

Pedagogy of the Oppressed

Paulo Freire

With an Introduction by Donaldo Macedo

Introduction

According to Freire...

"I engage in dialogue not necessarily because I like the other person. I engage in dialogue because I recognize the social and not merely the individualistic character of the process of knowing. In this sense, dialogue presents itself as an indispensable component of the process of both learning and knowing.

Foreword

Freire is able to [incarnate a rediscovery of the humanizing vocation of the intellectual, and demonstrates the power of thought to negate accepted limits and open the way to a new future] because he operates on one basic assumption: that man's ontological vocation (as he calls it) is to be a Subject who acts upon and transforms his world, and in so doing moves toward ever new possibilities of fuller and richer life individually and collectively. This *world* to which he relates is not a static and closed order, a *given* reality which man must accept and to which he must adjust; rather, it is a problem to be worked on and solved. It is the material used by man to create history, a task which he performs as he overcomes that which is dehumanizing at any particular time and place and dares to create the qualitatively new.

In this process, the old, paternalistic teacher-student relationship is overcome. A peasant can facilitate this process for a neighbor more effectively than a "teacher" brought in from outside.

"People educate each other through the mediation of the world."

As this happens, the word takes on new power. It is no longer an abstraction or magic but a means by which people discover themselves and their potential as they give names to things around them. As Freire puts it, each individual wins back the right to *say his or her own word, to name the world*.

"I work, and working I transform the world."

At first sight, Paulo Freire's method of teaching illiterates in Latin America seems to belong to a different world from that in which we find ourselves in this country. Certainly, it would be absurd to claim that it should be copied here. But there are certain parallels in the two situations that should not be overlooked. Our advanced technological society is rapidly making objects of most of us and subtly programming us into conformity to the logic of its system. To the degree that this happens, we are also becoming submerged in a new "culture of silence."

The paradox is that the same technology that does this to us also creates a new sensitivity to what is happening. Especially among young people, the new media together with the erosion of old concepts of authority open the way to acute awareness of this new bondage. The young perceive that their right to say their own word has been stolen from them, and that few things are more important than the struggle to win it back. And they also realize that the educational system today—from kindergarten to university—is their enemy.

There is no such thing as a *neutral* educational process. Education either functions as an instrument that is used to facilitate the integration of the younger generation 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 their world. The development of an educational methodology that facilitates this process will inevitably lead to tension and conflict within our society. BUT it could also contribute to the formation of a new man and mark the beginning of a new era in Western history.

Preface

Men and women rarely admit their fear of freedom openly, however, tending rather to camouflage it—sometimes unconsciously—by presenting themselves as defenders of freedom. They give their doubts and misgivings an air of profound sobriety, as befitting custodians of freedom. But they confuse freedom with the maintenance of the status quo; so that if *conscientização* threatens to place that status quo in question, it thereby seems to constitute a threat to freedom itself.

Radicalization involves increased commitment to the position one has chosen, and thus ever greater engagement in the effort to transform concrete, objective reality. Conversely, sectarianism, because it is mythicizing and irrational, turns reality into a false (and therefore unchangeable) "reality."

! The radical, committed to human liberation, does not become the prisoner of a "circle of certainty" within which reality is also imprisoned. On the contrary, the more radical the person is, the more fully he or she enters into reality so that, knowing it better, he or she can better transform it. This individual is not afraid to confront, to listen, to see the world unveiled. This person is not afraid to meet the people or to enter into dialogue with them. This person does not consider himself or herself the proprietor of history of all people, or the liberator of the oppressed; but he or she does commit himself or herself, within history, to fight at their side.

PEDAGOGY of the OPPRESSED

Chapter 1

Dehumanization, which marks not only those whose humanity has been stolen, but also (though in a different way) those who have stolen it, is a *distortion* of the vocation of becoming more fully human.

! Because it is a distortion of being more fully human, sooner or later being less human leads the oppressed to struggle against those who made them so. In order for this struggle to have meaning, the oppressed must not, in seeking to regain their humanity (which is a way to create it), become in turn oppressors of the oppressors, but rather restorers of the humanity of both.

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. Any attempt to “soften” the power of the oppressor in deference to the weakness of the oppressed almost always manifests itself in the form of false generosity; indeed, the attempt never goes beyond this. In order to have the continued opportunity to express their “generosity,” the oppressors must perpetuate injustice as well. An unjust social order is the permanent fount of this “generosity,” which is nourished by death, despair, and poverty. That is why the dispensers of false generosity become desperate at the slightest threat to its source.

True generosity consists precisely in fighting to destroy the causes which nourish false charity. False charity constrains the fearful and subdued, the “rejects of life,” to extend their trembling hands. True generosity lies in striving so that these hands—whether of individuals or entire peoples—need be extended less and less in supplication, so that more and more they become human hands which work and, working, transform the world.

! Who are better prepared than the oppressed to understand the terrible significance of an oppressive society? Who suffers the effects of oppression more than the oppressed? Who can better understand the necessity of liberation? They will not gain this liberation by chance through the praxis of their quest for it, through their recognition of the necessity to fight for it. And this

fight, because of the purpose given it by the oppressed, will actually constitute an act of love opposing the lovelessness which lies at the heart of the oppressors' violence, lovelessness even when clothed in false generosity.

It is a rare peasant who, once "promoted" to overseer, does not become more of a tyrant towards his former comrades than the owner himself. This is because the context of the peasant's situation, that is, oppression, remains unchanged. In this example, the overseer, in order to make sure of his job, must be as tough as the owner—and more so. Thus it illustrates our previous assertion that during the initial stage of their struggle the oppressed find in the oppressor their model of "manhood."

One of the basic elements of the relationship between oppressor and oppressed is prescription. Every prescription represents the imposition of one individual's choice upon another, transforming the consciousness of the person prescribed to into one that conforms with the prescriber's consciousness. Thus, the behavior of the oppressed is a prescribed behavior, following as it does the guidelines of the oppressor.

The oppressed, having internalized the image of the oppressor and adopted his guidelines, are fearful of freedom. Freedom would require them to eject this image and replace it with autonomy and responsibility. Freedom is acquired by conquest, not by gift. It must be pursued constantly and responsibly. Freedom is not an ideal located outside of man; nor is it an idea which becomes myth. It is rather the indispensable condition for the quest for human completion.

Although the situation of oppression is a dehumanized and dehumanizing totality affecting both the oppressors and those whom they oppress, it is the latter who must, from their stifled humanity, wage for both the struggle for a fuller humanity; the oppressor, who is himself dehumanized because he dehumanizes others, is unable to lead this struggle.

And in the struggle this pedagogy will be made and remade.

The central problem is this: How can the oppressed, as divided, unauthentic beings, participate in developing the pedagogy of their liberation? Only as they discover themselves to be "hosts" of the oppressor can they contribute to the midwifery of their liberating pedagogy. As long as they live in the duality in which to be is to be like, and to be like is to be like the oppressor, this contribution is impossible. The pedagogy of the oppressed is an instrument for their critical discovery that both they and their oppressors are manifestations of dehumanization.

Liberation is thus a childbirth, and a painful one.

This solution cannot be achieved in idealistic terms. In order for the oppressed to be able to wage the struggle for their liberation, they must perceive the reality of oppression not as a closed world from which there is no exit, but as a limiting situation which they can transform. This perception is a necessary but not a sufficient condition for liberation; it must become the motivating force for liberating action.

! Discovering himself to be an oppressor may cause considerable anguish, but it does not necessarily lead to solidarity with the oppressed. Rationalizing his guilt through paternalistic treatment of the oppressed, all the while holding them fast in a position of dependence, will not do. Solidarity requires that one enter into the situation of those with whom one is solidary; it is a radical posture. If what characterizes the oppressed is their subordination to the consciousness of the master, as Hegel affirms,⁵ true solidarity with the oppressed means fighting at their side to transform the objective reality which has made them these "beings for another." The oppressor is solidary with the oppressed only when he stops regarding the oppressed as an abstract category and sees them as persons who have been unjustly dealt with, deprived of their voice, cheated in the sale of their labor—when he stops making pious, sentimental, and individualistic gestures and risks an act of love. True solidarity is found only in the plenitude of this act of love, in its existentiality, in its praxis. To affirm that men and women are persons and as persons should be free, and yet to do nothing tangible to make this affirmation a reality, is a farce.

World and human beings do not exist apart from each other, they exist in constant interaction.

Reality which becomes oppressive results in the contradistinction of men as oppressors and oppressed. The latter, whose task it is to struggle for their liberation together with those who show true solidarity, must acquire a critical awareness of oppression through the praxis of this struggle. One of the gravest obstacles to the achievement of liberation is that oppressive reality absorbs those within it and thereby acts to submerge human beings' consciousness.⁶

Functionally, oppression is domesticating. To no longer be prey to its force, one must emerge from it and turn upon it. This can be done only by means of the praxis: reflection and action upon the world in order to transform it.

A different type of false perception occurs when a change in objective reality would threaten the individual or class interests of the perceiver. In the first instance, there is no critical intervention in reality because that reality is fictitious; there is none in the second instance because intervention would contradict the class interests of the perceiver. In the latter case the tendency of the perceiver is to behave "neurotically." The fact exists; but both the fact and what may result from it may be prejudicial to the person. Thus it becomes necessary, not precisely to deny the fact, but to "see it differently." This rationalization as a defense mechanism coincides in the end with subjectivism. A fact which is not denied but whose truths are rationalized loses its objective base. It ceases to be concrete and becomes a myth created in defense of the class of the perceiver.

But action is human only when it is not merely an occupation but also a preoccupation, that is, when it is not dichotomized from reflection.

!! For us, however, the requirement is seen not in terms of explaining to, but rather dialoguing with the people about their actions. In any event, no reality transforms itself,⁹ and the duty which Lukacs ascribes to the revolutionary party of "explaining to the masses their own action" coincides with our affirmation of the need for the critical intervention of the people in reality through the praxis. The pedagogy of the oppressed, which is the pedagogy of people engaged in the fight for their own liberation, has its roots here. And those who recognize, or begin to recognize, themselves as oppressed must be among the developers of this pedagogy. No pedagogy which is truly liberating can remain distant from the oppressed by treating them as unfortunates and by presenting for their emulation models from among the oppressors. The oppressed must be their own example in the struggle for their redemption.

Pedagogy which begins with the egoistic interests of the oppressors (an egoism cloaked in the false generosity of paternalism) and makes of the oppressed the objects of its humanitarianism, itself maintains and embodies oppression. It is an instrument of dehumanization. This is why, as we affirmed earlier, the pedagogy of the oppressed cannot be developed or practiced by the oppressors.

- (1) (2) The pedagogy of the oppressed, as a humanist and libertarian pedagogy, has two distinct stages. In the first, the oppressed unveil the world of oppression and through the praxis commit themselves to its transformation. In the second stage, in which the reality of oppression has already been transformed, this pedagogy ceases to belong to the oppressed and becomes a pedagogy of all people in the process of permanent liberation.

LB: stages of the pedagogy

! Any situation in which "A" objectively exploits "B" or hinders his and her pursuit of self-affirmation as a responsible person is one of oppression. Such a situation in itself constitutes violence, even when sweetened by false generosity, because it interferes with the individual's ontological and historical vocation to be more fully human. With the establishment of a relationship of oppression, violence has already begun. Never in history has violence been initiated by the oppressed. How could they be the initiators, if they themselves are the result of violence?

...

There would be no oppressed had there been no prior situation of violence to establish their subjugation.

Violence is initiated by those who oppress, who exploit, who fail to recognize others as persons—not by those who are oppressed, exploited, and unrecognized. It is not the unloved who initiate disaffection, but those who cannot love because they love only themselves. It is not the helpless, subject to terror, who initiate terror, but the violent, who with their power create the

concrete situation which begets the "rejects of life." It is not the tyrannized who initiate despotism, but the tyrants. It is not the despised who initiate hatred, but those who despise. It is not those whose humanity is denied them who negate humankind, but those who denied that humanity (thus negating their own as well). Force is used not by those who have become weak under the preponderance of the strong, but by the strong who have emasculated them. For the oppressors, however, it is always the oppressed (whom they obviously never call "the oppressed" but—depending on whether they are fellow countrymen or not—"those people" or "the blind and envious masses" or "savages" or "natives" or "subversives") who are disaffected, who are "violent," "barbaric," "wicked," or "ferocious" when they react to the violence of the oppressors.

Yet it is—paradoxical though it may seem—precisely in the response of the oppressed to the violence of their oppressors that a gesture of love may be found. Consciously or unconsciously, the act of rebellion by the oppressed (an act which is always, or nearly always, as violent as the initial violence of the oppressors) can initiate love. Whereas the violence of the oppressors prevents the oppressed from being fully human, the response of the latter to this violence is grounded in the desire to pursue the right to be human. As the oppressors dehumanize others and violate their rights, they themselves also become dehumanized. As the oppressed, fighting to be human, take away the oppressors power to dominate and suppress, they restore to the oppressors the humanity they had lost in the exercise of oppression.

!/? It is only the oppressed who, by freeing themselves, can free their oppressors. The latter, as an oppressive class, can free neither others nor themselves.

...

! If the goal of the oppressed is to become fully human, they will not achieve their goal by merely reversing the terms of the contradiction, by simply changing poles.

This may seem simplistic; it is not. Resolution of the oppressor-oppressed contradiction indeed implies the disappearance of the oppressors as a dominant class. However, the restraints imposed by the former oppressed on their oppressors, so that the latter cannot reassume their former position, do not constitute oppression. An act is oppressive only when it prevents people from being more fully human. Accordingly, these necessary restraints do not in themselves signify that yesterday's oppressed have become today's oppressors. Acts which prevent the restoration of the oppressive regime cannot be compared with those which create and maintain it, cannot be compared with those by which a few men and women deny the majority their right to be human*,

!! But even when the contradiction is resolved authentically by a new situation established by the liberated laborers, the former oppressors do not feel liberated. On the contrary, they genuinely consider themselves to be oppressed. Conditioned by the experience of oppressing others, any situation other than their former seems to them like oppression. Formerly, they could eat, dress, wear shoes, be educated, travel, and hear Beethoven; while millions did not eat, had no clothes or shoes, neither studied nor traveled, much less listened to Beethoven. Any restriction on this way of life, in the name of the rights of the community, appears to the former oppressors as a profound violation of their individual rights—although they had no respect for the millions who suffered and died of hunger, pain, sorrow, and despair. For the oppressors, "human beings" refers only to themselves; other people are "things." For the oppressors, there

exists only one right: their right to live in peace, over against the right, not always even recognized, but simply conceded, of the oppressed to survival. And they make this concession only because the existence of the oppressed is necessary to their own existence.

Analysis of existential situations of oppression reveals that their inception lay in an act of violence—initiated by those with power. This violence, as a process, is perpetuated from generation to generation of oppressors, who become its heirs and are shaped in its climate. This climate creates in the oppressor a strongly possessive consciousness—possessive of the world and of men and women. Apart from direct, concrete, material possession of the world and of people, the oppressor consciousness could not understand itself—could not even exist. Fromm said of this consciousness that, without such possession, "it would lose contact with the world." The oppressor consciousness tends to transform everything surrounding it into an object of its domination. The earth, property, production, the creations of people, people themselves, time—everything is reduced to the status of objects at its disposal.

! In their unrestrained eagerness to possess, the oppressors develop the conviction that it is possible for them to transform everything into objects of their purchasing power; hence their strictly materialistic concept of existence. Money is the measure of all things, and profit the primary goal. For the oppressors, what is worthwhile is to have more—always more—even at the cost of the oppressed having less or having nothing. For them, to be is to have and to be the class of the "haves."

The oppressors do not perceive their monopoly on having more as a privilege which dehumanizes others and themselves. They cannot see that, in the egoistic pursuit of having as a possessing class, they suffocate in their own possessions and no longer are; they merely have. For them, having more is an inalienable right, a right they acquired through their own "effort," with their "courage to take risks." If others do not have more, it is because they are incompetent and lazy, and worst of all is their unjustifiable ingratitude towards the "generous gestures" of the dominant class. Precisely because they are "ungrateful" and "envious," the oppressed are regarded as potential enemies who must be watched. It could not be otherwise. If the humanization of the oppressed signifies subversion, so also does their freedom; hence the necessity for constant control. And the more the oppressors control the oppressed, the more they change them into apparently inanimate "things."

Sadistic love is a perverted love—a love of death, not of life.

Given the preceding context, another issue of indubitable importance arises: the fact that certain members of the oppressor class join the oppressed in their struggle for liberation, thus moving from one pole of the contradiction to the other. Theirs is a fundamental role, and has been so throughout the history of this struggle. It happens, however, that as they cease to be exploiters or indifferent spectators or simply the heirs of exploitation and move to the side of the exploited, they almost always bring with them the marks of their origin: their prejudices and their deformations, which include a lack of confidence in the people's ability to think, to want, and to know.

! The generosity of the oppressors is nourished by an unjust order, which must be maintained in order to justify that generosity. Our converts, on the other hand, truly desire to transform the unjust order; but because of their background they believe that they must be the executors of the transformation. They talk about the people, but they do not trust them; and trusting the people is the indispensable precondition for revolutionary change. A real humanist can be identified more by his trust in the people, which engages him in their struggle, than by a thousand actions in their favor without that trust.

Those who authentically commit themselves to the people must re-examine themselves constantly. This conversion is so radical as not to allow of ambiguous behavior. To affirm this commitment but to consider oneself the proprietor of revolutionary wisdom—which must then be given to (or imposed on) the people—is to retain the old ways.

The convert who approaches the people but feels alarm at each step they take, each doubt they express, and each suggestion they offer, and attempts to impose his "status," remains nostalgic towards his origins.

Conversion to the people requires a profound rebirth. Those who undergo it must take on a new form of existence; they can no longer remain as they were.

Submerged in reality, the oppressed cannot perceive clearly the "order" which serves the interests of the oppressors whose image they have internalized. Chafing under the restrictions of this order, they often manifest a type of horizontal violence, striking out at their own comrades for the pettiest reasons.

On the other hand, at a certain point in their existential experience the oppressed feel an irresistible attraction towards the oppressors and their way of life. Sharing this way of life becomes an overpowering aspiration. In their alienation, the oppressed want at any cost to resemble the oppressors, to imitate them, to follow them. This phenomenon is especially prevalent in the middle-class oppressed, who yearn to be equal to the "eminent" men and women of the upper class. Albert Memmi, in an exceptional analysis of the "colonized mentality," refers to the contempt he felt towards the colonizer, mixed with "passionate" attraction towards him.

Self-depreciation is another characteristic of the oppressed, which derives from their internalization of the opinion the oppressors hold of them. So often do they hear that they are good for nothing, know nothing and are incapable of learning anything—that they are sick, lazy, and unproductive—that in the end they become convinced of their own unfitness.

The peasant feels inferior to the boss because the boss seems to be the only one who knows things and is able to run things.

The magical force of the landowners' power holds particular sway in the rural areas. A sociologist friend of mine tells of a group of armed peasants in a Latin American country who recently took over a latifundium. For tactical reasons, they planned to hold the landowner as a

hostage. But not one peasant had the courage to guard him; his very presence was terrifying. It is also possible that the act of opposing the boss provoked guilt feelings. In truth, the boss was "inside" them.

The oppressed must see examples of the vulnerability of the oppressor so that a contrary conviction can begin to grow within them. Until this occurs, they will continue disheartened, fearful, and beaten.²² As long as the oppressed remain unaware of the causes of their condition, they fatalistically "accept" their exploitation. Further, they are apt to react in a passive and alienated manner when confronted with the necessity to struggle for their freedom and self-affirmation. Little by little, however, they tend to try out forms of rebellious action. In working towards liberation, one must neither lose sight of this passivity nor overlook the moment of awakening.

Within their unauthentic view of the world and of themselves, the oppressed feel like "things" owned by the oppressor. For the latter, to be is to have, almost always at the expense of those who have nothing.

! It is only when the oppressed find the oppressor 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.

!! But to substitute monologue, slogans, and communiques for dialogue is to attempt to liberate the oppressed with the instruments of domestication. Attempting to liberate the oppressed without their reflective participation in the act of liberation is to treat them as objects which must be saved from a burning building; it is to lead them into the populist pitfall and transform them into masses which can be manipulated.

The insistence that the oppressed engage in reflection on their concrete situation is not a call to armchair revolution. On the contrary, reflection—true reflection—leads to action. On the other hand, when the situation calls for action, that action will constitute an authentic praxis only if its consequences become the object of critical reflection.

To achieve this praxis, however, it is necessary to trust in the oppressed and in their ability to reason. Whoever lacks this trust will fail to initiate (or will abandon) dialogue, reflection, and communication, and will fall into using slogans, communiques, monologues, and instructions. Superficial conversions to the cause of liberation carry this danger.

Political action on the side of the oppressed must be pedagogical action in the authentic sense of the word, and, therefore, action with the oppressed.

..

Using their dependence to create still greater dependence is an oppressor tactic.

However, not even the best-intentioned leadership can bestow independence as a gift. The liberation of the oppressed is a liberation of women and men, not things. Accordingly, while no one liberates himself by his own efforts alone, neither is he liberated by others.

The revolutionary leaders of every epoch who have affirmed that the oppressed must accept the struggle for their liberation—an obvious point—have also thereby implicitly recognized the pedagogical aspect of this struggle. Many of these leaders, however (perhaps due to natural and understandable biases against pedagogy), have ended up using the "educational" methods employed by the oppressor. They deny pedagogical action in the liberation process, but they use propaganda to convince.

They must realize that they are fighting not merely for freedom from hunger, but for . . . freedom to create and to construct, to wonder and to venture. Such freedom requires that the individual be active and responsible, not a slave or a well-fed cog in the machine. ... It is not enough that men are not slaves; if social conditions further the existence of automatons, the result will not be love of life, but love of death.

The oppressed, who have been shaped by the death-affirming climate of oppression, must find through their struggle the way to life-affirming humanization, which does not lie simply in having more to eat (although it does involve having more to eat and cannot fail to include this aspect). The oppressed have been destroyed precisely because their situation has reduced them to things. In order to regain their humanity they must cease to be things and fight as men and women. This is a radical requirement. They cannot enter the struggle as objects in order later to become human beings.

Chapter 2

Education is suffering from narration sickness.

The teacher talks about reality as if it were motionless, static, compartmentalized, and predictable.

The outstanding characteristic of this narrative education, then, is the sonority of words, not their transforming power. "Four times four is sixteen; the capital of Para is Belem." The student records, memorizes, and repeats these phrases without perceiving what four times four really means, or realizing the true significance of "capital" in the affirmation "the capital of Para is Belem," that is, what Belem means for Para and what Para means for Brazil.

! For apart from inquiry, apart from the praxis, individuals cannot be truly human.

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.

...The teacher presents himself to his students as their necessary opposite...

The more students work at storing the deposits entrusted to them, the less they develop the critical consciousness which would result from their intervention in the world as transformers of

that world. The more completely they accept the passive role imposed on them, the more they tend simply to adapt to the world as it is and to the fragmented view of reality deposited in them.

The oppressors use their "humanitarianism" to preserve a profitable situation.

Indeed, the interests of the oppressors lie in "changing the consciousness of the oppressed, not the situation which oppresses them"...

The truth is, however, that the oppressed are not "marginals," are not people living "outside" society. They have always been "inside"—inside the structure which made them "beings for others." The solution is not to "integrate" them into the structure of oppression, but to transform that structure so that they can become "beings for themselves." Such transformation, of course, would undermine the oppressors' purposes; hence their utilization of the banking concept of education to avoid the threat of student *conscientização*.

! ...reality is really a *process*, undergoing constant transformation.

The more completely the majority adapt to the purposes which the dominant minority prescribe for them (thereby depriving them of the right to their own purposes), the more easily the minority can continue to prescribe. The theory and practice of banking education serve this end quite efficiently. Verbalistic lessons, reading requirements,³ the methods for evaluating "knowledge," the distance between the teacher and the taught, the criteria, for promotion: everything in this ready-to-wear approach serves to obviate thinking.

! The teacher cannot think for her students, nor can she impose her thought on them. Authentic thinking, thinking that is concerned about reality, does not take place in ivory tower isolation, but only in communication. If it is true that thought has meaning only when generated by action upon the world, the subordination of students to teachers becomes impossible. Because banking education begins with a false understanding of men and women as objects, it cannot promote the development of what Fromm calls "biophilia," but instead produces its opposite: "necrophily."

While life is characterized by growth in a structured, functional manner, the necrophilous person loves all that does not grow, all that is mechanical. The necrophilous person is driven by the desire to transform the organic into the inorganic, to approach life mechanically, as if all living persons were things. . . . Memory, rather than experience; having, rather than being, is what counts. The necrophilous person can relate to an object—a flower or a person—only if he possesses it; hence a threat to his possession is a threat to himself; if he loses possession he loses contact with the world. ... He loves control, and in the act of controlling he kills life.⁴

! Oppression—overwhelming control—is necrophilic; it is nourished by love of death, not life. The banking concept of education, which serves the interests of oppression, is also necrophilic. Based on a mechanistic, static, naturalistic, spatialized view of consciousness, it transforms students into receiving objects. It attempts to control thinking and action, leads women and men to adjust to the world, and inhibits their creative power.

!! Populist manifestations perhaps best exemplify this type of behavior by the oppressed, who, by identifying with charismatic leaders, come to feel that they themselves are active and effective. The rebellion they express as they emerge in the historical process is motivated by that desire to act effectively. The dominant elites consider the remedy to be more domination and repression, carried out in the name of freedom, order, and social peace (that is, the peace of the elites). Thus they can condemn—logically, from their point of view—"the violence of a strike by workers and [can] call upon the state in the same breath to use violence in putting down the strike."

Unfortunately, those who espouse the cause of liberation are themselves surrounded and influenced by the climate which generates the banking concept, and often do not perceive its true significance or its dehumanizing power.

!! But one does not liberate people by alienating them. Authentic liberation—the process of humanization—is not another deposit to be made in men. Liberation is a praxis: the action and reflection of men and women upon their world in order to transform it.

Liberating education consists in acts of cognition, not transferrals of information. It is a learning situation in which the cognizable object (far from being the end of the cognitive act) intermediates the cognitive actors—teacher on the one hand and students on the other.

Through dialogue, the teacher-of-the-students and the students-of-the-teacher cease to exist and a new term emerges: teacher-student with students-teachers. The teacher is no longer merely the-one-who-teaches, but one who is himself taught in dialogue with the students, who in turn while being taught also teaches. They become jointly responsible for a process in which all grow.

The banking concept (with its tendency to dichotomize everything) distinguishes two stages in the action of the educator.

=O Hence in the name of the "preservation of culture and knowledge" we have a system which achieves neither true knowledge nor true culture.

In this way, the problem-posing educator constantly re-forms his reflections in the reflection of the students. The students—no longer docile listeners—are now critical co-investigators in dialogue with the teacher. The teacher presents the material to the students for their consideration, and re-considers her earlier considerations as the students express their own. The role of the problem-posing educator is to create; together with the students, the conditions under which knowledge at the level of the *doxa* is superseded by true knowledge, at the level of the *logos*.

Whereas banking education anesthetizes and inhibits creative power, problem-posing education involves a constant unveiling of reality. The former attempts to maintain the submersion of consciousness; the latter strives for the emergence of consciousness and critical intervention in reality.

Students, as they are increasingly posed with problems relating to themselves in the world and with the world, will feel increasingly challenged and obliged to respond to that challenge. Because they apprehend the challenge as interrelated to other problems within a total context, not as a theoretical question, the resulting comprehension tends to be increasingly critical and thus constantly less alienated. Their response to the challenge evokes new challenges, followed by new understandings; and gradually the students come to regard themselves as committed.

! Authentic reflection considers neither abstract man nor the world without people, but people in their relations with the world. In these relations consciousness and world are simultaneous: consciousness neither precedes the world nor follows it.

In one of our culture circles in Chile, the group was discussing (based on a codification⁹) the anthropological concept of culture. In the midst of the discussion, a peasant who by banking standards was completely ignorant said: "Now I see that without man there is no world." When the educator responded: "Let's say, for the sake of argument, that all the men on earth were to die, but that the earth itself remained, together with trees, birds, animals, rivers, seas, the stars . . . , wouldn't all this be a world?" "Oh no," the peasant replied emphatically. "There would be no one to say: This is a world'."

The world which brings consciousness into existence becomes the world *of* that consciousness.

That which had existed objectively but had not been perceived in its deeper implications (if indeed it was perceived at all) begins to "stand out," assuming the character of a problem and therefore of challenge. Thus, men and women begin to single out elements from their "background awareness" and to reflect upon them. These elements are now objects of their consideration, and, as such, objects of their action and cognition.

In problem-posing education, people develop their power 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, in transformation. Although the dialectical relations of women and men with the world exist independently of how these relations are perceived (or whether or not they are perceived at all), it is also true that the form of action they adopt is to a large extent a function of how they perceive themselves in the world.

! Banking education (for obvious reasons) attempts, by mythicizing reality, to conceal certain facts which explain the way human beings exist in the world; problem-posing education sets itself the task of demythologizing. Banking education resists dialogue; problem-posing education regards dialogue as indispensable to the act of cognition which unveils reality. Banking education treats students as objects of assistance; problem-posing education makes them critical thinkers. Banking education inhibits creativity and domesticates (although it cannot completely destroy) the intentionality of consciousness by isolating consciousness from the world, thereby denying people their ontological and historical vocation of becoming more fully human. Problem-posing education bases itself on creativity and stimulates true reflection and action upon reality, thereby responding to the vocation of persons as beings who are authentic only when engaged in inquiry and creative transformation. In sum: banking theory and practice,

as immobilizing and fixating forces, fail to acknowledge men and women as historical beings; problem-posing theory and practice take the peoples historicity as their starting point. Problem-posing education affirms men and women as beings in the process of becoming—as unfinished, uncompleted beings in and with a likewise unfinished reality. Indeed, in contrast to other animals who are unfinished, but not historical, people know themselves to be unfinished;

Problem-posing education is revolutionary futurity.

...it affirms women and men as beings who transcend themselves, who move forward and look ahead, for whom immobility represents a fatal threat, for whom looking at the past must only be a means of understanding more clearly what and who they are so that they can more wisely build the future.

!! Any situation in which some individuals prevent others from engaging in the process of inquiry is one of violence. The means used are not important; to alienate human beings from their own decision-making is to change them into objects.

! This movement of inquiry must be directed towards humanization—the people's historical vocation. The pursuit of full humanity, however, cannot be carried out in isolation or individualism, but only in fellowship and solidarity; therefore it cannot unfold in the antagonistic relations between oppressors and oppressed. No one can be authentically human while he prevents others from being so. Attempting to be more human, individualistically, leads to having more, egotistically, a form of dehumanization. Not that it is not fundamental to have in order to be Human. Precisely because it is necessary, some men's having must not be allowed to constitute an obstacle to others having, must not consolidate the power of the former to crush the latter.

Problem-posing education does not and cannot serve the interests of the oppressor. No oppressive order could permit the oppressed to begin to question: Why? While only a revolutionary society can carry out this education in systematic terms, the revolutionary leaders need not take full power before they can employ the method. In the revolutionary process, the leaders cannot utilize the banking method as an interim measure, justified on grounds of expediency, with the intention of later behaving in a genuinely revolutionary fashion. They must be revolutionary—that is to say, dialogical—from the outset.

Chapter 3

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.

...there is no transformation without action.

1. Action	}	word = work = praxis
Reflection		
Sacrifice of action = verbalism		
Sacrifice of reflection = activism		

! ...dialogue cannot occur between those who want to name the world and those who do not wish this naming—between those who deny others the right to speak their word and those whose right to speak has been denied them.

Dialogue cannot exist, however, in the absence of a profound love for the world and for people. The naming of the world, which is an act of creation and re-creation, is not possible if it is not infused with love.⁴ Love is at the same time the foundation of dialogue and dialogue itself. It is thus necessarily the task of responsible Subjects and cannot exist in a relation of domination. Domination reveals the pathology of love: sadism in the dominator and masochism in the dominated. Because love is an act of courage, not of fear, love is commitment to others. No matter where the oppressed are found, the act of love is commitment to their cause—the cause of liberation. And this commitment, because it is loving, is dialogical. As an act of bravery, love cannot be sentimental; as an act of freedom, it must not serve as a pretext for manipulation. It must generate other acts of freedom; otherwise, it is not love.

Dialogue, as the encounter of those 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 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 and women who lack humility (or have lost it) cannot come to the people, cannot be their partners in naming the world. Someone who cannot 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 people who are attempting, together, to learn more than they now know

! He is convinced that the power to create and transform, even when thwarted in concrete situations, tends to be reborn.

Without this faith in people, dialogue is a farce which inevitably degenerates into paternalistic manipulation.

! False love, false humility, and feeble faith in others cannot create trust. Trust is contingent on the evidence which one party provides the others of his true, concrete intentions; it cannot exist if that party's words do not coincide with their actions. To say one thing and do another—to take one's own word lightly—cannot inspire trust. To glorify democracy and to silence the people is a farce; to discourse on humanism and to negate people is a lie.

Hope, however, does not consist in crossing one's arms and waiting. As long as I fight, I am moved by hope; and if I fight with hope, then I can wait.

! For the naive thinker, the important thing is accommodation to this normalized "today." For the critic, the important thing is the continuing transformation of reality, in behalf of the continuing hu-manization of men. In the words of Pierre Furter:

The goal will no longer be to eliminate the risks of temporality by clutching to guaranteed space, but rather to temporalize space . . . The universe is revealed to me not as space, imposing a massive presence to which I can but adapt, but as a scope, a domain which takes shape as I act upon it.

For the anti-dialogical banking educator, the question of content simply concerns the program about which he will discourse to his students; and he answers his own question, by organizing his own program.

! Authentic education is not carried on by "A" for "B" or by "A" about "B," but rather by "A" with "B," mediated by the world—a world which impresses and challenges both parties, giving rise to views or opinions about it. In its desire to create an ideal model of the "good man," a naively conceived humanism often overlooks the concrete, existential, present situation of real people. Authentic humanism, in Pierre Furter's words, "consists in permitting the emergence of the awareness of our full humanity, as a condition and as an obligation, as a situation and as a project.

Many political and educational plans have failed because their authors designed them according to their own personal views of reality, never once taking into account (except as mere objects of their actions) the men-in-a-situation to whom their program was ostensibly directed.

For the truly humanist educator and the authentic revolutionary, the object of action is the reality to be transformed by them together with other people—not other men and women themselves. The oppressors are the ones who act upon the people to indoctrinate them and adjust them to a reality which must remain untouched. Unfortunately, however, in their desire to obtain the support of the people for revolutionary action, revolutionary leaders often fall for the banking line of planning program content from the top down. They approach the peasant or urban masses with projects which may correspond to their own view of the world, but not to that of the people.¹⁰ They forget that their fundamental objective is to fight alongside the people for the recovery of the people's stolen humanity, not to 'Avin the people over" to their side. Such a phrase does not belong in the vocabulary of revolutionary leaders, but in that of the oppressor. The revolutionary's role is to liberate, and be liberated, with the people—not to win them over.

! One cannot expect positive results from an educational or political action program which fails to respect the particular view of the world held by the people. Such a program constitutes cultural invasion,¹¹ good intentions notwithstanding.

The starting point for organizing the program content of education or political action must be the present, existential, concrete situation, reflecting the aspirations of the people.

It is not our role to speak to the people about our own view of the world, nor to attempt to impose that view on them, but rather to dialogue with the people about their view and ours. We must realize that their view of the world, manifested variously in their action, reflects their situation in the world. Educational and political action which is not critically aware of this situation runs the risk either of "banking" or of preaching in the desert.

Often, educators and politicians speak and are not understood because their language is not attuned to the concrete situation of the people they address. Accordingly, their talk is just alienated and alienating rhetoric.

One may well remember— trite as it seems—that, of the uncompleted beings, man is the only one to treat not only his actions but his very self as the object of his reflection; this capacity distinguishes him from the animals, which are unable to separate themselves from their activity and thus are unable to reflect upon it.

As they separate themselves from the world, which they objectify, as they separate themselves from their own activity, as they locate the seat of their decisions in themselves and in their relations with the world and others, people overcome the situations which limit them: the "limit-situations."¹⁵ Once perceived by individuals as fetters, as obstacles to their liberation, these situations stand out in relief from the background, revealing their true nature as concrete historical dimensions of a given reality. Men and women respond to the challenge with actions which Vieira Pinto calls "limit-acts": those directed at negating and overcoming, rather than passively accepting, the "given,"

Thus, it is not the limit-situations in and of themselves which create a climate of hopelessness, but rather how they are perceived by women and men at a given historical moment: whether they appear as fetters or as insurmountable barriers. As critical perception is embodied in action, a climate of hope and confidence develops which leads men to attempt to overcome the limit-situations. This objective can be achieved only through action upon the concrete, historical reality in which limit-situations historically are found. As reality is transformed and these situations are superseded, new ones will appear, which in turn will evoke new limit-acts.

It is as transforming and creative beings that humans, in their permanent relations with reality, produce not only material goods— tangible objects—but also social institutions, ideas, and concepts.

An epoch is characterized by a complex of ideas, concepts, hopes, doubts, values, and challenges in dialectical interaction with their opposites, striving towards plenitude. The concrete representation of many of these ideas, values, concepts, and hopes, as well as the obstacles which impede the people's full humanization, constitute the themes of that epoch. These themes imply others which are opposing or even antithetical; they also indicate tasks to be carried out and fulfilled. Thus, historical themes are never isolated, independent, disconnected, or static;

they are always interacting dialectically with their opposites. Nor can these themes be found anywhere except in the human-world relationship. The complex of interacting themes of an epoch constitutes its "thematic universe."

Its opposing theme, the critical and dynamic view of the world, strives to unveil reality, unmask its mythicization, and achieve a full realization of the human task: the permanent transformation of reality in favor of the liberation of people.

In sum, limit-situations imply the existence of persons who are directly or indirectly served by these situations,, and of those who are negated and curbed by them. Once the latter come to perceive these situations as the frontier between being and being more human, rather than the frontier between being and nothingness, they begin to direct their increasingly critical actions towards achieving the untested feasibility implicit in that perception. On the other hand, those who are served by the present limit-situation regard the untested feasibility as a threatening limit-situation which must not be allowed to materialize, and act to maintain the status quo. Consequently, liberating actions upon an historical milieu must correspond not only to the generative themes but to the Way in which these themes are perceived.

Within these sub-units, national themes may or may not be perceived in their true significance. They may simply be felt— sometimes not even that. But the nonexistence of themes within the sub-units is absolutely impossible. The fact that individuals in a certain area do not perceive a generative theme, or perceive it in a distorted way, may only reveal a limit-situation of oppression in which people are still submerged.

When people lack a critical understanding of their reality, apprehending it in fragments which they do not perceive as interacting constituent elements of the whole, they cannot truly know that reality.

! Individuals of the middle class often demonstrate this type of behavior, although in a different way from the peasant. Their fear of freedom leads them to erect defense mechanisms and rationalizations which conceal the fundamental, emphasize the fortuitous, and deny concrete reality. In the face of a problem whose analysis would lead to the uncomfortable perception of a limit-situation, their tendency is to remain on the periphery of the discussion and resist any attempt to reach the heart of the question. They are even annoyed when someone points out a fundamental proposition which explains the fortuitous or secondary matters to which they had been assigning primary importance.

A group which does not concretely express a generative thematic—a fact which might appear to imply the nonexistence of themes—is, on the contrary, suggesting a very dramatic theme: *the theme of silence*. The theme of silence suggests a structure of mutism in face of the overwhelming force of the limit-situations.

Some may think it inadvisable to include the people as investigators in the search for their own meaningful thematic: that their intrusive influence (n.b., the "intrusion" of those who are most

interested—or ought to be—in their own education) will "adulterate" the findings and thereby sacrifice the objectivity of the investigation. This view mistakenly presupposes that themes exist, in their original objective purity, outside people—as if themes were things. Actually, themes exist in people in their relations with the world, with reference to concrete facts.

We must realize that the aspirations, the motives, and the objectives implicit in the meaningful thematics are human aspirations, motives, and objectives. They do not exist "out there" somewhere, as static entities; they are occurring. They are as historical as human beings themselves; consequently, they cannot be apprehended apart from them. To apprehend these themes and to understand them is to understand both the people who embody them and the reality to which they refer. But—precisely because it is not possible to understand these themes apart from people—it is necessary that those concerned understand them as well.

The real danger of the investigation is not that the supposed objects of the investigation, discovering themselves to be co-investigators, might "adulterate" the analytical results. On the contrary, the danger lies in the risk of shifting the focus of the investigation from the meaningful themes to the people themselves, thereby treating the people as objects of the investigation. Since this investigation is to serve as a basis for developing an educational program in which teacher-student and students-teachers combine their cognitions of the same object, the investigation itself must likewise be based on reciprocity of action.

As a process of search, of knowledge, and thus of creation, it requires the investigators to discover the interpenetration of problems, in thinking of meaningful themes. The investigation will be most educational when it is most critical, and most critical when it avoids the narrow outlines of partial or "focalized" views of reality, and sticks to the comprehension of *total* reality. Thus, the process of searching for the meaningful thematics should include a concern for the links between themes, a concern to pose these themes as problems, and a concern for their historical-cultural context.

! The investigator who, in the name of scientific objectivity, transforms the organic into something inorganic, what is becoming into what is, life into death, is a person who fears change. He or she sees in change (which is not denied, but neither is it desired) not a sign of life, but a sign of death and decay. He or she does want to study change—but in order to stop it, not in order to stimulate or deepen it. However, in seeing change as a sign of death and in making people the passive objects of investigation in order to arrive at rigid models, one betrays their own character as a killer of life.

I repeat: the investigation of thematics involves the investigation of the people's thinking—thinking which occurs only in and among people together seeking out reality. I cannot think for others or without others, nor can others think for me. Even if the people's thinking is superstitious or naive, it is only as they rethink their assumptions in action that they can change. Producing and acting upon their own ideas—not consuming those of others—must constitute that process.

The more the group divide and reintegrate the whole, the more closely they approach the nuclei of the principal and secondary contradictions which involve the inhabitants of the area. By locating these nuclei of contradictions, the investigators might even at this stage be able to organize the program content of their educational action. Indeed, if the content reflected these contradictions, it would undoubtedly contain the meaningful thematics of the area. And one can safely affirm that action based on these observations would be much more likely to succeed than that based on "decisions from the top."

An equally fundamental requirement for the preparation of the codifications is that their thematic nucleus be neither overly explicit nor overly enigmatic. The former may degenerate into mere propaganda, with no real decoding to be done beyond stating the obviously predetermined content. The latter runs the risk of appearing to be a puzzle or a guessing game. Since they represent existential situations, the codifications should be simple in their complexity and offer various decoding possibilities in order to avoid the brainwashing tendencies of propaganda. Codifications are not slogans; they are cognizable objects, challenges towards which the critical reflection of the decoders should be directed.

As they do this, they begin to see how they themselves acted while actually experiencing the situation they are now analyzing, and thus reach a "perception of their previous perception." By achieving this awareness, they come to perceive reality differently...

By stimulating "perception of the previous perception" and "knowledge of the previous knowledge," decoding stimulates the appearance of a new perception and the development of new knowledge.

During his use of this method in the post-literacy stage, Bode observed that the peasants became interested in the discussion only when the codification related directly to their felt needs. Any deviation in the codification, as well as any attempt by the educator to guide the decoding discussion into other areas, produced silence and indifference.

! The great achievement of Gabriel Bode is that, by means of the dialectics between the essential and the auxiliary codifications, he has managed to communicate to the participants a sense of totality. Individuals who were submerged in reality, merely feeling their needs, emerge from reality and perceive the causes of their needs. In this way, they can go beyond the level of real consciousness to that of potential consciousness much more rapidly.

! In one of the thematic investigations carried out in Santiago, a group of tenement residents discussed a scene showing a drunken man walking on the street and three young men conversing on the corner. The group participants commented that "the only one there who is productive and useful to his country is the spouse who is returning home after working all day for low wages and who is worried about his family because he can't take care of their needs. He is the only worker. He is a decent worker and a souse like us."

! The investigator had intended to study aspects of alcoholism. He probably would not have elicited the above responses if he had presented the participants with a questionnaire he

had elaborated himself. If asked directly, they might even have denied ever taking a drink themselves. But in their comments on the codification of an existential situation they could recognize, and in which they could recognize themselves, they said what they really felt.

In contrast, imagine the failure of a moralistic educator, sermonizing against alcoholism and presenting as an example of virtue something which for these men is not a manifestation of virtue.

In another experience, this time with peasants, I observed that the unchanging motif during an entire discussion of a situation depicting work in the fields was the demand for an increase in wages and the necessity of joining together to create a union to obtain this particular demand. Three situations were discussed during the session, and the motif was always the same. Now imagine an educator who has organized his educational program for these men, consisting of reading "wholesome" texts in which one learns that "the water is in the well." But precisely this type of thing happens all the time in both education and politics, because it is not realized that the dialogical nature of education begins with thematic investigation.

When the taped interview is presented to the culture circle, an introductory statement indicates who each speaker is, what she or he has written, done, and doing now; meanwhile, the speaker's photograph is projected on a screen.

This technique links intellectuals, often well-intentioned but not infrequently alienated from the reality of the people, to that reality. It also gives the people an opportunity to hear and criticize the thought of intellectuals.

As in the case of the recorded interviews, the author is introduced before the group begins, and the contents are discussed afterward.

! Along the same lines, it is indispensable to analyze the contents of newspaper editorials following any given event: "Why do different newspapers have such different interpretations of the same fact?" This practice helps develop a sense of criticism, so that people will react to newspapers or news broadcasts not as passive objects of the "communiques" directed at them, but rather as consciousnesses seeking to be free.

The thematics which have come from the people return to them—not as contents to be deposited, but as problems to be solved.

With the experience now behind me, I can affirm that the concept of culture, discussed imaginatively in all or most of its dimensions, can provide various aspects of an educational program. In addition, after several days of dialogue with the culture circle participants, the educators can ask the participants directly: "What other themes or subjects could we discuss besides these?" As each person replies, the answer is noted down and is immediately proposed to the group as a problem.

One of the group members may say, for example: "I'd like to talk about nationalism." "Very well," says the educator, noting down the suggestion, and adds: "What does nationalism mean? Why

is a discussion about nationalism of any interest to us?" My experience shows that when a suggestion is posed as a problem to the group, new themes appear. If, in an area where (for example) thirty culture circles meet on the same night, all the "coordinators" (educators) proceed in this fashion, the central team will have a rich variety of thematic material for study.

! The important thing, from the point of view of libertarian education, is for the people to come to feel like masters of their thinking by discussing the thinking and views of the world explicitly or implicitly manifest in their own suggestions and those of their comrades. Because this view of education starts with the conviction that it cannot present its own program but must search for this program dialogically with the people, it serves to introduce the pedagogy of the oppressed, in the elaboration of which the oppressed must participate.

Chapter

4

I shall start by reaffirming that humankind, as beings of the praxis, differ from animals, which are beings of pure activity. Animals do not consider the world; they are immersed in it. In contrast, human beings emerge from the world, objectify it, and in so doing can understand it and transform it with their labor.

! But human activity consists of action and reflection: it is praxis; it is transformation of the world. And as praxis, it requires theory to illuminate it. Human activity is theory and practice; it is reflection and action. It cannot, as I stressed in chapter 2, be reduced to either verbalism or activism.

! Lenin's famous statement: "Without a revolutionary theory there can be no revolutionary movement" means that a revolution is achieved with neither verbalism nor activism, but rather with praxis, that is, with reflection and action directed at the structures to be transformed. The revolutionary effort to transform these structures radically cannot designate its leaders as its thinkers and the oppressed as mere doers.

! If true commitment to the people, involving the transformation of the reality by which they are oppressed, requires a theory of transforming action, this theory cannot fail to assign the people a fundamental role in the transformation process. The leaders cannot treat the oppressed as mere activists to be denied the opportunity of reflection and allowed merely the illusion of acting, whereas in fact they would continue to be manipulated—and in this case by the presumed foes of manipulation.

! The leaders do bear the responsibility for coordination and, at times, direction—but leaders who deny praxis to the oppressed thereby invalidate their own praxis. By imposing their word on others, they falsify that word and establish a contradiction between their methods and their objectives. If they are truly committed to liberation, their action and reflection cannot proceed without the action and reflection of others.

! Revolutionary praxis must stand opposed to the praxis of the dominant elites, for they are by nature antithetical. Revolutionary praxis cannot tolerate an absurd dichotomy in which

the praxis of the people is merely that of following the leaders decisions—a dichotomy reflecting the prescriptive methods of the dominant elites. Revolutionary praxis is a unity, and the leaders cannot treat the oppressed as their possession.

! Manipulation, sloganizing, "depositing," regimentation, and prescription cannot be components of revolutionary praxis, precisely because they are components of the praxis of domination. In order to dominate, the dominator has no choice but to deny true praxis to the people, deny them the right to say their own word and think their own thoughts.

If the oppressed do not become aware of this ambiguity during the course of the revolutionary process, they may participate in that process with a spirit more revanch-ist than revolutionary.³ They may aspire to revolution as a means of domination, rather than as a road to liberation.

! If revolutionary leaders who incarnate a genuine humanism have difficulties and problems, the difficulties and problems will be far greater for a group of leaders who try (even with the best of intentions) to carry out the revolution for the people. To attempt this is equivalent to carrying out a revolution without the people, because the people are drawn into the process by the same methods and procedures used to oppress them.

! Dialogue with the people is radically necessary to every authentic revolution. This is what makes it a revolution, as distinguished from a military coup. One does not expect dialogue from a coup—only deceit (in order to achieve "legitimacy") or force (in order to repress). Sooner or later, a true revolution must initiate a courageous dialogue with the people. Its very legitimacy lies in that dialogue.⁴ It cannot fear the people, their expression, their effective participation in power.

The earlier dialogue begins, the more truly revolutionary will the movement be. The dialogue which is radically necessary to revolution corresponds to another radical need: that of women and men as beings who cannot be truly human apart from communication, for they are essentially communicative creatures. To impede communication is to reduce men to the status of "things"—and this is a job for oppressors, not for revolutionaries.

Action and reflection occur simultaneously. A critical analysis of reality may, however, reveal that a particular form of action is impossible or inappropriate at the present time. Those who through reflection perceive the infeasibility or inappropriateness of one or another form of action (which should accordingly be postponed or substituted) cannot thereby be accused of inaction. Critical reflection is also action.

=O! Apart from this communion, we do see dichotomy: leaders on one side and people on the other, in a replica of the relations of oppression. Denial of communion in the revolutionary process, avoidance of dialogue with the people under the pretext of organizing them, of strengthening revolutionary power, or of ensuring a united front, is really a fear of freedom. It is fear of or lack of faith in the people. But if the people cannot be trusted, there is no reason for liberation; in this case the revolution is not even carried out for the people, but "by" the people for the leaders: a complete self-negation.

! The revolution is made neither by the leaders for the people, nor by the people for the leaders, but by both acting together in unshakable solidarity. This solidarity is born only when

the leaders witness to it by their humble, loving, and courageous encounter with the people. Not all men and women have sufficient courage for this encounter—but when they avoid encounter they become inflexible and treat others as mere objects; instead of nurturing life, they kill life; instead of searching for life, they flee from it. And these are oppressor characteristics.

Authentic revolution attempts to transform the reality which begets this dehumanizing state of affairs. Those whose interests are served by that reality cannot carry out this transformation; it must be achieved by the tyrannized, with their leaders. This truth, however, must become radically consequential; that is, the leaders must incarnate it, through communion with the people. In this communion both groups grow together, and the leaders, instead of being simply self-appointed, are installed or authenticated in their praxis with the praxis of the people.

! Many persons, bound to a mechanistic view of reality, do not perceive that the concrete situation of individuals conditions their consciousness of the world, and that in turn this consciousness conditions their attitudes and their ways of dealing with reality. They think that reality can be transformed mechanistically,⁶ without posing the persons false consciousness of reality as a problem or, through revolutionary action, developing a consciousness which is less and less false. There is no historical reality which is not human. There is no history without humankind, and no history for human beings; there is only history of humanity, made by people and (as Marx pointed out) in turn making them. It is when the majorities are denied their right to participate in history as Subjects that they become dominated and alienated. Thus, to supersede their condition as objects by the status of Subjects—the objective of any true revolution—requires that the people act, as well as reflect, upon the reality to be transformed.

Revolutionary leaders cannot think *without* the people, nor *for* the people, but only *with* the people.

If the elites were to think with the people, the contradiction would be superseded and they could no longer dominate.

! A Mr. Giddy, later President of the Royal Society raised objections which could be matched in every country: "However specious in theory the project might be of giving education to the laboring classes of the poor, it would be prejudicial to their morals and happiness; it would teach them to despise their lot in life instead of making them good servants in agricultural and other laborious employments; instead of teaching them subordination it would render them fractious and refractory as was evident in the manufacturing counties; It would enable them to read seditious pamphlets, vicious books and publications against Christianity; it would render them insolent to their superiors and in a few years the legislature would find it necessary to direct the strong arm of power against them.

What Mr. Giddy really wanted (and what the elites of today want, although they do not denounce popular education so cynically and openly) was for the people not to think. Since the Mr. Giddys of all epochs, as an oppressor class, cannot think with the people, neither can they let the people think for themselves.

This leadership group either identifies itself with the oppressed state of the people, or it is not revolutionary. To simply think about the people, as the dominators do, without any self-giving in that thought, to fail to think with the people, is a sure way to cease being revolutionary leaders. In the process of oppression the elites subsist on the "living death" of the oppressed and find their authentication in the vertical relationship between themselves and the latter; in the revolutionary process there is only one way for the emerging leaders to achieve authenticity: they must "die," in order to be reborn through and with the oppressed.

! We can legitimately say that in the process of oppression someone oppresses someone else; we cannot say that in the process of revolution someone liberates someone else, nor yet that someone liberates himself, but rather that human beings in communion liberate each other. This affirmation is not meant to undervalue the importance of revolutionary leaders but, on the contrary, to emphasize their value. What could be more important than to live and work with the oppressed, with the "rejects of life," with the "wretched of the earth"? In this communion, the revolutionary leaders should find not only their *raison d'être* but a motive for rejoicing. By their very nature, revolutionary leaders can do what the dominant elites—by their very nature—are unable to do in authentic terms.

Every approach to the oppressed by the elites, as a class, is couched in terms of the false generosity described in chapter 1. But the revolutionary leaders cannot be falsely generous, nor can they manipulate/Whereas the oppressor elites flourish by trampling the people underfoot, the revolutionary leaders can flourish only in communion with the people. Thus it is that the activity of the oppressor cannot be humanist, while that of the revolutionary is necessarily so.

Scientific revolutionary humanism cannot, in the name of revolution, treat the oppressed as objects to be analyzed and (based on that analysis) presented with prescriptions for behavior.

The one who is doing the decreeing defines himself and the class to which he belongs as those who know or were born to, know; he thereby defines others as alien entities. The words of his own class come to be the "true" words, which he imposes or attempts to impose on the others: the oppressed, whose words have been stolen from them. Those who steal the words of others develop a deep doubt in the abilities of the others and consider them incompetent. Each time they say their word without hearing the word of those whom they have forbidden to speak, they grow more accustomed to power and acquire a taste for guiding, ordering, and commanding. They can no longer live without having someone to give orders to. Under these circumstances, dialogue is impossible.

Scientific and humanist revolutionary leaders, on the other hand, cannot believe in the myth of the ignorance of the people. They do not have the right to doubt for a single moment that it is only a myth. They cannot believe that they, and only they, know anything—for this means to doubt the people. Although they may legitimately recognize themselves as having, due to their revolutionary consciousness, a level of revolutionary knowledge different from the level of empirical knowledge held by the people, they cannot impose themselves and their knowledge on the people.

Some well-intentioned but misguided persons suppose that since the dialogical process is prolonged¹⁰ (which, incidentally, is not true), they ought to carry out the revolution without communication, by means of "communiques," and that once the revolution is won, they will then develop a thoroughgoing educational effort. They further justify this procedure by saying that it is not possible to carry out education—liberating education—before taking power.

! Once more, I wish to emphasize that there is no dichotomy between dialogue and revolutionary action. There is not one stage for dialogue and another for revolution. On the contrary, dialogue is the essence of revolutionary action. In the theory of this action, the actors intersubjectively direct their action upon an object (reality, which mediates them) with the humanization of men (to be achieved by transforming that reality) as their objective. In the theory of oppressor action, antialogical in essence, the above scheme is simplified. The actors have as simultaneous objects of their action both reality and the oppressed, and the preservation of oppression (through the preservation of oppressive reality) as their objective.

THEORY OF REVOLUTIONARY ACTION

Intersubjectivity

Subjects-Actors
(revolutionary
leaders) *Actors-Subjects*
(the oppressed)

THEORY OF OPPRESSIVE ACTION

Actors-Subjects
(dominant elites)

These men and women (or most of them) believe in the necessity for dialogue with the people, but do not believe this dialogue is feasible prior to taking power. When they deny the possibility that the leaders can behave in a critically educational fashion before taking power, they deny the revolutions educational quality as cultural action preparing to become cultural revolution. On the other hand, they confuse cultural action with the new education to be inaugurated once power is taken.

! But because the revolution undeniably has an educational nature, in the sense that unless it liberates it is not revolution, the taking of power is only one moment—no matter how decisive—in the revolutionary process.

! The newness of the revolution is generated within the old, oppressive society; the taking of power constitutes only a decisive moment of the continuing revolutionary process. In a dynamic, rather than static, view of revolution, there is no absolute "before" or "after," with the taking of power as the dividing line.

! Originating in objective conditions, revolution seeks to supersede the situation of oppression by inaugurating a society of women and men in the process of continuing liberation. The educational, dia-logical quality of revolution, which makes it a "cultural revolution" as well, must be present in all its stages. This educational quality is one of the most effective instruments for keeping the revolution from becoming institutionalized and stratified in a counter-revolutionary bureaucracy; for counter-revolution is carried out by revolutionaries who become reactionary.

!! Were it not possible to dialogue with the people before power is taken, because they have no experience with dialogue, neither would it be possible for the people to come to power, for they are equally inexperienced in the use of power. The revolutionary process is dynamic, and it is in this continuing dynamics, in the praxis of the people with the revolutionary leaders, that the people and the leaders will learn both dialogue and the use of power. (This is as obvious as affirming that a person learns to swim in the water, not in a library.)

The struggle for a free society is not a struggle for a free society unless through it an ever greater degree of individual freedom is created.

! Thus the road to revolution involves openness to the people, not imperviousness to them; it involves communion with the people, not mistrust.

Conquest

Just as antidialogical action is a concomitant of the real, concrete situation of oppression, dialogical action is indispensable to the revolutionary superseding of that situation. An individual is not antidialogical or dialogical in the abstract, but in the world. He or she is not first antidialogical, then oppressor; but both, simultaneously. Within an objective situation of oppression, antidialogue is necessary to the oppressor as a means of further oppression—not only economic, but cultural: the vanquished are dispossessed of their word, their expressiveness, their culture.

! Further, once a situation of oppression has been initiated, antidialogue becomes indispensable to its preservation.

Because liberating action is dialogical in nature, dialogue cannot be a posteriori to that action, but must be concomitant with it. And since liberation must be a permanent condition, dialogue becomes a continuing aspect of liberating action.¹³

To this end the oppressors attempt to destroy in the oppressed their quality as "considerers" of the world. Since the oppressors cannot totally achieve this destruction, they must mythicize the world. In order to present for the consideration of the oppressed and subjugated a world of deceit designed to increase their alienation and passivity, the oppressors develop a series of methods precluding any presentation of the world as a problem and showing it rather as a fixed entity, as something given—something to which people, as mere spectators, must adapt. It is necessary for the oppressors to approach the people in order, via subjugation, to keep them passive. This approximation, however, does not involve being with the people, or require true communication. It is accomplished by the oppressors depositing myths indispensable to the preservation of the status quo: for example, the myth that the oppressive order is a "free society"; the myth that all persons are free to work where they wish, that if they don't like their boss they can leave him and look for another job; the myth that this order respects human rights and is therefore worthy of esteem; the myth that anyone who is industrious can become an entrepreneur—worse yet, the myth that the street vendor is as much an entrepreneur as the owner of a large factory; the myth of the universal right of education, when of all the Brazilian

children who enter primary schools only a tiny fraction ever reach the university; the myth of the equality of all individuals, when the question: "Do you know who you're talking to?" is still current among us; the myth of the heroism of the oppressor classes as defenders of "Western Christian civilization" against "materialist barbarism"; the myth of the charity and generosity of the elites, when what they really do as a class is to foster selective "good deeds" (subsequently^a elaborated into the myth of "disinterested aid," which on the international level was severely criticized by Pope John XXIII); the myth that the dominant elites, "recognizing their duties," promote the advancement of the people, so that the people, in a gesture of gratitude, should accept the words of the elites and be conformed to them; the myth that rebellion is a sin against God; the myth of private property as fundamental to personal human development (so long as oppressors are the only true human beings); the myth of the industriousness of the oppressors and the laziness and dishonesty of the oppressed, as well as the myth of the natural inferiority of the latter and the superiority of the former.

!!! In ancient Rome, the dominant elites spoke of the need to give "bread and circus" to the people in order to "soften them up" and to secure their own tranquility. The dominant elites of today, like those of any epoch, continue (in a version of original sin") to need to conquer others—with or without bread and circus. The content and methods of conquest vary historically; what does not vary (as long as dominant elites exist) is the necrophilic passion to oppress.

Divide and Rule

! As the oppressor minority subordinates and dominates the majority, it must divide it and keep it divided in order to remain in power. The minority cannot permit itself the luxury of tolerating the unification of the people, which would undoubtedly signify a serious threat to their own hegemony. Accordingly, the oppressors halt by any method (including violence) any action which in even incipient fashion could awaken the oppressed to the need for unity. Concepts such as unity, organization, and struggle are immediately labeled as dangerous. In fact, of course, these concepts are dangerous—to the oppressors—for their realization is necessary to actions of liberation.

! It is in the interest of the oppressor to weaken the oppressed still farther, to isolate them, to create and deepen rifts among them. This is done by varied means, from the repressive methods of the government bureaucracy to the forms of cultural action with which they manipulate the people by giving them the impression that they are being helped.

! The same divisive effect occurs in connection with the so-called "leadership training courses," which are (although carried out without any such intention by many of their organizers) in the last analysis alienating. These courses are based on the naive assumption that one can promote the community by training its leaders—as if it were the parts that promote the whole and not the whole which, in being promoted, promotes the parts. Those members of the communities who show sufficient leadership capacities to be chosen for these courses

necessarily reflect and express the aspirations of the individuals of their community. They are in harmony with the way of living and thinking about reality which characterizes their comrades, even though they reveal special abilities which give them the status of "leaders." As soon as they complete the course and return to the community with resources they did not formerly possess, they either use these resources to control the submerged and dominated consciousness of their comrades, or they become strangers in their own communities and their former leadership position is thus threatened. In order not to lose their leadership status, they will probably tend to continue manipulating the community, but in a more efficient manner.

The oppressors do not favor promoting the community as a whole, but rather selected leaders. The latter course, by preserving a state of alienation, hinders the emergence of consciousness and critical intervention in a total reality. And without this critical intervention, it is always difficult to achieve the unity of the oppressed as a class.

! Class conflict is another concept which upsets the oppressors, since they do not wish to consider themselves an oppressive class. Unable to deny, try as they may, the existence of social classes, they preach the need for understanding and harmony between those who buy and those who are obliged to sell their labor.¹⁸ However, the unconcealable antagonism which exists between the two classes makes this "harmony" impossible.¹⁹ The elites call for harmony between classes as if classes were fortuitous agglomerations of individuals curiously looking at a shop window on a Sunday afternoon. The only harmony which is viable and demonstrable is that found among the oppressors themselves. Although they may diverge and upon occasion even clash over group interests, they unite immediately at a threat to the class. Similarly, the harmony of the oppressed is only possible when its members are engaged in the struggle for liberation. Only in exceptional cases is it not only possible but necessary for both classes to unite and act in harmony; but when the emergency which united them has passed they will return to the contradiction which defines their existence and[^] which never really disappeared. All the actions of the dominant class manifest its need to divide in order to facilitate the preservation of the oppressor state. Its interference in the unions, favoring certain "representatives" of the dominated classes (who actually represent the oppressor, not their own comrades); its promotion of individuals who reveal leadership capacity and could signify a threat if they were not "softened up" in this way; its distribution of benefits to some and penalties to others: all these are ways of dividing in order to preserve the system which favors the elite.

!! People are fulfilled only to the extent that they create their world (which is a human world), and create it with their transforming labor. The fulfillment of humankind as human beings lies, then, in the fulfillment of the world. If for a person to be in the world of work is to be totally dependent, insecure, and permanently threatened—if their work does not belong to them—the person cannot be fulfilled. Work that is not free ceases to be a fulfilling pursuit and becomes an effective means of dehumanization.

!! Every move by the oppressed towards unity points towards other actions; it means that sooner or later the oppressed will perceive their state of depersonalization and discover that as long as they are divided they will always be easy prey for manipulation and domination. Unity and organization can enable them to change their weakness into a transforming force with which they can re-create the world and make it more human.

! Dividing in order to preserve the status quo, then, is necessarily a fundamental objective of the theory of antidialogical action. In addition, the dominators try to present themselves as saviors of the women and men they dehumanize and divide. This messianism, however, cannot conceal their true intention: to save themselves.

! They want to save their riches, their power, their way of life: the things that enable them to subjugate others. Their mistake is that men cannot save themselves (no matter how one understands "salvation"), either as individuals or as an oppressor class. Salvation can be achieved only with others. To the extent, however, that the elites oppress, they cannot be with the oppressed; for being against them is the essence of oppression.

! A psychoanalysis of oppressive action might reveal the "false generosity" of the oppressor (described in chapter 1) as a dimension of the latter's sense of guilt. With this false generosity, he attempts not only to preserve an unjust and necrophilic order, but to "buy" peace for himself. It happens that peace cannot be bought; peace is experienced in solidary and loving acts, which cannot be incarnated in oppression.

! Since it is necessary to divide the people in order to preserve the status quo and (thereby) the power of the dominators, it is essential for the oppressors to keep the oppressed from perceiving their strategy. So the former must convince the latter that they are being "defended" against the demonic action of "marginals, rowdies, and enemies of God" (for these are the epithets directed at men who lived and are living the brave pursuit of man's humanization). In order to divide and confuse the people, the destroyers call themselves builders, and accuse the true builders of being destructive. History, however, always takes it upon itself to modify these designations.

It is the men who in their own time sought unity for liberation who are the heroes—not those who used their power to divide and rule.

Manipulation

Within certain historical conditions, manipulation is accomplished by means of pacts between the dominant and the dominated classes—pacts which, if considered superficially, might give the impression of a dialogue between the classes. In reality, however, these pacts are not dialogue, because their true objectives are determined by the unequivocal interest of the dominant elites. In the last analysis, pacts are used by the dominators to achieve their own ends.

Sooner or later, these pacts always increase the subjugation of the people. They are proposed only when the people begin (even naively) to emerge from the historical process and by this emergence to threaten the dominant elites.

When the oppressed are almost completely submerged in reality, it is unnecessary to manipulate them. In the antidialogical theory of action, manipulation is the response of the oppressor to the new concrete conditions of the historical process.

It happens, however, that large sectors of the oppressed form an urban proletariat, especially in the more industrialized centers of the country. Although these sectors are occasionally restive, they lack revolutionary consciousness and consider themselves privileged. Manipulation, with its series of deceits and promises, usually finds fertile ground here.

All the policies of the Left are based on the masses and depend on the consciousness of the latter. If that consciousness is confused, the Left will lose its roots and certain downfall will be imminent, although (as in the Brazilian case) the Left may be deluded into thinking it can achieve the revolution by means of a quick return to power.

!! In a situation of manipulation, the Left is almost always tempted by a "quick return to power," forgets the necessity of joining with the oppressed to forge an organization, and strays into an impossible "dialogue" with the dominant elites. It ends by being manipulated by these elites, and not infrequently itself falls into an elitist game, which it calls "realism."

! Whether one calls this correct thinking "revolutionary consciousness" or "class consciousness," it is an indispensable precondition of revolution. The dominant elites are so well aware of this fact that they instinctively use all means, including physical violence, to keep the people from thinking. They have a shrewd intuition of the ability of dialogue to develop a capacity for criticism. While some revolutionary leaders consider dialogue with the people a "bourgeois and reactionary" activity, the bourgeoisie regard dialogue between the oppressed and the revolutionary leaders as a very real danger to be avoided.

One of the methods of manipulation is to inoculate individuals with the bourgeois appetite for personal success. This manipulation is sometimes carried out directly by the elites and sometimes indirectly, through populist leaders.

The emergence of populism as a style of political action thus coincides causally with the emergence of the oppressed. The populist leader who rises from this process is an ambiguous being, an "amphibian" who lives in two elements. Shuttling back and forth between the people and the dominant oligarchies, he bears the marks of both groups.

! I have come to say that at this moment the Administration does not yet have the laws or the concrete instruments for immediate action to defend the people's economy. It is thus necessary for the people to organize—not only to defend their own interests, but also to give the government the base of support it requires to carry out its objectives ... I need your unity. I need for you, in solidarity, to organize yourselves in unions. I need for you to form a strong and cohesive bloc to stand beside the government so that it will have all the force it needs to solve your problems. I need your unity so you can fight against saboteurs, so you do not fall prey to the interests of speculators and rapacious scoundrels in detriment of the interests of the people. . . . The hour has come to appeal to the workers; unite in your unions as free and organized

forces ... at the present time no Administration can survive or dispose of sufficient force to achieve its social ends if it does not have the support of the laboring organizations.

This is because welfare programs as instruments of manipulation ultimately serve the end of conquest. They act as an anesthetic, distracting the oppressed from the true causes of their problems and from the concrete solution of these problems. They splinter the oppressed into groups of individuals hoping to get a few more benefits for themselves. This situation contains, however, a positive element: the individuals who receive some aid always want more; those who do not receive aid, seeing the example of those who do, grow envious and also want assistance. Since the dominant elites cannot "aid" everyone, they end by increasing the restiveness of the oppressed.

The revolutionary leaders should take advantage of the contradictions of manipulation by posing it as a problem to the oppressed, with the objective of organizing them.

Cultural Invasion

Whether urbane or harsh, cultural invasion is thus always an act of violence against the persons of the invaded culture, who lose their originality or face the threat of losing it. In cultural invasion (as in all the modalities of antidialogical action) the invaders are the authors of, and actors in, the process; those they invade are the objects.

! All domination involves invasion—at times physical and overt, at times camouflaged, with the invader assuming the role of a helping friend.

In cultural invasion it is essential that those who are invaded come to see their reality with the outlook of the invaders rather than their own; for the more they mimic the invaders, the more stable the position of the latter becomes.

For cultural invasion to succeed, it is essential that those invaded become convinced of their intrinsic inferiority. Since everything has its opposite, if those who are invaded consider themselves inferior, they must necessarily recognize the superiority of the invaders. The values of the latter thereby become the pattern for the former. The more invasion is accentuated and those invaded are alienated from the spirit of their own culture and from themselves, the more the latter want to be like the invaders: to walk like them, dress like them, talk like them.

!! Cultural invasion is on the one hand an instrument of domination, and on the other, the result of domination. Thus, cultural action of a dominating character (like other forms of antidialogical action), in addition to being deliberate and planned, is in another sense simply a product of oppressive reality.

For example, a rigid and oppressive social structure necessarily influences the institutions of child rearing and education within that structure. These institutions pattern their action after the style of the structure, and transmit the myths of the latter. Homes and schools (from nurseries to

universities) exist not in the abstract, but in time and space. Within the structures of domination they function largely as agencies which prepare the invaders of the future.

The parent-child relationship in the home usually reflects the objective cultural conditions of the surrounding social structure. If the conditions which penetrate the home are authoritarian, rigid, and dominating, the home will increase the climate of oppression.³⁰ As these authoritarian relations between parents and children intensify, children in their infancy increasingly internalize the paternal authority.

Presenting (with his customary clarity) the problem of necrophilia and biophilia, Fromm analyzes the objective conditions which generate each condition, whether in the home (parent-child relations in a climate of indifference and oppression or of love and freedom), or in a sociocultural context. If children reared in an atmosphere of lovelessness and oppression, children whose potency has been frustrated, do not manage during their youth to take the path of authentic rebellion, they will either drift into total indifference, alienated from reality by the authorities and the myths the latter have used to "shape" them; or they may engage in forms of destructive action.

The atmosphere of the home is prolonged in the school, where the students soon discover that (as in the home) in order to achieve some satisfaction they must adapt to the precepts which have been set from above. One of these precepts is not to think.

Internalizing paternal authority through the rigid relationship structure emphasized by the school, these young people tend when they become professionals (because of the very fear of freedom instilled by these relationships) to repeat the rigid patterns in which they were miseducated. This phenomenon, in addition to their class position, perhaps explains why so many professionals adhere to anti-dialogical action.³¹ Whatever the specialty that brings them into contact with the people, they are almost unshakably convinced that it is their mission to "give" the latter their knowledge and techniques. They see themselves as "promoters" of the people. Their programs of action (which might have been prescribed by any good theorist of oppressive action) include their own objectives, their own convictions, and their own preoccupations. They do not listen to the people, but instead plan to teach them how to "cast off the laziness which creates underdevelopment." To these professionals, it seems absurd to consider the necessity of respecting the "view of the world" held by the people. The professionals are the ones with a "world view." They regard as equally absurd the affirmation that one must necessarily consult the people when organizing the program content of educational action. They feel that the ignorance of the people is so complete that they are unfit for anything except to receive the teachings of the professionals.

Well-intentioned professionals (those who use "invasion" not as deliberate ideology but as the expression of their own upbringing) eventually discover that certain of their educational failures must be ascribed, not to the intrinsic inferiority of the "simple men of the people," but to the violence of their own act of invasion. Those who make this discovery face a difficult alternative: they feel the need to renounce invasion, but patterns of domination are so entrenched within them that this renunciation would become a threat to their own identities. To renounce invasion would mean ending their dual status as dominated and dominators. It would mean abandoning

all the myths which nourish invasion, and starting to incarnate dialogical action. For this very reason, it would mean to cease being *over* or *inside* (as foreigners) in order to be *with* (as comrades).

The fear of freedom is greater still in professionals who have not yet discovered for themselves the invasive nature of their action, and who are told that their action is dehumanizing.

! Professional women and men of any specialty, university graduates or not, are individuals who have been "determined from above"³⁴ by a culture of domination which has constituted them as dual beings. (If they had come from the lower classes this miseducation would be the same, if not worse.) These professionals, however, are necessary to the reorganization of the new society. And since many among them—even though "afraid of freedom" and reluctant to engage in humanizing action—are in truth more misguided than anything else, they not only could be, but ought to be, reclaimed by the revolution.

Technical and scientific training need not be inimical to humanistic education as long as science and technology in the revolutionary society are at the service of permanent liberation, of humanization.

From this point of view, the training of individuals for any occupation (since all occupations occur in time and space) requires the understanding of (a) culture as a superstructure which can maintain "remnants" of the past³⁶ alive in the substructure undergoing revolutionary transformation and (b) the occupation itself as an instrument for the transformation of culture. As the cultural revolution deepens conscientização in the creative praxis of the new society, people will begin to perceive why mythical remnants of the old society survive in the new. And they will then be able to free themselves more rapidly of these specters, which by hindering the edification of a new society have always constituted a serious problem for every revolution.

As men who "house" the oppressor, they resist as might the latter themselves the further basic steps which the revolution must take. And as dual beings they also accept (still due to the remnants) power which becomes bureaucratized and which violently represses them. In turn, this violently repressive bureaucratic power can be explained by what Althusser calls the "reactivation of old elements" in the new society each time special circumstances permit.

! Finally, cultural revolution develops the practice of permanent dialogue between leaders and people, and consolidates the participation of the people in power. In this way, as both leaders and people continue their critical activity, the revolution will more easily be able to defend itself against bureaucratic tendencies (which lead to new forms of oppression) and against "invasion" (which is always the same).

! And when the power of decision is located outside rather than within the one who should decide, the latter has only the illusion of deciding.

! Thus, while all development is transformation, not all transformation is development. The transformation occurring in a seed which under favorable conditions germinates and sprouts, is

not development. In the same way, the transformation of an animal is not development. The transformations of seeds and animals are determined by the species to which they belong; and they occur in a time which does not belong to them, for time belongs to humankind

In the last analysis, the latter determines the destiny of the former: mere transformation; for it is their transformation—not their development—that is to the interest of the metropolitan society.

! It is essential not to confuse modernization with development. The former, although it may affect certain groups in the "satellite society," is almost always induced; and it is the metropolitan society which derives the true benefits therefrom. A society which is merely modernized without developing will continue—even if it takes over some minimal delegated powers of decision—to depend on the outside country. This is the fate of any dependent society, as long as it remains dependent.

The basic, elementary criterion is whether or not the society is a "being for itself." If it is not, the other criteria indicate modernization rather than development.

The principal contradiction of dual societies is the relationship of dependency between them and the metropolitan society. Once the contradiction has been superseded, the transformation hitherto effected through "aid," which has primarily benefited the metropolitan society, becomes true development, which benefits the "being for itself."

! For the above reasons, the purely reformist solutions attempted by these societies (even though some of the reforms may frighten and even panic the more reactionary members of the elite groups) do not resolve their external and internal contradictions. Almost always the metropolitan society induces these reformist solutions in response to the demands of the historical process, as a new way of preserving its hegemony. It is as if the metropolitan society were saying: "Let us carry out reforms before the people carry out a revolution."

The people must find themselves in the emerging leaders, and the latter must find themselves in the people.

..."class necessity" and "class consciousness."

In the second case, the emerging leaders receive from the people sympathetic and almost instantaneous support, which tends to increase during the process of revolutionary action. The leaders go to the people in a spontaneously dialogical manner. There is an almost immediate empathy between the people and the revolutionary leaders: their mutual commitment is almost instantly sealed. In fellowship, they consider themselves co-equal contradictions of the dominant elites. From this point on, the established practice of dialogue between people and leaders is nearly unshakable. That dialogue will continue when power is reached; and the people will know that they have come to power.

After all, it is not easy for leaders who have emerged through adherence to the oppressed to recognize themselves as being in contradiction with those to whom they adhered

Since the leaders need the adherence of the people so that the revolution can be achieved (but at the same time mistrust the mistrustful people), they are tempted to utilize the same procedures used by the dominant elites to oppress. Rationalizing their lack of confidence in the people, the leaders say that it is impossible to dialogue with the people before taking power, thus opting for the antidialogical theory of action. Thenceforward—just like the dominant elites—they try to conquer the people: they become messianic; they use manipulation and carry out cultural invasion. By advancing along these paths, the paths of oppression, they will not achieve revolution; or if they do, it will not be authentic revolution.

! The role of revolutionary leadership (under any circumstances, but especially so in those described) is to consider seriously, even as they act, the reasons for any attitude of mistrust on the part of the people, and to seek out true avenues of communion with them, ways of helping the people to help themselves critically perceive the reality which oppresses them.

What distinguishes revolutionary leaders from the dominant elite is not only their objectives, but their procedures. If they act in the same way, the objectives become identical. It is as self-contradictory for the dominant elites to pose human-world relations as problems to the people as it is for the revolutionary leaders not to do so.

Cooperation

! In the theory of antidialogical action, conquest (as its primary characteristic) involves a Subject who conquers another person and transforms her or him into a "thing." In the dialogical theory of action, Subjects meet in cooperation in order to transform the world.

The above does not mean that in the dialogical task there is no role for revolutionary leadership. It means merely that the, leaders—in spite of their important, fundamental, and indispensable role—do not own the people and have no right to steer the people blindly towards their salvation.

The commitment of the revolutionary leaders to the oppressed is at the same time a commitment to freedom. And because of that commitment, the leaders cannot attempt to conquer the oppressed, but must achieve their adherence to liberation.

Let me re-emphasize that posing reality as a problem does not mean sloganizing: it means critical analysis of a problematic reality.

Note Guevara's emphasis that communion with the people was decisive for the transformation of a "spontaneous and somewhat lyrical decision into a more serene force, one of an entirely different value."

! In dialogical theory, at no stage can revolutionary action forgo communion with the people. Communion in turn elicits cooperation, which brings leaders and people to the fusion described by Guevara. This fusion can exist only if revolutionary action is really human, empathetic, loving, communicative, and humble, in order to be liberating,

Unity for Liberation

Whereas in the antidialogical theory of action the dominators are compelled by necessity to divide the oppressed, the more easily to preserve the state of oppression, in the dialogical theory the leaders must dedicate themselves to an untiring effort for unity among the oppressed—and unity of the leaders with the oppressed—in order to achieve liberation.

! The difficulty is that this category of dialogical action (like the others) cannot occur apart from the praxis. The praxis of oppression is easy (or at least not difficult) for the dominant elite; but it is not easy for the revolutionary leaders to carry out a liberating praxis. The former group can rely on using the instruments of power; the latter group has this power directed against it. The former group can organize itself freely, and though it may undergo fortuitous and momentary divisions, it unites rapidly in the face of any threat to its fundamental interests. The latter group cannot exist without the people, and this very condition constitutes the first obstacle to its efforts at organization.

It would indeed be inconsistent of the dominant elite to allow the revolutionary leaders to organize. The internal unity of the dominant elite, which reinforces and organizes its power, requires that the people be divided; the unity of the revolutionary leaders only exists in the unity of the people among themselves and in turn with them. The unity of the elite derives from its antagonism with the people; the unity of the revolutionary leadership group grows out of communion with the (united) people.

Further, domination is itself objectively divisive. It maintains the oppressed I in a position of "adhesion" to a reality which seems all-powerful and overwhelming, and then alienates by presenting mysterious forces to explain this power.

The individual is divided between an identical past and present, and a future without hope. He or she is a person who does not perceive himself or herself as becoming; hence cannot have a future to be built in unity with others.

! The object of dialogical-libertarian action is not to "dislodge" the oppressed from a mythological reality in order to "bind" them to another reality. On the contrary, the object of dialogical action is to make it possible for the oppressed, by perceiving their adhesion, to opt to transform an unjust reality.

Proposing as a problem, to a European peasant, the fact that he or she is a person might strike them as strange. This is not true of Latin-American peasants, whose world usually ends at the boundaries of the latifundium, whose gestures to some extent simulate those of the animals and the trees, and who often consider themselves equal to the latter.

Men who are bound to nature and to the oppressor in this way must come to discern themselves as *persons* prevented from *being*.

! In order for the oppressed to unite, they must first cut the umbilical cord of magic and myth which binds them to the world of oppression; the unity which links them to each other must be of a different nature.

Peasants live in a "closed" reality with a single, compact center of oppressive decision; the urban oppressed live in an expanding context in which the oppressive command center is plural and complex. Peasants are under the control of a dominant figure who incarnates the oppressive system; in urban areas, the oppressed are subjected to an "oppressive impersonality." In both cases the oppressive power is to a certain extent "invisible": in the rural zone, because of its proximity to the oppressed; in the cities, because of its dispersion. Forms of cultural action in such different situations as these have nonetheless the same objective: to clarify to the oppressed the objective situation which binds them to the oppressors, visible or not.

Organization

This constant, humble, and courageous witness emerging from cooperation in a shared effort—the liberation of women and men—avoids the danger of antidialogical control.

In order to determine the what and how of that witness, it is therefore essential to have an increasingly critical knowledge of the current historical context, the view of the world held by the people, the principal contradiction of society, and the principal aspect of that contradiction. Since these dimensions of witness are historical, dialogical, and therefore dialectical, witness cannot simply import them from other contexts without previously analyzing its own.

!! The essential elements of witness which do not vary historically include: consistency between words and actions; boldness which urges the witnesses to confront existence as a permanent risk; radicalization (not sectarianism) leading both the witnesses and the ones receiving that witness to increasing action; courage to love (which, far from being accommodation to an unjust world, is rather the transformation of that world in behalf of the increasing liberation of humankind); and faith in the people, since it is to them that witness is made—although witness to the people, because of their dialectical relations with the dominant elites, also affects the latter (who respond to that witness in their customary way). All authentic (that is, critical) witness involves the daring to run risks, including the possibility that the leaders will not always win the immediate adherence of the people. Witness which has not borne fruit at a certain moment and under certain conditions is not thereby rendered incapable of bearing fruit tomorrow. Since witness is not an abstract gesture, but an action—a confrontation with the world and with people—it is not static. It is a dynamic element which becomes part of the societal context in which it occurred; from that moment, it does not cease to affect that context

Accordingly, the discipline necessary to any organization must not be confused with regimentation. It is quite true that without leadership, discipline, determination, and

objectives—without tasks to fulfill and accounts to be rendered—an organization cannot survive, and revolutionary action is thereby diluted. This fact, however, can never justify treating the people as things to be used. The people are already depersonalized by oppression—if the revolutionary leaders manipulate them, instead of working towards their *conscientização*, the very objective of organization (that is, liberation) is thereby negated.

Leaders who do not act dialogically, but insist on imposing their decisions, do not organize the people—they manipulate them. They do not liberate, nor are they liberated: they oppress.

! The dialogical theory of action opposes both authoritarianism and license, and thereby affirms authority and freedom. There is no freedom without authority, but there is also no authority without freedom. All freedom contains the possibility that under special circumstances (and at different existential levels) it may become authority. Freedom and authority cannot be isolated, but must be considered in relationship to each other.

! Authentic authority is not affirmed as such by a mere transfer of power, but through delegation or in sympathetic adherence. If authority is merely transferred from one group to another, or is imposed upon the majority, it degenerates into authoritarianism.

! Just as authority cannot exist without freedom, and vice versa, authoritarianism cannot exist without denying freedom, nor license without denying authority.

Cultural Synthesis

Cultural action is always a systematic and deliberate form of action which operates upon the social structure, either with the objective of preserving that structure or of transforming it.

Dialogical cultural action does not have as its aim the disappearance of the permanence-change dialectic (an impossible aim, since disappearance of the dialectic would require the disappearance of the social structure itself and thus of men); it aims, rather, at surmounting the antagonistic contradictions of the social structure, thereby achieving the liberation of human beings.

Antidialogical cultural action, on the other hand, aims at mythicizing such contradictions, thereby hoping to avoid (or hinder insofar as possible) the radical transformation of reality.

The incapacity of antidialogical cultural action to supersede its induced character results from its objective: domination; the capacity of dialogical cultural action to do this lies in its objective: liberation.

In cultural invasion the actors (who need not even go personally to the invaded culture; increasingly, their action is carried out by technological instruments) superimpose themselves on the people, who are assigned the role of spectators, of objects.

!! In this sense, every authentic revolution is a cultural revolution.

The more sophisticated knowledge of the leaders is remade in the empirical knowledge of the people, while the latter is refined by the former.

! In cultural synthesis—and only in cultural synthesis—it is possible to resolve the contradiction between the world view of the leaders and that of the people, to the enrichment of both. Cultural synthesis does not deny the differences between the two views; indeed, it is based on these differences. It does deny the invasion of one by the other, but affirms the undeniable support each gives to the other.

Revolutionary leaders must avoid organizing themselves apart from the people; whatever contradiction to the people may occur fortuitously, due to certain historical conditions, must be solved—not augmented by the cultural invasion of an imposed relationship. Cultural synthesis is the only way.

Revolutionary leaders commit many errors and miscalculations by not taking into account something so real as the people's view of the world: a view which explicitly and implicitly contains their concerns, their doubts, their hopes, their way of seeing the leaders, their perceptions of themselves and of the oppressors, their religious beliefs (almost always syncretic), their fatalism, their rebellious reactions.

Cultural synthesis (precisely because it is a synthesis) does not mean that the objectives of revolutionary action should be limited by the aspirations expressed in the world view of the people. If this were to happen (in the guise of respect for that view), the revolutionary leaders would be passively bound to that vision.

To be concrete: if at a given historical moment the basic aspiration of the people goes no further than a demand for salary increases, the leaders can commit one of two errors. They can limit their action to stimulating this one demand⁵⁴ or they can overrule this popular aspiration and substitute something more far-reaching—but something which has not yet come to the forefront of the people's attention. In the first case, the revolutionary leaders follow a line of adaptation to the people's demands. In the second case, by disrespecting the aspirations of the people, they fall into cultural invasion. v The solution lies in synthesis: the leaders must on the one hand identify with the peoples demand for higher salaries, while on the other they must pose the meaning of that very demand as a problem. By doing this, the leaders pose as a problem a real, concrete, historical situation of which the salary demand is one dimension. It will thereby become clear that salary demands alone cannot comprise a definitive solution. The essence of this solution can be found in the previously cited statement by bishops of the Third World that "if the workers do not somehow come to be owners of their own labor, all structural reforms will be ineffective . . . they [must] be owners, not sellers, of their labor . . . [for] any purchase or sale of labor is a type of slavery"

To achieve critical consciousness of the facts that it is necessary to be the "owner of one's own labor," that labor "constitutes part of the human person," and that "a human being can neither be sold nor can he sell himself" is to go a step beyond the deception of palliative solutions.

In the antidualogical theory of action, cultural invasion serves the ends of manipulation, which in turn serves the ends of conquest, and conquest the ends of domination. Cultural synthesis serves the ends of organization; organization serves the ends of liberation.

This work deals with a very obvious truth: just as the oppressor, in order to oppress, needs a theory of oppressive action, so the oppressed, in order to become free, also need a theory of action.

The oppressor elaborates his theory of action without the people, for he stands against them. Nor can the people—as long as they are crushed and oppressed, internalizing the image of the oppressor—construct by themselves the theory of their liberating action. Only in the encounter of the people with the revolutionary leaders—in their communion, in their praxis—can this theory be built.