sharpen the inescapability of the need for continual reflexivity in all that we do. Education, in its broadest sense, is a mediation of reality in a critical way.

Most recently, the examination of the possibilities for and ramifications of dialogue has become central to my inquiry into pedagogical theories and practices in the People's Republic of China. As my question about the nature of pedagogy in China arises for me, becomes my own, I have felt the necessity of carefully rethinking my own conceptions about education. I want to do this not for the purpose of producing at some point in the future a specifically comparative work. Rather, I hope to clarify my own biases of vision and allow for the possibility of some honest appraisal in China. In this attempt, I find that my two ways of meeting Freire--through Chinese studies and education-- have merged.

How do I speak about education now? And later, how will I speak about the pedagogies of Chinese teachers? While the illumination and interpretation of their theories and practices is the point, I will be doing this telling. In a sense I will be making the final decisions for the boundaries of the field in which this analysis comes ir .) being.

Trying to understand what it means to tell a story that is both mine and yet the product of others as well, leads to the theme of this essay: the very real parallels between the teacher's and researcher's praxis. What comprises

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the act of telling for the researcher is a constant dialogue with oneself, as well as with those others in the study, and therefore an act of self-discovery. But the author's voice is also sometimes silent, when the story and its subjects speak through her/him. What mediates between these two components of the researcher's discovery process, the role of the subject and the larger role of the author who sees beyond the subject's point of view toward the larger landscape? Here, I realize, I am not only speaking of the process of teaching, the giving of oneself over to what is at hand, but also the constant witnessing and subsequent evaluative demand for thoughtful action directed towards the future. For both the researcher and the teacher the major goal should be a broadening of access for understanding and changing an aspect of the human world; an offering of further and continuous insight.

This juxtaposition of teacher and researcher, as embedded in this overarching human project of understanding, owes much to Walter Benjamin's essay, "The Storyteller". His eloquent statement is rich in significance for interpreting history, the "word", and lived experience, and their varying powers for offering counsel, testimony, and "informed vision" for cultural access.

Four of Benjamin's formulations are particularly complementary to Freire's use of dialogue: The nature of the real story is that it contains something useful, giving counsel and wisdom, "counsel woven into the fabric of real life to its audience"; (1) the art of storytelling and the legitimacy and value of personal experience in which it finds its vital source is coming to an end; counsel gained from the story of experience has been replaced by preinterpreted information which can be promptly verified and abbreviated; and the power of words lies in evoking but also confusing the immediate by projecting over experience a grid which in some sense creates discontinuity, just as a tear in the eye refracts and amplifies sadness into many little griefs.

By accentuating the difference between merely making observations and offering testimony, these ideas point to the dialectical core of both education and research processes. In their most misleading, blinded usages, "educated" and "researched" connote "adapted to" and "perfected by". Observation, as such, implies a management of ideas, a values clarification without commitment. Yet education and research are never neutral.

> Testimony bears on something independent from me and objectively real; it has therefore an essentially objective end. At the same time it commits my entire being as a person who is answerable for my assertions and for myself. . . . I am obliged to bear witness because I hold, as it were, a particle of light and to keep it to myself would be equivalent to extinguishing it. . . . what concerns us is the relation in which the witness stands to the world. (2)

II. Meaning and the Researcher's Testimony

Freire sees knowledge as a fundamentally social process. It is in this process that a researcher resides, attempting to constitute her/himself with

empathy among others. Bearing witness is the core of the researcher's praxis and that which transforms insight into responsibility for the outcome of increased understanding. Meaning set in this context of human action and transformation is meaning that forms part of the "human project." It demands advocacy and sometimes risk, a walking of what Martin Buber called the "narrow ridge". (3) The researcher's task of understanding does not end with trying to understand the day-to-day life of actors in a living setting. The aim of interpretation is not merely more interpretation; it points beyond itself to the fundamental problems of human existence. In this act of interpretation, the researcher inscribes social discourse, attempting to enlarge the universe of that discourse.

Dialogue becomes a moving between, through which subjects come to understand their "lived-in" worlds. The researcher tells this story by juxtaposing the subject's own words with her/his own description, restatements, and temporal framework, and thus recaptures the drama and power of individual projects.

This vision of the world as a fluid, partially shared system of meaning implies that the baseline "realities" of both the researcher and the subject are practices, socially constituted actions, within a specific, perceived and lived-in world. Not only are meanings intentional and social, they are also temporal. Meanings are intentional projects in time. As Sartre asserts, one does not just have knowledge, but a bursting out in the act of knowing. This, too, implies change, the necessity for research which can meet the dialectical nature of knowledge--or praxis. "To understand is to change, to go beyond oneself". (4)

This emphasis on project is intended to suggest that while our social situatedness is indeed plurivocal, it is not infinitely so. Ultimately, the researcher must draw together one story. This position does not contradict the goal in human science research of faithful portrayal of experience; rather it clarifies that portrayal by making its elements accessible to public discourse, by taking them out of discontinuous narrative and presenting them in some intelligible sequence. In doing this the researcher must keep in mind and reflect upon the social conditions which may refract her/his own gaze. The interpretive tradition which binds the means of investigation to its ends and initiates a recovery and reappropriation of the richness and contingency of human life, cannot be naive; for practice must not degenerate into spectacle.

Recognition must be made of the ineradicable tension between our human search for coherent life and thought which manifests itself in practice and the limitations forced on us by our own involvement in social, historical roles. Such recognition reaffirms that human reason is comprised of both value and judgment, and consequently, ambiguity and advocacy. If the very possibility of coming to understand cultural life flows from that life, it follows that theory must be grounded as consciously as possible in the speech of the subject, where the researcher's voice and interpretation are kept at a low profile. Theory grown from the sense of the narrative, one may hope, cannot establish autonomously the terms for defining reality. Dialogue here serves as eloquent testimony to attentive insight and judgment, as well as careful analysis, where the researcher considers human phenomena through fresh eyes and records them without banishing the sense of mystery or paradox within.

III. Curriculum and the Teacher's Counsel

> One can go and ask oneself whether the relationship of the storyteller to his material, human life, is not in itself a craftman's relationship, whether it is not his very task to fashion the raw material of experience, his own and that of others, in a solid, useful, and unique way. ... Seen in this way, the storyteller joins the ranks of the teachers and the sages. He has counsel—not for a few situations, ... but for many, like the sage. For it is granted to him to reach back to a whole lifetime (a life, incidentally, that comprises not only his own experience but no little of the experience of others; what the storyteller knows from hearsay is added to his own). His gift is the ability to relate his life; his distinction, to be able to tell his entire life. The storyteller; he is the man who could let the wick of his life be consumed completely by the gentle flame of his story. (5)

As the researcher necessarily becomes a witness to and an advocate for the context which dialogue, in part, creates, teachers necessarily become witness to the learning context. Much recent work in education, by default, denies the crucial posture of the evaluative stance, as close scrutiny of the goals of educating are given over solely to interpersonal relations. In discussions of what it means to educate, "what it means" is too often defined as social interaction leading to emancipatory goals. These discussions are based on the tacit assumption that the possibility for emancipatory goals rests only on establishing an I-Thou relationship between student and teacher.

This emphasis on the intersubjective results in a lack on the part of many educators to deal effectively with the notion David Hawkins (6) calls the "it", through which the I and the Thou, the teacher and the student, act in the process of learning and teaching. Benjamin's notion of counsel speaks to this issue, that a teacher is a life meter. She/he must notice, be aware of, make changes, using the subject matter as a vehicle for posing "questions" that strike the moment for learning.

The content of "class materials", the world in and through which the student and teacher meet, must be viewed carefully, as the significant starting point for dialogue to develop, from which social relationships are built and earned. If the curriculum is external to the individual's search for meaning it becomes alienating. By the same token, the curriculum requires a subject if it is to be disclosed; this disclosure takes place only if the student is already engaged in generating and regenerating "structures", and lends the curriculum her/his life, just as the storyteller does the story.

Thus, substantive curricular issues cannot be divorced from social interaction; the conceptual frameworks for dealing with content as well as interpersonal issues must be present. The picture of the "amphibious teacher", at home in the world of the child and the world of the task, is sometimes conjured up by writers who suggest that the pedagogic situation comes into being only as a result of the active intervention of the educator. Meaning here is only viewed as normative, as the origin of the only process that can

humanize social interaction; yet, how meaning is generated should be related to a detailed analysis of the structuring of the subject matter.

The practice in much educational literature in the U.S. of subordinating subject matter concern to interpersonal relations is perhaps a reaction to the sterility of an organized, bureaucratic school environment. Educators seek and advocate, in defense, patterns of association which are arranged for easy communication. Yet, teachers can associate authentically with students only through a community of subject matter and engagement which extends beyond the world of their intimacy. This image of the triangle, stability between two actors as they venture outward through shared question, is absent from most pedagogical considerations. (7) Researchers never get beyond their rejoinders to view the process of making curriculum. Theirs seems to be a critique against essentialists only, to remind us of but not go beyond the idea that social facts of the educational world emerge from structuring activities to become external and constraining, as part of a world that is both of our making and beyond our making. Studies in the "new sociologist" tradition are often entitled "Social Relations as Contexts of Learning in Schools" (8) but rarely "Learning in School as Contexts for Social Relations".

The point is that the commitment to establishing mutuality and trust between two people often stands alone in educational discussions, as if it is the necessary and sufficient condition for learning to occur, the dialogical relationship between the I and the Thou. While dialogue is necessary, it is not sufficient. Pedagogy is not just an existential encounter. We cannot assume that with that the rest will all just somehow happen, the child will be interested, learn, and so on. When Freire states that dialogue by necessity involves two subjects, that life is encounter, that "humanism is to make dialogue live" (9), he also makes clear that acceptance of dialogue as a means for carrying out this "ontological vocation" of humanism within the world and with each other, demands a concomitant acceptance of total responsibility for what critical action in the world entails. This is the nature of problematizing education. Education has no absolute value--nor has dialogue. It is for a purpose, always. The dialogue must not and in fact cannot exist solely as an intangible, intersubjective way of relating, but must be translated into the physical and social world--into the very mechanics of our lives. The subject matter not only inspires respect, commitment, and confrontation, but also, in Freire's words, empowers and makes accessible a greater part of the world. And commitment moves outward into the world, away from the dialogical partnership, and the school, into other realms, where the student also lives and needs direction.

It is how this content is developed through confronting and further augmenting the student's level of experience, that is important. What the teacher does as an involved, evaluating committed participant should start here. The dialogue is an essential, on-going process for continued evaluation, but it is only the movement through which other things get made, practiced, and remade again.

Dialogue as this movement between subjects does form a community. It must at least be grounded in mutuality, the affirmation by each individual of the other's presence as a meaning-maker. In this process, Freire stresses that

no one individual teaches another, nor is anyone self-taught. Instead, teaching is a social-political process, where human beings, in mediation with the world, teach each other.

But respect is earned, and it is the sphere of the between, located not primarily in either partner but in their interchange that is the locus for real learning. Education is more than communion. Neither the utterance nor the speaking voice has meaning apart from the other. Entrance to the dialogue cannot be forced; it must be volunteered.

In creating dialogue the teacher's actions, and the student's, are purposeful and deliberately willed. The teacher makes her/himself the living selection of the world, becomes a selective sieve, to meet and guide the student.

Dialogue, for Freire, is born of a critical matrix. The joint search for knowledge which is sponsored by a world which will be used and understood must be nurtured by love, hope, mutuality, faith and trust. But action in the world and that world's transformation, demands a projection outward from the dialogue, avoiding both the aimless, relative acceptance of all acts and the authoritarian subversion of the context in which dialogue may grow.

IV. Conclusion

> Storytelling does not aim to convey the pure essence of the thing, like information or a report. It sinks the thing into the life of the storyteller, in order to bring it out of him again. Thus traces of the storyteller cling to the story the way the handprints of the potter cling to the clay vessel. Storytellers tend to begin their story with a presentation of the circumstances in which they themselves have learned what is to follow. (10)

This inquiry into the nature of pedagogical theory and practice has merged the roles of the teacher and the researcher. The meaning of inquiry for the researcher, and teaching for the teacher, transcends dialogue. For Freire, this transcendance is the result of critical reflection. The only way to formulate one's project-in-the-world is to get distance from it in the form of intentionality and self-awareness.

> There would be no human action if there were no objective reality, no world to be the "not I" of man and to challenge him; just as there would be no human action if man were not a "project" if he were not able to transcend himself, to perceive his reality and understand it in order to transform it. (11)

Yet the possibility of transcendance also demands a clear sense of historicity in the world. If the educational venture, in it broadest sense encapsulating both research and teaching, is tied inextricably to a culture's tradition and imbued with its spirit, it follows that one of the major tasks for educators is to think critically about the past and its relationship to the

present. Historicity in this sense involves an entwining and simultaneously developing relationship between the individual's own moving life and the ongoing changes of the settings (both present and transmitted) in which she/he is embedded as a meaning maker.

For the educational enterprise this recognition of the human being as an encoded and encoding species demands some clarification of what words speak most powerfully to the living of a full life. What in fact, is the place of tradition, in both its negative sense—as being critical enough to assume a position against history—and its positive:

> Only through others do we gain true knowledge about ourselves . . . historical knowledge does not necessarily lead to the dissolution of the tradition in which we live: it can also enrich this tradition, confirm or alter it—in short, contribute to the discovery of our own identity. (12)

These examinations of the historicity of the present, not only unveil our natural and material environment, but also allow for a critical openness to the future, without which value, judgment, and reason are all suspect. For the only way to approach the future is through a critical appropriation and reappropriation of tradition.

It is at this juncture of past, present and future that educators must do serious thinking. Here is Benjamin's position as he mourns the loss of the authority of experience and thus the art of storytelling. It is here also that Berger and Luckman (13) locate homelessness in technological cultures. And it is here the Freire locates the possibility for education for critical consciousness and praxis.

> Problem-posing education affirms men as beings in the process of becoming—as unfinished reality. . . . In this incompletion and this awareness lie the very roots of education as an exclusively human manifestation. The unfinished character of men and the tranformational character of reality necessitate that education be an ongoing activity. (14)

The relativity that so often finds its way into our present thinking is perhaps rooted in the separation of the realization that discovery makes its own antecedent, that each history reorganizes the archive, that the proper attitude toward history is belief, not knowledge. It is the notion that every living thing also carries with it a part of that past with which it must come to terms in an intentional, useful way to make the future.

But how do researchers and teachers find and interpret and most importantly guide this heart of human meaning—and keep its liberating character? Perhaps not by probing around its edges and then stabbing through to its undersides. Mining destroys the living tissues of human discourse. The task becomes one of reaching the transparency of a phenomenon giving ourselves over to that clarity and communicating it justly, through our experience of it. For this reason, there seems some sense to the exhortation,

"Never trust the teller. Trust the tale". The task is not duplication of another's experience for the researcher or the expert's logical expression of subject matter for the teacher. Rather for both it is project.

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ARROGANCE AND HUMILITY IN THE CLASSROOM

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Dialogue cannot exist without humility. The naming of the world, through which men constantly re-create that world, cannot be an act of arrogance. Dialogue as the encounter of men addressed to the common task of learning and acting, is broken if the parties (or one of them) lack humility.

How can I dialogue if I always project ignorance onto others and never perceive my own? How can I dialogue if I start from the premise that the naming of the world is the task of an elite and that the presence of the people in history is a sign of deterioration, thus to be avoided? How can I dialogue if I am closed to—and even offended by the contribution of others? How can I dialogue if I am afraid of being displaced, the mere possibility causing me torment and weakness. Self-sufficiency is incompatible with dialogue. Men who lack humility (or have lost it) cannot come to the people, cannot be their partners in naming the world. Someone who can not acknowledge himself to be as mortal as everyone else still has a long way to go before he can reach the point of encounter. At the point of encounter there are neither utter ignoramuses nor perfect sages; there are only men who are attempting, together, to learn more than they now know. (1a)

Without dialogue there is no communication and without communication there can be no true education. (1b)

As a teaching assistant in the Psychology Department at the University of Michigan, I was startled one crisp autumn afternoon when a first term freshman approached me with the following words:

Why are arrogant professors and arrogant students the most respected people around here? It bothers me. Oh, well, maybe that's the way it has to be. Take professor . . . Maybe he's got a right to be so arrogant. He is a noted <u>expert</u> in his field. But, it still bothers me. Why do so many have to be so arrogant?

His thoughts caught me off guard; and yet, I knew that he was grasping at a "truth," one I often tried to ignore.

His insight matched many of my own experiences at this prestigious "multi-versity," and so they were troubling. I had observed that the ideas of humble, unassuming students with quiet "deliveries" are often attributed to other classmates because of their more assertive, if not aggressive, academic styles. To survive in this competitive atmosphere, many students quickly become proficient at "packaging and selling" their ideas and themselves. This

wins for them academic acclaim and sometimes even financial aid. Some become transformed into cool, calculating "academic tigers"--"disputatious, ill-tempered, mean spirited, believing firmly that the world's salvation depends on its adopting (their) master's views. (2)

Many aspiring assistant and associate professors adopt the same arrogant stance although perhaps for different reasons. Under constant pressure to obtain grants, conduct research, publish, carve an "academic niche" for themselves, and survive in their "intellectual hothouses," many appear anxious and defensive about their intellectual abilities and academic achievements. To mask their insecurities, they adopt a pretentious, aloof manner—hoping to create for students and colleagues (and possibly for themselves) an image of intellectual superiority.

Eminent "full" professors—noted university experts (despite their differing fields of expertise) are frequently the most charismatic and contemptuous of faculty members. Adelson describes them as "narcississtic"--keeping the audience's attention focused on themselves, inviting students to observe "the self's entanglement with ideas." (3) They often speak and write in "psychobabble," "educationese," or the jargon of their respective fields whose abstruseness crystallizes the myth of their intellectual elitism.

Humbleness, it appears, is not a valued commodity in academia. But, are arrogant people always the most respected in academia? From my personal experiences of teaching at two universities and from numerous talks with graduate and undergraduate students, it appears that arrogance is not valued at every institution of higher education. It is, however, cultivated to a great extent in those universities and colleges that exude an "intellectual elitism." Yet even within these institutions, many faculty and students are not arrogant. So the questions remain: What is arrogance in academia all about? Why does it exist? Why is it valued more than humility by some universities, faculty, and students? What function does arrogance serve?

This paper is not a definitive answer to these questions about the meanings of arrogance in academia. It is, rather, a composite of reflections about how arrogance is sometimes "lived out" within university classrooms. It is, I hope, a beginning toward understanding the significance, complexities, and subtleties of the dialectic of arrogance and humility in academia.

Four dialectical themes of education: Oppression (dehumanization) vs. Liberation (humanization), Static vs. Dynamic conception of reality, Banking vs. Problem-Posing Pedagogy, and Anti-Dialogue vs. Dialogue as a teaching method seem to influence whether arrogance or humility exists in and is valued within any given college classroom. They are discussed in this particular order because the toleration of oppression seems to support the static conception of the world which in turn often leads to the practice of banking education, anti-dialogue, and the valuing of arrogance. In contrast, the advocacy of humanization provides the basis for a dynamic conception of the world that facilitates the practice of problem-posing education, dialogue, and the valuing of humility.

Each theme needs to be discussed on both a systemic level—from an institutional standpoint and on an individual one--from the standpoints of both faculty and students. In discussing arrogance from these three perspectives, it

is then possible to postulate some of the functions arrogance serves.

Oppression vs. Liberation

As systems, American colleges and universities in general seem to encourage the existence of arrogance by the systemic oppression on which they are based and which they tolerate. American institutions of higher learning that foster "intellectual elitism" tend to support, inculcate, and perpetuate arrogance and discriminate against humility as a valued personality characteristic. In short, the American system of higher education seems dehumanizing for many of its participants.

The experiences of one of my Ph.D. student friends illustrates this dehumanization. He happened to be in a highly technical scientific field in which he was assigned problems each class period which were due the next; sometimes a single problem would take him days to calculate. His professor was noted for his "toughness." When this student arrived at class, the professor would not say a word. He would go silently to the chalkboard, fill it with numbers (his calculations of the assigned problems), and then dismiss class. There was no discussion, no communication, no dialogue--just assigned problems and numbers on the board, week after week, till one day my friend literally exploded with frustration. He stood up in this graduate class and screamed, "If we don't talk or discuss this or anything else today, I'm going to rip those numbers and the chalkboard right off the wall."

Whether or not one agrees with the actions of my angry friend, one has to admit that he did do something. He took back his right "to say his own word, to name his world." A not so unexpected ending to this story is that this incident was a turning point toward a more positive self image and a firmer belief in his own academic competencies, the turning point in what was to become a long term close friendship with this same professor, and a turning point in how the class operated that semester and henceforth.

The student's outburst catalyzed the professor and students to engage in dialogue for the first time. As in Freire's description of liberatory education, they became joint Subjects in their own searches for self-affirmation. Their dialogue eliminated the professor's prior arrogance. He became more humble. Their dialogue abolished the former self-depreciation and submissiveness of the students in the class. They became liberated. This student freed not only himself and other students from their oppressed student roles but also the professor from his oppressive teacher role.

Freire tells us that liberation is this mutual process freeing both teacher and student ". . . from the twin thraldom of silence and monologue." (4)

> This, then, is the great humanistic and historical task of the oppressed: to liberate themselves and their oppressors as well. The oppressors, who oppress, exploit, and rape by virtue of their power, cannot find in this power the strength to liberate either the oppressed or themselves. Only power that springs from the weakness of the oppressed will be sufficiently strong to free both. (5)

Many questions arise from this tale: Why was this professor so aloof and arrogant in the first place? Did he have a model of a "good teacher" who is a distant, superior "professional?" Did he think his teaching method was a good one, the only possible one, one mandated by his colleagues? How did he feel about this change? What caused him to change so rapidly? The questions seem endless.

Maybe everyone in academia would just like to be <u>human</u> but the system prevents it or the participants think for various reasons that they can not or should not display their <u>humanness</u>. Perhaps, this professor was exceptional in his ability and willingness to change. Perhaps, he was hoping someone would challenge his teaching style. Maybe this student was unusually courageous in his confrontation of an oppressive classroom situation. Maybe all of us simultaneously fear and long for similar opportunities to liberate ourselves. Maybe.

Freire states that oppression usually entails one group's manipulation, control, exploitation, and mystification of another. Some faculty feel coerced and manipulated into turning their classes into data collection activities for the research that they are mandated to continuously produce. The political views of young professors are influenced if not controlled by the firing or tenure refusal of those with "unfavorable" political ideologies. Some faculty feel alienated from their labor by an exploitative system in which salaries and promotions are sometimes unrelated to their teaching skills. All faculty confront the myth of the university—a non-competitive, apolitical community of scholars who share ideas and co-operatively solve the pertinent social problems of the day—with the realities of academic life—being overburdened with numerous committee assignments, heavy teaching loads, and constant demands for publications that will enhance the status of the university.

Students too often find the process of obtaining an undergraduate or graduate college education dehumanizing. One graduate student describes it this way:

> Its an amazing process. After you've been around for several years and put in your time, you're finally accepted as having some competency. Now you're a person. Not just a student. The irony is that you're really still the same person you were four years ago.

Many college students are not treated as worthy human beings until they "prove themselves" academically, but in the process they do not remain the same people. Students in most American higher education institutions undergo an extensive socialization/education process that instructs them that there is only one "right" way to view the world i.e., through "scientific," rational, objective methods and simultaneously encourages them to adopt an arrogant, intellectually superior manner once they have learned this "truth." The culmination of this dualistic process is often the creation of arrogant intellectual protégés who think they "know" and who continue a self-perpetuating cycle of academic arrogance.

Static vs. Dynamic Reality

The prevailing view of reality in the Social Sciences is that it is a static entity—a fixed quantity that people encounter and must grasp (with varying degrees of accuracy and amount) to be considered mentally healthy and/or knowledgeable. There is one world; there is one truth. Knowledge is a static commodity to be observed, measured, and transmitted. In this view, the world is a closed order, a given reality which must be accepted and to which one must adjust.

Faculty who hold this view tend to see themselves as "the transmitters" of knowledge. They are representatives of the positivist scientific tradition. Their role is to give to students this "correct" view of the world; to impart "knowledge." Adelson points out that as we remember being students, we too may envision this same image of a teacher.

> When we think of ourselves as we once were, as students, we tend to reconstruct ourselves at the feet of a great teacher—some great man, or perhaps only a kindly and devoted one—someone who infused in us whatever modest claim to merit we possess. Now this may indeed have happened to us; but I have come to feel that whether or not it has we will rearrange the past to imagine that it has. There is something in us, something almost archetypal, that makes us feel that we achieved our maturity only by taking over the strength and wisdom of our teachers. (6)

In one way or another, college initiates often learn that they are devoid of "the truth" and therefore "intellectually naive" or "stupid." They are to be filled with the knowledge of the intellectual experts around them, and this becomes their mission. Day after day they sit in classrooms and listen to renowned professors lecture on their particular "specialties of truth." The students, like little school children, chatter in the hallways about the credentials and academic accolades of these sages and secretly hope to someday acquire a similar dossier of academic awards, publications, and professional activities.

Many take a popular road toward duplication of this academic style by adopting one of these faculty members as their mentor. Openly or covertly, consciously or unconsciously, over time, his (and it still is usually a male) academic "style" is mimicked. They imitate how he thinks and what he thinks; how he speaks and what he says; and even how he looks and what he wears. Adelson reiterates, "Almost all of us . . . can chip in with similar anecdotes, where the disciples of an impressive teacher—the kind word is 'dynamic' -- (take) over his mannerisms, speech, habits, tastes, interests, eccentricities, and what have you. (7)

Then they have "it." They know, and they know how to act. Some are already in graduate school. They have taken the required theoretical courses, spent many a Saturday at the computer center, duplicated myriads of assigned articles, and paid for reams of well typed, edited, and proofread papers. They are "finished;" they are "educated;" they have acquired "the knowledge package."

A belief in a static reality often leads those who hold it (administrators, faculty, or students) to feel superior to "the uneducated,"--those who have not learned this truth, this true way of seeing and living in the world. Arrogance is this sense of superiority and smugness in "the educated."

Freire tells us that another conception of reality exists--a dynamic or transformative one. In this view, human beings are seen as unfinished, evolving Subjects acting upon their world that is itself continuously changing. Each is a partner in the joint venture of discovering and knowing a piece of reality. Both faculty and students learn that they are not self-sufficient. Together, they learn that they are interdependent (a term intensely disliked by some "rugged American individualists"). They learn that they do not have all the answers and cannot find them alone. Humbled by their incompleteness, by their joint dependence on each other, and by their evolving complexities as human beings, the propensity toward arrogance is precluded.

Banking vs. Problem Posing Pedagogy

Freire says if education is not perceived as a dynamic interactive process, it "becomes an act of depositing, in which the students are the depositories and the teacher is the depositor. Instead of communicating, the teacher issues communiques and makes deposits which the students passively receive, memorize, and repeat." (8) He labels this the banking conception of education; it is the pedagogy found in many American institutions of higher education.

In banking education, the reciprocal learning/teaching functions of all participants does not take place. Instead, students passively carry out their assignments, listen to innuendoes about their "ignorance," blindly obey university rules and regulations, and admit their "inferiority" to the professors "under whom" they study. They "take" classes in which the curriculum and class objectives are predetermined (to measure teacher accountability) and have little say in what they want or need to learn.

> In the banking concept of education, knowledge is a gift bestowed by those who consider themselves knowledgeable upon those whom they consider to know nothing. Projecting an absolute ignorance onto others, a characteristic of the ideology of oppression, negates education and knowledge as processes of inquiry. The teacher presents himself to his students as their opposite; by considering their ignorance absolute, he justifies his own existence. The students, alienated like the slave in the Hegelian dialectic, accept their ignorance as justifying the teacher's existence--but, unlike the slave, they never discover that they educate the teacher. (9)

In talking with some undergraduates (particularly those of a minority status), I have sometimes been shocked at the blatantly derogatory remarks made about them by certain faculty, when the students have failed to "take in," understand, or accept particular lecture points.

Can't you understand anything?
You just don't know anything, do you?
How did you ever get admitted here?

The irony of banking education is that "those educated"--those that "know" and those they denigrate--"the uneducated" are <u>both</u> subjected to the same self fulfilling prophecy that seems inherent in the American system of higher education. They must learn not to be humble--in order to be arrogant. And that is the root of their "ignorance."

Other students attending intellectually elitist colleges or universities hear different messages. They do not receive derogatory comments. They are told repeatedly of the prestige of the college they attend and feel proud "to be accepted by such a distinguished institution." They endure intense competition with other students in the classroom and feel glad that they "can hold their own" in these intellectual tugs-of-war. Finally, they are assured that graduation from this particular renowned university will land them a coveted slot in a desirable medical school, a partnership in a prestigious law firm, or a faculty position at "another good university." These students are of course prone to be arrogant. They have been told repeatedly that they "are better and brighter," and they believe it is true.

Still another group of undergraduates internalizes (in some form or another) the ignorance or intellectual inferiority attributed to them by their professors. They are made to lack confidence in themselves. When some become graduate students, they often mask their inferior feelings by acting out the attitudes of intellectual superiority and smugness with which they have previously had to deal. They become the insensitive, autocratic, haughty teaching assistants about whom the undergraduates complain. They become perpetuators of banking education.

Perhaps the most common phenomenon in American college classrooms is, however, simply an alienation of both the students and faculty from the educational process and from each other. Freire points out that today much of what goes on in university classrooms like other classrooms is "verbalism." Verbalism is pure reflection without action. The "full professor" fills the students with "knowledge." The professor lectures, and the students listen and take notes.

> The teacher talks about reality as if it were motionless, static, compartmentalized, and predictable. Or else he expounds on a topic completely alien to the existential experience of the students. His task is to "fill" the students with the contents of his narration--contents which are detached from reality, disconnected from the totality that engendered them and could give them significance. Words are emptied of their concreteness and become a hollow, alienated, and alienating verbosity. (10)

Could it be different? Freire says yes. American universities could adopt a "problem-posing pedagogy." Students and faculty participating in problem-posing education would not be alienated from the dual teaching/learn-

ing process. They would engage as "co-equals" to examine actively, intentionally, and critically the world they share. Together, they would teach each other, "mediated by the world." (11) They could join each other in a journey of unveiling, demythologizing, and re-creating their reality with dialogue as their vehicle.

Anti-Dialogue vs. Dialogue

Anti-dialogue (the lecture and other teaching methods that eliminate or deemphasize equal sharing between teacher and students) views students as objects or things and their teacher as the only active "knowing" Subject in the classroom. Students are expected to accept the paternalization of the professors, the mystification of knowledge (including its atomization into "models," "majors," and university "departments"), and the myth of their own ignorance.

Anti-dialogue divides students against each other because of their internalized images of themselves as "intellectual inferiors." They speak not with each other but to impress the professors. They often become attracted to and emulate professors least open to dialogue. Students sometimes even fake competencies and make derogatory remarks about each other or each others' ideas to improve their own status in the professors' eyes.

Michael Kahn demonstrates that this "anti-dialogue" can take place in several classroom prototypes. Two are:

(1) The Free for All: There is a prize out there in the middle of the floor. It may be the instructor's approval or it may be one's own self-esteem, but it's there and the goal is to win it and anything goes. You win by looking not just smart, but by looking smarter. And that means its just as important to make them look dumb as to make you look smart.

(2) The Beauty Contest: This is the class in which I parade my idea by yours in its bathing suit and high heels seeking your admiration. When its off the runway, I go to the dressing room and get ready for my next appearance while you're parading your idea. Of course, I'm not paying any attention to yours. (12)

In contrast to these classrooms, how would college classrooms be if dialogue were the pedagogical method? In such classrooms, both students and faculty would engage in genuine communication with each other with the goals of critically analyzing, understanding, and changing the world. Dialogue would necessitate and generate critical thinking. Each member of the dialogue would be a teacher/learner. As Freire reminds us, "Those who are called to teach must first learn how to continue learning when they begin to teach." (13) Knowing oneselves as teacher/learners engaged in the joint process of naming the world, all would be humbled. Dialogue has no use for arrogance.

Some Functions of Arrogance

How does the toleration, support, and valuing of arrogance serve the university or college as a system?

It helps the university perpetuate itself as a social institution in status quo fasion.

It fosters a conception of reality in which people are stratified into those who "know," are "educated," and who are therefore "superior" from those who are "ignorant," "uneducated," and even in need of "guidance" from the "educated."

It discourages social change by telling people that they must adjust to and accept "the truths"--"the reality" that they learn about in the process of "being educated."

What functions does arrogance serve for the faculty?

It may mask the anxiety of academicians who are intellectually insecure--because of their personal backgrounds, academic training, and perceived intellectual abilities, and/or teaching skills.

It may be adopted consciously as "the correct professional stance," i.e., keeping a required distance from students.

Some faculty may deem it necessary to display arrogance to survive in what they experience as a competitive Darwinian jungle of intellects, constant academic demands for achievement, and continuous evaluations.

What uses does arrogance serve for students?

They may feel that it is the necessary modus operandi in a highly competitive, intellectually demanding atmosphere.

They may use it to mask their anxieties about their intellectual and/or academic abilities.

They may adopt an arrogant style as they complete their undergraduate education i.e., and feel "superior" because they are "educated."

They may identify with and emulate the arrogance of their professors to satisfy a multitude of varying identity needs typical of young people who are college age.

Arrogance seems to exist, be valued, and serve specific functions for the

university system, faculty, and students because each has chosen to tolerate or support the anti-human, dialectial, educational themes of: oppression, static reality, banking education, and anti-dialogue.

Arrogance in academia is complex and has many paradoxes and subtleties. First, arrogance may be misperceived at the system level of the university or college because the university (perhaps more than the college) is so many things to so many people. A particular university might envision itself as an academic community of scholars whose sole purpose is to be a format for sharing ideas; whereas, students might perceive the university's main function as job training. Arrogance may be attributed to a college or university simply because of this class of interests.

A similar misperception may evolve about faculty. Faculty may be misperceived as arrogant when they differ from students in their abilities to and manner of expressing their ideas. Their language may differ from students'. They may be continuously eloquent (an irritating characteristic to those of us who are not.) They just may be exceptionally brilliant but not arrogant!

Some of the paradoxes of academic arrogance are: students and faculty whose behaviors are arrogant but whose speech is not and vice versa, faculty who are professionally but not personally arrogant and vice versa, and universities whose rhetoric is student oriented and humanistic but whose policies are elitist and dehumanizing and vice versa.

Many modes of connections bind students and teachers to each other, and unfortunately arrogance is one of them. Perhaps as we continue to discuss the phenomenon of arrogance in academia, we will be better able to understand and practice the humility necessary for true education—the humility that Paulo Freire both advocates and embodies.

Conclusion

What would American college and university classrooms be like if humility were valued? If it were valued, humble people would no longer be dismissed as being "soft" or nonassertive. No one would be considered the bearer of "the truth." Real academic communities could be formed because people would want to share their ideas and themselves. The interdependence and the transformative nature of reality and of human beings would be understood. Dialogue, critical thinking, and actions for freedom would be possible. The search for human completion, for living humanely, for the humanization of all participants in American higher education institutions would be possible.

If humility were valued, education would be possible.*

*This paper would not be complete without a note of celebration for the humility and humanness of Paulo Freire, members of the University of Michigan phenomenology seminar, and members of my dissertation committee with whom I have participated in education for liberation—an experience that has transformed my life.

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PAULO FREIRE: SOURCES OF PEDAGOGY

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Nearly a decade ago a prominent adult educator had the following to say about Paulo Freire's pedagogy:

> Freire's pedagogy offers neither fresh ideas concerning the methodology of adult education nor practical guidance for implementing the revolution. The literature of adult education contains more complete and systematic guidance for the planning and conducting of programs than can be found in his pedagogy. (1)

In part, this observation may be so. Much of Freire's pedagogy is not new. By emphasizing the development of critical awareness, active rather than passive learning, and dialogical discussion as a prime educational method, Freire echoes the teachings of many adult educators. Eduard Lindeman, for example, writing over fifty years ago notes:

> Small groups of aspiring adults who desire to keep their minds fresh and vigorous; who begin to learn by confronting pertinent situations; who dig down into the reservoirs of their experience before resorting to texts and secondary facts; who are led in the discussion by teachers who are also searchers after wisdom and not oracles: this constitutes the setting for adult education, the modern quest for life's meaning. (2)

Yet, I am troubled by adult educators who glibly dismiss Freire as simply another prophet with an old message. This insensitivity betrays a self-righteousness among many contemporary educators which is distasteful. If Freire's plea for a humane pedagogy grounded in critical awareness and the mutual respect of all parties involved in a learning situation is not new, so what! Adult education shall not suffer from the repetition of such themes.

But my concern is not to debate Paulo Freire's methodological contribution to the adult education literature. Rather, I wish to briefly respond to another quality of Freire: his passion. Harry Overstreet, a major adult education movement spokesman for half a century knew well the place of passion in adult education:

> . . . facts are not everything. There must be some passion about the business of adult education. For one thing, we must care about other people, we must respect their intelligence and integrity, and we must strive to give them every possible opportunity to develop their potential powers.
>
> We must also care intensely about furthering a social purpose
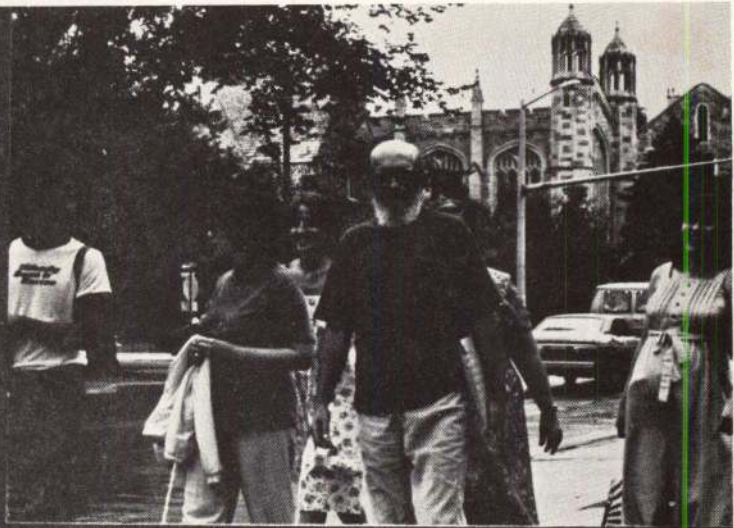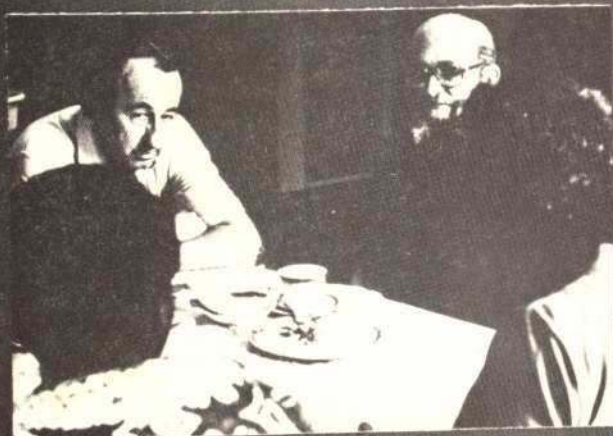
and must direct our efforts toward the creation of conditions that will make this social purpose come alive. (3)

Years ago, passionate adult education leaders may have been commonplace. One senses this fervor in the writings of Harry and Bonaro Overstreet, Eduard Lindeman, Dorothy Canfield Fisher, Alvin Johnson and numerous others. But today these voices are all but silent. And few new voices have their ability to excite in us a commitment to the education of adults. Freire is an exception.

Freire's passion seems to have emerged from his own personal experiences of suffering and conflict and the need to resolve this conflict and inhumanity. His commitment to adult education, I feel, is defined by this perspective. Freire's pedagogy surfaces as a piercing cry for justice, originating in feelings that are aroused and not mere intellectual abstractions. Its focus is the unity of thought and action, for by acting upon reflection, one confronts conflict.

Buttressing Freire's passion is a firm commitment to the "word". He writes:

> . . . the word is more than just an instrument which makes dialogue possible; accordingly we must seek its constitutive elements. Within the word we find two dimensions, reflection and action, in such radical interaction that if one is sacrificed--even in part--the other immediately suffers. There is no true word that is not at the same time a praxis. Thus, to speak a true word is to transform the world. (4)

Words for Freire are more than educational tools--they help us understand as well as identify our surroundings. A "hoe" for example is not only a label for a farming instrument. This word has a history, has consequence. It can unfold the unity and interrelatedness of farming and technology, of man and nature; it can illustrate freedom and it can illustrate oppression. A "hoe" both reveals culture and is a product of it. It is a word which identifies an object yet is loaded with meaning and significance.

Freire's writings, his work in Brazil, Chile, and Guinea-Bissau, unfold a unity of thought and action which is often absent from the work of his colleagues. He has shown that discovery has consequence. If the "hoe" is identified as a tool of oppression, then the oppressive situation can no longer be ignored. To ignore it drains one's inquiry of meaning. Yet to act naively without thoroughly weighing outcomes is the path of the fool. Thought without action Freire calls mere verbalism. Action without thought he views as nothing more than activism. It is the unity of the two--the willingness to search and the necessity to act--which once realized can no longer be disengaged.

Freire's pedagogy appears to have evolved as a direct response to the sufferings of people, as in the case of his work with adult literacy in Brazil. The consequence for Paulo Freire was exile. His pedagogy screams for justice as well as method. It pleads with educators to lift their eyes from computer

print outs and to know the nature of oppression around them, to know injustice, and to know the source of their humaneness. Freire writes:

> To be human is to engage in relationships with others and with the world. It is to experience that world as an objective reality, independent of oneself, capable of being known. (5)

Elsewhere he states:

> In my conversation with educators, I have always stressed the need for political clarity—especially with regard to whose interests they are serving—rather than techniques and methods. (6)

It is his call for humaneness, for ideological and political clarity, for unity of thought and action on the part of educators which separates Freire from many contemporary workers in the field of adult education who appear concerned primarily with pedagogy detached from the social-political reality in which they live. This theme is echoed in the writings of a few adult educators. Arthur Lloyd, for example, challenges his colleagues to heed Freire's message:

> The problem that Freire indirectly poses for American adult educators has to do with the neutrality of education: from whose interests does education serve? (7)

Jack London pushes adult educators further:

> An interesting exercise might be that each adult educator reflect upon the oppressive pressures imposed upon him by his own organization. To what extent have adult educators sought to awaken their own awareness of the social-economic-political reality which influences their lives, and to what extent do they have any power to transform their reality. (8)

As Overstreet suggests "there must be passion about the business of adult education." And, Freire exemplifies this quality. He continues a long tradition of adult educators who zealously work toward a more critically aware citizenry. Contemporary adult educators who belittle Freire's methodological contribution to their field, might consider instead the source of Paulo Freire's pedagogy, i.e., the awareness of the social, economic and political reality, and the consequence of that awareness. They too might be moved by his passionate commitment to the education of adults.

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THE CONCEPT OF THE ENEMY

REFLECTIONS ON THE STRATEGIC USE OF LANGUAGE

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One of the most important contributions Paulo Freire has made to our life and work has been through his stress on the politics of language and culture. His emphasis on the ways in which reality is clarified or mystified through manipulation of key symbols is a crucial issue in the development of political consciousness and in the generation of action for change. As he points out, the relationship is reciprocal: the meanings we create define the struggle, and active engagement in struggle creates new meanings.

In this brief essay, we explore the concept of "enemy". This particular concept is central to our scientific analysis of social systems, and in our planning of actions for social change and social justice. The essay was prepared during the Passover-Easter weekend of 1981. The themes of Oppression and Revolutionary Struggle for Liberation that so mark the Jewish Passover, and the themes of the Struggle to live out the reality of the Resurrection that so mark the Christian Easter, seemed a most propitious setting for thoughts about these problems.

This essay is explorative, and is the first step in a longer exploration. It is also a partisan exploration: it should come as no surprise that the concept of enemy has certain meanings and utilities for some social groups, and other meanings and utilities for other groups. All attempts to explore and clarify a cultural symbol are political acts; as such, they must be undertaken in ways that are cognizant of and responsive to active political struggle. An "abstract" analysis, done apart from the context of struggle, would lead to abstract and vague conclusions. An analysis undertaken from a different political stance than ours, from a different position in the struggle for social justice, would of course come to different conclusions regarding the acceptable meaning and utility of the concept of enemy.

Why Is the Concept of "Enemy" So Challenging?

Examination of social scientific literature relevant to social change indicates only sporadic use of the concept of enemy. Some analysts and observers use it often and with clarity; others use muddled and inconsistent versions of a general concept; and still others fail to use the concept—or even object to its use. Why, then, do we find it an attractive and challenging concept?

One reason the concept is important to us is precisely that it is used rarely, and often in muddled fashion, in social scientific analyses of change. At the same time, it is commonly used by persons actively engaged in struggles for change. Thus, it is one example of ideas that have very different

legitimacy in the world of action and the world of the academic analyst. Since we often work on the cusp of both scientific and activist frames of reference, clarification of this term might help us illuminate the role of science in legitimating and in using other provocative ideas and concepts.

A second reason the concept is attractive to us is that its use appears to jar contemporary liberal sensibilities. As such, it reminds us of the need to conduct intellectual and political analyses that challenge the liberal and functionalist bias in American politics and social science. It forces us to try to account for conflict, oppression and evil. It reminds us, moreover, of the reality of systematic violence, whereby powerful groups pursue their privileged interests through physical and psychological coercion. Since our own relatively privileged status sometimes blinds us to this reality, we welcome the need to remain aware of how the reality of an enemy is masked by statements of cooperation, paternalistic concern and victim blaming. Moreover, the concept of enemy implies a struggle, and its use presses us to conceptualize social systems and social change in ways that highlight a constant struggle against oppression and evil.

A third major reason the concept is important to us is that we have experienced oppression and violation personally, and thus have direct experience with enemies. To deny the term thus denies part of our own experience. We think this is true of almost all people, although many do deny or expunge such memories in the interest of "more adequate coping" or "a more rational analysis". The objective reality of racial and sexual oppression in America is incontrovertible. The ways in which working class people, of all races and sexes, experience oppression is harder to demonstrate to some people, but the evidence is once again overwhelming. And as Erich Fromm reminds us, children typically experience oppression as a normal part of their early life:

> Infants and children . . . fight against suppression of their freedom . . . The adults behave like any elite whose power is challenged. They use physical force, often blended with bribery, to protect their position. As a result, most children surrender and prefer submission to constant torment. All human beings share the common experience of once having been powerless and of having fought for their freedom. That is why one may assume that every human being . . . has acquired in his childhood a revolutionary potential that, though dormant for a long time, might be utilized under special circumstances. (1)

A fourth reason the concept of enemy is attractive to us is that its conscious and deliberate use denies the consensus images of the world that we have been taught. If enemies exist, then harmony and friendship are not universal realities. If enemies exist, then oppression and violence (racism and sexism, colonial exploitation) are not accidents, temporary incidents, or historically inevitable happenstances. To pretend, to believe, to argue, that enemies do not exist is to see the world dimly, through rose colored glasses. Coherent and effective action for change cannot afford such mystification, but must be grounded in analyses that portray the world as it is.

All four bases of the concept of enemy link to principles Freire himself suggests, and our use of the concept has it roots in his writings. He constantly stresses: the need for revised intellectual analyses and language that describe oppressed peoples' realities in direct terms; the intellectual analysis of a world with oppressors; the struggle to see how each of us carries the mark of that oppression, and perhaps how we pass it on; and the need to think and see clearly as a complement to action for change. As he also suggests, however, neither this analysis nor its acceptance by others will be easy:

> Any change . . . necessarily provokes resistance from the old ideolo-
> gy that survives in the face of forces to create a new society. (2)

What Is An Enemy . . . and What Is Not?

The emotionally and politically "loaded" character of the concept of enemy makes it difficult to use with precision, and difficult to employ in strategic planning. As we have tried to think clearly, and to anticipate issues others might raise, we have found it helpful to ask several core questions. The answers to these questions help frame and define our concept of enemy. (3)

Are all people with whom we disagree enemies? No! Disagreement alone is not the telling mark of an enemy relationship. However, it may be a place to start in attempting to discern underlying patterns of power and control. Enemies are people who disagree with us about basic and fundamental aspects or goals of our common life, who have the power to oppress us and do violence in the enforcement of their will, and who actually do exercise this oppressive power and control against our interests and values. Major disagreements about core human values are not simply individual matters, but are products of race, sex, and class background and their ensuing justifications for interest-centered action. When members of one class (or race or sex) have the power to enforce their will and actually act in ways that oppress others with their preferred policies and programs, then they are our enemies. (4)

Are all people who hurt us our enemies? No! Many hurts are accidental, unsystematic and without organized political meaning. However, when people who inflict hurt act out of opposing class interests, and when their actions systematically do physical or emotional violence (inflict pain, disadvantage, poverty, anxiety, cultural confusion and loss of identity, etc.), then they are acting as enemies. Thus, the concept of enemy is inseparable from the relationship between oppressor and oppressed. Deliberate action whereby this relationship is identified and transformed is the key to Freire's concept of conscientization.

Are all enemies conscious of what they are doing? No! Many enemies are as mystified and "illiterate" about the prevailing culture as are many of our comrades. They may not "know" others are in pain and oppressed. They may not "know" they are acting in ways that contribute to this oppression. They may not even "know" they are acting as members of a class with oppressive interests. However, their lack of consciousness does not mean they are acting any less as an enemy. A lack of subjective consciousness does not alter objective class location and consequent behavior, nor the impact of such

behavior on others. As conscious realization is irrelevant to the denotation of an enemy, so are protestations of innocence or lack of intent to cause harm and oppression.

Are oppressed people somebody's enemies? Perhaps. Certainly they are made out to be. In one sense, they are the enemies of their enemies: oppressors must be fearful of some sort of retaliation. However, since oppressed groups seldom have the power to dominate their powerful enemies, it is a strange twist of the concept to apply it reciprocally. As Freire notes:

> And this is a radical difference between the violence of the oppresser and the violence of the oppressed. That of the former is exercised in order to express the violence implicit in exploitation and domination. That of the latter is used to eliminate violence through the revolutionary transformation of the reality that makes it possible. (5)

This may seem solipsistic and naive, but only to those who deny the reality of power—the power to exert violence or not—and who wish to reduce all human acts to their personal meaning alone. Ruling classes create their own enemies, as a by-product of actions that dominate and gain/maintain privilege. If there be a choice, let those with power exercise it.

Are reifications of ourselves and our failings the enemy? Is greed the real enemy? Is apathy? Ignorance? Human nature? Poverty? No. The enemy is the class of oppressors who stand at the helm of historic forces, and who dominate and gain from the ebb and flow of political-economic trends. In so doing, they manage and disseminate a culture that justifies their privilege and disparages and denies others' humanity and rights. In order to maintain such control, our enemies have, over the years, created weaknesses in us and in oppressed groups. Sometimes, these weaknesses come to pass, and sometimes they only appear to be true. But these weaknesses are not the enemy; rather, they are evidence of how our enemies can destroy us from within. As Freire notes:

> This (colonial) system could not help but reproduce in children and youth the profile that colonial ideology had itself created for them; namely, that of inferior beings, lacking in all ability; their only salvation lay in becoming "white" or "black with white souls". (6)

These are familiar words to those acquainted with arguments about "inferior native intelligence", the "culture of poverty", etc.

Are our enemies capable of being transformed? Yes! But, their transformation is not the result of a series of individual educational efforts, or incantations of love and charity. Rather, our enemies can be transformed if and when they alter their class position and their privileged status. This is not accomplished easily, nor without confusion and conflict. As they shed the perquisites (and sometimes the burdens) of unmerited power and privilege, they no longer oppress others. Then they are transformed. At a collective level, the enemy relationship vanishes when the oppressive class relationship is

altered. As Freire notes regarding middle class educators and intellectuals:

> In actual practice . . . many of these teachers are conditioned by their class position and by the myths of their superiority in relation to the peasants and workers. They assimilate these myths during their own class education and reduce the learners to mere depositories for their knowledge. Instead of challenging the peasants to "read" their reality, they offer discourses to the peasants in a language they are unable to understand. (7a)
>
> Without the "reconversion" upon which Amilcal Cabral insisted so frequently, it is not possible for the middle-class intellectual to internalize the liberation struggle and to be integrated within it. (7b)
>
> I am convinced that it is easier to create a new type of intellectual—forged in the unity between practice and theory, manual and intellectual work—than to reeducate an elitist intellectual. When I say it is easier, I do not discount the validity of such reeducation when it does occur.
>
> The challenge for such a society is not to continue creating elitist intellectuals so that they can commit suicide, but rather to prevent their formation in the first place. (7c)

How should we relate with our enemies? Warily! We can relate to them with caring and concern, and perhaps even with love. Indeed, some feminists argue that the loving bond of sexual intimacy can be a vital integrative factor between women and their otherwise oppressive male associates. On occasion, we can work collaboratively, or in a coalition, with our enemies. The history of black-white relations in America testifies to the possibility of coalitions; it also emphasizes the necessity of engaging in them cautiously. We certainly may sup and converse with our enemies. But warily! For they are our enemies still, even if the oppression and violence surrounding and defining the relationship is inert or covert for some time. Should we become watchful and unalert, and therefore vulnerable to attack, we would have lost sight of the reality of our position and of class oppression in the society. It is an unavoidable human tragedy that such wariness makes true dialogue, true cooperation, and truly human relationships very scarce indeed.

What shall we do to our enemies? Mostly, we should overcome them. We also must resist oppression, even if we cannot overcome it. Multiple strategies are available to deal with an enemy who has already dehumanized him/herself by acts of domination and oppression. Non-violent direct action is preferred, because it protects life while confronting (and perhaps altering or transforming) oppression. But non-violence does not work in all situations, especially when authorities persist in violence. (8) Then the effort to resist oppression inevitably involves the possibility of armed struggle.

It should be clear from this discussion that we find the concept of enemy a fruitful and empowering one. It demystifies many aspects of this world, affixes responsibility for seeing and acting more clearly, and thus makes it

more possible to resist oppression. But many other people and groups object to or avoid the concept. Why?

Why Do Some People and Groups Avoid or Deny the Concept of Enemy?

It is reasonable that groups experiencing systematic hurt and oppression should see those responsible for perpetrating such circumstances as their enemy. Others not familiar with these circumstances, or perhaps even involved in creating/maintaining them, should object to such labels, especially as they may be applied to themselves. In our experience, not only groups in power, but academics and professional practitioners of planned social change rarely use the term. Why? We recognize the personal and speculative limits of a discussion of these issues, but offer these conjectures as a starting point for further analysis and dialogue around use and non-use of the concept of enemy.

Does the concept threaten ego or self-perception? As discussed previously, the concept of the enemy raises the spectre of serious hurt and injury to oppressed people. It also connotes the possiblity of identifying those involved in doing the hurting. This is an unpleasant if not repugnant reality for all involved. For privileged people and groups, consciousness of being responsible for pain and violence is threatening and guilt provoking. At the very least, it raises the questions: "How is it that I am powerful and privileged, or comfortable and content, when others are seriously oppressed and hurt?" "What is my/our responsibility for the way things are--including my comfort and privilege and others' exploitation and poverty?"

One set of answers to these questions avoids responsibility. It suggests privilege is bestowed on those who merit it—whose ancestors worked hard or whose personal and group history merit substantial rewards. In this view, privilege is legitimate, and power is exercised fairly and in the interests of all peoples.

Another set of answers raises the possibility that people with privilege and comfort, with power and control, may be the enemy of the oppressed. This is likely to lead to substantial guilt and discomfort. For some, such guilt is paralyzing, and leads to denial and avoidance of the question, the answer, and any personal meaning to the concept itself. For others, the effort to meet the question clearly, and to avoid being the enemy, leads to a disruptive but life-transforming journey—to what Freire calls "class suicide".

Does the concept of enemy dehumanize? The concept of enemy focuses on the behavior of oppressor groups, and depicts the reality of their actions in negative terms. Moreover, action is legitimized to struggle against this behavior, and perhaps to transform or overcome the enemy. Some people opposed to the concept contend that it dehumanizes people by refusing to acknowledge the persons involved. Even people in oppressor roles may not "want" to be there, may not "like" what they are doing, may be human, too. They should not be identified or related to as objects.

This view fails to distinguish between the powerful and the powerless, and fails to acknowledge what the concentrated exercise of power does to oppressed peoples. The discomfort oppressors face in not being treated as

"human" simply does not belong on the same scale as the pain and exploitation experienced by the oppressed. Moreover, the pain or discomfort of individual oppressors is not the issue, no more than is their intent ("want") or personal preference ("like"). The issue is one of analyzing and depicting a class relationship, and suggesting or clarifying ensuing class struggle.

In many ways, the concept of enemy can lend dignity to this class relationship and struggle. By placing issues in a proper political context, we can avoid trivializing labels and concepts which often portray members of oppressor groups as "stupid", "pathological", "personally evil" and the like. They may be none of these, and the concept of enemy assumes little of a personal or personally pathologic nature. Moreover, opponents of the concept of enemy often fail to recognize that it is possible to love one's enemy, to recognize him or her as human while counteracting his or her negative impact on others. In fact, Freire argues that only acts that prevent oppression can liberate oppressors from the damnation of their own behavior: in this view, limiting oppressive behavior may be in itself an act of love for one's oppressor.

The struggle for liberation makes it critical to perceive one's enemy in human terms. Only then can his/her vulnerability be demystified and strategically attacked. Only then can one engage in a personal and human, rather than abstract and ideological, struggle for change. As Freire notes:

> Radicalization . . . is predominantly critical, loving, humble and communicative, and therefore a positive stance. The man who has made a radical option does not deny another man's right to choose, nor does he try to impose his own choice . . . . He tries to convince and convert, not to crush his opponent. The radical does, however, have the duty, imposed by love itself, to react against the violence of those who try to silence him--of those who, in the name of freedom, kill his freedom and their own. To be radical does not imply self-flagellation. Radicals cannot passively accept a situation in which the excessive power of a few leads to the dehumanization of all. (9)

Is the concept of enemy extremist and arrogant? Is it presumptuous and arrogant to presume we can name the enemy and act against him or her? Some argue that this stance assumes a great deal of knowledge, and encourages people to act with "right" and certainty even in the face of counter-arguments. People aware of the dangers of orthodoxy and orthopraxy often suggest that the concept of enemy generates an unsubstantiated and undifferentiated rejection and hatred of certain others. As such, it leads to extreme (and often erroneous or unwise) actions against presumed enemies. It may also romanticize oppressed groups and the nature of the struggle for liberation. Certainly such extremism exists; as Freire notes:

> Sectarianism is predominantly emotional and uncritical. It is arrogant, antidialogical and thus uncommunicative . . . The sectari- an creates nothing because he cannot love . . . Herein lies the inclination of the sectarian . . . for sloganizing, which generally

remains at the level of myth and half-truths, and attributes absolute value to the purely relative. The sectarian wishes the people to be present at the historical process as activists, maneuvered by intoxicating propaganda. They are not supposed to think. Someone else will think for them. (10)

Thus, the danger of extremism and arrogance is recognized; it is epitomized in sectarian action. But radical action avoids this trap. Reflection and analysis contained in a democratic dialogue is essential to a radical and revolutionary struggle. If these elements are involved in the identification of and struggle with the enemy they can correct potential arrogance and extremism, and promote a more conscious and loving struggle.

Arrogance and extremism are products of sectarian and closed-minded thinking, and of action and analysis that are not integrated. It is not extremist to identify the actions of dominators, nor to indicate the way they mystify their actions by keeping oppressed people "illiterate". It is not arrogant to say you see clearly, to dialogue with others about these perceptions or analyses, and then to act on and for new realities. Struggles against oppression must conduct careful analysis and dialogue, with love and democratic involvement of one's comrades, and must act vigorously for change. At the same time, action in the midst of oppression requires moral certitude, decisiveness and even righteousness. These are competing values and actions, and the total dominance of one over another leads either to arrogance and extremism, or to delay and paralysis. Radical (as opposed to sectarian) struggle requires a synthesis of inquiry and action, of theory and practice, of humility and certitude, and of love and righteous anger.

Is the concept of enemy a scientific concept? The concept of enemy presents several problems for the traditional social scientific perspective; some of these problems are rooted in the nature of science itself, while others are derived from the social location and institutional ties of science in American society. For instance, the traditional scientific perspective emphasizes neutrality, detachment, universal truth and conditional generalization. Moreover, the methodological canons of Western positivist science stress the need to separate the conduct of research on social problems from action taken to solve these problems. The concept of enemy, as we have discussed it, connotes partisan commitment, involvement in the world, plural realities for different groups, and sufficient certainty for even life-risking action. The identification and clarification of an enemy practically demands attention and active struggle with the situation of oppression. Thus, scientific disciplines often find a partisan and action-oriented concept—such as the enemy—illegitimate, distorted and potentially threatening.

In a somewhat different vein, the social role of social science makes it a major mechanism for conceptualizing and "naming" the world. Ruling groups interested in controlling the society, and in maintaining an order which legitimizes and protects their privileges, must be concerned with how the society is conceptualized (e.g., whether operating by merit or by arbitrary power, whether as fair or unfair, etc.). Thus, they may place pressure on science (and other institutions such as schools and the media), to describe and

explain, or "name", the world in certain ways. To the extent that large scale social science is dependent upon support from affluent and powerful groups, they may be quite vulnerable to these pressures. Under such circumstances, science may become part of the oppressor class and machinery, even while individuals claim their own objectivity and truthfulness. Whether operating on behalf of dominant groups' interests (consciously or unconsciously), or whether merely caught between conflicting pressures, scientists thus may be uncomfortable with the concept of enemy. They may, on occasion, try to delegitimize the concept, offering analyses of inequality and injustice that focus attention on abstractions (e.g., ignorance and poverty) or on the reactions of victims themselves (e.g., terrorists as the "enemy" of order and reason). These alternatives to the concept of enemy further buffer dominant groups from considering themselves, or being considered, much less named, as the enemy.

Does potential misuse of the concept outweigh its positive value? To label every action or group one dislikes as an enemy is to view life simplistically, and to commit the error of sectarianism. To conduct arrogant or extremist analysis, and to promulgate hatred for one's enemies falls into much the same trap. Misuse occurs: sometimes by our own comrades, and sometimes with the help of our enemies.

But to cease using the concept because of potential or occasional misuse fails to honor and humanize the victims of oppression. Failure to utilize the concept correctly often is accompanied by attempts to deny oppression, or to blame the victims of oppression for their own condition. Such distortion denies the role of social forces and of groups that are responsible for oppression and who could reduce if not eliminate this situation. The social truth of this concept and analysis should not be compromised simply because mistruths occasionally are generated in its name.

Some Consequences of Adopting the Concept of the Enemy

Adoption and acceptance of the concept of the enemy can help transform world views and alter behavior. Such change is seldom identical for different individuals and groups. To illuminate these issues, we provide some examples from our own experience. In citing these examples, we do not claim to "have arrived". We see many sisters and brothers taking much more substantial risks, and committing much more dramatic actions of resistance and transformation. We salute their responses to oppression, and to the active struggle against our/their enemies. Our personal examples are testimony to the importance of taking small steps where they can be taken, and of not being paralyzed by the enormous challenge of total transformation.

Acceptance of the concept of enemy is empowering our theory and our action. It is increasing our ability to identify groups who have been victimized, and to understand and act on this reality. It also is helping us analyze specific ways in which groups have created or contributed to oppression and exploitation. Thus, understanding the relation between oppressors and oppressed peoples is a key to understanding the entire society. Such understanding lays bare the masks of merit and justice with which the

privileged defend and justify their exploitative roles in society and its constituent organizations. This concept also is helping us appreciate and analyze the courage, intelligence and specific strategies by which groups and individuals resist oppression and its rationalization.

As enemies are identified, and the consequences of their behavior described, it has become important to us, as members of privileged groups, to try to understand how we carry these oppressive behaviors and attitudes within ourselves. As we consciously or unconsciously support oppression, we are the enemy of oppressed peoples ourselves, and do not have to look far to understand why and how the enemy operates. We have tried to cope with our white, male, professional and relatively affluent American status by trying to identify our roles, attitudes and behaviors as oppressors, and to understand the ways in which we may be active in resisting oppression. These analyses and changes are necessary for our fuller humanization, as well as for active involvement in struggles for liberation.

Our understanding of the concept of enemy has been forged in an active form of scholarship. Much of our work is conducted "in the field", and we most revere knowledge that has been created/tested against the experience of people involved in struggles for liberation. To do this work demands consciousness of our own status, openness to criticism, and willingness to take risks acting in alliance with oppressed peoples. These are all critical aspects of democratic dialogue. Thus, for us, scholarship is involved integrally with action and with the struggle against oppression. Most social science research in the U.S. has a different focus and role—a much different relation to action—and thus a different utility for the concept of enemy.

With the University, the concept of enemy stimulates a different understanding of the classroom and action to transform it. Processes of mystification deny the existence of oppression in this setting, and as a result, antagonistic and often enemied relations between professors and students are understood minimally. The dominant notion of education in the University is what Freire accurately has termed "banking" education.

(a) the teacher teaches and the students are taught.

(b) the teacher knows everything and the students know nothing.

(f) the teacher chooses and enforces his choice, and the students comply.

(i) the teacher confuses the authority of knowledge with his own professional authority, which he sets in opposition to the freedom of the students.

Thus, he notes that:

Education must begin with the solution of the teacher-student contradiction, by reconciling the poles of the contradiction so that both are simultaneously teachers and students. (11)

Without such resolution, student resistance and anger are seen as immature and inappropriate behaviors rather than the beginning of rebellion against oppression and a healthy search for dialogue. In our experience, classrooms with more student influence, and with content that focusses on real experiences with community conflict and struggle, represent important steps toward a liberating education.

As nominal (and more) members of the oppressor class, it is our particular responsibility to act from within . . . to challenge oppressive behaviors by other members of dominant classes. New world views, and new views of the University, cannot be separated from new struggles. Only in such struggles do new perspectives take on strength, as opposed to being held as tentative insights or facile generalizations.

Use of the concept of enemy is one path to more adequate analyses of the nature of oppression and revolutionary struggle. It is one weapon in the attempt to reunderstand and rename the world more accurately and more clearly in the experience of oppressed peoples. Its use can help direct and inform strategies for making change. In both respects, the concept is empowering and transformative in the ongoing struggle against oppression.

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[1] Erich Fromm, The Anatomy of Human Destructiveness, New York, Holt Rinehart and Winston, 1973, p. 199.

[2] Paulo Freire, Pedagogy in Process: The Letters from Guinea-Bissau. New York, Seabury Press, 1978, p. 115.

[3] Since the politics of cultural exploration and struggle require a partisan role for maximum relevance, we have explored these issues from the acknowledged stance of allies or comrades of oppressed groups in the American society. Since our own status is multivalent—relatively affluent, professional white males—this stance and status mix to create certain dilemmas we try to explore in the article. In a somewhat similar vein, Freire has noted: "The fact that I have not personally participated in revolutionary action does not negate the possibility of my reflecting on this theme" (Pedagogy of the Oppressed, p. 24). While neither stance nor status nor participation negate illumination they should make us cautious of our own mystification.

[4] Throughout this paper we use "class" in its generic sense, referring to demographic and socio-political categories, not solely ones of economic origin.

[5] *Pedagogy in Process*, p. 34.

[6] Ibid, p. 14.

[7a,b,c] Ibid, pp. 80, 79, 104.

[8] Freire notes that: "Every relationship of domination, of exploitation, of oppression, is by definition violent, whether or not the violence is expressed in drastic means. In such a relationship, dominator and dominated alike are reduced to things--the former dehumanized by an excess of power, the latter by lack of it." (*Education for Critical Consciousness*, p. 10). By acting to alter the oppressive relationship, (previously) dominated groups put an end to violence and restore humanity, both to themselves and to their oppressors.

[9] Paulo Freire, *Education for Critical Consciousness*. New York: Seabury, 1973, pp. 10-11.

[10] Ibid, p. 11.

[11] Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. New York: Seabury, 1968, p. 59.
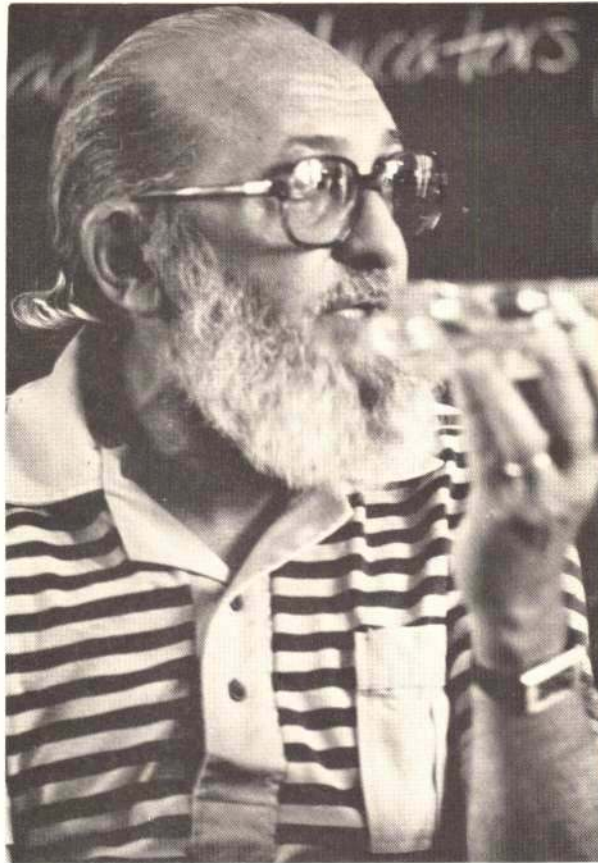
Risk characterizes the human existence. There is not existence without risk, and revolution exists because of the human existence. The question for me is not just how to answer the risk; it is to take the risk as a challenge . . .

REFLECTIONS ON AN EARLY PEACE CORPS

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT EXPERIENCE

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Introduction

In the summer of 1979, I had the privilege of becoming acquainted with Paulo Freire during a weekend retreat with him and other persons working in social change situations from across the United States and elsewhere. The retreat gave me occasion to examine Freire's philosophy and "praxis" in diverse contexts, from Third World economic and social development to feminist issues and urban community development in the U.S.A. This experience stimulated me to reflect on my work as a Peace Corps volunteer.

I had entered the Peace Corps as a community development volunteer in Ecuador in 1963. Aspects of our work as community development volunteers seemed, in retrospect, consistent with Freire's educational efforts in Brazil and Guinea Bissau, so much so as to beg a comparison of the two philosophies. Such a comparison would also enable me to examine my effectiveness as a community developer from a similar, yet different, point of view. 1) How applicable are Freirean models to my Ecuadorian experience? 2) Had I unknowingly used "dialogical encounters" to facilitate the "conscientization" of the people with whom I worked or had I been, in Freire's terms, an instrument of "cultural invasion," merely substituting one form of oppression for another? 3) Were the early Peace Corps volunteers adequately trained and thus truly qualified to be community development facilitators?

Early Peace Corps Volunteers

Ushering in the social turmoil of the sixties (and ultimately feeding the fire), the Peace Corps was enacted into law in 1961. Patriotism was alive and many Americans, especially youth, wanted to serve their country and humanity, but not always on U.S. terms, as in military service or the diplomatic corps. The Peace Corps seemed the perfect alternative. It enhanced the U.S.'s image abroad as a peacemaker and ready ally when requested. Officially, at least, it was to serve the host nations on their own terms--in their perceived areas of need, rather than ours.

Typical of early Peace Corps recruits was their middle class socioeconomic background, race, liberal arts college orientation, and relative youth (twenties and early thirties). The generalist background provided a good match with the field of community development: there would be minimal structure in the working situation and the most useful problem-solving and communications skills would be enhanced by a broad historical and humanities perspective.

A Brief Background to Community Development Training

For most of us, Peace Corps training provided the initial formal entry into the specialized field of community development. Interning for three weeks in a public health program in San Antonio, Texas, we learned about community development process and philosophy from both practical and theoretical viewpoints.

The main objective of community development was to enable the less advantaged classes to exercise control over their own lives through participation in existing political structures and processes. Many times, in this process, we would find ourselves being used as links or points of entry into the political power system.

For the first three months on site, we were to assess the social, political, and economic climate. This consisted of the following: 1) informal conversations with all levels of local society; 2) an attempt to ascertain the felt needs of the lower class residents—the common laborers, elderly, and unemployed; 3) identifying and analyzing communications structures; and 4) gaining the confidence of the local inhabitants, especially the lower classes who were our designated constituency, by eating and drinking with them, sharing in their social activities, attending their churches, living among them and at their level and sharing their homes. By such means we hoped to gain the trust of the inhabitants which would make possible the formation of barrio (neighborhood) groups and identification of indigenous leaders. Using neighborhood groups as a social and political base, we would encourage the members to define their problems and explore possible solutions to them. There was no other preconceived organizational structure, though a democratic orientation prevailed probably owing to our own traditions of political participation. Structure was to be only a response to process.

Material support from the U.S. Peace Corps in Washington was more than adequate. Host country administrative and material support varied depending upon the project attempted and the populations involved.

A Comparison of Freire's "Conscientization" and Community Development Theory (1)

Community development theory, as we had learned it and sought to implement it in Ecuador, appears to have had elements in common with Paulo Freire's educational experiments in Third World countries.

I. Population Involved

The populations, with which the Peace Corps community development volunteer and Freirean educator worked, were similar. For both, the constituency was made up of the less powerful members of society; in Freire's case, always the powerless portion of society. Both groups were reactive to their environment and perceived themselves as having little control over the direction of their own lives.

II. Concept of Society

Community development is based on the assumption that the aims of the governed and government are in accord and working to achieve a common goal if all people fully participate within the established system of government. The system, by nature, is not assumed to be oppressive. Thus, the dilemma of the lower classes can be remedied through self-help and education. In effect, conflict is capable of resolution with the existing system of government by consensual means.

Freire, however, differs markedly from the community development model in that he adopts a class-conflict basis for society. An oppressor/object relationship between rulers and ruled is assumed. The natural outcome of the struggle between the two classes is a completely new order, a result of the oppressed transforming their own world. This is a revolutionary philosophy as compared to the community development theory practiced by the Peace Corps which emphasizes the ineffectiveness of the lower classes in using the existing system to their benefit.

In addition, Freire's concept of society seems to emphasize the potential empowerment of the individual, rather than the group. That is, individuals come to "conscientization" through critical reflection on their own lived reality, and by extension, the oppressed position they occupy in the social structure. The process of dialogue by which the individual achieves "conscientization" implies collective decision-making, but the origin of action is based on individual convictions. On the contrary, individual commitment is already assumed in community development theory and so action emanates from a consensual group decision.

III. Action of "Praxis"

Both Freire and community development theory put major emphasis on action. "Praxis," as Freire calls it—the synthesis of critical reflection and appropriate action in a continual dialectic of "conscientization"—defines ultimate success for Freire. The individual "names" his/her own world instead of accepting the "naming" of others.

> It is only when the oppressed find the oppresssor out and become involved in the organized struggle for their liberation that they begin to believe in themselves. This discovery cannot be purely intellectual but must involve action; nor can it be limited to mere activism, but must include serious reflection: only then will it be a praxis. (2)

Community development theory also enervates people for action, but on a group level, as I pointed out earlier. Conceptualizing the problem is a necessary step, but acting toward solutions brings success.

> Action follows decision. The specific activities in which people participate may range from muscle-stretching labor to desk

work. . . . The important element is that the people involved shall take part in a Work Project which they have helped to plan. (3)

Though both Freire and community development theory include action as the complement of discussion and theorizing, one can sense from the two preceding quotes that the type of action generated is different. Freire's action is laden with social and political meaning; he encourages revolutionary action, perhaps violent action, when the action involves the overthrow of the oppressor class. Action in Peace Corps community development theory is non-violent, sequential, sometimes of the "make work" variety and has only unintentional social and political consequences. Action takes place only within the established structure and according to specific procedures.

It is this arena of action ("praxis") that represents the area of greatest divergence between Freirean and community development philosophies. For Freire there are no limits. Men and women are

> . . . beings in the process of becoming--as unfinished, uncompleted beings in and with a likewise unfinished reality.
> . . . The unfinished character of men and the transformational character of reality necessitate that education be an ongoing activity. (4)

Whereas Freire encourages the people to construct their own methods for accomplishing their objectives, implying that totally new, perhaps unheard of forms will be necessary, Peace Corps volunteers, by virtue of their position politically, and in keeping with the democratic, non-violent orientation of community development theory, were obligated to encourage solutions only within the existing political and economic structure of the host country.

It is worth mentioning, however, that most volunteers, at least in our group in Ecuador, came from activist political backgrounds so that in actuality, community development practice came much closer to the Freirean example than would have been condoned by Peace Corps-Washington, the American public or the host country government. When disillusioned neighborhood leaders became involved in campaigns for change in current structures, officially, a volunteer was obligated to remain uninvolved. However, volunteers frequently were passively supportive of such efforts which resulted in closing down projects altogether once the host government sensed subversion.

IV. Educational Methods

Education in the traditional institutionalized sense has little to do with either form of social change. In both Freire and Peace Corps community development theory there is no hierarchy between "learners" and "learned." The teacher (or "encourager" as he/she is called in some community development theory) commands respect for the wide perspective he/she brings to a given issue, but, at the same time, the knowledge and credibility that comes from the experience of living are equally necessary to informed action.

The teacher does not instruct. Instead, through dialogue with participants around commonly acknowledged themes suggested by the people themselves and re-presented by the teacher, the participants come to a realization of the power to change the world. One technique used to make dialogue most effective is "question-posing" in community development, akin to Freire's "problem-posing."

> An encourager . . . is . . . an instigator of processes that call upon others to bcome innovators. He takes the initiative so that others will take the initiative.
> In an age of change, the encourager hopes that people may learn to exercise more control over change, rather than to be its victims only. (5)

V. Structure

Both models for social change also depend upon interaction--between participants themselves, and between participants and facilitator (teacher, encourager or whatever). Thus group organization is implied at least at some points, in the process of development. Whatever the resultant structure, it is not static, but constantly changing dependent on the demands of the moment. In both models, process determines structure. This is especially true of Freire. In community development theory, structure seems to be defined in a more limited sense--essentially democratic and participatory but clearly formal and institutionalized.

Falling Short of the Ideal: Cultural Shock and Cultural Bias

The burden of successful community development, as well as Freirean "conscientization" falls upon the individual facilitator and how well they can divorce themselves from cultural biases, lest they contaminate the thinking and priorities of the participants, thereby, in Freire's terms, substituting one oppressor for another. Fortunately, the consensual orientation of community development theory gave legitimacy to the democratic bias of Peace Corps volunteers, but in a Freirean setting which owes loyalty to no existing structure, it could be more difficult to mediate facilitator bias. "Culture shock" was the term used to refer to the dilemma that we as volunteers invariably met when having to dissociate ourselves from our own culture and accept that of our host. But cultural biases were not particular to organizational schemes. "Culture shock" was an experience common to all volunteers in differing degrees, and the success one had in fighting the "disease" certainly was a major influence on one's effectiveness as a Peace Corps volunteer. The volunteer found him/herself having to accept values sometimes contradictory to his/her own. Then came the reconciliation of these opposing values in the volunteer's mind--was the new value defensible in terms of the volunteer's new cultural milieu or did it jeopardize the peoples' chances of reaching their greater goals? And, it follows, should one, as a volunteer, expose the fallibility of a value or accept it and work with it in

achieving one's ultimate goals as a community development volunteer? Or is acceptance a matter of degree? There were no clear-cut answers, and each decision came after hours of soul-searching and had to be constantly re-evaluated.

A case in point follows. Beggars were commonplace in the Latin culture and were accepted as such. A daily occurrence as one walked along the streets, ate in a restaurant, etc., was an outstretched palm appearing out of nowhere and hushed utterances of "Un sucre." "Por Dios." As begging was so alien to my culture, it was difficult for me to accept. I found it bothersome and outright disgusting to see a person divest him/herself so completely of pride as to live at the utter mercy of others. Usually I walked quickly by or turned my head pretending I had not seen the huddled figure.

One day a friend was having his shoes shined by a nine-year-old boy. (Shoeshine boys were everywhere. A shine cost 5¢, so his work was only one notch above begging as far as profit was concerned.) While the boy was shining my friend's shoes, an old man in tattered rags nudged him. "Un sucre, por Dios." My friend waved him off gently giving him nothing. At the same moment the boy finished his shoes. My friend paid him 1½ sucres (8¢) and as my friend turned to go, he saw, out of the corner of his eye, the shoeshine boy transferring the sucre he had just paid him to the beggar's hand. "Gracias, Dios le bendiga," whispered the old man.

That incident seems to me to express the ultimate in caring for one's brother and left me with feelings of shame for myself and my friend which I find difficult to bear to this day.

But the most insidious aspect of culture shock was when it was turned on its head! That is, the values accepted by many of the Ecuadorians were exactly those American values from which we as volunteers, were trying to dissociate ourselves. These values were perpetuated through the Ecuadorians' frequent exposure to American movies and magazines which emphasized the superficial, material, pleasure-seeking luxury of American culture and the Ecuadorians were asking us to accept these adopted values as their own. This was all the worse because they had accepted, in my judgement, the most suspect parts of our culture. They were anti-humanitarian aspects which, I believe, have more to do with a society's demise than its triumph. We were pressured to dispel these less desirable aspects of our own culture which we were, at the same time, seeking to overcome, and rediscover with the Ecuadorians their native culture, one about which we knew precious little to begin with. The confusing struggle blurred even more the lines between "cultural invasion" and the determination of true Ecuadorian "generative themes," to use Freirean terms. Were certain American values legitimately part of the Ecuadorian setting or did we, because of our personal abhorrence of some of these adopted values from our own culture, unintentionally place undue emphasis on convincing the Ecuadorians of their illusory benefit?

For example, when my husband and I moved into our two-room apartment in Manta (part of the residence of an Ecuadorian family), we promptly set about decorating it to our taste using the beautiful woods, paja (woven straw), shells, hammocks, etc. that were native to the area. Our Ecuadorian visitors showed no appreciation at all for such furnishings. How could we possibly use

our money to buy things that "poor people" use in their houses when we had the money to buy all the plastic flowers and "cheap" plastic furnishings in the world (or so it seemed to them)? Anything that intimated origins in Ecuadorian home industry or manufacture was not appreciated since it did not appropriately display a machine-made quality indicative of the myriad of gadgets and cheap replicas that dazzle consumers in this country. (6)

The last difficulty with which the Peace Corps volunteers struggled, and which, in turn, influenced their effectiveness as community developers, was their position in relation to the administrative structure of the host country. Obviously this was not a problem in the Freirean situation since the teacher has no officially recognized connection with the prevailing government or its institutions. On the other hand, the Peace Corps volunteers served in a country only at the invitation of the host government. According to U.S. policy, volunteers would not be sent to countries which practiced any sort of unjust discrimination. The fallacies in this policy are legion.

Another of the basic tenets of Peace Corps policy was that volunteers work with indigenous counterparts. In other words, they were to interface their activities with or become actual parts of programs already in operation and approved by the government of the country. In some cases, this "counterpart" arrangement implied U.S. acceptance of a program acknowledged to be corrupt. In these cases, the Peace Corps volunteer became just another pawn for individuals who had built small dynasties based on the power they held as distributors of materials which came as gifts through U.S.-sponsored foreign aid programs such as CARE, CARITAS, USAID, etc. Clearly, Peace Corps volunteers were not intentionally placed with corrupt Ecuadorian counterparts, but when mistakes were made, it sometimes destroyed completely the credibility of the Peace Corps organization and the volunteers themselves. It also compounded the volunteers' difficulty in resolving the culture shock-cultural bias issues.

Conclusion

I think one can see from the preceding examples that Peace Corps community development projects in the early sixties honestly sought to fulfill the official objectives of the Peace Corps, both from a practical standpoint "to . . . supplement technical advisors by offering the specific skills needed by developing nations if they are to put technical advice to work. . . . (7) and on a more ideal and philosophical basis (working for "world peace and human progress"). (8) But naively, the U.S. government underestimated the political implications of Peace Corps service, especially in the case of community development volunteers.

Even if volunteers had been successful in divesting themselves completely of their own cultural biases, which I think is quite impossible, their association with the host government and local leaders made it impossible for the Peace Corps volunteers to create an image of neutrality. This is to say nothing of the domestic political dilemmas the Peace Corps also produced. In effect, the assumption that the Peace Corps could be an essentially apolitical entity hindered and, at times, destroyed altogether, the effectiveness of the

Peace Corps.
Paulo Freire clearly rejects that naivete. In his own words,

> . . . one cannot conceive of objectivity without subjectivity. . . .
> To deny the importance of subjectivity in the process of transforming the world and history is naive and simplistic. It is to admit the impossible: a world without men. This objectivistic position is as ingenuous as that of subjectivism which postulates men without a world. World and men do not exist apart from each other, they exist in constant interaction. (9)

Changing the reality of human beings, whether it be a total transformation through revolution or merely making the existent situation more responsive to certain populations, necessitates change in the individual's relationship with objective reality and with his/her co-inhabitors of that reality. Of necessity there are political consequences. Freire's approach acknowledges this truth with the caveat that critical reflection must temper one's subjectivity. Only through constant critical appraisal of one's own class situation, is it possible to nurture "conscientization" in people of other classes. In this way, Freire is much closer to reality, in that he takes into account the inherent political outcomes of an "outside expert" entering an alien class or culture.

In addition, the relatively rigid social and organizational structure which was to serve as the base for community development action was not realistic. It did not allow for sufficient flexibility to respond to the evolution of societal forms. Our work as community developers was directed toward the establishment of a stable organizational base for action which was to persist even after our term of duty was over and the temporary project accomplished.

The indigenous "counterpart" arrangement for volunteers placed additional limitations on the flexibility a volunteer had in responding to local situations and needs. Though it did help to assure continuity of leadership over time, it sometimes implied leadership with a certain point of view and encouraged the formation of a ruling clique.

Freire again, I believe, grounds his praxis far more realistically in the dialectical process which characterizes our existence. The continuously evolving nature of "conscientization" and "praxis" in Freirean philosophy acts as a built-in safeguard against the possibility of outmoded structures and leadership becoming ineffectual in a constantly changing reality.

As the U.S. government became aware of the unusual amount of political risk inherent in Peace Corps community development projects, it decided the outcomes were too unpredictable to justify to the public. Shortly after I returned to this country in 1963, Peace Corps community development programs were decidedly curtailed and recruitment narrowed to skilled technicians, involving a minimal exchange of cultural values. This limited the risk of political repercussions which might upset the power balance between the host and donor countries. The hope for the development of a country at the hands of its own people in the Freirean sense was once more "sold out" to the safety of service to the status quo, and the Peace Corps volunteer's potential as an agent of social change was eclipsed.

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[1] My thanks to Professor William Cave for acquainting me with "Three Models of Community Organization Practice" in _Organizing and Planning of Social Change_ by Jack Rothman, Columbia University Press, 1974. Though community development and Freirean development practices do not conform exactly to Models A and C ("locality development" and "social action," respectively), these models can serve as a plausible basis for comparison of Freirean and community development techniques.

[2] Paulo Freire, _Pedagogy of the Oppressed_. New York: The Seabury Press, 1970 , p. 52.

[3] William W. Biddle, _The Community Development Process: The Rediscovery of Local Initiative_. New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1965 , p. 99.

[4] Freire, _Pedagogy_, p. 72.

[5] Biddle, _The Community_, p. 260.

[6] A possible exception is the weavings and hand-carved statues done by the Indians of the Sierra. But even in this case, I suspect that the appreciation accorded these artifacts stemmed from the value they had for tourists.

[7] President's Peace Corps Proposal, _Congressional Quarterly Almanac_, 1961, pp. 872-3.

[8] Ibid.

[9] Freire, _Pedagogy_, p. 35.

CLASS/CULTURAL SUICIDE: PREPARING FOR BOTSWANA

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The following excerpt, written before my departure to Botswana, is taken from a longer paper that describes my ongoing dialogue with the thought and work of Paulo Freire. In addition my attitudes in this paper are linked to the formation of my new identity in relation to living in Botswana. Thus, the response of the Botswana people with whom I work will be a product of both who they are and how they perceive me. Realizing that our identities and our mutual responses are dynamic, dialectical processes of becoming, I want to at least begin to initiate my praxis. My understanding will probably change when I am thinking from an inside rather than an outside vantage point.

In considering the manifestations and effects of my attitudes, three issues worthy of critical reflection have emerged: the possibility of cultural invasion by me; the possible need for my class and cultural suicide; and the characteristics of my personality in relation to my anticipated community work in Botswana.

Cognitively, I feel ready to commit class suicide--which, Freire says, is necessary on the part of revolutionary leaders and community development workers so true communion with the people is possible--and this gives me the energy to actually do so. However, I have found it more difficult to do this in the U.S. and perceive that it will be easier in Africa. Thus, on one level it is almost a "cop-out" to go to Africa rather than strive for class suicide in this society. Perhaps it is simply a "cop-out," but at this point in my life it is one that I need. I just completed four years of college primarily paid for by my parents. I am very thankful for all they have taught and done for me and feel a strong challenge now to give of myself, if only in honor of them. For me this may take, at least in part, a different form than their own "giving." While I appreciate what I have, this comfortable lifestyle is also restricting my own and others' true freedom. I desire the chance to break away. We never give up our heritage, yet we must each begin to create our own history.

Class suicide in the context of being in Botswana needs a further word. It is somewhat inappropriate for me to speak of class suicide in Botswana outside of the specific situation. Class suicide is purposeless separated from interaction and dialogue with the people with whom I desire solidarity. For all I know, they could be middle class Africans, perhaps necessitating a different process to get at conscientization and liberation. To premeditate my behavior is to think of them as static objects to be worked on. What is crucial is to live and work as equal subjects. In talking about the learning process of the educator and educatee, Freire has stated that we both become active subjects in the process of knowing, and in transforming reality.

There are certain manifestations of class suicide of which I have become aware. Some people have said that one can not avoid using hired help if working in a third world country. A typical explanation is that a foreigner is

not brought there to spend his/her time washing clothes and preparing food. This is totally alien to my current perspective. Washing and cooking are important aspects of a culture. More essential, this belief reflects a superior attitude on the part of the foreign worker which is both inaccurate and paternalistic.

A second manifestation of my own class suicide (or lack of) is what I choose to take with me and what kind of lifestyle I develop in Pitseng. What does it mean that I will have a camera, books, a clock, leather shoes, warm clothing? Should I take a tape recorder, a watch, gifts and extra money? My desire is not to suffer unnecessarily, but I must realize that not only words can speak. I must consider my own needs while trying to be sensitive to those with whom I live.

Cultural suicide which is a central aspect of class suicide can occur on a number of levels. First, there is the basic level of adjusting to different foods, climate, daily living habits, and ways of relating to people of a different class and culture.

Living in a foreign third world society is a chance to discover which of my manners or beliefs involve cultural stereotypes or biases and which carry a deeper significance. Of course, such a process is not completed through one experience, but takes more than a lifetime to unravel. The cultural aspect of class suicide involves my whole identity and approach to life. I may feel fear and insecurity; it will require openness, honesty and critical frankness. I perceive this to be the hardest thing for my family and friends to understand, especially in my departure from and return to the United States. They will be sending me off to a reality they do not know and I will return influenced by this reality. As Freire has said, fear stems from ignorance, thus I feel it will be important to translate my understanding to family and friends. But ignorance and fear are also products of not thinking critically and openly about life around us wherever we are. Learning to trust may uproot fear.

Both class and cultural suicide result from taking a radical stance. They are crucial requirements for solidarity with the people. One must first know one's political position in order for "radicalization" to take place. This involves increased commitment to the position one has chosen, and also a greater engagement in the effort to transform concrete, objective reality.

> A radical is critical, loving, humble, communicative; in his (her) choosing, the radical man (woman) does not deny others the right to choose as well. He (she) is convinced of his (her) own choice but respects the right of the other to be convinced of his (hers). (1)

I do not pretend to have such a radical stance and it is not an easy task to pursue. Nevertheless, it is the task at hand for Paulo Freire has taught us the pedagogy of the oppressed is a task for radicals. While neither class or cultural suicide can be premeditated, it may be beneficial to identify my own character and personality traits as these may be challenged by the new environment.

First, I am idealistic and have become rather defensive on this issue. I realize that idealism can be a product of naivete and I struggle against this.

My defensiveness has increased, however, as I find that idealism is almost always taken as naiveté. I think this is a grossly unfair generalization as well as very destructive because it is "domestication." Idealism gives people energy to commit themselves to and often accomplish the impossible: altering the status quo, obliterating injustice, liberating the oppressed, serving the poor, revolutionizing society. Thus, society, including the "left," downgrades idealism and virtually insures the continual historical reality of dehumanization.

Recently I had a memorable experience with a Bostonian educator, Paul Nash, one of the few adults I know who has not lost his sensitivity, humanity and idealism. It was under his influence that I committed myself to not giving up my own sensitivity and idealism.

However, critical consciousness must go hand in hand with idealism. Idealism can never overcome the impossible if one does not deal with reality critically. Honesty for me is a cardinal virtue; it is essential to a critical consciousness. Within the past two years, I have become aware of some deficiencies in my ability to think critically. I grew up being very trusting and accepting and, while these are important positive traits, they become negative when they hinder objective critical reflection. Continued growth of my critical faculties is necessary.

In addition, humility and compassion are also important ideals to me. My Christianity is my core belief and the familiar words, faith, hope and love, express most of it better than any essay ever could. My Christianity is also a source of questions for me; part of my desire to be in Africa is to understand more of my religious faith outside of the narrow U.S. context.

My womanhood is another characteristic that will face cultural contradictions in Africa. It is an identity I am coming to know more clearly. I see the cultural challenge as strengthening in the long run, while perhaps difficult in the short. It will be very important to respect African cultural norms and behavior, while also not forsaking my own identity as a woman. Living in the African context will allow me an outside stance to reflect upon the U.S. culture. From my past experience in Africa, I have always felt that male-female relationships were different than those in the U.S. At this stage of my life that is definitely something I will have to deal with directly.

There are a number of positive traits I see within myself which may influence my work in Botswana. I was a hard worker through college, but self-motivation is more difficult when there is no external pressure or sanctions. I do better when life is hard and challenging. If it is not my energy sometimes dies out. I will have to be my own guide and motivator. Secondly, I have always been friendly, open to strangers, comfortable and initiating in new situations. What I have come to realize is the futility of empty chit-chat and the importance of follow-up and consistent initiative. I hope to remember these. Thirdly, I am sometimes accused of being too serious. While I want to relax and have fun, to enjoy life to its fullest, I also accept and love myself for who I am. Finally, my moods often change and I respect my intuition. Does identifying these traits serve a purpose? No, if it makes them grounded in my mind as set ways or attitudes. Yes, if it helps me to understand my reactions and to accept and pursue changes as I enter a new society.

Work

As I do not yet know the specifics about my job situation in Pitseng this section focuses on more general role models which I think are important. Probably the fundamental requirement is the understanding that life is a mutual learning process. I will learn and I will teach; my life must reflect both sides. My role there is to serve the people. I do not think of the church as my employer. I want to be responsible first to the community. I may be able to help the people become aware of their potential as creative human beings.

The needs of the people generate community development work and my starting point for organizing the program content of education (following Freire) must be the existential, concrete situation that reflects the wishes of the people. To do this, I must live and talk with the people; I must learn about the history of Pitseng and past efforts in community development or adult education efforts. I believe each locality exists within greater contexts, and we are remiss if we fail to recognize them. Freire describes this as a generative universe comprised of generative themes, within a concentric circle model. However, we are each aware of different levels at different times and our awareness cannot be imposed on others. I can only glean their level of awareness from listening and observing and respond to the reality they express. This should not mean that I remain void of having or expressing my own opinion. Dialogue means that I must express my world views as well, but it must only be a source for dialogue not domination.

The initial days, weeks and months will shape my total effort and are thus crucial. It must be a time for observing, learning, sharing and participating in the community life. I should get to know various types of people. I should begin an ongoing evaluative process, recording observations and reflections, identifying themes and goals.

To learn about their reality, my relationship to the people must be dialogical. Dialogue is the basis of Paulo Freire's philosophy. He discusses six requirements for dialogue. (2) First, one must have a profound love for the world and for people. Second, dialogue cannot exist without humility. I can think of many times dialogue was blocked by thinking I was right, forgetting to truly listen, or wanting to sound good. Dialogue requires an intense faith in "man." This does not mean a naive trust but rather a belief in people's ontological vocation of humanization while dealing with the historical fact of dehumanization. It becomes a naive, uncritical trust when one fails to recognize the elements of the oppressor which we and others have internalized. Fourth, trust is established and continued by dialogue, as long as dialogue is authentic. Authenticity is determined by one's action being congruent with one's dialogue. And dialogue does not exist without hope. Hopelessness creates silent, passive, isolated individuals; hope gives us energy to search for justice, a search which can only exist in reaching out to and then with others. Finally, the words of dialogue must both grow out of and generate critical thinking. For Freire, critical thinking means seeing reality as a process, a transformation rather than a static entity. When most people describe a certain reality it is usually seen as the latter. It will be especially interesting to discover how this point is manifested in Africa, which many

consider unchanged throughout time. In summary, love, humility, faith in people, trust, hope and critical thinking must characterize my work and life.

One of the most crucial aspects to my own survival in Pitseng is to be very realistic about expectations, goals, capabilities and restricting circumstances. I have been warned about burning myself out and becoming frustrated with slow results. My recognition of the need for a community-empowered rather than a Lucille-empowered movement makes me hopeful that I will not get extremely frustrated. I must realize, though, that activities I help organize may not be priorities for others. I do need the caution against burn-out and setting unattainable goals. While it is important to push hard and be creative, people need to see fruits of their efforts in order to give sustained effort. This sparks the question of whether it is even right for me to insert myself into a community for a limited period of time. I can give neither a yes or no answer. The only way it will possibly be justified, though, is if the program(s) and efforts continue once I am gone.

Conclusion

Working as a foreigner in community organization or development efforts has potential for both positive or negative outcomes. Hopefully, this process of thinking through my attitudes and conceptions of my future work role in Botswana will facilitate a positive contribution. Many of the issues and attitudes I have raised are ones which continue to have a profound impact on my life. Writing about them makes them static--mere objects for evaluation. This makes me realize how dialogue is more real and dynamic than the written word.

Yet the written word assists my thinking process; words put onto paper provide room for new words to form in my mind. As Freire notes, "To speak a true word is to transform the world." (3)

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THE EDUCATION OF MEXICAN-AMERICANS:

A FREIREAN APPROACH

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As I reflect on my conversations with and observations of Mexican-Americans and on the school experiences that their children portrayed for me, (1) I wonder if there is any way in which they can reverse the pattern that, purposefully or not, the school has set for them. Would Paulo Freire's pedagogy help them in such a task? Is such an approach feasible within the U.S. educational system? And, furthermore, would this approach reflect the needs and aspirations of the Mexican-American people?

The School Culture and the Mexican-American Child

School constitutes a specific culture with its own rituals, rules and organization characterized by the transmission of a certain intellectual content, and a narrow band of cultural values, which reflect those of the dominant economic and political structures.

One predominant attribute of American society is the ideology of capitalism which is reflected in school in its emphasis on academic achievement and performance, and individualism for purposes of efficiency and orderliness. Another characteristic of American society consists of institutional patterns reflecting racial injustice and oppression of minorities. In school the curriculum reflects a white view of American history and social studies. (2) School is thus an instrument of society that channels children into social and economic roles similar to those of their parents. (3) There is a wide difference of opportunities at different levels of schooling. Thus those who reach college are allowed an ample spectrum of choices refused to people who only receive a high school education. The social relations at each educational level mirror the social relations of the work place. (4)

In the elementary and middle schools that I observed in southeastern Michigan the above characteristics of the American educational system were so alien to many Mexican-Americans, that these children were bound to fail. The imposition of tasks that did not allow them to assume responsibility as they were required to do at home, the prohibition against sharing possessions and knowledge, the rejection of movement and loudness in favor of "order" and silence, were but a few of the many school values which stood in opposition to Mexican-American culture.

In addition, a striking feature of these schools was their flagrant disregard for the history and the culture of these children. The few times that reference was made to Mexican-American history or culture, this history was devoid of life, devoid of the influence of work and economic hardship as this impacted on people's lives.

In this atmosphere the implementation of a bilingual school program did not bring any improvement to the situation of the children. The bilingual program and the regular class were two unrelated entities. There was a widespread belief among teachers that by learning one language, Spanish in this case, children became confused in relation to the language of instruction, English. Many teachers even used coercion and punishment to prevent children from attending the bilingual program. There were permanent confrontations between bilingual personnel and regular teachers.

The impact of these problems and other school characteristics on the children was all pervasive. Many parents withdrew their children from the program, many students forgot their Spanish, even many of those who attended the bilingual program. One child I knew of developed a speech impediment in English. Many teachers labelled other children as linguistically deficient because they spoke with the accent proper to their group. Consequently, many of these children developed academic problems.

The Words of the People

Were Mexican-American families interested in having their children go through a different educational experience? While working as a participatory researcher in the community I organized parents' meetings and visited the homes of school children. In both situations the issue of children's needs at school emerged and broadened to be embedded in the more general problems that encompassed the whole existence of Mexican-Americans in the community.

Although I was sensitive to what people said and did, I did not remain passive; on the contrary, I familiarized myself with the people's environment and tried to share in their experiences. I participated in their games, their celebrations, their work, and in some cases I also shared in their sorrows and their joys.

The following extracts from conversations with these families, have been obtained in this way over a period of two years. Let us listen to their words. (The names of the people are fictitious in order to preserve anonymity.)

Juana (Mother of 5): We should learn both languages Spanish and English. But now we don't know any of them well.

Rosa (Mother of 4): I don't want to say these things because they think I'm a honky, that I want my children to learn only English and I don't want them to learn Spanish, and that's not true. They are Mexican, but they have to learn English because they need it. They can learn Spanish later.

People from the community did not only stress the importance of preserving their language while acquiring English as necessary to integrate the children into the American society; they also considered it important to allow the children to critically know their cultural and historical reality.

Jose (Community worker): The other side of the bilingual program is to teach cultural and historical facts, music, etc. Mirta (c.w.): It's then when the time element comes in. Estela (c.w.): For language, historical and cultural matters they should set aside one day. Actually, I'd like them to do it two days. Go to the classroom and teach Spanish culture and language to all kids.

Isabel (Mexican Agency employee): ... With the Alamo. Do you realize the number of kids on vacation and they stop there at the Alamo — Alberto (Mex.-Am. teacher): It's a myth, a shitty. — Isabel: Well, that's what I mean, and then the kids come back and say: Mrs. Alonzo, we went to Texas and we saw the Alamo, you know, where we won, actually (laugh). But there is nothing in there about los Mexicanos and what they were actually fighting at the time.

Isabel: I would suggest that we get permission and just get into certain history books that are around here. You notice how they have certain historical approach, they are dealing with the Mexicanos and they actually put down the Mexicanos as far as ... — Alberto: The enemy. — Isabel: At that time, when I was going to school, I felt very ashamed of the history that was given to me. — Alberto: Yeah, they made us identify with the bandidos (bandits). — Yola (c.w.): Here los Mexicanos were bandidos, yeah. And over there, in Texas, they were heroes. — Isabel: If you read the origins of the flag. I mean, (laugh) that's a joke and a half, you know, when you really look at it.

In the last quotation there is also a call for action in Isabel's words. She does not only criticize the particular historical approach of the schools, she also wants to prevent them from giving children a biased view of their people.

Elisa (Mother of 7): Mexican parents should also make decision on the curriculum but usually they don't go to the meetings, it is the whites who make the decisions. You're lucky if you find two Mexicans. And then this only parent doesn't talk, he only hears. — Emilia (Me): Are the teachers interested in hearing their opinions and ideas? — Elisa: (smiles) Some are, some aren't.

Emilia (Researcher): And kids are suffering all through school. — Justina (Mother of 4): What's the answer? I really don't know. I express a lot of my feelings to the teachers, I let them know that I am concerned, that I can see the effects it had on me, and I don't want them to go through the same thing. I want them to be able to enjoy their education. Not as a threat or learn-it-by-force. It should be at their pace. I'm not asking for special attention but you know, I'm asking that the teacher know the children, and sometimes that's a lot to ask.

Although action by Mexican-Americans was sporadic they undoubtedly saw the need for it, not only by themselves but also by the teachers. What people demanded from the teachers was that they knew their culture and their children. That we can see in the last two quotations above, and also in the following ones.

Juana: Teachers don't know Mexican children. The son of a friend of mine asked the teacher a question and the teacher told him to wait for a while, but then the boy didn't ask her the question again. He was shy. But then he ended up not knowing what he has to know. -- Emilia: This is why it is important that teachers know Mexican children. -- Juana: Yeah, but they just ignore them.

Elisa: Only Mexicans attend the Bilingual Advisory Committee meetings, but teachers should also be there. They don't know what the Mexican's child life is like when he comes back from school. When white children go back home they just have to do their homework. But Mexicans, they have to work, they go shopping, they take care of younger kids. Teachers should know that.

It is clear from the words of these Mexican-American people that they saw the need for an integrated education effort, springing from both teachers and parents. Although in the following quotation Justina referred to the work situation, her words may well be applied to the education of children.

Justina: The only way to go is to work as a big family, where everybody may ask for help. I always go to Blanca (her secretary) or Ricardo. I say: Blanca, can you help me with this. Something that she knows and I don't.

Participatory Education and Investigation

A very important point made by many people from the community was the necessity for the teachers to know the children. In Freire's pedagogy, only through participation with the community can educators attain this goal. In order to know the people and work with them, the educator must be deeply and honestly involved and committed. (5)

In my visits to various schools, I saw that the relations between teachers and children were cold, distant and often antagonistic. Teachers had a superficial knowledge of Mexican-American characteristics and their interpretation of these characteristics was often erroneous.

It should be said, though, that teachers are at the center of a web of forces that act upon them and to which they must respond in order to survive within the institution. As Baudelot and Establet (6) affirm, the teacher's school practices are based on an ideology applied from above. That orientation is given, according to Musgrave (7) by the nation's idea of what a school shall be. Other forces come from colleagues, the general public and the community.

Nevertheless there are channels such as teachers unions through which

teachers can bring pressure on those who try to influence them. But as Spitz (8) states "... teachers are as much, if not more, the creators of conformity. ... They too accept the values and the myths of their community. Hence they too are annoyed by those among them who disturb their tranquility and repose." Thus, many teachers become servants of the school's bourgeois ideology. Most of them transmit the values prevalent in the society without regard to their class character and without challenging them. There are, however, as Freire (9) has pointed out, many well intentioned teachers who do not realize that, through banking education, they are serving only to dehumanize their students.

To carry out a liberating education teachers must become conscious of the forces acting upon them, and of the influence that they exert upon their students. They must learn, together with their students, that the normal state of man/woman is not only to be in the world but with the world, and that they must engage in permanent creative relations with the cultural world. This implies a critical appraisal of their own and their students' reality within the wider social, political and economic context, and critical action to modify this reality. (10) Critical consciousness thus requires a new mode of existence. Consequently teachers must go through a process of conversion to the people through which they will truly know them. (11)

For teachers to know their students, they must go to the community without preconceived hypothesis and without ready-made instruments to prove or disprove. If they possess humility, and love and trust people, they will have the opportunity to learn the communication styles, the teaching and learning styles, the values, ideas and other characteristics of this particular community. Some teachers would argue; why take the trouble to go to the community if we can just as well learn the same by reading a few books or by talking to our students in school?

Against this argument I should say that, although it might be useful to know what is said about Mexican-Americans in the existing literature, it could also be misleading, since they are not an homogeneous group. Furthermore, no book could be a substitute for the first hand knowledge obtained through involvement with this particular community and their children. Books may, of course, provide complementary information.

Participating in the children's lives in school is only the beginning, although a very important one, of the teachers' participation in their education. Because involvement with the community is so important, teachers must be prepared for observation, dialogue and interpretation. Conscientization is a prior requirement.

The present discussion, so far, may give the impression that the only people responsible for a participatory approach to education are the teachers. What about the children and the community? Should they wait until the teachers discover and know the community and transmit to the children what they discovered? This approach would be far removed from Freire's point of view and one that I would never recommend. Children also must be engaged in the active exploration of their physical and social environment, and, together with their teachers and the community, analyse the circumstances under which their people live.

We must remember though that it is not only Mexican-American children that attend a class or a school. In the schools I observed there were middle class and poor white children, poor Mexican-Americans and a few black children. We should also take into consideration that "minority" children must relate to other people and institutions outside their community and within the larger society, and that white children, whatever their background, are in close contact with children whose characteristics are different from their own.

A participatory educational approach requires that all children, their culture and their language become an integral part of school life. That is, the school and all its personnel become an integral part of the communities that they serve.

In many cases though, the reality is that teachers and community oppose each other. Teachers conceive themselves as professionals who have the authority to rule in the classroom and parents should not interfere with such authority. (12) Instead of building a reciprocal relationship both teachers and community devise ways of defending themselves against interference by the other. In the schools I frequently heard teachers saying: "Parents, parents! We should educate parents", or I heard them commenting on the books that would help them to legally defend themselves from possible attacks by parents or community.

Many parents, on their part felt threatened by their presumed inadequacy and lack of knowledge to deal with the school and the teachers. Many times they felt unable to communicate with them.

In the participatory approach, on the other hand, teachers become conscientized and come to realize that parents and community can become not only providers of knowledge but also allies in their struggle to humanize their students, in giving them voice in the shaping of their own life. If the communities are integrated into the school and the school participates in the communities through its teachers and other personnel, it is not difficult to see that parents will become active in the formal education of their children. Since their ideas, values and aspirations will be taken seriously and will be integrated in the life of the school, they will probably not be compelled to remain silent, as has been the case of the Mexican-American parents mentioned by Elisa.

Adaptation or Integration?

Many Mexican-American authors have pointed out that the school should develop and strengthen the home and community experiences of the children. Castaneda et al. add that these experiences should constitute the basis for exploring the Anglo-American middle class world. ". . . the child would use his own heritage as a basis for exploring, and developing loyalties to, a second heritage. . . . The educational environment would cease, in other words, to structure these different heritages as conflicting or mutually exclusive, as requiring a choice to identify with one and reject the other." (13)

In the above approach the issues that Mexican-American children face are simplified to an extreme. It seems that all the school should do is to help children continue holding their values and acquire some others that would

automatically become integrated into the child's system of values. No conflicts would arise since the school would not present them as conflicting. The child would then become happily adapted to both cultures. He will not have to make a choice. Consequently his or her educational problems will vanish.

Nevertheless, various values held by many Mexican-Americans conflict with the values sponsored by the schools. Besides, the history of the relations between Mexicans and Americans is a long history of conflicts. Would these conflicts disappear just because they are banished from school?

Undoubtedly, conflict will be present as long as different cultures hold opposing points of view and it is not the duty of the teacher to hide those conflicts, but to help the children deal with them. Conflicting situations and conflicting historical accounts will represent challenges to be met. Only by facing this conflicting reality will teachers, children and their communities, be able to understand their world and change it.

Many people from the Mexican-American community have described their conflicting values and historical dilemmas to me. They are aware that such conflicts exist and that they cannot be erased by ignoring them. Remember, for example, Isabel's words when referring to the Alamo.

Mexican-American children in the community I studied are faced daily with conflictful situations. They are proud of taking care of younger children for example, but in school this task is seen as having psychologically unhealthy consequences. Many times they hear their people called lazy, while they see that many struggle to find a stable job without ever being able to get one. They hear that all Americans have equal opportunities, while they are refused the opportunity to attend schools that are responsive to their cultural needs and their parents are politically powerless to modify this situation.

All children in the classroom, the teachers as well as the communities, should learn to perceive critically their cultural-historical and economic realities. In this way the teacher will not impose on the children a particular construction of reality but will develop explanations of reality together with them and thus, have the chance to select and integrate into their own lives, elements from these different cultures with a clearer understanding of the situation they live in and of what needs to be changed in order to move to praxis.

One aspect of the education of Mexican-American children that could and should avoid this conflict situation is language learning. As Juana pointed out, Mexican-Americans should learn both languages, both integrated into their analysis of the cultural, social, political and economic situation they live in. Of course, the other children in the class, should not be excluded from the opportunity of learning two languages, particularly because knowing Spanish they will have one more element to better understand their classmates' culture, in the same way as knowing English will help Mexican-Americans understand the culture and institutions of the larger society.

Nonetheless, as Massialas (14) points out, the classroom is the last place where political issues are discussed, that teachers usually prefer not to consider controversial issues in the class, and that there is a relationship between their unwillingness to discuss such issues and their fear of sanctions.

Spitz (15) affirms that many teachers reflect how the dominant sectors in the community think. Thus some teachers welcome the pressures against critical and independent thought and seek to impose these sectors' values.

However, there are teachers and people in the community who support the idea of a radical education and who, as critical thinkers and actors within the educational system, may take the lead in spreading a different approach to education.

Is This Approach Feasible?

"Children learn early the kind of future roles and status society affords their social or ethnic group. School just doesn't make too much difference in the lives of the poor and downtrodden. The influences of day-to-day living are more significant than the contrived and unreal experiences of the school." (16) Like Carter and Segura many educators have pointed out that, for school to make a difference in the lives of poor children, society itself has to offer them different rewards. The symbolic rewards offered by school are not sufficient to overcome the insufficient rewards offered by the real world.

That means that for our approach to make a difference in the lives of children praxis should be exercised in the real world. Are teachers and students powerful enough to effect change? Experience has amply demonstrated that most innovative teachers that have intended to change their relations with their students and make a difference in their lives have faced strong opposition of colleagues and school authorities. Some have persisted though, and in many cases have continued working in alternative schools.

This means that the task of our teachers is going to be difficult. If school authorities are inbued with the spirit of change to improve children's opportunities, teachers will not have to face as much opposition, and their task will be easier. But it is only by obtaining the support of a strongly organized community that actual change will be possible, and only with the participation of the community will the teachers or the school not be left powerless in the face of strong opposition to change. But an alliance between teachers and community is difficult. As we already mentioned the relations between them are generally antagonistic and can be traced to the historical role of schools as agents of social order and social control. (17) The schools' patterns of social and racial injustice are threatening to parents, particularly to the poor who lack the power to reverse them.

Consequently, for the community to trust the teachers, the latter must genuinely accept and encourage the power of the community, which must share with teachers the authority to determine the way in which their children will be educated. Areas of competence may, of course, be delineated but it is likely that in the process of knowing each other, both parties will change, as will their competences and responsibilities.

How can this balance of power be obtained when school authorities oppose the community's genuine participation in the school?

In the first place, teachers committed to participatory education must try to find allies within the school and the school system by identifying others who are trying to free themselves from the prevalent ideology.

In the second place, teachers and parents must establish close links to the mass organizations of the community. These organizations, already working around different issues are the best allies of parents and teachers in their attempts to carry out a participatory approach to education. As Alinsky (18) affirms many different issues are basic to successful mass organization. They ensure constant daily activity and give people a sense of purpose, action and victory.

Concrete educational problems to be solved would be among the many problems that the community faces in its struggle to know and change reality. In this struggle, it is essential that the teachers and the community (including the children) know the educational system's political-legal process, its links to the main institutions of society, and to prevalent values. It is also essential that proposed aims lead to real action, and that actions be carefully scrutinized so that new goals are discovered in the process and new actions undertaken. As Alinsky (19) states, it is only through continuous action that organizations survive. Action will also strengthen the link between teachers and community.

Teachers committed to the people they serve will thus obtain their support, and a community that supports such committed teachers will gain their confidence. The relation between them will thus be a dialectical one, and one which will be given new forms continuously. Obtaining this relationship is basic for the approach presented here to be feasible.

It would be naive, though, to think that the educational problems of children, in this particular case, of Mexican-Americans, would be completely solved on a local level. As we have already said, society itself has to offer poor Mexican-American children different rewards. This implies that local changes are not enough. Social and economic problems are national and are linked to the economic and social organization of the country. For teachers and communities to have real power to transform the lives of their children they must establish links at a broader level. This is, of course, a more remote objective, but one that teachers and communities must not lose sight of if they want to change their children's lives.

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THE ROLE OF CULTURE

IN A COMMUNITY BASED EDUCATION SYSTEM

IN SWAZILAND

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The starting point for organizing the program content of education must be the present existential, concrete situation which reflects the reality and aspirations of the people. Any type of social life constructed by the people reflects their particular definitions of reality. Whatever people experience in a given situation is a result of such definitions of their cultural universe. I would like to borrow from one of Paulo Freire's (1) illustrations of such a social reality and to quote his example of one of the cultural circles in Chile where a group discussion on the anthropological concept of culture took place. A peasant who, under normal circumstances, was considered completely ignorant, said "Now I see that without man there is no world" when the educator responded: "Let us say for the sake of argument that all the men on earth were to die but the earth itself remained, together with trees, birds, animals . . . wouldn't all this be a world?" "Oh no," the peasant replied emphatically, "there would be no one to say 'this is a world.'" In other words, in order for the world to exist, it must be defined by man/woman. The world exists with and it cannot exist without human beings. Culture and the naming of things depends on definitions ascribed by people. It is clear then that culture is a product of history and reflects at any given epoch the material and spiritual reality of the individual and society.

We are continually faced with conflicts which set us against nature and the exigencies of common life. It is therefore important to appreciate the fact that there is no historical reality which is not human; for as Paulo Freire has stated, there is no history for men, there is only history of men made by men and in turn making them. It is therefore essential that educational content materials be drawn or developed from the peoples' own pre-occupations, doubts, hopes and fears.

In Swaziland, the organization for developing curriculum materials that are relevant to the social and economic reality of the country, is organized through the national education system. There are also education projects that are organized by the government with the communities involved. Government agencies have been warned that they should not take a reformist attitude which includes telling the people what to do and when to do it. This type of approach would be "banking" education. According to Paulo Freire there is no such thing as a neutral education process. Education either functions as an instrument which is used to facilitate the integration of the student into the logic of the present system and bring about conformity to it, or it becomes the practice of freedom, the means by which men and women deal critically and

creatively with reality and discover how to participate in the transformation of the world.

The major problem in some independent African countries or states has been the preservation of the administrative structures that were created by the colonial powers. In some countries, they have only replaced whites with blacks, but for the people it is the same form of domination. What has happened is that only the drivers have changed places; the vehicle is the same. The problem of the nature of the state created after independence is perhaps the secret of the failure of certain African post-independence struggles.

The structures that we are developing in Swaziland attempt to avoid "banking" education. Banking education was used by our colonizers. Under such a system, the teachers issued instructions and made deposits which the students patiently received, memorized and repeated. This "bank-clerk" type of education allowed students to receive, file and store the deposits. The concept was also based on the assumption that the teachers knew all the answers and the student knew nothing. It was education for dominated people. The dominated people are not supposed to think, plan and create for themselves. All their thinking, planning and creating was done by the colonial powers.

After independence, the people realized that this could not continue. Thus the whole structure of education is being changed and the methods and content of curriculum now need to reflect an education system that aims at developing critical consciousness in people. In the new structure, assumptions have been made to the effect that man/woman is an uncompleted being and therefore an unfinished reality capable of human growth and development.

In contrast we see that when seeds are transformed to plants, they are not developed. They are not aware of the changes. The transformation of seeds and animals is determined by the species to which they belong and they occur in a time which does not belong to them, for time alone belongs to the human being. The importance of the unfinished character of man/woman and the transformational character of reality necessitate that education be an ongoing activity. The education structure we are developing emphasizes the fact that education is a life-long process. We are therefore developing a problem-solving education system.

In problem-solving education, men/women develop their powers to perceive critically the way they exist in the world with which and in which they find themselves. They come to see the world not as a static reality, but as a reality in process. The world is dynamic and is developing at any moment in time. The approach that we are following encourages a dialogue with the students, the parents, the farmers, the politician and people of all walks of life. The whole aim is to unveil reality as perceived by the people of Swaziland today. The hidden agenda is to encourage critical thinking. This would encourage students to be creative and to make them intentionally conscious of the world they live in and transform. This approach makes men and women aware of their historical reality and attempts to make them self-reliant. From this perspective, problem-posing education could be equated with Nyerere's education for self-reliance.

The new education system intends to develop new structures such as the

new curriculum unit for primary education and a number of innovative teacher centers. These new centers will provide the teachers with freedom to create and to construct new teaching materials and teaching aids. It will allow them to wonder and venture into the unknown. I am hopeful that in such ventures, teachers will be able to learn from students and parents as much as they learn from other teachers. The development of curriculum materials will be based on a dialogue with the people of Swaziland. In fact, in the past few years since 1976, the ministry officials have had such a dialogue. In these discussions, the parents and farmers tell the teachers what content materials should be included in the new instructional materials. The materials are developed with the people. Curriculum designers write up prototype materials from their discussions with the people. The prototypes are then sent back to the schools, where teachers experiment with them and then offer suggestions for improvements. Some of these materials originate from the parents in terms of folk-tales and others from the teachers; until now only a few have been written by the students themselves.

In problem-posing education, the greatest asset is freedom from fear, and freedom from the fear of making mistakes is the greatest asset of liberating education, where an appreciation of the strength and value of the indigenous culture is no longer a "denigrated enterprise." The inclusion of folktales will bring our indigenous culture, for the first time, into our learning materials. Inclusion of cultural materials will help our young people to appreciate and not despise our customs and to respect our elders. Instead, the young will begin to identify with their cultural heritage. From that strength, then, they will be ready for international education and thus be full participants in the international community. There can be no international community unless and until there is a local community. On this issue King Sobhuza II says, "Western schools are a new thing, but learning is old." Thus, Western education per se has no monopoly on the teaching of the young. The inclusion of Swazi cultural elements will take into consideration the fact that a culture is highly dependent and reciprocal in the nature of its linkages to historical social and economic realities.

The Teacher Innovation centers are designed as resource-centers. Teachers and parents will use them for research purposes and teachers will be provided with materials that could help in the development of teaching aids. It will also be a library center for teaching aids, including slides, cassettes, and film strips. Slides will be developed by both the teachers and other ministry officials. In addition to the Teacher Centers, each school is provided with an additional facility, which we refer to as a rural education center. In the rural education centers facilities for adult literacy classes, basic technology and a hall for folk-tales and traditional drama and dance are provided. Literacy alone is not sufficient. Adults need to be taught simple skills such as how to make their doors, build simple structures, and cook. This is particularly important in rural areas. In addition, agriculture, carpentry, and other simple skills could be taught by experienced adults and government agencies. In this way, everybody becomes a teacher when the schools become community centers where teachers help to identify talented members (like farmers) in the community, and both students and adults learn from each other. Thus

education should be seen as a process by which people of all ages and of all interests in the community learn to share their thoughts, their ideals, their aspirations, their joys and sorrows, and to a greater extent to mold and shape their communal destiny for themselves.   Only in this way can education become a process of self-discovery by which the people of a community learn to identify and solve their community problems such as irrigation canals, fencing pastural areas, and even resettlement programs.   This illustrates the unity between theory and action Paulo Freire advocates in Pedagogy of the Oppressed.

Our perception of developing a true community-based educational system has forced us to realize that there can be no perfect curriculum or complete curriculum.   The process of writing curriculum materials is a continuous one. It therefore implies that there can be no completely structured education system.   The education of any society requires continuous changes in terms of new needs that are expressed by the learners.   In such a system, the objectives of the curriculum materials are dictated by the needs of the learners, and the goals of the education system are spelled out by the people.   The ruling elite, namely the ministers and parliamentarians, have to be continually guided by the people in terms of policies.   Dialogue and only dialogue is helpful in establishing a united national identity.   Under the colonial system, the indigenous culture was a silent one.   After independence, our culture has to blossom like a flower.   This flower is a result of dialogue between the leaders and the people.   We have seen in history that people can be silent for a while but not forever.   It is with this in mind that dialogue, in terms of setting up goals of education, becomes a shining star that can guide our nation to a brighter future.

It is, therefore, clear that in planning education there should be no dichotomy between the education of the young and that of adults.   School education and adult education complement each other.   In life, the home is the first school, and the social institution called "school" only supplements the foundation provided by the home.   In this way, the school becomes a community and a learning center.   The teachers in such a center include the farmer, the community poet, the carpenter, students, and the professionally qualified teacher.   Adults and children learn together.   It is only through this approach that the myth of western education which alienated our African children from their culture, beliefs, and values, can be avoided.   The school becomes the heart of the community where new skills and indigenous culture are fused in terms dictated by the community and not the ruling elite and their civil servants.   This appears to me to be one of the best ways of using education to provide a cohesive social order in which there would be no gap between the leaders and the people, the children and their parents, the schooled and the unschooled.   There would be no room for social and cultural alienation.   Above all, there would be created a united, critically conscious society in which modernization of the natural resources would reflect the quality of the development of human resources.

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LOOKING TO THE EIGHTIES

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"I am in the world to change it—if I was here to adapt to it, I would rather die . . . . The pleasure of living is not in studying the world but in creating the world."

- Paulo Freire (1)

Paulo Freire's month-long residency with his wife Elsa and his two younger sons at The University of Michigan in July of 1979, was riven with a tantalising tension for the Freire family. In our excitement with the genius of Paulo Freire's educational vision, in the poetry of the words that he seemed to spin off with such musical ease in several intense seminars, we often forgot the epoch-making tension that the family, itself, was experiencing. Only days before Paulo arrived in Ann Arbor, and after fifteen long years in exile from his beloved Brazil, he had finally been re-issued a Brazilian passport, and five days after leaving Ann Arbor he was about to embark on a new era in his life and that of his family. Paulo graciously delayed his return as he spent the summer of 1979 at The University of Michigan, but the frustration and anticipation to re-engage himself in Brazil after "having the world as my arena, of learning with the world" must have been great. Yet his humility and his intrinsic and related major pedagogic themes persisted, even at a time of such high anticipation when, in answer to our questions he insisted that for six months he would have to "re-learn" his country, he would have to listen and allow his fellow Brazilians to teach him about all that he had missed. For this is the way that Paulo Freire engages people everywhere, and because he is a universal teacher in this rare and elusive sense, his work has changed and re-created parts of the world. He is, no doubt, once again involved in the process of transformation and co-creation with his people in Brazil at the present time. It is my intention here to touch on a handful of the "moments" and themes from July 1979 that stand out in my mind, and that are most likely to endure far into the 1980's and beyond.

On the Impossibility of Neutral Research on Teaching

This theme of disenchantment with the dominant and pervasive nature of a positivist, quantitative approach to research and teaching was echoed in the seminars and the retreat. Paulo damned this approach—the belief that a researcher or teacher can ever be neutral—with faint praise. "I respect the right of such practitioners to be naive, but I cannot make my own subjectivity disappear, any more than I can make objectivity appear in what is essentially a

dialectical relationship, where one cannot have subjectivity without objectivity." (2) In the same vein the attempt to measure human beings, to measure subjectivity as separate from objectivity, to propound a psychology in a vacuum from its history, culture and geography, was condemned.

The most revealing insight to come out of these discussions, however, was the realization that we were trying to arrive at an alternative mode for preventing the distortion of the reality we are studying. While acknowledging our "position de classe," and the distorting lens of our cultural, historical and professional backgrounds, Paulo consistently spoke of action based on our interpretation of reality, as the best criteria for guarding against our own distortions. Unlike most academic research which tends to be disconnected from action, Paulo talked of a research mode wedded to action in a dialectical relationship, where the researcher gains knowledge from his/her praxis, and where the cost of deficient analysis may be failure and, for a liberation fighter, even death.

On Sexism and Racism

In the context of accusations of sexism in the predominantly male organization of the weekend retreat (where the female co-ordinator was absent due to illness), Paulo defused a tense moment by acknowledging his own learning from the Womens' Liberation movement in the U.S.A. With characteristic humility, he admitted the strong "ideology of man" and male culture of Recife which he brought to his early writings, but stated that he has come now to acknowledge with solidarity, that "I am also a woman."

However, he warned that it was naive to only speak of male oppression today, because this overlooked the class basis of sexism and racism. He stressed that racist or sexist problems could not be solved in a capitalist society, "in a consumption conception of life" which precluded the liberation of the working class.

In a similar vein, when discussing racism both in the U.S. and the Third World, he insisted that ideology and commitment have no color, that while he was not a defender of white values, neither did he align himself with blacks of all classes,--that bourgeois blacks, for instance, have "white" perceptions of reality. Thus, a white who commits "class suicide" to join with blacks in their struggle is making a choice of high human commitment.

On Political Literacy

Paulo stressed that not being able to read and write does not preclude being able to think. In Guinea-Bissau 95% of the people were illiterate, but they were sufficiently politically literate to make a revolution. In contrast university people are literate but often politically illiterate, the test being their ability to critically reflect on their reality, to understand the interconnections of history, culture and class, and to de-mystify the control of science and technology over their lives.

On the Dialectic Between the First and Third Worlds

Now that Paulo Freire has returned to Brazil, and in the light of the Reagan government's policy of restoring support to the reactionary juntas of Latin America, our discussions of the need for third world people to defend themselves against cultural invasion, and to "counter-penetrate" (3) the first world, become all the more poignant.

Third world cultures must learn to appropriate what they want from first world cultures without being deformed by them, without depersonalising or destroying their cultural identity. Paulo stressed that just as science is not objective, so technology is not neutral. He pointed out that technology is an expression of culture, it is created by human beings and carries within it elements of the mother culture, and that foreign technology and foreign culture should be seen as a vehicle for economic and political domination and invasion. He believes, however, that the dominated culture can create a wall of defense which the invaders cannot penetrate, an inner sanctum with a language clear only to those on the inside.

It was also suggested by an African participant that while economically deprived, the third world would emerge as the repository, the custodian of humanization and re-humanization in the face of the more destructive debilitating, and dehumanizing aspects of first world greed and technology.

Paulo urged those of us in the first world, now facing the sometimes bleak promise and challenges of the Reaganite 1980's, to remember that in history we do what we can and not what we want to do, that our possibilities for doing are limited by historical conditions, that history makes us as we are being made by it, that it has its limitations as it does its opportunities.

Paulo Freire's Return to Brazil

The Freires returned to Brazil in 1979, amidst a tumultuous welcome and great acclaim. In 1980, Paulo accepted two University offers and at present is living and teaching in São Paulo. From recent communication with him we discovered that his return home from exile has been everything he hoped for—the only negative aspect being his over-taxing schedule and demanding life-style as he attempts to make up for fifteen lost years.

The most revealing of his anecdotes was this reconstruction of an exchange with a watermelon street vendor, which is paraphrased from memory.

Vendor   How old are you, Paulo? (Paulo drew great mirth from this contrast to Europe where, asking the name and age of a complete stranger, is unthinkable!)

Paulo   Fifty-eight, José.

Vendor   Impossible, My father is seventy-five and he looks younger than you.

<u>Paulo</u>	No it is true.
<u>Vendor</u>	Then you must have had a very hard life.
<u>Paulo</u>	Not harder than yours. Compare your hands to mine. See, yours show the signs of hard labor.
<u>Vendor</u>	But your hair is grey.
<u>Paulo</u>	For many years I was not allowed to come back to Brazil and that was very hard for me and so my hair turned grey. During all those years I was thinking of you. I was missing you.
<u>Vendor</u>	(The man clasped Paulo's hand) Yes I understand.

This brief, encounter (which hardly does justice to Paulo's animated recounting of the incident) shows the special magic that Paulo weaves, his love of the common person, his complete frankness, and the deep bond of understanding and fellowship that he can forge in what, for others, might have been a trivial conversation. Paulo Freire is indeed back home again on the streets and in the fields of Brazil.

REFERENCES

[1] Dialogue from the July Seminar, 1979.

[2] Ibid

[3] A concept attributed to Ali Mazrui of The University of Michigan Political Science Department and Center for Afro-American and African Studies.