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ABSTRACT

The topic of this review concerning international literacy is the Brazilian educator Paulo Freire and his theories and methods for teaching illiterates to read by teaching them fewer than 20 three syllable words, reflective of their social condition, such as "Shanty-town" and "wages" ("favela" and "salario" in Portuguese), whose syllables can be rearranged to form other words. Discussion of these words as depicted by a situational picture, provides the opportunity for dialog about their role in culture and the awakening of consciousness or conscientization. Articles contained in this review include an introduction by Farideh Mashayekh which contains a discussion of methodology, a list of key words used in the state of Rio, Brazil, and samples of pictorial situations; the articles by Paulo Freire first published in the "Harvard Education Review" entitled "The Adult Literacy Process as Cultrual Action for Freedom"; and reaction papers by William S. Griffeth, Pierre Furter, and John A. Bugbee. Another article by Freire on research methods offers suggestions for applying his ideas to Tanzania. William A. Smith offers an idea for adapting simulation games to "conscientization." A section on reviews of Freire's works and a bibliography are also included. (MKM)

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The Editors invite authors to submit manuscripts which they believe to be of interest to those in the field of literacy and adult education. Contributions in the form of articles, book reviews, abstracts, research papers, texts of lectures, reports on projects and literacy institutes, as well as bibliographies will be accepted. These should preferably be written in English or French, however papers in Spanish, Italian, Arabic and German will also be considered. All correspondence should be addressed to:

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PAULO FREIRE

LITERACY THROUGH CONSCIENTIZATION

LITERACY DISCUSSION

SPRING 1974

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EDITOR'S NOTE

With this issue, "Literacy Discussion" introduces a number of changes in form and substance. The most conspicuous is the new cover design. The Persian script forming the flame of knowledge is a quotation from Ferdowsi's immortal "Shahnameh": "Seek knowledge from the cradle to the grave." Writing in the 10th century of the Christian era, the poet expressed with felicity the spirit of the contemporary concept of life-long learning.

Another departure from customary practice is the inclusion of articles that have appeared elsewhere. It is believed that the loss in originality is more than compensated by a gain in utility. This volume seeks to present a many-sided view of Paulo Freire: the man, his philosophy and his literacy methods. In order to fulfill this aim, articles by Freire, his supporters and his critics are included. In planning this issue, the editors have borne in mind the special needs of training courses and discussion groups, as well as the interests of a more general readership.

* Appreciation is expressed to the following publishers: to the "Harvard Educational Review" and the Center for the Study of Development and Social Change, Cambridge (Mass.) for permission to reprint "The Adult Literacy Process as Cultural Action for Freedom," by Paulo Freire; to the "Comparative Educational Review" for authorization to use Professor Edgar Z. Friedenberg's review of "Pedagogy of the Oppressed," and to Syracuse University Publications in Continuing Education for approval to reproduce, "Paulo Freire: Utopian Perspective on Literacy Education for Revolution," by William S. Griffith. The Griffith article originally appeared in "Paulo Freire: a revolutionary dilemma for adult education," edited by Stanley M. Grabowski, 1972. The editors are also grateful to the Institute of Adult Education of the University of Dar-es-Salaam for permission to reprint "Research Methods," based on a lecture by Paulo Freire, and to the Center for

International Education of the University of Massachusetts for allowing them to reproduce "Conscientization and Stimulation Games," by William A. Smith. The latter article is based upon the experience gained in the Ecuador Non-Formal Education Project in which the Centre participated.

Another departure from previous practice in the inclusion of book reviews from the subject fields in which the Institute works. These have previously been featured in "Literacy Documentation," a specialized publication intended for libraries and documentation centres. It is thought that a wider readership may be served through their inclusion here.

Finally, it should be emphasized that the assertions and opinions expressed in this volume are those of the authors, and do not necessarily represent the views of the International Institute for Adult Literacy Methods, or its sponsors. Paulo Freire has a message to which some will react with delight and others with varying degrees of distaste. It is this element of controversy that makes him a particularly fitting subject for "Literacy Discussion", a journal devoted to the exploration of innovative and controversial themes in the domains of literacy and adult basic education.

Readers are cordially invited to express their reactions and offer suggestions to the editors.

John W. Ryan
Director

FOREWORD

Majid Rahnama

Ten years ago Paulo Freire was little known outside his native Brazil. Today, he is widely acclaimed as a leading thinker on education; for those of us who have been privileged to work with him and have come to know at close range the force of his mind and the sincerity of his convictions, it is not his present fame but his previous neglect that demands explanation. Yet, it is worth pondering how a polysyllabic Portuguese term, "conscientizacao", has come to be common currency in international conferences devoted to education. Part of the explanation is that, with Freire, familiarity breeds respect. The body of his work is now widely available in English, French and Spanish, and indeed is appearing in paperback editions. But perhaps there is more to it than that. Is it, as I suspect, that Freire's message is more in tune with the present decade than it was with the past one.

In many ways, the mentality of the 1960's seems remote from that of the current decade. The conference talk of the last decade turned upon what was rather grandly styled the "instrumental use of education in development". Manpower planning and rate of return analysis techniques were greatly refined during that period and enjoyed a considerable vogue. Their purpose was to maximize through better planning the service rendered by education to the economy. More generally, education was perceived as a means for adapting men to changing societies and new techniques.

Dr. Majid Rahnama, author of the Foreword to this issue of "Literacy Discussion", was born in 1920, the son of a well-known Iranian author, journalist and diplomat. He obtained his Bachelor's degree in Law from Tehran University where he taught for a time, and his Ph.D. in Economics and Law from the Sorbonne University, Paris. He entered government service in Iran with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and diplomatic posts, first in Paris and then, as Press Attaché in Moscow, followed. A former ambassador to Switzerland, Dr. Rahnama has travelled extensively in America (he was for a time Consul-General in San Francisco), Africa, Europe and the Soviet Union. He served as Head of the International Division of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Tehran, and as Minister of Economics in the same Ministry. As Iran's first Minister of Science and Higher Education, he played a prominent role in the establishment of this Ministry in 1967.

In the Third World, the masses were thought to require special educational "processing". The modernization of traditional societies depended upon and implied the re-making of traditional man. In the developed nations, recalcitrant minorities became "target populations" for the special educational treatments that were to be applied. Education and training were the keys to employment and hence to social integration. In both settings, developing and developed, education was the means for fitting man into the new social and economic roles that the impersonal forces of progress would ordain.

This notion of education is the very antithesis of Freire's conception. For him, the fore-going is not education at all, but a species of anti-education, a form of conditioning demeaning to man. Freire's insistence upon a conception of education compatible with man's dignity and responsibility is explicit. "If, for animals, orientation in the world means adaptation to the world, for man it means humanizing the world by transforming it".¹ Man humanizes the world through "praxis": unity of thought and action. Through his thoughts he seeks to understand the world and through his actions, to transform and humanize it. Man's humanity, Freire insists, derives from his creation in God's image and imposes upon him his essential vocation and quest: to become a more human being. The challenge that confronts him is that of escaping from the prisons of habit and precedent and the constraints of his bio-social situation in order to realize his humanity to its fullest extent.

True education serves this end through conscientization; it is a liberating process which addresses itself to both the individual and the social dimensions of man. It expresses itself in the manner in which human beings relate to external realities in order to act upon them and transform them into the instruments of their humanization.

Dr. Rahnema has represented Iran at five sessions of the United Nations General Assembly. He has also been active in Unesco affairs. At the invitation of the Director-General of Unesco, he served in the seven-member International Commission on the Development of Education; "Learning To Be", the report of this Commission, is a thoughtful inquiry into the needs and requirements of education in the current decade and beyond. Recently, Dr. Rahnema has been appointed to the United Nations University Council.

In Iran, Dr. Rahnema's activities include the direction of a study on the nation's health and medical problems and the development of pilot programmes for the training of front-line health and medical workers in tribal and rural areas.

If authentic education is characterized by the liberation of the human mind and spirit, the basis of much traditional education is what Freire disparages as "banking", whereby a teacher "deposits" knowledge into the mind of the learner. Both parties -- teacher and learner -- are captives of a conception of education imposed upon them by tradition and society. By conceiving education to be mastery of a stock of knowledge rather than an orientation towards their role in the world, men condemn themselves to realizing less than their full humanity: Content to exist in the world rather than participating in it, they become mere objects of history rather than the authors of their own destinies.

Thus, man must seek and education must provide a way of passing from a "primary consciousness" to the "critical consciousness" needed for his creative action upon reality. In the state of "primary consciousness" man is submerged by reality and his interests center on the most vegetative aspects of his life. He cannot perceive the world as it is and is paralyzed by fear of everything, including his own freedom. His life has no historical consistency. He is ignorant of his potentialities and, consequently, unable to act or to transform reality to achieve his own ends.

"Critical consciousness" allows man to emerge as a free human being. It allows him to perceive the world as it is, relate to it, question it. It enables him to choose, and to commit himself to the choice he has made; to accept responsibility and, together with his fellow men, to learn how to reach a higher degree of authentic freedom. For Paulo Freire the task of education is, therefore, to bring about the most favourable conditions to enable man, and society as a whole, to reach this state of critical awareness.

If for Freire the object of education is liberation, its method is dialogue. Dialogue is an encounter between men mediated by the world. Its purpose is the pursuit of truth; its substance, a liberating act of creation. In the "Pedagogy of the Oppressed", Freire warns that dialogue must not be subverted into a "craft instrument" for the domination of one man by another. "The domination implicit in dialogue is that of the world by dialoguers; it is a conquest of the world for the liberation of men." (p. 77). Dialogue implies a humanistic, an "optimistic" view of the world: the belief that any man, if freed from fear and the "internalization" of oppression, if truly liberated, can add his meaningful and unique contribution to the collective effort of all men to humanize the world. It negates the "pessimistic" view that only a few, consti-

tuting the "elite", are called to lead the rest, that the judgement of all may not be trusted, that neither individuals nor communities, left to themselves, are fit to make the "right" decisions as to their own best interests.

For Paulo Freire there can be no dialogue between oppressed and oppressor. The object of the former, however dimly perceived, is his liberation. The purpose of the latter is to maintain his domination. Between the two there can never exist the honesty of purpose which authentic dialogue supposes.

Nor can dialogue exist in the absence of profound love. Love is the force motivating dialogue, expressing itself in the quest of each for the fulfilment of the other. Hostile polemical arguments between men, being devoid of love, can never aspire to authentic dialogue.

Humility is yet another condition for dialogue. "How can I dialogue", writes Freire, "if I regard myself as a case apart from other men -- mere 'its' in which I cannot recognize other 'I's'?"² (p. 78). Nor can dialogue flourish among men who arrogantly presume to possess the truth they offer to share, but refuse to seek through the help of their partners. Dialogue excludes the perfect sage and the utter ignoramus. It exists only for men who, together, are attempting to learn more than any one of them now knows alone.

An intense faith in man's vocation to realize his fullest humanity is yet another condition for dialogue. The faith of "dialogical man", however, is critical and not naive. He is aware that the power of his fellows to re-create their world and liberate themselves represents a potentiality which domination and alienation may have denied them the capacity to realize. This awareness he confronts not with discouragement but with determination. "Without faith in man, dialogue is a farce which inevitably degenerates into paternalistic manipulation."² (p. 79).

Nor can dialogue exist without hope. "If dialoguers expect nothing to come of their efforts, their encounter will be empty and sterile, bureaucratic and tedious."² (p. 80)

Finally, dialogue is critical thinking about man and his role in the world. This thinking does not separate itself from action, perceiving reality as a process of becoming rather than as a predetermined state of being. Critical thinking requires a rigorous analysis of existing reality and the means by which it may be transformed. It

will not do for man to accept passively the ready-made answers of either the political left or the political right. Freire is only too aware of the possible danger of education being degraded into demagoguery. The purpose of authentic education is to "draw out" the creative potentialities innate in men and not to "fill them up" with the ideologies of would-be manipulators.

I have stressed the importance of dialogue because, for Freire, dialogue is education. He makes this explicit: "Without dialogue there is no communication and without communication there can be no true education."² (81) "Authentic education", he continues, "is not carried on by 'A' for 'B' or by 'A' about 'B', but rather by 'A' with 'B' mediated by the world....."² (p. 82)

The editors have asked me to stress in this Foreword, the significance of Paulo Freire's contribution to the teaching of literacy and, more generally to education. My response is as follows. Freire's greatest service to education has been to emphasize the process of humanization rather than the methods of pedagogy, the goals of conscientization rather than the techniques of imparting ready-made knowledge. He conceives literacy not as a set of technical skills to be transferred to a learner, but as an act of liberation intended to provoke a new sense of self and a creative and constructive orientation toward the external realities that surround and threaten to submerge us.

For Paulo Freire, the objectives of literacy cannot be separated from those of education "as a practice of freedom". Learning the alphabet or the three R's can be meaningful only when it constitutes a stage in the process of "conscientizacao", only when it enables men to take their first steps along the road toward their humanization. In such a context, the individual with the greatest store of sheer "knowledge" is not basically different from an illiterate. The alphabet, like any other tool for reading the world, is nothing but a technical instrument. The main problem for man is how to perceive and use this instrument as an aid to his liberation, to his passage from a state of "primary consciousness" to one of critical consciousness. Paulo Freire's foremost contribution to literacy has been to show the irrelevance of a formal, aimless, "content-less" approach to the subject. To a greater extent than any other contemporary thinker, he has succeeded in identifying the true dimensions of literacy and its place in man's process of self-realization.

Thus conceived, education becomes more than a "bag of tricks"; it is a new vision of life and a more profound interpretation of its possibilities and significance. That the practice of problem-posing, dialogue-based education which Freire urges will not come easy, I shall not deny. Indeed, its challenge is its pre-eminent virtue. For, in responding to it, men raise the level of their consciousness, and, in meeting it, realize in fuller measure their humanity.

The sense of crisis pervading education today, I contend, the consequence of alienating the process of learning from the basic reasons for man's desire to learn. It reflects the growing divorce between the ends and the means of education. This has led us to conceive our problems in quantitative rather than qualitative terms and has, according to our plans and programmes, produced more schools, more students, more teachers, more drop-outs..... more of everything except solutions. We have sought our answers in production rather than purpose and they have eluded us.

My warm personal friendship with Paulo and the admiration I feel for his prophetic qualities are such that, were I to express at greater length my own opinions, I should be in danger of betraying the spirit of dialogue he urges upon us. I shall, therefore, invite you to form your own reactions to Paulo Freire: the man, the thinker, the humanist, the fighter and the philosopher.

Without seeking to prejudice your judgements, I offer my congratulations to the editors of "Literacy Discussion" for what I consider to be a unique and very useful collection of papers. In them, you will encounter Paulo Freire, his critics and his admirers. The issues to which they address themselves are fundamental: their contentions represent a challenge to education as traditionally conceived and practised. I join the editors in formulating the hope that this volume will find a place in training courses and universities, in addition to serving the purposes of a more general readership.

NOTES

- 1 Paulo Freire, "The Adult literacy Process as Cultural Action for Freedom." (See p. 64 of this issue)
- 2 Paulo Freire, "Pedagogy of the Oppressed." (Herder and Herder, New York, 1970)

INTRODUCTION :

FREIRE - THE MAN, HIS IDEAS AND THEIR IMPLICATIONS

by

Farideh Mashayekh

In this introduction to the subject of the present issue of *Literacy Discussion*, Farideh Mashayekh seeks to explain Paulo Freire's approach to literacy. This is a challenging assignment. Paulo Freire is not a fragmented thinker. His literacy method is the application of his philosophy. It derives from his conception of man and man's role in the social order. This philosophy, in turn, is rooted in his experience of the environment in which he grew to manhood - the North East of Brazil, a geographical expression with political and social overtones. Thus to comprehend Freire's approach to literacy is to know his philosophy and the social situation in which it was conceived and to which it relates.

This article is intended as an introduction to those which follow. The writer is a Research Officer at the International Institute for Adult Literacy Methods.

Paulo Freire's message is directed to the Third World but its implications are more general. His fundamental thesis is that the purpose of education is the formation of man as a creative and critical being.

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One cannot educate without having
a philosophy of man and the world.
It is a lie to speak of neutral edu-
cation.....

Paulo Freire

I. PAULO FREIRE: THE MAN AND HIS ACTION

Paulo Freire was born in Recife in Brazil's North-East in 1921. His was a middle-class family in a region beset by poverty. That Freire's mind and future vocation were shaped by the social situation into which he was born and in which he grew to manhood seem evident. Schooling in Recife was a privilege enjoyed by a minority. It was this schooled minority which dominated the social and economic institution's of society and enjoyed the benefits they produced. The majority lived in circumstances of grinding poverty and oppression. They were to be seen in the streets and served in shops and homes, but were not "heard". They lived in what Freire terms a "culture of silence", condemned to passivity.

In Recife, Freire completed his university studies in the philosophy of education and began an academic career. The course of that career was determined by the concern that dominated his thoughts and actions. His purpose was to work out an educational method that could speak to and make speak those who lived in silence and accepted ignorance and poverty as their assigned lot in life. To them he proclaimed a "pedagogy of freedom" founded upon an awareness of both self and society. Basing himself upon a study of Brazilian history and the writings of Marx, Sartre, Fromm and Althusser, Freire stressed the need for literacy teaching based on his concept of "conscientization" through which "man, not as a recipient but as a knowing subject, reaches a deeper awareness both of the socio-cultural reality on which his life is built and of his ability to transform that reality."

In Brazilian society, the illiterate offers an almost perfect example of alienation. But illiteracy is not the whole cause of this alienation, only one aspect of it. In an under-developed society, the illiterate is not effectively

* "Conscientization refers to the process by which man, not as a recipient but as a knowing subject, reaches a deeper awareness both of the socio-cultural reality on which his life is built and of his ability to transform that reality". P. Freire, *Cultural action for freedom*. Harvard Educational Review, Cambridge, Mass. 1970. p. 27

master of himself. He is a proletarian in the true sense of the word: his only wealth is his progeny. Since he has no professional qualifications, he is at the mercy of employers who exploit him as they wish. His relations with them are of the master-slave type. His work, in such conditions, is devoid of any creativity. His activity centres on the satisfaction of two basic instincts, which are the least typically human: survival and reproduction. In satisfying these instincts, he is dependent on nature and her magical power. How can he stand up to drought, bad harvests and capricious fertility? How can he fight the occult forces at work in us and in our environment?

Unable to comprehend his potential, the illiterate cannot develop it. He is marginal with respect both to himself and to others, whether they share his ill-fortune or exploit him. Time, for him, does not permit the exercise of freedom: his life has no historical contour. This being the case, a positive legislation has recognized this constitutive sterility and marginality by refusing illiterates the right to vote. So how can they emerge from their mental under-development to collaborate in the advancement of others and in the construction of a more human society? This requires a new concept of education. Education insofar as it is a concept already colonized by the school, is condemned by Freire. The school is seen to be an instrument of domestication all over the world; whereas in the nineteenth century it was believed that free, universal public schooling would spell the end of class distinctions, it appears today as an integral part and favourite instrument of the system.

However, the myth of the school as a democratic institution is still far too alive; this myth must be destroyed, and the process of selection of privileged elites must be shown to be no accident, but the actual aim of the system, even if well-hidden beneath the democratic rhetoric of equal opportunity for accession to the ruling class. Paulo Freire, as both pedagogue and philosopher, is one of the partisans of authentic democratization of educational opportunity. Although his ideas on the new concept of education in general,

and on adult literacy in particular, clearly reflect the disturbed situation of Brazilian society, his overall view of education is nevertheless, to some extent, valid for all oppressed people of the Third World.

Paulo Freire's early experiments in the application of his pedagogy date back to 1962, at his birthplace, Recife, (Pernambuco State) and in João Pessoa, (Paraíba State): The convictions he had acquired and fostered from early youth through contact with the oppressed in his own region were strengthened by his work with the popular cultural movement in Recife. He set up an important organization for education and popular culture, the "Cultural Centre," in which "cultural circles" took the place of traditional classes. He instituted group discussions, to promote the analysis of existential situations or action itself inspired by such analysis.

In the course of the conversations in the "cultural circles", topics for discussion were proposed by the groups themselves with the intention of drawing up a list of problems that could be used as items for debate. Favourite subjects such as "nationalism", "development", "democracy", "illiteracy", "the political development of Brazil", and "the illiterate's vote" cropped up in more than one group discussion. Whenever possible, and with the aid of visual media, these topics, in outline form, were presented to the group through a dialogue to encourage all members of the group to participate.

After six months of experimentation, Paulo Freire wondered whether it would not be possible to apply the same active method to adult literacy, thereby transforming the traditional approach. At the same time, a Cultural Extension Service was set up in the University of Pernambuco to discuss and analyse his method.

In 1963, Paulo Freire was appointed co-ordinator of the national literacy programme and in that same year the Angicos (Rio Grande del Norte State) experiment took place. In about 45 days, 300 workers became literate, a result that made a deep impression on public opinion.

After this experiment, he was able to apply his method on a wider scale, but this time under the patronage of the Federal Government and all over the national territory. Consequently, "cultural circles" were set up in nearly all the different state capitals of the country between June 1963 and May 1964.

The 1964 Development Plan set an educational target for that year to teach approximately two million illiterates (30 participants to a circle, with each circle lasting about three months). This was, therefore, the beginning of a literacy campaign on a national scale which started in the urban districts and rapidly spread to the rural areas.

In the "cultural circles" the predominant notion of *liberty* gave meaning to educational experience, which cannot be effective, nor achieve its aims, without the free and conscious participation of the adult illiterates.

In accordance with his pedagogical conception, Paulo Freire went farther than certain classical models in his experiments. For example, he replaced the concept of the class, which he felt to be too highly-charged with passivity, by that of the *cultural circle*. Instead of the teacher, dispensing traditional ex-cathedra education, he offered a *discussion leader* or *co-ordinator*. *Dialogue* was substituted for the discursive lesson, *participating group member* for illiterate, homogeneous, limited programmes, codified into *learning units*, for traditional programmes and curricula.

The political implication of the cultural movement gradually began to provoke concern. Only those who could read and write were allowed to vote. The 1964 Development Plan made serious provision for increasing the number of illiterates and hence the number of voters. For example, in the State of Sergipe, a total of 80,000 voters was added to the 9,000 previously enrolled; in the State of Pernambuco, the electoral roll jumped from 800,000 to 1,300,000 and the same phenomenon was to be expected in other states.

Literacy and the awareness among the masses of their social condition which it produced was perceived by the governing classes as a threat to social stability and privilege. While there was no objection to the increase in literacy, which was perceived as probably beneficial and in any case harmless, the by-products of the process, awareness and assertiveness, were viewed with alarm.

Conscientization cleared the way for the voicing of social claims which are often produced by a state of oppression. If many workers, as soon as they became literate joined a movement to organize syndicates, this was because they had discovered, for themselves, that this was a legitimate means of defending their own interests and those of their work mates. This new element, a political awareness among the masses, began to engender opposition. Although incapable of instigating an autonomous policy themselves, the oppressed were no longer prepared to passively accept the policies of others. Popular education was developing a spirit of questioning and doubting.

In the domain of education, Freire achieved a unity of theory and action that was his purpose. As an educator, engrossed in the problem of illiteracy, Freire addressed himself to the most oppressed classes. He used his own experiences and those of the people as the basis for his pedagogy in which both the teacher and the taught, equally deserving of freedom and capable of criticism and judgement, share an apprenticeship in the development of an awareness of the situation in which they live. His pedagogy is fundamentally anti-authoritarian.

In the realm of politics, Freire's ideas suffered from their spectacular educational success. Literacy, previously advocated as "a gift of the enlightenment" to the poor and miserable, came to be seen as a means for questioning the established order and potentially a weapon for achieving social change acceptable to the extent that it enabled politicians to play the electoral game and engage in a uni-directional communication with the masses. Literacy became suspect when it led the masses to communicate their interests and expectations to their leaders. Freire was eliminating author-

itarianism in education. Would his "subversive" influence spread to the political realm? This was a question left unanswered by the political events of 1964.

Following the assumption of power by the military in 1964, Paulo Freire was imprisoned for 75 days on a charge of applying an educational policy opposed to the national interest. Upon his release he took refuge in the Bolivian Embassy and later fled Brazil. For four and half years, he lived with his family in Chile where he collaborated with Unesco in the Institute of Capacitation and Agrarian Reform. He has recently been appointed Counsellor at the Centre for Education and Development Studies of Harvard University. At present he is working with the World Council of Churches in Geneva, in the Directorate of the Education Division.

The issue of political conflict which arose in Brazil and is inherent in his concept and method of education has not been resolved even in Freire's own mind. In a 1972 interview, Virginia McKins posed the following question and received the indicated answer:

V.M. : What would you do if the class in power did not accept the idea of education as a liberating action?

P.F. : That is a good question. However, if I knew the reply, I should not have come to Geneva.

The Times Educational Supplement. "Interview with Paulo Freire." New York, 20/10/72, p. 80.

Education, being a subsystem of society, necessarily reflects the main features of that society. It would be vain to hope for a rational, humane education in an unjust society.

Unesco. *Learning to be; the world of education today and tomorrow*. Paris, 1972.
p. 60.

II. EDUCATIONAL CONCEPTS

Paulo Freire's theory of education rests on the conviction that any man, however ignorant, is capable of looking "critically" at his world. According to Freire, what is important for the illiterate masses is not to learn how to read and write, but rather to discover how "to hold history in their hands." They must learn to *read*, and at the same time to *make* history, instead of learning how to intone "ba, be, bu...." After observation of the existential situation of the illiterate masses in Latin America, Paulo Freire states that it is impossible to accept the idea that 40% of the population in Brazil, 90% in Haiti, 60% in Bolivia, 40% in Peru, more than 30% in Mexico and Venezuela, and 70% in Guatemala have deliberately chosen the tragedy of illiteracy which forces them to remain on the outskirts of society.

His educational conception is generated by critical reflection on the condition of the illiterate. This is a perpetual dialectic according to which one should denounce in order to announce, keeping the transformation of the existential reality. As the oppressed gradually perceive their personal and social situation more clearly and critically, discerning its contradictions, discovering its causes and foreseeing its consequences, they become capable of transforming these facts into concrete action. Furthermore, in applying themselves to this transformation, the more clearly do they discover all the implications of these facts and the more acute does their critical awareness become. It is in this perspective that Paulo Freire avoids the use of the word *education*, which is employed also for "training", "domestication" or "personal promotion". He prefers the term *cultural action*, which allows him to speak of "cultural action for freedom" or "cultural action for domestication".

He accepts, as a definition of cultural action, the formula of Mao Tse-tung: "Progressing from emotional knowledge to a rational perception of reality." The transformation of existential reality is brought about by means of *reflection*, which is admiration of the object received. Reflection will

lead dialectically to a *praxis*, which is action for freedom provoked by reflection; this action in its turn will evoke new reflection, and so on... This process leads to "conscientization" which according to Paulo Freire, is the development of critical reflection or the critical insertion of man into history and culture. *Culture* is conceived as the transforming action of man on nature.

1. Toward a Critical Awareness

Taking as his point of departure the fact that man's normal condition consists of being not only present in the world, but also a part of it, Paulo Freire thinks* that "man must establish a relationship with the world, and by an act of creation and re-creation beginning in the *world of nature*, he must succeed in evolving a personal contribution, a 'cultural action' so that he can take his place in the *world of culture*. Man, in his relationship with reality, within reality, in order to pass successfully from the world of nature to that of culture, creates a specific link, of subject to object, resulting in the knowledge that will be expressed through language. This link must be established by man, whether literate or not. One has only to be a man to be able to do this *potentially*. One has only to be a man to be able to grasp the data of the *existential* world and to know, even if this knowledge can be only relative; in other words neither complete ignorance nor absolute knowledge. Man, however, does not perceive the data of reality, his *existential situation*, phenomena or problems, in their pure state. In his perception, problems and phenomena are apprehended at the same time as their logical links. He grasps their causality. The comprehension resulting from perception will be all the more critical, once the true causality has been apprehended. On the other hand, it will remain all the more magical, if the links of causality

* Paulo Freire, *L'éducation: pratique de la liberté* (Education: practice of freedom). Les éditions du Cerf, 1971, pp. 108, 109.

are less well perceived. ↖

Even if true causality is always subjected to analysis in a critical awareness, for what is true today may not be so tomorrow nevertheless what seems to be the genuine causality to a primary awareness is no longer such in reality, because this awareness attributes to the causality a static character, something definite and stable."

Human existence unfolds in a given time-table context, which man does not choose. But to a certain extent, he is able to emerge from this world into which he is thrown. An animal adapts itself to nature, a man transforms nature and leaves his impression on it.

The first step in conscientization, therefore, consists of helping the illiterate to rediscover nature with new eyes and to distinguish himself from it. This first stage is translated into practice by interpolating all the habits, routines and traditions that have been conserved. This interpolation leads to the second stage, in which man discovers the principal difference between nature and culture.

By distinguishing himself from nature and recognizing himself as a *subject*, man discovers himself to be a creator of culture, defined by Paulo Freire as "man's contribution to nature."

In order to assist the illiterate in discovering this distinction, he is presented first with objects found in nature (water, trees, clouds, etc) and then with objects bearing the stamp of human labour (bricks, a house, a dam, etc.). Thus, little by little, man discovers the significance of work and discerns in this enrichment of nature, a new, specifically human meaning, which he has created. Man, conscious of the creative power he deploys in his work, discovers himself, sees himself up as a subject and can be recognized as such by other men. This leads to the realization that the relationship of man to nature cannot be dissociated from the relationship that exists between men. Moreover, culture is not the result of one man's work; it acquires meaning only for a group of men built up by it into a community. Because of its work, this community is itself the subject of a specific culture, which is transmitted and

enriched over the years.

From here on, the discovery of culture goes hand in hand with the discovery of history. Man, as a subject of culture, is also a subject of history.

2. The Stages of Conscientization

The process leading to conscientization can be divided into three successive stages:*

- A. At the *intransitive awareness stage*, man does not perceive the dialectic relationship which unites him with nature. He is caught in its flux and cannot emerge from it: in order to satisfy his basic needs, he gives himself up to the irrational game of magical forces, which he serves by his activity. Fatalistic, and an outsider with regards to history lives from day to day. The society in which he exists is not a community, but at most an aggregate of families struggling for life.
- B. *Naive transitive awareness* is characterized by an initial perception of problems. But his examination is not pushed to its limits: it is restricted to vague global diagnoses and solutions of a similar character.
- C. It is only by *critical transitive awareness* that man can free himself from his alienation. At this stage the individual examines problems without allowing himself to be blinded by passion. In his diagnosis, as well as in his search for solutions, he tries to be *critical* and proceeds rationally. And as the problems to be solved are complex and affect the collectivity as well as the individual, diagnosis and solutions demand dialogue and concerted efforts, in other words, true democracy.

* Michel Schooyans: "La Maïeutique Nouvelle: la conscientisation de Paulo Freire"/The New Maieutics: the conscientization of Paulo Freire. *Culture. et développement*. Vol. 11, no. 3, Paris 1969-70, p. 435-453.

3. Glossary

In order to facilitate understanding of the practical, political or social aspects of this pedagogy, a description of certain concepts, as Paulo Freire himself defines them, appears indispensable*

MAN

Man is a being in the process of transformation, therefore incomplete. Accordingly, one cannot insist that he behaves like any given model. One must accept the fact that he belongs to different communities (socio-economic, religious, cultural, etc.) which are continually shaping him. It is in his relations with the world that man becomes aware of himself and, by progressing beyond emotional perception of facts and things, arrives at the act of knowledge through reflection which is the source of activity of his intellectual faculties.

- *Faced with reality*

Man's initial attitude toward reality is not knowledge, but ingenuity, for at his most primitive degree of awareness he has difficulty in differentiating himself from nature. In fact, reality is for him at first the concrete situation in which he can develop his activity and which provides his emotional perceptions. However, the fundamental characteristic distinguishing him from an animal is that the latter adapts itself to nature, whereas even the most "primitive" man attempts to adapt and humanize nature. One might say that men have a *relationship* with the world, while animals have only *contact* with it.

- *As a being in a situation*

The starting point for the concept of conscientization is the re-positioning of man as a being existing in the world. "It is because he is a conscious being that man is not only *in* the world, but *with* the world. Only man, as an *'open'* being, is capable of successfully accomplishing the complex operation of *'transforming'* the world by his

* The following descriptions are taken from Paulo Freire's talks at the C.I.D.O.C., Paris, January 26-31, 1970.
(Editor)

action, at the same time that he grasps and expresses its reality by means of his creative speech."

If man was only "in the world" he would not succeed in knowing either it or himself. However, man is also "with the world"; whereas the animal is merely "in the world".
The animal lives:

- without time;
- submerged in life with no possibility of emerging from it;
- adjusted and adhering to reality;

But man can:

- cut through this adherence and transcend his being in the world;
- add to the life he has, the existence he makes for himself.

Existence is, therefore, a way of life peculiar to the being capable of:

- transforming
- producing
- deciding
- creating
- and communicating

Whereas the animal, which only lives in the world, is incapable of thinking about itself as living in the world, man, as a subject *existing with the world*, thinks about this and questions himself on his relationship with the world. The realm of his existence is, therefore, one of work, history, culture and values in which he experiences dialectics, determinism and freedom. Were he not to destroy his adherence to the world in order to emerge from it with an awareness formed by his admiration (ad-miration) of the world as an object, man would be only a particular being, incapable of

pondering his own liberation. Only those beings that are conscious of the fact of their conditioning are capable of liberating themselves.

This "reflectivity" springs not from a vague, uninvolved awareness, but from the exercise of a deeply transforming action on the determining reality.

"Awareness of" and "action on" reality are, therefore, the two inseparable components of the transformation act by means of which men become related beings.

AWAKENING OF CONSCIOUSNESS

Awareness is the essential attitude of man *in and with* the world. But although any consciousness is "consciousness of something", the growth of consciousness is not always knowledge..... and, moreover, much time is often needed for the awakening of consciousness of all we experience.

THE ACT OF KNOWLEDGE

A certain number of perceptible elements exist within the visual field of the human consciousness. Some of them are already perceived in a detached manner. By standing back from them, by admiring them, one begins to know them (which is quite different from the "knowledge" one may receive through transmission in education without necessarily acquiring a "cognitive experience"). The act of knowledge implies the dual context of practice (reality) and theory (the critical comprehension of this reality), with codification (drawing, symbols, writing....) acting as mediator between the two contexts.

REFLECTION

The ad-miration mentioned above is reflection. A man may feel hungry (without any deeper understanding of why he is hungry than that he has not eaten. If men are incapable of analysing their actions (which transform the world) critically they are in an impasse... as is generally the case with the oppressed awareness. It is through ad-miration of a past perception (or reflection on a situation already lived) that

men gradually begin to understand reality... If this knowledge is real, there is involvement; in other words, knowledge is materialized in action: reflection leads to *praxis* (for it is actions, not words, that transform).

OPPRESSED CONSCIOUSNESS

The preceding steps are less easy for the oppressed consciousness; which in our society of domination is the basic state of almost all men we try to help liberate themselves (no-one can free anyone, no-one can free himself, but men can free themselves together). The oppressed consciousness feels oppressed... but does not know why; it is imprisoned in the "culture of silence", the great barrier facing the "educators" who want to help them advance.

The oppressed consciousness can be characterized by:

- a huge inferiority complex when faced with "one who knows";
- a certain debility ("I don't know..."), or lack of self-confidence;
- an over-powering belief in the invulnerability of the strong who oppress it...culminating in servility (perhaps as an attempt to conciliate them a little).

All this adds up to a total existential insecurity and great emotional instability which may be sublimated in violence if a favourable opportunity presents itself. This is because the oppressed consciousness is dual; it is both oppressed and oppressor (of those who are weaker). Its model, the "strong" man is, in fact, the oppressor and learning from experience that "seeming" is more essential than "being" in our society, it will try to pass from one camp into the other. (Examples - which we often tend to judge harshly without understanding, - of the exploited who turn into much worse exploiters than those who oppressed them are numerous). Nevertheless, this does not prevent the oppressed consciousness from readily feeling guilty when it accomplishes, or participates in, an action that could liberate it, at least partially from its yoke.

These characteristics are employed by the oppressor to

increase his oppression: he takes advantage of the ready feeling of guilt in order to annihilate any germ of reaction; he makes particular use of slogans, taking advantage of the emotional instability of the oppressed consciousness (we have only to think of commercial advertising, or political demagogy...), knowing that the more thoroughly he tames these people, the more tractable they will be later on... Our first task, in fact, will be to learn how to recognize their varied reactions... if we wish to understand them and not to cross them even with the best will in the world.

FREEDOM

We cannot, indeed, learn freedom in a situation of oppression, which we run the risk of maintaining, if we do not attentively search within ourselves for the characteristics of oppressing consciousness we all possess (cultural invasion: we have so many important things to teach them. We know how to solve a certain problem so much better and so much more effectively. When all is said and done, we have so much more experience than they do!).

With slight adjustments, this also applies within the level of the family to "bringing up" children. Parents should ask themselves whether their upbringing is not oppressive in nature: they should remember that the foundation of authority is well-conceived freedom, or else they will never be able to teach their children freedom! Children must be able to live their lives and they must be able to exist (existence is more than life!); if one must take precautions, one must also know how to respect their legitimate autonomy.

EDUCATION

There are two ways of practising "education". There is education-for-domestication (or "training", well-illustrated by the school) and education-for-freedom. It is preferable to speak of cultural-action-for-domestication and of cultural-action-for-freedom. We shall not dwell on this distinction which has already been drawn in detail.

By taking these terms of reference into consideration, the methodology and principal components of any educational system, whether its function is to liberate or to domesticate, can be represented by the following diagram.

EDUCATION

*conformist action
domestication*

*cultural action
liberation*

METHODOLOGY

For whom?	- the isolated individual (ignorant)	- man in his environment (rich in experience)
Why?	- to adapt the individual to the established system of values; man must submit to history	- to make man critical of the established system of values; man must make history
What?	- a corpus of knowledge already organized: "ready-made packages"	- a corpus of knowledge to be discovered and organized: "tailored packages"
How?	- by a mechanical transfer of knowledge: use of repetition and memorization	- by the functional discovery of knowledge: use of observation, analysis and "interiorization"

EDUCATIONAL COMPONENTS

Group	- isolated individuals: "empty vessels to be filled"	- active human beings discovering the object of their knowledge
Instructor	- sole subject possessing "knowledge"; agent of transmission of "knowledge"	- co-ordinator acting as a catalyst in the search for "knowledge"
Programme	- a uniform preconceived ensemble reflecting the "knowledge accumulated by man"	- learning units conceived and prepared in accordance with their identified needs of man and his environment
Method	- monologue encouraging memorization	- dialogue inviting creation

.... it is only by means of an education that does not separate *action* from *reflection*, *theory* from *practice*, *consciousness* from the *world*, that it is possible to instil a dialectic form of thinking that will contribute to man's integration as a subject into historical reality.

(from "Quelques idées insolites sur l'éducation" by Paulo Freire)

III. METHODOLOGY

We have seen that the ultimate aim of this pedagogy is to promote a change in the *consciousness* of the illiterate adult in which the acquisition of the techniques of writing and reading can be considered as a means to an end. But it would be an error to think that learning to read and write precedes "conscientization" or vice versa. Conscientization and literacy are coincident.

According to Freire, the essence of literacy through conscientization, in a syllabic language such as Portuguese, is to help man discover, critically, the mechanisms of word composition, so that he himself can enter into the creative game of combining words. In his method, the word is not a static element, cut off from human life and existential experience, but one dimension of man's linguistic reflection on the world. For this reason, when adult illiterates participate in a critical way in the analysis of the first generative words* related to their existential experience, they discover the mechanism of word composition. In this way, little by little, by means of the generative words, they increase their vocabulary and stimulate their creative imagination. This explains Paulo Freire's basic mistrust of primers which organize and distribute graphic signs, thereby reducing the illiterate to the object, rather than making him the subject, of his own literacy. Although Freire realized it was necessary to use up to forty, fifty or even eighty words in order to teach the basic phonemes of the Portuguese language, he reduced the number of generative words, the basic key words required for learning a syllabic language such as Portuguese, to eighteen Key words which he saw as sufficient for literacy through conscientization (see Appendix I, p. 38).

* In addition to the value of the concept they embody and which governs their selection, generative words or key words are those which, when divided into syllables, allow the creation of new words through new combinations of the same elements.

1. Preparation of the Teaching Materials

a. In the *first phase* one makes an inventory of the verbal universe of the working groups. This inventory is drawn up on the strength of spontaneous conversations held with the inhabitants of the regions selected for literacy work in the course of which appear not only the words most highly charged with existential meaning, and thus with emotional content, but also the typical expressions and specific lexical items of the people, related to the experience of the group members, and especially with their experience of work.

This is the most fruitful phase for the team of educators because of the relationships established with the future members of the cultural clubs and also of the frequently discovered and unsuspected wealth of popular speech. Since the key words are drawn from this list by the educators themselves, in accordance with the strictest possible technical norms, they reflect the thoughts, problems and aspirations of the inhabitants of a particular community. The principal characteristics of this method, its orientation toward socio-professional and cultural contexts, is illustrated by the different lists of words and situations drawn up by Paulo Freire for illiterates in the rural and urban areas of the different regions of Brazil.

b. The *second phase* consists of the choice of key words, taken from the total number of words collected in the preceding phase. Their selection must be made in accordance with the following three criteria:

- *First criterion: the richness of the sounds of phonemes.* One must choose words containing the basic sounds of the language. In Portuguese and Spanish, the syllables that make up words have very little variation in the vowel sounds and a minimum number of consonant combinations. Freire discovered that sixteen to twenty words might be enough to cover the whole repertory of sounds.

- *Second criterion: phonetic difficulty.* In choosing words one must bear in mind the phonetic difficulties of the language, arranging them in order of increasing difficulty, so the student can progress from the simplest sounds and letters towards the most complex. The educator's experience and perspicacity contribute to a better understanding of the problems

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confronting the illiterate adult learning to read and write and reinforce his self-confidence, an essential factor in the mastery of these techniques.

- *Third criterion: the pragmatic content of the word.* The words included should be resonant of the social, cultural and political contexts. They should provide an emotional and mental stimulation; they should be suggestive. The content of the word "house", for example, extends far beyond the context of daily family life, to that of local and national housing problems. The provocative word "work" is related to many of the problems inherent in human existence: exploitation, unemployment, under-employment etc.

According to the Brazilian Professor Jarbas Maciel* such criteria for the selection of key words are semiological:

"The best key word is the one with the greatest syntactical value (number or richness of phonemes, degree of phonetic difficulty and complexity, degree of *flexibility* of the groups of signals, syllables etc), semantic value (the degree of intensity of the correspondence between the word and the thing it designates), and pragmatic value (the degree of potential for *conscientization* contained in the word, or the variety of socio-cultural reactions the word produces in the person or group employing it)."

c. The *third phase* appertains to the production of teaching materials. These materials are of two different types: one consists of a series of pictorial representations of situations related to the lives of the group members. These pictures are presented in a series of cards or slides (see Appendix II). They act as challenges to the groups. They are coded problem cases, containing elements to be deciphered by the groups with the help of the discussion leader. The discussion of them, as can be seen in the commentaries given in the Appendix cited above, leads to an anthropological concept of culture that enables the groups to recognize their value

* Jarbas Maciel, "A fundamentação teórica de sistema Paulo Freire de educação" (The theoretical foundation of the Paulo Freire system of education), Estudos universitários, Revista de Culture, No. IV, 1963. University of Recife.

and to place themselves in a historical context resulting in simultaneous conscientization and literacy. Examples are taken from local situations but are directed towards the analysis of regional and national problems. The key words appear in these pictures, in order of increasing phonetic difficulty. A key word may equally well apply to the entire situation or to only one of its elements.

The other type of teaching material consists of a series of cards showing the generative words broken up into syllables (e.g. favela: fa - ve- la) with the phonemic sequences corresponding to each one:

fa	fe	fi	fo	fu
va	ve	vi	vo	vu
la	le	li	lo	lu

These cards are conceived as a means of facilitating progress in reading and writing through the creative intervention of the learner.

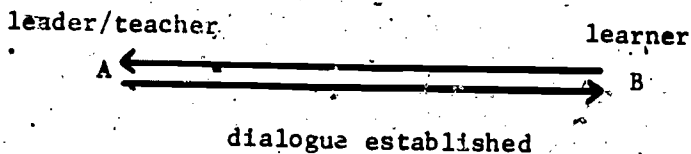
2. Training of Discussion Leader/Coordinators

The greatest difficulty encountered in any literacy campaign, and especially in applying this method which demands a well-developed sense of responsibility, is that of training the teams of instructors. The problems connected with their training are not all purely technical. The main difficulty lies in creating a new attitude favouring dialogue in the instructors, so that they can act as catalysers within the group of participants. According to Freire:^{*}

"The discussion leaders must be converted to an attitude favouring dialogue so that they actually *educate* and do not *domesticate*. As a dialogue is an *I--you* relationship, it has to be a relationship between two subjects. Whenever the *you* of this relationship is turned into a mere object the dialogue is destroyed, and one is now deforming instead of educating. This serious task of education must always be accompanied by control, which is also exercised by a dialogue, in order to forestall the dangerous temptation of 'anti-dialogue'".

^{*} *Ibid*, p. 121.

By dialogue Freire means a horizontal A to B relationship:



Dialogue springs from criticism and engenders *critical judgement*. It feeds on love, humility, hope, faith and confidence. When the two poles of the dialogue are related thus, in love, hope and mutual faith, they become critical in their common quest. A sympathetic relationship is set up between them. It is only at this point that communication is created.

Anti-dialogue, as opposed to dialogue, establishes a vertical A over B relationship:

dialogue
broken off



Anti-dialogue is lacking in love, and consequently "a - critical", in the sense that it does not engender a spirit of criticism. It has no humility, is disheartening, arrogant and self-sufficient. In this process, the "sympathetic" relationship between the poles is broken off. For these reasons, anti-dialogue does not allow communications. It creates passive beings.*

According to Paulo Freire, and in order to minimize indoctrination in the learning process, the instructor's role within the group is generally laid down as follows: respect and confidence in the illiterate's experience, rejection of the

Karl Jaspers. *Raison et anti-raison de notre temps* (Reason and anti-reason in our time) Desclées de Brouver, Paris, 1953.

traditional teacher-pupil relationship and the practice of dialogue. However, the actual technical training (manipulation of the visual aids) is not a major problem. A few practical sessions teach this skill. The problem lies in applying the essence of the method: how can one ensure that the teachers share this philosophical concept and are capable of applying it in the manner proposed by Paulo Freire? In other words, by respecting the individual and sustaining a dialogue? The Brazilian experiment shows the method's capacity for mobilizing recruits (volunteers). In Brazil, many school and university teachers volunteered their services. Furthermore, the construction of the method which is more or less programmed by means of the generative words and the pre-determined subjects for dialogue, ensure that basic principles will be respected.

In short, as the Brazilian experiment shows, the number of teachers required to implement Freire's approach can be reduced to a few well-trained technicians to plan, organize and elaborate programmes and to train the discussion leaders. The latter may belong to the community selected for literacy action, the only qualifications needed being some elementary education, political convictions, human qualities (intellectual alertness, social sensitivity) and residence in the area in which they are to work.

To the coordinator of a "cultural circle"*

This selection of quotations is taken from a circular sent by Freire to the coordinators of study groups in Chile.

"In order to be able to be a good coordinator for a 'cultural circle' you need, above all, to have faith in man, to believe in his possibility to create, to change things. You need to love. You must be convinced that the fundamental effort of education is the liberation of man, and never his 'domestication.' You must be convinced that this liberation takes place to the extent that a man reflects upon himself his relationship to the world in which, and with which he lives. And that it takes place to the extent that, in 'conscientizing' himself, he inserts himself in history as a subject.

"A cultural circle is not a school, in the traditional

* Reproduced from *Convergence*, Vol. IV, no. 1, 1971. p. 61-62.

sense. In most schools, the teacher, convinced of his wisdom, which he considers absolute, gives classes to pupils, passive and docile, whose ignorance he also considers absolute.

"A cultural circle is a live and creative dialogue, in which everyone knows some things and does not know others, in which all seek, together, to know more.

"This is why you, as the coordinator of a cultural circle, must be humble, so that you can grow with the group, instead of losing your humility and claiming to direct the group, once it is animated.

"During discussions, do all you can to ensure that the entire group participates. Try to learn the names of the group participants, and avoid referring to them simply as 'you'.

"When you ask a question, always direct it to the group, unless it is meant to motivate one of the less active members. In any case, however, ask the question first and only afterwards direct it to the person whom you hope to stimulate.

"During the discussion, use answers to reformulate questions for the group. Become a part of the group. As much as possible make yourself one of the members. Never talk much about your personal experiences, except when they offer something of interest to the discussion.

"Even if the codified material has a content with which you are familiar, do not be a slave to it, to the point where you force the group to follow it. This means that you must respect the significance that the group attaches to materials. It is almost certain that the group, faced with a situation, will start by describing it in terms of its own existential experience, which may or may not be that of the coordinator. Your role is to seek, with the group, to deepen the analysis until the situation presented, studied as a problem, is criticized.

"Do not move ahead of the group in decodifying the materials. Your task is not to analyze for the group, but to coordinate the discussion.

"In any group, there are some who talk excessively and

others who speak very little. Stimulate both to reach an equilibrium.

"It is important, indeed indispensable, that you be convinced that each meeting with your group will leave both you and its members enriched. For this, it is necessary that you seek to have a critical posture. The more you and your group are inclined to study situations as problems, the more critical you will become. This critical posture, which should be adopted by you and by the group, will overcome a naive consciousness, which loses itself on the periphery of problems, as you are convinced that you have arrived at their essence."

3. Application of the method*

The first task in the "search" for "critical consciousness" is to turn the illiterate into the spectator of his own reality so that he will think about it. This is done by projecting pictures which reproduce his environment, his habits and his real, mythical and religious world. The illiterate then becomes his own spectator and that of his specific existential reality. The procedure for this "conscientization", as Freire describes it, as follows:

When the first picture displaying the corresponding key word is projected on the screen, discussion of the different aspects of the situation presented is set in motion. It is only when the group, helped by the leader, has exhausted the analysis (de-coding) of the situation presented, that the educator proceeds to visualization of the key-word, that is, to its visual presentation, and not to its memorization. Once the key word has been presented and the semantic correspondence between this word and the object it designates has been established, the pupil is shown the word, without the corresponding object, on another slide, board or shot (if it is a still film): Immediately afterwards, the same word is presented divided into syllables, which the illiterate generally refers to as "pieces." When these pieces have been properly seen and analysed, one proceeds to the visual presentation of the phonemic sequences corresponding to the

* This section is taken from "L'Éducation pratique de la liberté" (Education - practice of freedom), p. 121-125.

syllables of the word being studied. These sequences are at first studied separately, then presented simultaneously, leading in a final analysis, to the discovery of vowels. The card showing the grouped sequences is called the "discovery card." And it is by means of this card that the human being, by a semantic process, discovers the mechanism of word formation by the combination of phonemes, in a syllabic language such as Portuguese.

By assimilating this mechanism critically, and not simply by relying on his memory, which would not result in true assimilation, the pupil starts to work-out his own system of graphic signs. He then, with the greatest of ease, begins to compose words by combining the phonemes he has been shown from the very first day in the analysis of three-syllable words.

The word *tijolo* (brick), selected as the first key word, is illustrated by the picture of a building site. After every aspect of the picture has been discussed, the semantic correspondence between the word and the object it designates is established. Once the word has been seen in the picture, it is shown without the corresponding object: *tijolo*. Next it is split up: *tí - jo - lo*. Immediately after this presentation of the pieces, the study of phonemic sequences begins. Starting with the first syllable, *ti*, the group is encouraged to discover the entire family of sounds resulting from the combination of its initial consonant with the other vowels. Then the group discovers a second family, through the presentation of 'jo', and finally reaches the third through the syllable 'lo'.

When the sequence of phonemes is projected, the group recognizes only the syllable of the word it has already seen: (*ta - te - ti - to - tu, ja - je - ji - jo - ju, la - le - li - lo - lu*). Once the 'ti' of the key word 'tijolo' has been recognized, the group is asked to compare it with the other syllables, which leads to the discovery that, although they all begin identically, they finish differently. Consequently they cannot all be 'ti'. The same procedure is followed with the syllables 'jo' and 'lo' and their families.

After each family of sounds has been explored, reading exercises are given in order to fix the new syllables. At

this point, the three sequences are shown simultaneously on the discovery cards:

ta - te - ti - to - tu

ja - je - ji - jo - ju

la - le - li - lo - lu

After reading them horizontally and vertically, learning to discriminate between the different sounds, the group - *not the leader* - starts to make an oral synthesis. One after the other, all the participants begin to 'make up' words with the various combinations available:

tatu (an animal), luta (struggle), lajota (platform)

Tito (first name), loja (shop), tãla (cloth), etc.

After the oral exercises, in which discovery is reinforced by practice, the adult begins in the very first session, to practise writing. Starting from the second session, each adult is asked to bring to class a list of all the words he has been able to make up by combining the phonemes he knows. Whether the words have any meaning or not is not important. What does matter is the discovery of the mechanism by which phonemes are combined. Verification of the words composed in this way is carried out by the group with the help of the leader, and not by the latter with the help of the group.

In the Brazilian experiment, the words with meaning were called *expressions of thought* and those without, *dead expressions*. It frequently happened that certain adults, after assimilating the phonemic mechanism by means of the discovery card, wrote down words containing complex phonemes: tra, , plã, , which they had not yet been taught. How can one explain the fact that an illiterate can, in so short a time, write words composed of complex phonemes, before he has even studied them? Paulo Freire replies: ". . . . It is because, once he has mastered the mechanism of combining phonemes he has tried, and succeeded, in expressing himself graphically, in the same way that he speaks." *

* *Ibid.*, p. 125.

We have just seen that, in this approach, each word corresponds to a sociological situation. Thus, discussion leads the cultural circle to dwell on its life and its existential realities, its latent and disorganized knowledge, to see them through the agency of the information contributed by the others and by the group leader, and to organize this knowledge after criticism of its different aspects. A cultural circle session can be compared to a session of group psycho-analysis, an attempt to reveal the hidden motives influencing man's behaviour. This pedagogy of dialogue enables a man to recognize, dialectically, his life as a man, a worker, an agent of production, a shopkeeper, a father, a syndical leader, an elector, etc., while making use of his newly acquired aptitudes for communication, his reading and writing.

Just as this method helps the illiterate to strengthen his awareness of his problems and of his human condition - as a subject - so it contributes to the increase of active members of society rather than isolated individuals. The example of an ex-illiterate who, after attending the cultural circle sessions, declares that he no longer belongs to the 'mass' but to the 'people', is highly significant. In so saying, he has chosen to participate in the making of decisions, which only the people can do. One of Freire's projects, on observing the interest and enthusiasm of the participants in the cultural circles was to prepare materials for a type of education in which there would be room for what Aldous Huxley has called "the art of dissociating ideas".

He considered this art to be the antidote to the propaganda attempting to domesticate the people dispersed by the constantly expanding information media. Freire's ideas on the necessity of combating the information medias alienating influence on man are similar to those expressed by the International Commission on Educational Development: "For the development of mass-communication media has provided political and economic authorities with extraordinary instruments for conditioning the individual, in whatever capacity we consider him, and especially as a consumer and as a citizen. The latter must therefore be able to combat the risk of personality-alienation involved in the more

obsessive forms of propaganda and publicity, and in the behavioural conformity which may be imposed on him from the outside, to the detriment of his genuine needs and his intellectual and emotional identity". *

Challenging situations, ranging from simple commercial propaganda, to ideological propaganda should be discussed in the cultural circles.

The aim of these anti-propaganda sessions was to help the people discover the difference between education and propaganda. This project was never put into practice. The political events of 1964 closed the cultural circles and resulted in Freire's departure from his native land.

IV. THE METHOD AS APPLIED IN CHILE AND CONCLUSIONS

In the preceding pages we have seen how Paulo Freire's method, which is also known as the "psycho-social" method, was gradually perfected during the period of its application in Brazil. However, aside from the undisputed theoretical value of Freire's educational conception, available documents and data on the results achieved during this experiment are far from enabling us to evaluate the effectiveness of this method in either the *cognitive* or the *affective* domain.

Of the Latin-American countries other than Brazil that have applied Freire's method, Chile may be taken as an example. An experiment of this type was carried out there for the first time in 1966, in the "Community and Basic Education Centres", at a time when adult education and literacy activities were not yet coordinated and directed by one organization affiliated to the Ministry of Education. At the present time, the entire literacy and adult education policy is closely related to the development targets of the Chilean Peoples' Union Government. Its main task is that of transforming the existing economic, political, social and cultural structures.

In conformity with this priority, the structure of adult education in Chile is as follows:

* Unesco. *Learning to be; the world of education today and tomorrow*, Paris, 1972. xvi, 315 p. figs, graphs, tables.

- *General education*, lasting three years;
- *Education in the humanities and science*, lasting four years;
- *Techno-vocational education*, differing as to content and duration.

Literacy, as such, is taught only in the course of the first *four* months of the first year. It is during this period that Freire's "psycho-social" method, adapted to the Chilean situation, is used. The Chilean example was fairly significant of its kind, since the general policy of the country was not essentially incompatible with the adoption of Freire's method; the mobilization of the people by means of a "conscientization" campaign was directed and supported by the socialist government of the Peoples' Union. The Chilean experiment, like that of Brazil, did not provide adequate quantitative data allowing systematic evaluation of the method's impact. In spite of the relatively low rate of illiteracy in Chile (11.7%) and government support for literacy programmes through "conscientization", the problems of drop-out among the participants has not yet been solved. It is therefore indispensable, in order to know the effectiveness of the method, that comparable studies employing different approaches, both traditional and functional, be carried out in varying socio-political contexts.

In short, the introduction of this pedagogy of cultural action implies an overhaul of the value systems established in a social context polarized as regards class. For Paulo Freire, development is not restricted to purely technical, political or economic aspects, but also requires the transition from one mentality to another. A group of adults is always defined in time and space. It has an "individuality" distinguishing it from other human groups situated in another time, another place, another context. Awareness of this fact conditions all the forms of intervention which we could wish to exert on this group. In fact, the introduction of reading and writing techniques within the framework of this pedagogy is a kind of intervention, since its principal aim is not instruction, but "conscientization", the individual's awakening to the consciousness of the position he occupies in nature, time and society. The success of this inter-

vention depends above all on the "coordinator", who is not asked to teach facts, regardless of their casualities and interaction, or to express personal opinions, but to arouse in the participants a desire to question themselves on the 'rudiments' of everyday life, in order to emerge from it. The motivation of "conscientization" stems from the participants' dialogue, in which each one discovers the significance of generative concepts. Nevertheless, this inevitably results in political participation and the formation of community organizations and labour syndicates. This type of involvement in general is scarcely encouraged, nor even allowed, by the systems in force in almost the whole of the Third World.

Freire claims, moreover, that a valid education should assist the individual to become a subject, to establish new man/man and man/world relationships, to shape his culture and to take part in history. A true education is thus one which emancipates the individual instead of standardizing and subjugating him.

APPENDIX I

LIST OF KEY-WORDS

Seventeen key-words listed below have been taken from the universal vocabulary put together in the State of Rio, and are also valid for Guanabara State.

They are cited without the pictures of actual situations illustrating them, simply to show a few of the aspects analysed in discussions.

1. FAVELA (shanty-town)

Basic necessities: Housing, Food, Clothing, Health and Education.

Here once again, with the word *favela*, the procedure described previously for the word *tijolo* (brick) will be outlined briefly.

Once the situation projected on the screen has been analysed, the problems of housing, food, clothing, health and education in a shanty-town have been discussed, and the participants have discovered the implications of the *favela*, one proceeds to visualize the word, pointing out its semantic content.

A slide is then projected in which the word appears on its own: FAVELA. Immediately afterwards, the word is shown divided into syllables:

FA - VE - LA

Then the phonemic sequence: FA- FE - FI - FO - FU

Next: VA - VE - VI - VO - VU

Then: LA - LE - LI - LO - LU

Finally the three sequences together: are shown on a discovery card:

FA FE FI FO FU

VA VE VI VO VU

LA LE LI LO LU

The group then begins to make up words with the combinations available.

2. CHUVA (rain)

Topics for discussion:

Influence of the ambient environment on human life. The climatic factor in a subsistence economy. Regional disparities in Brazil.

3. ARADO (plough)

Topics for discussion:

The value of human labour. Man and technology: the process of transforming nature. Work and capital. Land reform.

4. TERRENO (land)

Topics for discussion:

Economic domination. Latifundium (large estates). Irrigation. Natural resources. Protection of the national heritage.

5. COMIDA (food)

Topics for discussion:

Malnutrition. Local and national hunger. Endemic diseases and infant mortality.

6. BATUQUE (popular dance)

Topics for discussion:

Popular culture. Academic culture. Cultural alienation.

7. POÇO (well)
Topics for discussion: Health and endemic diseases. Health education. Problems of conveying water.
8. BICICLETA (bicycle)
Topics for discussion: Problems of Transport. Collective transport.
9. TRABALHO (work)
Topics for discussion: The process of transforming nature. Enhancing man's value through work. Manual, intellectual and technological work. Handicrafts. Dichotomy: manual/intellectual work.
10. SALARIO (wages)
Topics for discussion: Economics. Man's position: remuneration for work, salaried and non-salaried work; minimum wage, wage scale.
11. PROFISSAO (job)
Topics for discussion: Social problems. Industry. Social classes and social mobility. Syndicalism. Strikes.
12. GOVERNO (government)
Topics for discussion: Politics. Political power (three kinds of power). The role of the people in the organization of power. Popular participation.
13. MANGUE (marsh)
Topics for discussion: Marsh dwellers. Paternalism. "Assistantialism". Human progress from an object situation to a subject situation.

14. ENGENHO (sugar-cane plantation)

Topics for discussion:

The economic history of Brazil. Monoculture. Large estates. Land reform.

15. ENXADA (spade)

Topics for discussion:

Land reform and agricultural credit. Technology and reform.

16. TIJOLO (brick)

Topics for discussion:

Urban reform, basic problems. Planning. Inter-relation of different reforms.

17. RIQUEZA (wealth)

Topics for discussion:

Brazil's position in the world. Comparative study of wealth and poverty. Rich versus poor. Rich nations versus poor nations. Dominating and dominated countries. Developed and under-developed nations. National emancipation. Effective international aid and World Peace.

APPENDIX II

PICTURES OF SITUATIONS

First Picture

MAN IN THE WORLD, PARTICIPATING IN THE WORLD: NATURE AND INSTRUCTION

In discussing this picture, man will be studied as a related being par excellence, and a distinction will be drawn between two worlds, the world of nature and the world of culture. The group will be taught to perceive that man's normal situation is to be in the world and also to participate in the world. Man is a creative and re-creative being, who will modify reality by his work. Next come simple questions, such as: Who makes the well? Why is it made? How is it made? When? The same questions are then applied to the other parts of the picture. In this way two fundamental notions are brought to light: *necessity* and *work*. Culture is understood at its lowest level, as subsistence. The man has made a well because he needed water. He has made it by establishing a relationship with the world, which becomes the object of his knowledge. Through his work, he submits the world to a process of transformation. In the same way, he builds a house, makes his clothes and fashions his implements. After this comes discussion with the group, choosing simple, concrete terms, on the relationships between men. These should not be pictured as domination or transformation of the type that has just been analysed, but as the affirmation of man as a subject.

Second Picture

NATURE, MEDIATOR OF DIALOGUE

In the previous discussion, we analysed the relationships between men, which are relationships between subjects and cannot be relationships of domination. The group is therefore prepared at this stage to analyse dialogue, communication between men and the meeting of more than one consciousness. It is prepared to understand the world's role of mediator in this communication and, finally, to reflect on the foundations of dialogue: love, humility, hope, judgement, the spirit of creation.

The next three pictures form a series, and their analysis completes an understanding of the concept of culture, while permitting discussion of other important aspects at the same time.

Third Picture

THE PRIMITIVE HUNTER

Discussion of this picture should start by distinguishing what belongs to nature from what belongs to culture. "Culture", say the participants, "is represented here by the arrows, or by the feathers worn by the Indian." When asked whether the feathers do not belong to nature, they always reply, "As long as the feathers are on the bird, they belong to nature; but when a man has killed a bird, taken its feathers and put them together by his work, they are no longer a part of nature, but of culture." We have heard such a reply on many occasions, in different parts of the country. By drawing a distinction between the historico-cultural level of the hunter and their own level, the group members reach an awareness of what a primitive culture is. They discover that, in lengthening his arms by five to ten metres by means of an instrument he has made, so that already he is no longer obliged to catch his prey with his hands, he has accomplished a cultural action. In communicating to younger generations not only the way in which this instrument works, but also the ascent technology of its manufacture, he accomplishes an educational action. Discussion follows on the workings of education in a primitive society where there is no question of illiteracy as we know it. The students perceive immediately that an illiterate is one who lives in a primitive society, unable to master the skills of writing and reading. For some, this new awareness is dramatic.

Fourth Picture

THE CULTURED HUNTER

When this picture is projected on the screen, the participants identify the hunter with a man of their own cultural level, even though they are illiterate. One points out to them the technological progress represented by the gun as opposed to the bow and arrow. Man's increasing potential for entering into a relationship with the world and for incessantly transforming it by means of his creative spirit and his work is analysed. Such transformation is significant only in so far as it contributes to man's humanization and becomes a part of his liberation. Finally, the effects of education on development are examined.

Fifth Picture

THE FELINE, BEAST OF PREY

In this series of pictures of hunters, we hoped to teach the difference of cultural level between the first two, and the ontological difference between both of them and the third. Obviously, we shall not mention difference of cultural level or ontological difference in cultural circles. The people, however, perceive these differences in their own language and in their own way. We shall never forget one illiterate in Brasilia who confidently asserted: "Of the three, only the two men are really hunters. They are hunters because first they accomplish a cultural action and then they hunt. (He forgot to say only that they also accomplish a cultural action by hunting). As for the third, the cat, equally removed from any form of culture both before and after the hunt, it is not a hunter, but a persecuter." His distinction between hunter and persecuter was a subtle one, but basically, the fundamental notion of accomplishing a cultural action was well understood.

These discussions produced many precious observations on the subject of animals and men, the power of creation, freedom, intelligence, instinct, education and teaching.

Sixth Picture

MAN TRANSFORMS NATURE BY HIS WORK

Discussion starts when the drawing is projected. What do we see? What are these men making? "They are working clay", everyone answers. "They are in the process of transforming a natural material by their work," say a few. After many comments connected with the topic of work (and some will even mention the joy of making beautiful things, as did one man in Brasilia), one asks whether such labour can produce an act of culture? They reply that this is possible: for example, a vase, a storage jar, or any recipient.

Seventh Picture

THE VASE, PRODUCED BY MAN'S WORK FROM A NATURAL MATERIAL

It was with emotion, in the Recife Cultural Club, that we heard an enthusiastic women declare, during discussion of this picture: "I can perform an act of culture; I know how to make a vase like that." Many participants say of the flowers in the vase, "Flowers are things of nature, but the decorative bouquet is an act of culture."

At this point, discussion defines something that has been latent from the start, the aesthetic aspect of creation. This notion will be strengthened by the next picture, when we come to analyse the meaning of culture at the level of spiritual aspirations.

Eighth Picture

POETRY

First of all, the discussion leader reads the text projected on the screen, slowly. "This is a poem," the audience generally declares. One then explains to the group that this is a popular work, written by a simple man of the people. The ensuing discussion decides whether poetry is culture or not. "It is an act of culture like the vase," they say, "but different from the vase." In the course of discussion they realize that poetic expression results from a different aspiration, and that it does not take shape in the same way. After discussing the different aspects of artistic creation, whether popular or erudite and not necessarily restricted to poetry, the group leader reads the text again and submits it for group discussion.

Text: The terrible atomic bomb	If war stopped
And radioactivity	And all were united,
Signify terror,	Our world of today
Ruin and calamity.	Would not be destroyed.



A BOMBA

**A TERRÍVEL BOMBA ATÔMICA
E A RADIO-ATIVIDADE
SIGNIFICAM TERROR
RUINA E CALAMIDADE**

**SE ACABASSEM COM A GUERRA
E TUDO FICASSE UNIDO
O NOSSO MUNDO DE HOJE
NÃO SERIA DESTRUÍDO**

Ninth Picture

TYPES OF BEHAVIOR

By means of this picture, we hoped to analyse types of behavior from a cultural point of view, and then to discuss resistance to change.

The picture shows a "gaúcho" from the South, and a "vaqueiro"* from the north-east of Brazil, each one dressed in his own way. By speaking about their clothes, we reach discussion of certain aspects of their behavior. One day, in a cultural club in the south of Brazil, we heard the following remark: "Here we see the traditional customs of two parts of Brazil, the south and the north-east, as regards dress. But before this tradition was established, it was necessary to dress like this: one has warm clothes because of the climate of his region, and the other has stout leather clothing to protect himself from the thorny vegetation of the north-east. Sometimes a necessity disappears, but a tradition remains."

Analysis of this situation was always informative, as was that of the other pictures. We obtained what we desired; a consideration of different types of behavior as varied manifestations of culture.

* Mounted cattle-herders.

Tenth Picture

A CULTURAL CLUB IN ACTION. SYNTHESIS OF PREVIOUS DISCUSSIONS

The picture represents a Cultural Club in action. The participants easily recognize themselves in the picture shown on the screen. Discussion opened by considering culture as the systematic acquisition of knowledge, and the democratization of culture as part of the wider process of *fundamental democratization* which existed in Brazil at that time.

"The democratization of culture," said one of these anonymous illiterates, full of wisdom, one day, "should start with what others decide and want for us."

After these debates on culture and its democratization, we analysed the organization of a Cultural Club, its dynamism, the creative force of dialogue and mental awakening. These aspects were discussed on two different evenings, and the participants became more and more strongly motivated, ready to begin literacy the following day, as they then pictured it as the key that would open the doors of written communication for them.

Only in this way can literacy acquire meaning. It becomes the consequence of man's first thoughts on his own powers of reflection, his position in the world, the world itself, his work, his ability to transform the world and the meeting of minds; and, finally, on literacy itself, which ceases to be something external to man and becomes his own personal problem, which will issue from him and his own creation, in the relationship he establishes with the world.

Literacy work seems to us valid only in this way, when its true meaning is understood by man as a force capable of transforming the world. It is only in this way that literacy can be justified: in so far as man, by discovering the relativity of ignorance and learning while he is as yet illiterate can banish one of the levers with which the usurping élite manipulates him. It is only in this way that literacy acquires its whole value: in so far as it makes full use of man's effort of reflection on himself and the world in which he lives, in order to reveal to him that *the world belongs to him too, and that his work is not a punishment inherent in his human condition, but a means of loving - and of helping the world to become a better place.*

Appendix 1 & 2 are taken from Paulo Freire's work: *L'éducation pratique de la liberté*. Paris, Les éditions du Cerf, 1971.

M E S S A G E :

THE ADULT LITERACY PROCESS AS CULTURAL
ACTION FOR FREEDOM

by

Paulo Freire

This article is a concise statement of the author's view of the purpose of education and the means through which it can be realized.

It is part of a longer essay penned by Freire while a Fellow at the Center for the Study of Development and Social Change, Cambridge, Massachusetts, U.S.A.

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PART I: Every educational practice implies a concept of man and the world

Experience teaches us not to assume that the obvious is clearly understood. So it is with the truism with which we begin: All educational practice implies a theoretical stance on the educator's part. This stance in turn implies - sometimes more, sometimes less explicitly - an interpretation of man and the world. It could not be otherwise. The process of men's orientation in the world involves not just the association of sense images, as for animals. It involves, above all, thought-language; that is, the possibility of the act of knowing through his praxis, by which man transforms reality. For man, this process of orientation in the world can be understood neither as a purely subjective event, nor as an objective or mechanistic one, but only as an event in which subjectivity and objectivity are united. Orientation in the world, so understood, places the question of the purposes of action at the level of critical perception of reality.

If, for animals, orientation in the world means adaptation to the world, for man it means humanizing the world by transforming it. For animals there is no historical sense, no options or values in their orientation in the world; for man there is both an historical and a value dimension. Men have the sense of "project," in contrast to the instinctive routines of animals.

The action of men without objectives, whether the objectives are right or wrong, mythical or demythologized, naive or critical, is not praxis, though it may be orientation in the world. And not being praxis, it is action ignorant both of its own process and of its aim. The interrelation of the awareness of aim and of process is the basis for planning action, which implies methods, objectives, and value options.

Teaching adults to read and write must be seen, analyzed and understood in this way. The critical analyst will discover in the methods and texts used by educators and students practical value options which betray a philosophy of man, well or poorly outlined, coherent or incoherent. Only someone with a mechanistic mentality, which Marx would call

"grossly materialistic," could reduce adult literacy learning to a purely technical action. Such a naive approach would be incapable of perceiving that technique itself as an instrument of men in their orientation in the world is not neutral.

We shall try, however, to prove by analysis the self-evidence of our statement. Let us consider the case of primers used as the basic texts for teaching adults to read and write. Let us further propose two distinct types: a poorly done primer and a good one, according to the genre's own criteria. Let us even suppose that the author of the good primer based the selection of its generative words* on a prior knowledge of which words have the greatest resonance for the learner (a practice not commonly found, though it does exist).

Doubtlessly, such an author is already far beyond the colleague who composes his primer with words he himself chooses in his own library. Both authors, however, are identical in a fundamental way. In each case they themselves decompose the given generative words and from the syllables create new words. With these words, in turn, the authors form simple sentences and, little by little, small stories, the so-called reading lessons.

Let us say that the author of the second primer, going one step further, suggests that the teachers who use it initiate discussions about one or another word, sentence, or

* In languages like Portuguese or Spanish, words are composed syllabically. Thus, every non-monosyllabic word is, technically, *generative*, in the sense that other words can be constructed from its de-composed syllables. For a word to be authentically generative, however, certain conditions must be present which will be discussed in a later section of this essay. [At the phonetic level the term *generative word* is properly applicable only with regard to a sound-syllabic reading methodology, while the thematic application is universal. See Sylvia Ashton-Warner's *Teacher*, for a different treatment of the concept of generative words at the thematic level - Editor]

text with their students.

Considering either of these hypothetical cases we may legitimately conclude that there is an implicit concept of man in the primer's method and content, whether it is recognized by the authors or not. This concept can be reconstructed from various angles. We begin with the fact, inherent in the idea and use of the primer, that it is the teacher who chooses the words and proposes them to the learner. Insofar as the primer is the mediating object between the teacher and students, and the students are to be "filled" with words the teachers have chosen, one can easily detect a first important dimension of the image of man which here begins to emerge. It is the profile of a man whose consciousness is "spatialized," and must be "filled" or "fed" in order to know. This same conception led Sartre, criticizing the notion that "to know is to eat," to exclaim: "*O philosophie alimentaire!*"*

This "digestive" concept of knowledge, so common in current educational practice, is found very clearly in the primer**. Illiterates are considered "under-nourished," not in the literal sense in which many of them really are, but because they lack the "bread of the spirit". Consistent with the concept of knowledge as food, illiteracy is conceived of as a "poison herb", intoxicating and debilitating persons who cannot read or write. Thus, much is said about the

* Jean Paul Sartre, *Situations I* (Paris: Librairie Gallimard, 1947), p. 31.

** The digestive concept of knowledge is suggested by "controlled readings", by classes which consist only in lectures; by the use of memorized dialogues in language learning; by bibliographical notes which indicate not only which chapter, but which lines and words are to be read; by the methods of evaluating the students' progress in learning.

"eradication" of illiteracy to cure the disease.* In this way, deprived of their character as linguistic signs constitutive of man's thought-language, words are transformed into mere "deposits of vocabulary" - the bread of the spirit which the illiterates are to "eat" and "digest."

This "nutritionist" view of knowledge perhaps also explains the humanitarian character of certain Latin American adult literacy campaigns. If millions of men are illiterate, "starving for letters," "thirsty for words", the word must be *brought* to them to save them from "hunger" and "thirst". The word, according to the naturalistic concept of consciousness implicit in the primer, must be "deposited," not born of the creative effort of the learners. As understood in this concept, man is a passive being, the object of the process of learning to read and write, and not its subject. As object his task is to "study" the so-called reading lessons, which in fact are almost completely alienating and alienated, having so little, if anything, to do with the student's socio-cultural reality.**

It would be a truly interesting study to analyze the reading texts being used in private or official adult literacy campaigns in rural and urban Latin America. It would not be unusual to find among such texts sentences and readings

* See Paulo Freire, "La alfabetización de adultos, crítica de su visión ingenua; comprensión de su visión crítica," in *Introducción a la Acción Cultural* (Santiago: ICIRA, 1969).

** There are two noteworthy exceptions among these primers: (1) in Brazil, *Viver e Lutar*, developed by a team of specialists of the Basic Education Movement, sponsored by the National Conference of Bishops. (This reader became the object of controversy after it was banned as subversive by the then governor of Guanabara, Mr. Carlos Lacerda, in 1963) (2) in Chile, the ESPIGA collection, despite some small defects. The collection was organized by Jefatura de Planes Extraordinarios de Educación de Adultos, of the Public Education Ministry.

like the following random samples:*

A asa é da ave - "The wing is of the bird"

Eva viu a uva - "Eva saw the grape."

O galo canta - "The cock crows."

O cachorro ladra - "The dog barks."

Maria gosta dos animais - "Mary likes animals."

João cuida das arvores - "John takes care of the trees."

O pai de Carlinhos se chama Antonio. Carlinhos é um bom menino, bem comportado e estudioso - "Charles's father's name is Antonio. Charles is a good, well-behaved, and studious boy."

*Ada deu o dedo ao urubu? Duvido, Ada deu o dedo a arara***

Se você trabalha com martelo e prego, tenha cuidado para não furar o dedo. - "If you hammer a nail, be careful not to smash your finger."***

"Peter did not know how to read. Peter was ashamed. One day, Peter went to school and registered for a night course. Peter's teacher was very good. Peter knows how to read now. Look at Peter's face. [These lessons are generally illustrated].

* Since at the time this essay was written the writer did not have access to the primers, and was, therefore, vulnerable to recording phrases imprecisely or to confusing the author of one or another primer, it was thought best not to identify the authors or the titles of the books.

** The English here would be nonsensical, as is the Portuguese, the point being the emphasis on the consonant *d*.

*** The author may even have added here, "... If, however, this should happen, put a little mercurochrome."

Peter is smiling. He is a happy man. He already has a good job. Everyone ought to follow his example."

In saying that Peter is smiling because he knows how to read, that he is happy because he now has a good job, and that he is an example for all to follow, the authors establish a relationship between knowing how to read and getting good jobs which, in fact, cannot be borne out. This naiveté reveals, at least, a failure to perceive the structure not only of illiteracy, but of social phenomena in general. Such an approach may admit that these phenomena exist, but it cannot perceive their relationship to the structure of the society in which they are found. It is as if these phenomena were mythical, above and beyond concrete situations, or the results of the intrinsic inferiority of a certain class of men. Unable to grasp contemporary illiteracy as a typical manifestation of the "culture of silence," directly related to underdeveloped structures, this approach cannot offer an objective, critical response to the challenge of illiteracy. Merely teaching men to read and write does not work miracles; if there are not enough jobs for men able to work, teaching more men to read and write will not create them.

One of these readers presents among its lessons the following two texts on consecutive pages without relating them. The first is about May 1st, the Labor Day holiday, on which workers commemorate their struggles. It does not say how or where these are commemorated, or what the nature of the historical conflict was. The main theme of the second lesson is *holidays*. It says that "on these days people ought to go to the beach to swim and sunbathe...." Therefore, if May 1st is a holiday, and if on holidays people should go to the beach, the conclusion is that the workers should go swimming on Labor Day, instead of meeting with their unions in the public squares to discuss their problems.

Analysis of these texts reveals, then, a simplistic vision of men, of their world, of the relationship between the two, and of the literacy process which unfolds in that world.

A asa é da ave, Eva viu a uva, o galo canta, and *o machorro late*, are linguistic contexts which, when mechanically memorized and repeated, are deprived of their authentic dimension as thought-language in dynamic interplay with reality. Thus impoverished, they are not authentic expressions of the world.

Their authors do not recognize in the poor classes the ability to know and even create the texts which would express their own thought-language at the level of their perception of the world. The authors repeat with the texts what they do with the words, i.e., they introduce them into the learners' consciousness as if it were empty space - once more, the "digestive" concept of knowledge.

Still more, the a-structural perception of illiteracy revealed in these texts exposes the other false view of illiterates as marginal men.* Those who consider them marginal must, nevertheless, recognize the existence of a reality to which they are marginal - not only physical space, but historical, social, cultural, and economic realities - i.e., the structural dimension of reality. In this way, illiterates have to be recognized as beings "outside of", "marginal to" something, since it is impossible to be marginal to nothing. But being "outside of" or "marginal to" necessarily implies a movement of the one said to be marginal from the center, where he was, to the periphery. This movement, which is an action, presupposes in turn not only an agent but also his reasons. Admitting the existence of men "outside of" or "marginal to" structural reality, it seems legitimate to ask: Who is the author of this movement from the center of the structure to its margin? Do so-called marginal men, among them the illiterates, make the decision to move out to the periphery of society? If, so, marginality is an option with all that it involves:

* [The Portuguese word here translated as *marginal man* is *marginado*. This has a passive sense: he who has been made marginal, or sent outside society; as well as the sense of a state of existence on the fringe of society. - Translator.]

hunger, sickness, rickets, pain, mental deficiencies, living death, crime, promiscuity, despair, the impossibility of being. In fact, however, it is difficult to accept that 40% of Brazil's population, almost 90% of Haiti's, 60% of Bolivia's, about 40% of Peru's, more than 30% of Mexico's and Venezuela's and about 70% of Guatemala's would have made the tragic *choice* of their own marginality as illiterates.* If, then, marginality is not by choice, marginal man has been expelled from and kept outside of the social system and is, therefore, the object of violence.

In fact, however, the social structure as a whole does not "expel", nor is marginal man a "being outside of." He is, on the contrary, a "being inside of" within the social structure, and in a dependent relationship to those whom we call falsely autonomous beings, inauthentic beings-for-themselves.

A less rigorous approach, one more simplistic, less critical, more technicist, would say that it was unnecessary to reflect about what it would consider unimportant questions such as illiteracy and teaching adults to read and write. Such an approach might even add that the discussion of the concept of marginality is an unnecessary academic exercise. In fact, however, it is not so. In accepting the illiterate as a sort of person who exists on the fringe of society, we are led to envision him as a sort of "sick man," for whom literacy would be the "medicine" to cure him, enabling him to "return" to the "healthy" structure from which he has become separated. Educators would be benevolent counsellors, scouring the outskirts of the city for the stubborn illiterates, runaways from the good life, to restore them to the forsaken bosom of happiness by giving them the gift of the word.

In the light of such a concept - unfortunately, all too widespread - literacy programs can never be efforts toward

* Unesco. La situación educativa en América Latina, Cuadro no. 20, page 263 (Paris, 1960).

freedom; they will never question the very reality which deprives men of the right to speak up - not only illiterates, but all those who are treated as objects in a dependent relationship. These men, illiterate or not, are, in fact, not marginal. What we said before bears repeating: They are not "beings outside of"; they are "beings for another." Therefore the solution to their problem is not to become "beings inside of," but men freeing themselves; for, in reality, they are not marginal to the structure, but oppressed men within it. Alienated men, they cannot overcome their dependency by "incorporation" into the very structure responsible for their dependency. There is no other road to humanization - theirs as well as everyone else's - but authentic transformation of the dehumanizing structure.

From this last point of view, the illiterate is no longer a person living on the fringe of society, a marginal man, but rather a representative of the dominated strata of society in conscious or unconscious opposition to those who, in the same structure, treat him as a thing. Thus, also, teaching men to read and write is no longer an inconsequential matter of *ba, be, bi, bo, bu*, of memorizing an alienated word, but a difficult apprenticeship in naming the world.

In the first hypothesis, interpreting illiterates as men marginal to society, the literacy process reinforces the mythification of reality by keeping it opaque and by dulling the "empty consciousness" of the learner with innumerable alienating words and phrases. By contrast, in the second hypothesis - interpreting illiterates as men oppressed within the system - the literacy process, as cultural action for freedom, is an act of knowing in which the learner assumes the role of knowing subject in dialogue with the educator. For this very reason, it is a courageous endeavor to demythologize reality, a process through which men who had previously been submerged in reality begin to emerge in order to re-insert themselves into it with critical awareness.

Therefore the educator must strive for an ever greater clarity as to what, at times without his conscious knowledge, illumines the path of his action. Only in this way will he truly be able to assume the role of one of the subjects of

this action and remain consistent in the process.

PART II: The adult literacy process as an act of knowing.

To be an act of knowing the adult literacy process demands among teachers and students a relationship of authentic dialogue. True dialogue unites subjects together in the cognition of a knowable object which mediates between them.

If learning to read and write is to constitute an act of knowing, the learners must assume from the beginning the role of creative subjects. It is not a matter of memorizing and repeating given syllables, words, and phrases, but rather of reflecting critically on the process of reading and writing itself, and on the profound significance of language.

Insofar as language is impossible without thought, and language and thought are impossible without the world to which they refer, the human word is more than mere vocabulary - it is word-and-action. The cognitive dimensions of the literacy process must include the relationships of men with their world. These relationships are the source of the dialectic between the products men achieve in transforming the world and the conditioning which these products in turn exercise on men.

Learning to read and write ought to be an opportunity for men to know what *speaking the word* really means: a human act implying reflection and action. As such it is a primordial human right and not the privilege of a few.* Speaking the word is not a true act if it is not at the same time associated with the right of self-expression and world-expression, of creating and re-creating, of deciding and choosing and ultimately participating in society's historical process.

In the culture of silence the masses are "mute," that is, they are prohibited from creatively taking part in the transformations of their society and therefore prohibited from

* Paulo Freire, *op. cit.*

being. Even if they can occasionally read and write because they were "taught" in humanitarian - but not humanist - literacy campaigns, they are nevertheless alienated from the power responsible for their silence.

Illiterates know they are concrete men. They know that they do things. What they do not know in the culture of silence - in which they are ambiguous, dual beings - is that men's actions as such are transforming, creative, and re-creative. Overcome by the myths of this culture, including the myth of their own "natural inferiority," they do not know that *their* action upon the world is also transforming. Prevented from having a "structural perception" of the facts involving them, they do not know that they cannot "have a voice," i.e., that they cannot exercise the right to participate consciously in the socio-historical transformation of their society, because their work does not belong to them.

It could be said (and we would agree) that it is not possible to recognize all this apart from praxis, that is, apart from reflection and action, and that to attempt it would be pure idealism. But it is true that action upon an object must be critically analyzed in order to understand both the object itself and the understanding one has of it. The act of knowing involves a dialectical movement which goes from action to reflection and from reflection upon action to a new action. For the learner to know what he did not know before, he must engage in an authentic process of abstraction by means of which he can reflect on the action-object whole, or, more generally, on forms of orientation in the world. In this process of abstraction, situations representative of how the learner orients himself in the world are proposed to him as the objects of his critique.

As an event calling forth the critical reflection of both the learners and educators, the literacy process must relate *speaking the word to transforming reality*, and to man's role in this transformation. Perceiving the significance of that relationship is indispensable for those learning to read and write if we are really committed to liberation. Such a perception will lead the learners to recognize a much greater right than that of being literate. They will ultimately recognize that, as men, they have the right to have a voice.

On the other hand, as an act of knowing, learning to read and write presupposes not only a theory of knowing but a method which corresponds to the theory.

We recognize the indisputable unity between subjectivity and objectivity in the act of knowing. Reality is never just simply the objective datum, the concrete fact, but is also men's perception of it. Once again, this is not a subjectivistic or idealistic affirmation, as it might seem. On the contrary, subjectivism and idealism come into play when the subjective-objective unity is broken.*

The adult literacy process as an act of knowing implies the existence of two interrelated contexts. One is the context of authentic dialogue between learners and educators as equally knowing subjects. This is what schools should be - the theoretical context of dialogue. The second is the real, concrete context of facts, the social reality in which men exist.**

In the theoretical context of dialogue, the facts presented by the real or concrete context are critically analyzed. This analysis involves the exercise of abstraction, through which, by means of representations of concrete reality, we seek knowledge of that reality. The instrument for this abstraction in our methodology is codification,** or representation of the existential situations of the learners.

* "There are two ways to fall into idealism: The one consists of dissolving the real in subjectivity; the other in denying all real subjectivity in the interests of objectivity," Jean Paul Sartre, *Search for a Method*, trans. Hazel E. Barnes (New York: Vintage Books, 1968) p. 33.

** See Karel Kosik, *Dialectica de lo Concreto* (Mexico: Grijalbo, 1967).

*** *Codification* refers alternatively to the imaging, or the image itself, of some significant aspect of the learner's concrete reality (of a slum dwelling, for example). As such, it becomes both the object of the teacher-learner dialogue and the context for the introduction of the generative word. - Editor.

Codification, on the one hand, mediates between the concrete and theoretical contexts (of reality). On the other hand, as knowable object, it mediates between the knowing subjects, educators and learners, who seek in dialogue to unveil the "action-object wholes."

This type of linguistic discourse must be "read" by anyone who tries to interpret it, even when purely pictorial. As such, it presents what Chomsky calls "surface structure" and "deep structure."

The "surface structure" of codification makes the "action-object whole" explicit in a purely taxonomic form. The first stage of decodification* - or reading - is descriptive. At this stage, the "readers" - or decodifiers - focus on the relationship between the categories constituting the codification. This preliminary focus on the surface structure is followed by problematizing the codified situation. This leads the learner to the second and fundamental stage of decodification, the comprehension of the codification's "deep structure." By understanding the codification's "deep structure" the learner can then understand the dialectic which exists between the categories presented in the "surface structure," as well as the unity between the "surface" and "deep" structures.

In our method, the codification initially takes the form of a photograph or sketch which represents a real existent, or an existent constructed by the learners. When this representation is projected as a slide, the learners effect an operation basic to the art of knowing: they gain distance from the knowable object. This experience of distance is undergone as well by the educators, so that educators and learners together can reflect critically on the knowable object which mediates between them. The aim of decodification is to arrive at the critical level of knowing, beginning with

* *Decodification* refers to a process of description and interpretation, whether of printed words, pictures, or other "codifications." As such, decodification and decodifying are distinct from the process of decodifying or word-recognition. - Editor.

the learner's experience of the situation in the "real context."

Whereas the codified representation is the knowable object mediating between knowing subjects, decodification - dissolving the codification into its constituent elements - is the operation by which the knowing subjects perceive relationships between the codification's elements and other facts presented by the real context - relationships which were formerly unperceived. Codification represents a given dimension of reality as individuals live it, and this dimension is proposed for their analysis in a context other than that in which they live it. Codification thus transforms what was a way of life in the real context into "objectum" in the theoretical context. The learners, rather than receive information about this or that fact, analyze aspects of their own existential experience represented in the codification.

Existential experience is a whole. In illuminating one of its angles and perceiving the inter-relation of that angle with others, the learners tend to replace a fragmented vision of reality with a total vision. From the point of view of a theory of knowledge, this means that the dynamic between codification of existential situations and decodification involves the learners in a constant re-construction of their former "ad-miration" of reality.

We do not use the concept "ad-miration" here in the usual way, or in its ethical or aesthetical sense but with a special philosophical connotation.

To "ad-mire" is to objectify the "not-I." It is a dialectical operation which characterizes man as man, differentiating him from the animal. It is directly associated with the creative dimension of his language. To "ad-mire" implies that man stands over against his "not-I" in order to understand it. For this reason, there is no act of knowing without "ad-miration" of the object to be known. If the act of knowing is a dynamic act - and no knowledge is ever complete - then in order to know, man not only "ad-mires" the object, but must always be "re-ad-miring" his former "ad-miration." When we "re-ad-mire" our former "ad-miration" (always an "ad-miration of) we are simultaneously "ad-miring"

the act of "ad-miring" and the object "ad-mired", so that we can overcome the errors we made in our former "ad-miration". This "re-ad-miration" leads us to a perception of an anterior perception.

In the process of decodifying representations of their existential situations and perceiving former perceptions, the learners gradually, hesitatingly and timorously, place in doubt the opinion they held of reality and replace it with a more and more critical knowledge thereof.

Let us suppose that we were to present to groups from among the dominated classes codifications which portray their imitation of the dominators' cultural models - a natural tendency of the oppressed consciousness at a given moment.* The dominated persons would perhaps, in self-defense, deny the truth of the codification. As they deepened their analysis, however, they would begin to perceive that their apparent imitation of the dominators' models is a result of their interiorization of these models and, above all, of the myths of the "superiority" of the dominant classes which cause the dominated to feel inferior. What in fact is pure interiorization appears in a naive analysis to be imitation. At bottom, when the dominated classes reproduce the dominators' style of life, it is because the dominators live "within" the dominated. The dominated can eject the dominators only by getting distance from them and objectifying them. Only then can they recognize them as their antithesis.**

* Re the oppressed consciousness, see: Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* (New York: Grove Press, 1968); Albert Memmi, *Colonizer and the Colonized* (New York: Orion Press, 1965); and Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (tentative title), Herder & Herder, New York.

** See Fanon, *The Wretched*; Freire, *Pedagogy*.

To the extent, however, that interiorization of the dominators' values is not only an individual phenomenon, but a social and cultural one, ejection must be achieved by a type of cultural action in which culture negates culture. That is, culture, as an interiorized product which in turn conditions men's subsequent acts, must become the object of men's knowledge so that they can perceive its conditioning power. Cultural action occurs at the level of superstructure. It can only be understood by what Althusser calls "the dialectic of overdetermination."⁴ This analytic tool prevents us from falling into mechanistic explanations or, what is worse, mechanistic action. An understanding of it precludes surprise that cultural myths remain after the infrastructure is transformed, even by revolution.

When the creation of a new culture is appropriate but impeded by interiorized cultural "residue", this residue, these myths, must be expelled by means of culture. Cultural action and cultural revolution, at different stages, constitutes the modes of this expulsion.

The learners must discover the reasons behind many of their attitudes toward cultural reality and thus confront cultural reality in a new way. "Re-ad-miration" of their former "ad-miration" is necessary in order to bring this about. The learners' capacity for critical knowing - well beyond mere opinion - is established in the process of unveiling their relationships with the historical-cultural world *in and with* which they exist.

⁴ See Louis Althusser, *Pour Marx* (Paris: Librairie François Maspero, 1965); and Paulo Freire, *Annual Report: Activities for 1968, Agrarian Reform, Training and Research Institute ICIRA, Chile*, trans. John Dewitt, Center for the Study of Development and Social Change, Cambridge, Mass., 1969 (mimeographed).

do not mean to suggest that critical knowledge of the world relationships arises outside of praxis, a verbal knowledge. Praxis is involved in the concrete situations which are codified for critical analysis. To analyze the codification in its "deep structure" is, for this very reason, to reconstruct the former praxis and to become capable of a new and different praxis. The relationship between the theoretical context, in which codified representations of objective facts are analyzed, and the concrete context, where these facts occur, has to be made real.

Such education must have the character of commitment. It implies a movement from the concrete context, which provides facts, to the theoretical context where these facts are analyzed in depth and back to the concrete context where men experiment with new forms of praxis.

It might seem as if some of our statements defend the principle that, whatever the level of the learners, they ought to reconstruct the process of human knowing in absolute terms. In fact, when we consider adult literacy learning or education in general as an act of knowing we are advocating a synthesis between the educator's maximally systematized knowing and the learners' minimally systematized knowing - a synthesis achieved in dialogue. The educator's role is to propose problems about the codified existential situations in order to help the learners arrive at a more and more critical view of their reality. The educator's responsibility as conceived by this philosophy is thus greater in every way than that of his colleague whose duty is to transmit information which the learners memorize. Such an educator can simply repeat what he has read, and often misunderstood, since education for him does not mean an act of knowing.

The first type of educator, on the contrary, is a knowing subject, face to face with other knowing subjects. He can never be a mere memorizer, but a person constantly re-adjusting his knowledge, who calls forth knowledge from his students. For him, education is a pedagogy of knowing. The educator whose approach is mere memorization is anti-dialogic. His act of transmitting knowledge is inalterable. For the

educator who experiences the act of knowing together with his students, in contrast, dialogue is the seal of knowing. He is aware, however, that not all dialogue is in itself the mark of a relationship of true knowledge.

Socratic intellectualism - which mistook the definition of the concept for knowledge of the thing defined and this knowledge as virtue - did not constitute a true pedagogy of knowing, even though it was dialogic. Plato's theory of dialogue failed to go beyond the Socratic theory of the definition as knowledge, even though for Plato one of the necessary conditions for knowing was that man be capable of a "*prise de conscience*," and though the passage from *doxa* to *logos* was indispensable for man to achieve truth. For Plato, the "*prise de conscience*" did not refer to what man knew or did not know or knew badly about his dialectical relationship with the world; it was concerned rather with what man once knew and forgot at birth. To know was to remember or recollect forgotten knowledge. The apprehension of both *doxa* and *logos*, and the overcoming of *doxa* and *logos* occurred not in the man-world relationship, but in the effort to remember or rediscover a forgotten *logos*.

For dialogue to be a method of true knowledge, the knowing subjects must approach reality scientifically in order to seek the dialectical connections which explain the form of reality. Thus, to know is not to remember something previously known and now forgotten. Nor can *doxa* be overcome by *logos* apart from the dialectical relationship of man with his world, apart from man's reflective action upon the world.

To be an act of knowing, then, the adult literacy process must engage the learners in the constant problematizing of their existential situations. This problematizing employs "generative words" chosen by specialized educators in a preliminary investigation of what we call the "minimal linguistic universe" of the future learners. The words are chosen (a) for their pragmatic value, *i.e.*, as linguistic signs which command a common understanding in a region or area of the same city or country (in the United States, for instance, the word *soul* has a special significance in black areas which it

does not have among whites), and (b) for their phonetic difficulties which will gradually be presented to those learning to read and write. Finally, it is important that the first generative word be tri-syllabic. When it is divided into its syllables, each one constituting a syllabic family, the learners can experiment with various syllabic combinations even at first sight of the word.

Having chosen seventeen generative words*, the next step is to codify seventeen existential situations familiar to the learners. The generative words are then worked into the situations one by one in the order of their increasing phonetic difficulty. As we have already emphasized, these codifications are knowable objects which mediate between the knowing subjects, educator-learners, learner-educators. Their act of knowing is elaborated in the *circulo de cultura* (cultural discussion group) which functions as the theoretic context.

In Brazil, before analyzing the learners' existential situations and the generative words contained in them, we proposed the codified theme of man-world relationships in general**. In Chile, at the suggestion of Chilean educators, this important dimension was discussed concurrently with learning to read and write. What is important is that the person learning words be concomitantly engaged in a critical analysis of the social framework in which men exist. For example, the word *favela* in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, and the word *callampa* in Chile, represent, each with its own nuances, the same social, economic and cultural reality of the vast numbers of slum dwellers in those countries. If *favela* and

* We observed in Brazil and Spanish America, especially Chile, that no more than seventeen words were necessary for teaching adults to read and write syllabic languages like Portuguese and Spanish.

** See Paulo Freire, *Educaco como Prtica da Liberdade* (Rio de Janeiro: Paz e Terra, 1967). Chilean Edition (Santiago: ICIRA, 1969). French Edition (Paris: Sintese, 1968).

callampa are used as generative words for the people of Brazilian and Chilean slums, the codifications will have to represent slum situations.

There are many people who consider slum dwellers marginal, intrinsically wicked and inferior. To such people we recommend the profitable experience of discussing the slum situation with slum dwellers themselves. As some of these critics are often simply mistaken, it is possible that they may rectify their mythical clichés and assume a more scientific attitude. They may avoid saying that the illiteracy, alcoholism, and crime of the slums, that its sickness, infant mortality, learning deficiencies, and poor hygiene reveal the "inferior nature" of its inhabitants. They may even end up realizing that if intrinsic evil exists it is part of the structures and that it is the structures which need to be transformed.

It should be pointed out that the Third World as a whole, and more in some parts than in others, suffers from the same misunderstanding from certain sectors of the so-called metropolitan societies. They see the Third World as the incarnation of evil, the primitive, the devil, sin and sloth - in sum, as historically unviable without the director societies. Such a manichean attitude is at the source of the impulse to "save" the "demon-possessed" Third World, "educating it" and "correcting its thinking" according to the director societies' own criteria.

The expansionist interests of the director societies are implicit in such notions. These societies can never relate to the Third World as partners, since partnership presupposes equals, no matter how different the equal parties may be, and can never be established between parties antagonistic to each other.

Thus, "salvation" of the Third World by the director societies can only mean its domination; whereas in its legitimate aspiration to independence lies its utopian vision: to save the director societies in the very act of freeing itself.

In this sense the pedagogy which we defend, conceived in a significant area of the Third World, is itself a utopian

pedagogy. By this very fact it is full of hope, for to be utopian is not to be merely idealistic or impractical but rather to engage in denunciation. Our pedagogy cannot do without a vision of man and of the world. It formulates a scientific humanist conception which finds its expression in a dialogical praxis in which the teachers and learners together, in the act of analyzing a dehumanizing reality, denounce it while announcing its transformation in the name of the liberation of man.

For this very reason, denunciation and annunciation in this utopian pedagogy are not meant to be empty words, but an historic commitment. Denunciation of a dehumanizing situation today increasingly demands precise scientific understanding of that situation. Likewise, the annunciation of its transformation increasingly requires a theory of transforming action. However, neither act by itself implies the transformation of the denounced reality or the establishment of that which is announced. Rather, as a moment in an historical process, the announced reality is already present in the act of denunciation and annunciation.*

That is why the utopian character of our educational theory and practice is as permanent as education itself which, for us, is cultural action. Its thrust toward denunciation and annunciation cannot be exhausted when the reality denounced today cedes its place tomorrow to the reality previously announced in the denunciation. When the education is no longer utopian, i.e., when it no longer embodies the dramatic unity of denunciation and annunciation, it is either because the future has no more meaning for men, or because men are afraid to risk living the future as creative overcoming of the present, which has become old.

The more likely explanation is generally the latter. That is why some people today study all the possibilities

* Re the utopian dimension of denunciation and proclamation, see Leszek Kolakowski, *Toward a Marxist Humanism* (New York: Grove Press, 1969).

which the future contains, in order to "domesticate" it and keep it in line with the present, which is what they intend to maintain. If there is any anguish in director societies hidden beneath the cover of their cold technology, it springs from their desperate determination that their metropolitan status be preserved in the future. Among the things which the Third World may learn from the metropolitan societies there is this that is fundamental: not to replicate those societies when its current utopia becomes actual fact.

When we defend such a conception of education - realistic precisely to the extent that it is utopian - that is, to the extent that it denounces what in fact is, and finds therefore between denunciation and its realization the time of its praxis - we are attempting to formulate a type of education which corresponds to the specifically human mode of being, which is historical.

There is no announcement without denunciation, just as every denunciation generates announcement. Without the latter hope is impossible. In an authentic utopian vision, however, hoping does not mean folding one's arms and waiting. Waiting is only possible when one, filled with hope, seeks through reflective action to achieve that announced future which is born within the denunciation.

That is why there is no genuine hope in those who intend to make the future repeat their present, nor in those who see the future as something predetermined. Both have a "domesticated" notion of history: the former because they want to stop time; the latter because they are certain about a future they already "know". Utopian hope, on the contrary, is engagement full of risk. That is why the dominators, who merely denounce those who denounce them, and who have nothing to announce but the preservation of the status quo, can never be utopian nor, for that matter prophetic.⁴

⁴ "The right, as a conservative force, needs no utopia; its essence is the affirmation of existing conditions - a fact and not a utopia - or else the desire to revert to a state which was once an accomplished fact. The Right strives to idealize actual conditions, not to change them. What it needs is fraud not utopia." Kolakowski, *op. cit.*, pp. 71-72.

A utopian pedagogy of denunciation and annunciation such as ours will have to be an act of knowing the denounced reality at the level of alphabetization and post-alphabetization, which are in each case cultural action. That is why there is such emphasis on the continual problematization of the learners' existential situations as represented in the codified images. The longer the problematization proceeds, and the more the subjects enter into the "essence" of the problematized object, the more they are able to unveil this "essence". The more they unveil it, the more their awakening consciousness deepens, thus leading to the "conscientization" of the situation by the poor classes. Their critical self-insertion into reality, *i.e.*, their conscientization, makes the transformation of their state of apathy into the utopian state of *denunciation* and *annunciation* a viable project.

One must not think, however, that learning to read and write precedes "conscientization," or vice-versa. Conscientization occurs simultaneously with the literacy or post-literacy process. It must be so. In our educational method, the word is not something static or disconnected from men's existential experience, but a dimension of their thought-language about the world. That is why, when they participate critically in analyzing the first generative words linked with their existential experience; when they focus on the syllabic families which result from that analysis; when they perceive the mechanism of the syllabic combinations of their language, the learners finally discover, in the various possibilities of combination, their own words. Little by little, as these possibilities multiply, the learners, through mastery of new generative words, expand both their vocabulary and their capacity for expression by the development of their creative imagination.*

* "We have observed that the study of the creative aspect of language use develops the assumption that linguistic and mental process are virtually identical, language providing the primary means for free expansion of thought and feeling, as well as for the functioning of creative imagination." Noam Chomsky, *Cartesian Linguistics* (New York: Harper and Row, 1966), p. 31.

In some areas in Chile undergoing agrarian reform, the peasants participating in the literacy programs wrote words with their tools on the dirt roads where they were working. They composed the words from the syllabic combinations they were learning. "These men are sowers of the word," said Maria Edí Ferreira, a sociologist from the Santiago team working in the Institute of Training and Research in Agrarian Reform. Indeed, they were not only sowing words, but discussing ideas, and coming to understand their role in the world better and better.

We asked one of these "sowers of words", finishing the first level of literacy classes, why he hadn't learned to read and write before the agrarian reform.

"Before the agrarian reform, my friend," he said, "I didn't even think. Neither did my friends."

"Why?" we asked.

"Because it wasn't possible. We lived under orders. We only had to carry out orders. We had nothing to say," he replied emphatically.

The simple answer of this peasant is a very clear example of "the culture of silence." In "the culture of silence," to exist is to live. The body carries out orders from above. Thinking is difficult, speaking the word, forbidden.

"When all this land belonged to one big estate," said another man in the same conversation, "there was no reason to read and write. We weren't responsible for anything. The boss gave the orders and we obeyed. Why read and write? Now it's a different story. Take me, for example. In the new situation, I am responsible not only for my work like

After the disappropriation of lands in the agrarian reform in Chile, the peasants who were salaried workers on the large latifundia become "settlers" (*colonos*) during a three-year period in which they receive varied assistance from the government through the Agrarian Reform Corporation. This period of settlement *previa* precedes that

all the other men, but also for tool repairs. When I started I couldn't read, but I soon realized that I needed to read and write. You can't imagine what it was like to go to Santiago to buy parts. I couldn't get orientated. I was afraid of everything - afraid of the big city, of buying the wrong thing, of being cheated. Now it's all different."

Observe how precisely this peasant described his former experiences as an illiterate: his mistrust, his magical (though logical) fear of the world; his timidity. And observe the sense of security with which he repeats, "Now it's all different."

"What did you feel, my friend," we asked another "sower of words" on a different occasion, "when you were able to write and read your first words?"

"I was happy because I discovered I could make words speak," he replied.

Dario Salas reports⁴, "In our conversations with peasants we were struck by the images they used to express their interest and satisfaction about becoming literate. For example: 'Before we were blind, now the veil has fallen from our eyes'; 'I came to learn how to sign my name. I never believed I would be able to read, too, at my age'; 'Before, letters seemed like puppets. Today they say something to me, and I can make them talk.'

"It is touching," continues Salas, "to observe the delight of the peasants as the world of words opens to them. Sometimes they would say, 'We're so tired our heads ache, but we don't want to leave here without learning to read

of assigning lands to the peasants. This policy is now changing. The phase of "settlement" of the lands is being abolished, in favor of an immediate distribution of lands to the peasants. The Agrarian Reform Corporation will continue, nevertheless, to aid the peasants.

Dario Salas, "Algunas experiencias vividas na Supervisao de Educacao basica," in *Algunas experiencias de Educacao basica*, Report to Unesco, November, 1968. Introduction: Paulo Freire.

and write."¹*

The following words were taped during research on "generative themes."²** They are an illiterate's decodification of a codified existential situation.

"You see a house there, sad, as if it were abandoned. When you see a house with a child in it, it seems happier. It gives more joy and peace to the people passing by. The father of the family arrives home from work exhausted, worried, bitter, and his little boy comes to meet him with a big hug, because a little boy is not stiff like a big person. The father already begins to be happier just from seeing his children. Then he really enjoys himself. He is moved by his son's wanting to please him. The father becomes more peaceful, and forgets his problems:"

Note once again the simplicity of expression, both profound and elegant, in the peasant's language. These are the people considered absolutely ignorant by the proponents of the "digestive" concept of literacy.

In 1968, an Uruguayan team³** published a small book, *You Live as You Can (Se Vive como se Puede)*, whose contents are taken from the tape recordings of literacy classes for

* Darío Salas refers here to one of the best adult education programs organized by the Agrarian Reform Corporation in Chile, in strict collaboration with the Ministry of Education and ICIRA. Fifty peasants receive boarding and instruction scholarships for a month. The courses center on discussions of the local, regional and national situations.

** An analysis of the objectives and methodology of the investigation of generative themes lies outside the scope of the essay but is dealt with in the author's work, *Ecology of the Oppressed*.

*** The members of the Uruguayan team were Raquel Carreira, Raquel Barreiro, Enrique Mendez, Julio de Santa Ana, and Julio Barreiro.

urban dwellers. Its first edition of three thousand copies was sold out in Montevideo in fifteen days, as was the second edition. The following is an excerpt from this book.

THE COLOR OF WATER

Water? Water? What is water used for?

"Yes, yes, we saw it (in the picture)."

"Oh, my native village, so far away..."

"Do you remember that village?"

"The stream where I grew up, called Dead Friar... you know, I grew up there, a childhood moving from one place to another... the color of the water brings back good memories, beautiful memories."

"What is the water used for?"

"It is used for washing. We used it to wash clothes, and the animals in the fields used to go there to drink, and we washed ourselves there, too."

"Did you also use the water for drinking?"

"Yes, when we were at the stream and had no other water to drink, we drank from the stream. I remember once in 1945 a plague of locusts came from somewhere, and we had to fish them out of the water.... I was small, but I remember taking out the locusts like this, with my two hands - and I had no others. And I remember how hot the water was when there was a drought and the stream was almost dry.... the water was dirty, muddy, and hot, with all kinds of things in it. But we had to drink it, or die of thirst."

The whole book is like this, pleasant in style, with great strength of expression of the world of its authors, those anonymous people, "sowers of words," seeking to emerge from the "culture of silence."

Yes, these ought to be the reading texts for people learning to read and write, and not "Eva saw the grape," "The bird's wing," "If you hammer a nail, be careful not to hit your fingers." Intellectualist prejudices and above all class prejudices are responsible for the naive and

unfounded notions that the people cannot write their own texts, or that a tape of their conversations is valueless since their conversations are impoverished of meaning. Comparing what the "sowers of words" said in the above references with what is generally written by specialist authors of reading lessons, we are convinced that only someone with very pronounced lack of taste or a lamentable scientific incompetency would choose the specialists' texts.

Imagine a book written entirely in this simple, poetic, free, language of the people, a book on which inter-disciplinary teams would collaborate in the spirit of true dialogue. The role of the teams would be to elaborate specialized sections of the book in problematic terms. For example, a section of linguistics would deal simply, though not simplistically, with questions fundamental to the learners' critical understanding of language. Let me emphasize again that since one of the important aspects of adult literacy work is the development of the capacity for expression, the section on linguistics would present themes for the learners to discuss, ranging from the increase of vocabulary to questions about communication - including the study of synonyms and antonyms, with its analysis of words in the linguistic context, and the use of metaphor, of which the people are such masters. Another section might provide the tools for a sociological analysis of the content of the texts.

These texts would not, of course, be used for mere mechanical readings, which leaves the readers without any understanding of what is real. Consistent with the nature of this pedagogy, they would become the object of analysis in reading seminars.

Add to all this the great stimulus it would be for those learning to read and write, as well as for students on more advanced levels, to know that they were reading and discussing the work of their own companions....

To undertake such a work, it is necessary to have faith in the people, solidarity with them. It is necessary to be utopian, in the sense in which we have used the word.

REACTIONS:

PAULO FREIRE: UTOPIAN PERSPECTIVE IN
LITERACY EDUCATION FOR REVOLUTION

by

William S. Griffith

The author of this critique on the methods and objectives of Paulo Freire is an Associate Professor at the University of Chicago, U.S.A. In the two articles that follow, Pierre Furter and John Bugbee respond to Griffith's criticism of Freire.

This article was originally published in occasional paper no. 32, edited by Stanley M. Grabowski and issued jointly by Syracuse University and the Eric Clearing House on Adult Education. Entitled *Paulo Freire: A Revolutionary Dilemma for the Adult Educator*. The Syracuse Publication was issued in December 1972, as part of the University's series on continuing education. It is re-printed here with permission of its publishers. The responses by Pierre Furter and John Bugbee were specially prepared for *Literacy Education*.

Forty years ago George S. Counts asked, "What is the function of education?" He questioned whether the function of education should be to transmit the culture to the untutored or to prepare them to work to create a society which would have fewer imperfections than the one in which they lived. Preparing students to adapt themselves to a static conception of their society seemed to Counts far less desirable than increasing the ability of the students to recognize the flaws in their society and to work to eliminate them.

Today Paulo Freire preaches a gospel of political revolution which is to serve as the motivating principle of his pedagogy. It will enable the poor and the dispossessed to learn and work in concert under the inspired leadership of disenchanted members of the upper classes who emerge in some spontaneous and unpredictable way. Together they will overthrow the existing oppressive government and replace it with a utopian form of governance which will serve the poor and lovingly restrain their former oppressors.

The purposes of this critique are to evaluate *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* from an adult educator's perspective in an effort to determine whether it is a revolutionary approach to literacy education in fact as well as in its author's intention; to evaluate the soundness of the plan for revolution which is to result from the literacy program, and to offer an explanation for the generally enthusiastic reception this book has received.

"Narrative Pedagogy" Ethical and Political Implications

Freire's criticisms of education, based primarily on his assumptions about the relationship between teachers and students, are neither new nor particularly useful in thinking about an improvement in the process. He asserts that education is suffering from "narrative sickness" because the teacher, in the role of a narrating subject, presents content to students, desiring an "attentive listening

objects, with the result that the material to be learned becomes "lifeless and petrified."⁴ John Dewey called for the improvement of pedagogy by involving the learners in the process of seeking solutions to practical problems they faced. However, Dewey did not seem to believe that a political revolution would be the most valuable end education should serve. Although Dewey advocated a pedagogical approach to insure that students would become active subjects in their own learning, he did not counsel political revolution as the universal motivating force to stimulate the learning.

Countless adult educators whose works are less well known, and apparently unknown to Freire, have expressed the same ideas regarding the active participation of learners in their own education and have set forth ideas for implementing the approach with both more rigor and greater humility than the author of *Pedagogy and the Oppressed*. Although Freire does not point out that his criticisms regarding conventional education are by no means new, the validity of his analysis of the instructional problem can scarcely be denied.

There is no evidence in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* that Freire was interested in examining the literature of adult education research before presenting his pedagogy. Despite Freire's impassioned preaching on the topic, his notions about the necessity for making the student an active, questioning, thinking participant in the formal education process as stated above, are neither new nor revolutionary. What would be revolutionary would be a practical method for insuring that those who are engaged in teaching would accept the advice and utilize the approaches that have been developed and advocated by systematic scholars in the field of adult education.

Freire joins the ranks of Jack R. Gibb, J. Roby Kidd, Jacob W. Getzels, Harry L. Miller, Malcolm S. Knowles⁵ and just about every other adult educator who has ever

attempted to describe the conditions which are most conducive to adult learning when he urges that adult literacy students be actively involved in their own learning. Further, Freire insists, as many other adult educators have done previously, that the adult learner must pursue his learning in the context of problem analysis and solution - "problematizing," as the process is labeled in Freire's argot.⁶ His ideas on these matters are in harmony with the positions advanced by adult educators, but he appears either to be unacquainted or unconcerned with this literature.

The "Banking" Conception of Education

Freire draws an analogy between education as he claims it is practiced and banking. He states that education is

an act of depositing, in which the students are the depositories and the teacher is the depositor. Instead of communicating, the teacher issues communiques and makes deposits which the students patiently receive, memorize, and repeat. This is the 'banking' concept of education in which the scope of the action allowed to the students extends only as far as receiving, filing, and storing the deposits.⁷

In more up-to-date language, which reflects a sophistication in the conceptualization of the process of learning, Freire might have evaluated the practices of teachers today in that they continue to emphasize educational objectives at the level of simple recall or comprehension as these levels have been defined in the *Taxonomy of Educational Objectives Handbook I, Cognitive Domain*.⁸ Nearly twenty years ago the authors of the *Taxonomy* sought to assist teachers to consider cognitive educational objectives at the levels of application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation, each of which requires the active interaction of the learner with the ideas rather than just the words used in the passages he reads.

Literacy curriculum materials are criticized with some justification by Freire, who offers a solution to the problem of inappropriate curricula. He suggests the edited transcriptions of the conversations of a group of students be used as texts for reading. In comparing a text made of transcriptions of students' conversations with the kinds of texts generally written by specialist authors of reading lessons, he observes that "only someone with very pronounced lack of taste or a lamentable scientific incompetency would choose the specialists' text."⁹ The suggestion of developing texts from the life experiences and conversations of the illiterate students would likely be supported by most adult educators, and if the editing were done painstakingly it is not unreasonable to assume that reading specialists would endorse this approach also.

Functions of Adult Literacy Education

Freire has observed in Brazil, Chile, and other nations that the act of teaching individuals to read and write does not simultaneously transform their environment. He noted that if there are not enough jobs for persons able to read and write, efforts directed toward making others literate can scarcely be expected to create new jobs. A cynic might observe that the federally funded adult basic education programs in the United States provided either full-time or part-time jobs for 32,887 teachers, counsellors, local and state supervisors, and other supporting personnel at the local and state levels in fiscal 1970 regardless of the amount of student learning which was facilitated. Such work is apparently not alleviating the employment problems of the 535,613 adults who were enrolled in the programs to a significant extent.

Government sponsored adult literacy programs are a popular target for social critics for several reasons: first, they are typically designed to enable individuals from the lower socio-economic classes to adapt to the demands of

our technological society without raising their hopes that they might be able to exert any influence on the nature of that society; second, such programs characteristically are carried on by volunteer teachers, public school teachers who are working overtime to earn a few extra dollars, and other part-time instructors whose preparation to teach adults is sketchy at best and whose work is supervised by local and state level career administrators whose area of academic specialization and career expectations are not in the administration of adult literacy programs. Finally, representatives of the sponsoring institutions may encourage the development of unrealistic expectations concerning both the rate of academic progress and the employment opportunities for prospective students. Freire has exposed the manipulative aspects of some governmentally funded literacy programs which he feels have been designed primarily to control the poor and to convince them that all of their troubles are the result of their own inadequacies.

Characteristics of Adult Literacy Programs

It cannot be denied that adult literacy programs frequently exhibit many of the hallmarks of the oppressive pedagogy associated with elementary and secondary school teaching and which seeks only to convey content instead of to educate the students. In contrast to the practice of involving the learner in the process of defining the problem, identifying objectives, designing the curriculum, and evaluating the outcomes, all of which have been advocated by the authors of the standard adult education textbooks for decades, many teachers focus not on the behavior of the student, but on delivering a given body of subject matter to a passive group of learners. An appreciable amount of the literacy instruction in the United States is still carried on at the levels of simple recall and comprehension (as these terms are defined in the *Taxonomy of Educational Objectives*). Although it is likely that the overwhelming

majority of tests used in these programs are designed only to measure simple recall and comprehension, the nature of instruction and testing at the higher cognitive levels has been described quite adequately. Efforts have also been made by progressive teachers for decades to conduct education using the full range of levels.

An examination of literacy programs in the United States would reveal a wider range of educational objectives than Freire has identified in his critique of this kind of effort. Certainly it is true that in some programs the entire instructional procedure resembles the banking concept of education which Freire decried. On the other hand an undetermined number of literacy teachers are more concerned with increasing their students' coping skills than with preparing them to pass tests of simple recall or to accommodate passively to the demands of their society. Coping skills are conceived as analytical and synthetic abilities which enable students to examine the facts of a problem situation, identify the likely consequences of alternative actions, and finally select and implement the final alternative. Such instruction is clearly not intended to produce passive consumers of the ideas and decisions of a ruling elite, and when the instruction is carried out successfully the graduates of these programs become active, inquiring individuals rather than passive fatalists.

Although the teaching of coping skills has not yet become a common characteristic of adult literacy programs in the United States, it would be erroneous to assume that the development of such skills is not a major objective of an appreciable and increasing number of these programs. The concern for teaching coping skills in basic education classes is of relatively recent origin and has not, as yet, been incorporated into the most widely used curricular materials. Further, only a relatively small percentage of the teachers have themselves been taught methods of developing such skills. Nevertheless, their teaching has become an integral part of some programs and apparently is being accepted as legitimate and desirable in an increasing number of programs. This orderly process of diffusion occurs

slowly, but the important fact to be considered is that bureaucratic structure of education continues to evolve and that ideas are gradually processed by the system.

Teachers for adult literacy programs have typically not had special training in the field of adult education, nor are they likely to think of themselves as adult educators. The fact that they may be poorly informed about the guidelines for teaching adults which abound in the literature is not evidence that the conceptualizations found in the adult education literature are either inadequate or inappropriate guides to action. The teachers' lack of academic preparation and their non-application of the existing guidelines may only indicate their unfamiliarity with the literature of the field. If such non-adoption of adult education approaches to instruction can be traced to the teachers' lack of knowledge of the literature, then there is little reason for believing that yet another book setting forth a new pedagogy or an old pedagogy under a new name is likely to influence educational practice appreciably, however appealing it may appear to contemporary critics of the educational system. Perhaps, however, Freire's writing style, plus the linking of his adult pedagogy to revolution and the freeing of the oppressed will attract a larger number of readers than have been drawn to the more rationalistic literature produced by scholars in adult education.

In Freire's schema the primary purpose of literacy training is not to produce the intrinsic satisfactions which may result from having learned to read and write; neither is the central purpose to yield the extrinsic satisfactions which may result from the effective use of these skills in satisfying the requirements of the society in which the students live. Instead, the justification for conducting literacy training programs is the preparation of the learners to participate in the revolution to overthrow the oppressive elites. Therefore, to assess the soundness of the entire schema it is necessary to consider the adequacy of the explanations of the components of the revolution and the internal consistency of the revolutionary program. This program is to follow the literacy training and is posed by Freire as the justification for that training.

The Process of Revolution

Freire stresses that the central idea of the revolution is dialogue between persons of opposing viewpoints, at least whenever it appears that this process will bring about a synthesis satisfactory to the individual who has accepted the idea that there must be a revolution to take away the power of the ruling elites. However, dialogue is regarded as inappropriate when it seems likely that the weaker party cannot be converted. Further, Freire leaves little question regarding his willingness to control and restrict the freedom of those who cannot see the superiority of his system. In justifying his denial of a right to engage in dialogue to the oppressive elites, Freire states:

Once a popular revolution has come to power, the fact that the new power has the ethical duty to repress any attempt to restore the old oppressive power by no means signifies that the revolution is contradicting its dialogical character. Dialogue between the former oppressors and the oppressed as antagonistic classes was not possible before the revolution; it continues to be impossible afterward.¹⁰

The freedom to disagree with the new ruling group, following the revolution, is to be restricted to those who have passed some undefined loyalty test. After the revolution, actions which may seem hostile to the governing group are not to be dealt with through dialogue. Instead, those who propose anything other than the "true gospel" are to be repressed by the new leaders using whatever means are necessary.

Although it may appear to the casual reader that Freire is willing to allow the free expression of opinions and that he is willing to rely on the logic of his arguments and his skill in the use of dialogue to deal with those who may disagree with and resist him, the examination of his attitude toward the training of organizers and his approval of the approach of Guevara lays that notion to rest. In discussing the way the revolutionary leaders must deal with their followers, he says, "But they (the leaders)

must always mistrust the ambiguity of oppressed men, mistrust the 'oppressor' housed in the latter. Accordingly, when Guevara exhorts the revolutionary to be always mistrustful he is not disregarding the fundamental condition of the theory of dialogical action. He is merely being a realist."¹¹

Freire quotes approvingly the advice given by Guevara to El Patojo, a young Guatemaltecan leaving Cuba to engage in guerilla activity in his own country:

Mistrust: at the beginning, do not trust your own shadow, never trust friendly peasants, informers, guides or contact men. Do not trust anything or anybody until a zone is completely liberated.¹²

In this case the word "liberated" may be defined as placed under the control of the revolutionary leader. "Mistrust" is the key word to describe the attitude of the leaders of the revolution toward all those with whom they must work. Whether such an attitude constitutes an effective way of building a better society for all mankind is open to doubt. It is clearly antithetical to the prevailing ideology of adult education.

Once an individual has become a member of the revolutionary group, he is not to be permitted to withdraw. Freire endorses the idea of punishing the deserter in order to preserve the cohesion and "discipline" of the group.¹³ It seems likely that "discipline" refers to acceptance of or submission to authority and control rather than to self-control or a commitment to engage in the dialectic when faced with a need to take action.

And although Freire warns against the danger of the revolutionaries becoming corrupted into the behaviour and through patterns of their former oppressors, the means he advocates for the forcible overthrow of the oppressive regime and for the handling of the former oppressors seem conducive to the replacement of one oppressive regime by another. Freedom is to be shared with the true believers. All others are to be bridled. The critical determination which some leader must make somehow is that of discriminating between those

who are sympathetic to the revolution and those who oppose it. Despite Freire's assertion that revolutionary action must be "human, empathetic, loving, communicative and humble, in order to be liberating," it is nevertheless clear that he approves of violent action to check those who are not sympathetic to the revolution.¹⁴

Freire's description of a radical committed to human liberation is a man who "is not afraid to meet the people or to enter into dialogue with them."¹⁵ However, "the people" does not include any of the "oppressors" who are to be overthrown. And although dialogue is proposed as the way of avoiding error, Freire's radical would not accept the notion that dialogue with the "oppressors" could be useful. So despite the professional openness to learning through dialogue, Freire's ideal radical would not tolerate the views of those who were not ready to accept the conclusion that revolution is essential. It is at this point that Freire's pedagogy parts company with democratic ideals and all educational philosophies which seek to arrive at truth by permitting the free expression of error as a means of exposing its limitations.

Rational men might be expected to accept the notion that they should welcome or at least tolerate the views of others as well as to keep an open mind to ideas that challenge tradition and established institutions because of a belief that there is always more to learn and more perspectives on a given problem or proposition than they have already perceived. Such is not Freire's position. While he advocates dialogue between the self-discovered leaders and those who are to be the self-discovered followers, such open discussion is to be denied the opponents of the revolution. This situation allows for a considerable amount of confusion concerning when dialogue is to be pursued and when efforts are to be directed toward restraining the actions of those who disagree with the revolutionary leadership. It is at the point of silencing dissent that Freire's pedagogy seems most oppressive.

Further, since the test of the radical leader is his acceptance by the people, one might assume that at least once in a while a self-appointed leader would arise with base

motives and an ability to attract followers and retain their loyalty. When it comes to the task of distinguishing between the "authentic" leaders and the "inauthentic" leaders Freire offers no guidance except to indicate that eventually the followers will end up with the appropriate leader through the process of dialogue. Such a corrective mechanism scarcely seems compatible with the advocacy of the silencing of dissent.

Freire considers freedom and authority briefly, by saying that authentic authority is affirmed through delegation or in sympathetic adherence. In his explanation of this relationship he notes that "authority can avoid conflict with freedom only if it is 'freedom become authority'."¹⁶ His attempted clarification of the relationship between freedom and authority is ineffectual partly because he states and restates the same idea in the same words. His use of the modifier "true" with authority and freedom does not serve to clarify these concepts and instead suggests that he regards his ideas in this area as worthy of acceptance on the basis of his sincerity alone and not on the basis of a logical argument.¹⁷ Other authors have used the term *legitimate authority* as a way of distinguishing between a leader's ascribed power to control his subordinates and the followers' willing acceptance of this right to direct their actions. Apparently legitimate or "true" authority in Freire's view exists only when the members of the lowest socioeconomic groups have freely selected all of the leaders, in which case freedom is exercised by choosing to follow their leader's instructions.

Limitations of the Dichotomizing Analytical Process

Freire's rhetoric is designed to emphasize a thesis-antithesis approach to both the definition of problems and to the identification of solutions for those problems. Unfortunately, this perspective of reality tends to oversimplify both problems and solutions by its inability to recognize other than two opposing views on any problem and its insistence upon dichotomizing the positions which may be taken with regard to its solution. For example, in his essay "Cultural Action and Conscientization," Freire rather simplistically compares the position of the oppressors on the

right with the enlightened revolutionaries:

The Right in its rigidity prefers the dead to the living; the static to the dynamic; the future as a repetition of the past rather than as a creative venture; pathological forms of love rather than real [?] love; frigid schematization rather than emotion of living; gregariousness rather than authentic [?] living together; organization men rather than men who organize; imposed myths rather than incarnated values; directives rather than creative and communicative language; and slogans rather than challenges.¹⁸

This quotation, which reflects the overgeneralizations and oversimplifications characteristic of a political campaign speech, is consistent with the author's obsession with the dialectic perspective as well as his apparent willingness to rely upon emotionally-laden and vaguely defined terms. Freire sees only good guys and bad guys. He acknowledges no middle ground.

Freire's own professional life since 1959 presents a pattern of sponsorship by the most favored segments of society, universities, international organizations, and churches, a pattern which may present an incongruous answer to his question "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."¹⁹ Evidently the implementation of the revolution will require the contributions of various kinds of leaders beyond those identified by Freire.

Emergence and "Rebirth" of Revolutionary Leaders

If then, Freire is not himself to lead the revolution, some provision must be made for the identification of those who are to lead. On this point Freire does not provide specific information, presenting instead a somewhat vague description of the way the revolutionary leadership will emerge.

Usually this leadership group is made up of men who in one way or another have belonged to the social strata of the dominators. At a certain point in their existential experience [?], under certain historical conditions, these men renounce the class to which they belong and join the oppressed, in an act of true solidarity (or so one would hope). Whether or not this adherence results from a scientific analysis of reality, it represents (when authentic) an act of love and true commitment.

These parenthetical phrases might alert readers to Freire in anticipation that some men will renounce their class and join the oppressed out of motives other than love and true commitment. Since the oppressed may be duped by cunning charlatans it would seem necessary to provide criteria for differentiating between authentic and inauthentic leaders. Also, if this explanation deals with the usual source of leaders, it might be reasonable to assume that the usual sources would also be identified. They are not. Freire's solution to the problem of dealing with inauthentic leaders is to depend on the oppressed individuals, who were previously described as not meriting trust, to expose these inauthentic leaders through the practice of the dialectic. Such an analysis is incomplete because it does not reflect a knowledge of history, a mastery of political science, or an administrator's grasp of organizational phenomena.

Freire admits his lack of comprehension of the specific mechanism through which his revolutionary goals will be achieved. He uses the term "cultural synthesis" to describe the process through which the contradictions between the world view of the leaders and the world views of the people are resolved:

Instead of following predetermined plans, leaders and people, mutually identified, together create the guidelines of their actions. In this synthesis, leaders and people are somehow reborn in new knowledge

and new action. Knowledge of the alienated culture leads to transforming action resulting in a culture which is being freed from alienation. The more sophisticated knowledge of the leaders is remade in the empirical knowledge of the people, while the latter is refined by the former.²¹

Freire can scarcely be accused by his readers of spending an excess of time analyzing and describing the process by which the miraculous transformation of society will be initiated. His sketchy description of the emergence of the leaders and the "rebirth" of both the leaders and the people does not offer much evidence that he has thought through the practical aspects of beginning the overthrow of the oppressors and their replacement by self-discovered saviors of the poor.

Freire's explanation of how leaders are to emerge is inconsistent with his position on the training of revolutionaries. On the one hand he appears to approve of the training of guerilla leaders in Cuba for export. But, on the other hand, he appears to oppose programs for the training of leaders, saying that:

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.... 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.

Again, Freire's apparent incapacity to conceive of anything but dichotomous situations leads to rhetoric which may persuade some readers, but it is not a particularly thorough analysis of the complexity of the reality of human experience. So the reader is left with the impression that Freire regarded Guevara's international expeditions to foment revolution and to train leaders as desirable and consistent with his notion of how the revolution should proceed, while at the same time he identified the notion of training leaders as alienating. On this point Freire has apparently provided both a thesis and an antithesis; he leaves the reader to perform the synthesis.

Community Development as a Process of Repression

Community development efforts are also seen by Freire as a part of the repressive actions of the ruling elite. He describes the process and its deficiencies as follows:

In 'community development' projects the more a region or area is broken down in 'local communities' without the study of these communities both as totalities in themselves and as parts of another totality (the areas, region, and so forth) - which in its turn is part of a still larger totality (the nation, as part of the continental totality) - the more alienation is intensified. And the more alienated people are, the easier it is to divide them and keep them divided. These focalized forms of action, by intensifying the focalized way of life of the oppressed (especially in rural areas), hamper the oppressed from perceiving reality critically and keep them isolated from the problems of oppressed men in other areas.

Is there, then, any way that community developers might win the approval of Freire for their efforts? Yes, for he offers the following observation regarding the statement just quoted:

This criticism of course does not apply to actions within a dialectical perspective, based on the understanding of the local community both as a totality in itself and as part of a larger totality. It is directed at those who do not realize that the

development of the local community cannot occur except in the total context of which it is a part, in interaction with other parts. This requirement implies the consciousness of unity in diversification, of organization which channels forces in dispersion, and a clear awareness of the necessity to transform reality.

Community development carried on outside of the dialectical perspective is seen by Freire as a form of manipulation of the people by giving them the impression they are being helped when, in his analysis, it is a means of weakening the oppressed still further, isolating them and creating and deepening rifts among them. Such developmental work is seldom perceived as oppressive by the dedicated but naive professionals who are carrying it out, according to Freire.

Unfortunately for those who regard themselves as ethical community developers, Freire never divulges the way in which the dialectical perspective, based on the understanding of the local community both as a totality in itself and as part of a larger totality, is to be developed. One point is clear, however: existing procedures for the preparation of community developers are not doing the job.

The lack of practical guidance for those who are to carry out the revolution is not surprising in a utopian formulation and Freire clearly identifies his approach as utopian.

The Utopian Perspective

The desire to establish a utopia is probably as old as man himself. There is no scarcity of utopian literature; common themes pervade such schemes. Equality, peace, and a contempt for riches have been characteristic of utopian formulations historically. Marxian analyses of the evils of the capitalistic systems lead to the formulation of reforms based on three unproved assumptions: (1) man's true needs are quite limited and only artificially created needs produce misery; (2) enormous quantities of labor are wasted on the luxuries of the ruling elites; and (3) scientific progress improves production per man, but man's needs do not

increase. The abolition of monopolies of property coupled with the establishment of some form of communism are seen as sufficient to eliminate any significant expression of man's antagonistic impulses - the basic cause of evil in society. Freire appears to have accepted all three assumptions.

Freire's chimeric notions combine a disregard of ultimate ends with an uncomplicated analysis of immediate obstacles to the implementation of his plan. The use of "authentic," "real," "true," and "genuine" does little to convince the reader that the author of *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* has a firm grasp of the reality he seeks to reform. The goal which Freire's pedagogy seeks is the establishment of a revolutionary society in which the process of revolution will continue permanently rather than to wane following the overthrow of the ruling elites. What is unclear is the basis for Freire's belief that those he classifies as the oppressed and their leaders will be transformed into virtuous, unselfish persons by the act of overthrowing their oppressors. Unstated assumptions regarding the dynamics of the transmutation of "rebirth" leave the reader with inadequate evidence to evaluate the soundness of the author's scheme.

Over the centuries an untold number of utopians have assumed that with the abolition of monopolies of property and with the establishment of some sort of communism, the antagonistic spirit, which is by definition the cause of evil, would no longer find significant expression in society. Yet the idea awaits effective implementation. What reason is there to believe that Freire's approach is any more likely to succeed?

One might assume that his education and experience would have led him to develop a high level of political sophistication. Freire earned his doctorate at the University of Recife at age thirty-eight and became a professor of the history and philosophy of education at the same university. He served in Brazil as Secretary of Education and General Coordinator of the National Plan of Adult Literacy until 1964, when a military coup made it necessary for him to leave. Moving to Chile he became a professor at the University of Chile and a consultant to Unesco Institute of Research and Training in Agrarian Reform. In 1969 he was named

a fellow of the Center and a visiting professor at the Center for Studies in Education and Development at Harvard University. Currently he serves as a special consultant to the Office of Education of the World Council of Churches in Geneva. These experiences might have led to a sophisticated understanding of the functioning of national governments and to an appreciation of the disciplined coordination and control required to carry out a successful revolution and to perform essential government functions following the revolution. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* does not, however, reflect a level of sophistication commensurate with a high degree of political acumen.

Freire advocates revolution because he believes that evolutionary approaches are inevitably unsuccessful. He states, "Freedom is acquired by conquest, not by gift". Perhaps it is because he is so thoroughly committed to the notion that revolution is required to overthrow the ruling elites that *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* is devoted primarily to justifying the revolution rather than to expounding the specific strategies to be used in its implementation.

The Uncritical Acceptance of the Pedagogy of Revolution

Freire's pedagogy offers neither fresh ideas concerning the methodology of adult education nor practical guidance for implementing the revolution. The literature of adult education contains more complete and systematic guidance for the planning and conducting of programs than can be found in his pedagogy. Further, a plan for a revolution which is dependent upon the spontaneous self-identification of leaders who must subsequently become involved in a process of mutual identification with those whom they will lead scarcely seems practical. Further, the rejection of leader training as alienating provides little indication that the practical problems of organizing a revolution have been considered. Finally, the dogmatic assertion that all training must involve both the leaders and the led in a dialectical situation would seem either to restrict the movement to groups which function on a face-to-face basis or suggest that the mass media will be used as the vehicle for the "dialogue" between the leader and the led.

The incomplete utopian scheme proposed by Freire has nevertheless found ready acceptance by a surprisingly large number of critics of the American educational system or the American form of government or both. Perhaps all that is needed to win acclaim today is a forceful condemnation of the existing authority structure, a mystical promise of a kind of "rebirth," and an insistence that the lack of plan for carrying out the revolution and for regulating society afterwards is evidence of the revolutionary's commitment to the dialectical method of dealing with problems. Two factors, a widespread disenchantment with public education and the quality of the intellectual leadership on college campuses, may help to explain the uncritical acceptance of this pedagogy.

Freire's criticisms of the banking concept of education cannot be dismissed lightly. While it is true that his call for a pedagogy to develop autonomous, self-directed learners is not new, his espousal of this philosophical position of adult educators in the context of the heightened social consciousness of the times gives his book a popular appeal which is lacking in less polemical adult education literature. Yet an appeal for the redirection of prevailing instructional practices from an exclusive focus on passive recall to an emphasis on the development of the student's analytical and evaluative abilities would have been stronger had Freire demonstrated his own mastery of these abilities rather than to exhibit an unswerving predilection for viewing both problems and solutions from an Hegelian posture.

The indiscriminating acceptance of this rhetoric of revolution may also be an indication of the dysfunctional consequences of the fragmented perceptions of reality found on college faculties. Specialists in each of the social sciences, bound by the concepts and methodologies of their own disciplines, work on research projects in which they need not differentiate between differences which are only statistically significant and those which have both statistical and practical significance. Although each of the disciplines taken singly is insufficient to explain human behavior specialists within each of them may lose their perspective on the explanatory power of their own discipline through sustained efforts

restricted by the boundaries of that discipline. Living with partial explanations may render some academics especially vulnerable to incomplete explanations which lead to conclusions they would like to accept.

Human behavior is influenced simultaneously by more variables than theoreticians or empiricists working within any specialty are prepared to study. Accordingly, the particular disciplinary concepts and perspectives of economists, psychologists, political scientists, sociologists, and other social scientists are of limited practical utility, not because the separate disciplines have imperfect perspectives but because each of these perspectives is limited by necessity. Perhaps, then, it should not be too surprising if those who spend their lives studying behavior from the limited perspective of a single social science are particularly susceptible to single discipline solutions to complex problems put forth by persuasive authors. Administrators and other men and women of affairs may be less likely to be persuaded by grand schemes which reflect simplistic notions of the determinants of human behavior.

In *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* Freire has restated the faults of a large part of the educational process as it is carried out, endorsing the higher level cognitive objectives without acknowledging that the criticisms and proposals he offers for the improvement of education have already been presented in more sophisticated and rigorous analyses by other authors. Yet there is nothing wrong with restating sound ideas. If the new pedagogy consisted solely of suggestions for improving adult literacy programs, then perhaps couching the approach in revolutionary rhetoric would serve to attract attention and even persuade literacy teachers to adopt a new perspective in their instructional efforts. The coupling of a plea for the improvement of adult education with a call to revolution weakens both appeals. Utopian schemes are attractive to those who want a simplistic solution to the problems of the world. For those who seek to bring about the changes, however, schemes which consist of superficial analyses and which are dependent upon the spontaneous emergence of enlightened authentic leaders acting out of love (who will somehow experience a rebirth

together with their followers), is an appeal to an extra-terrestrial intervention which eludes the ratiocination of social scientists.

Towards the Year 2012

If Freire's presentation of his pedagogy and revolutionary blueprint stimulates adult educators to reflect on their methods and to become more analytical in contemplating the compatibility of the goals they seek with the approaches they use, then the publication of this so-called revolutionary pedagogy will have served a worthwhile purpose. It would be comforting to believe that in another forty years there will be no need for another social critic to ask the question Counts asked forty years ago. However, the uncritical acceptance of the rhetoric of the pedagogy without the analysis of the substance by educators illustrates, more powerfully than Freire may have anticipated, the validity of his criticisms of educational systems which produce graduates whose critical faculties have remained undeveloped.

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2. Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, trans. by Myra Bergman Ramos (New York: Herder and Herder, 1970)
3. *Ibid.*, p. 57.
4. *Ibid.*
5. J.W. Getzels, *Learning Theory and Classroom Practice in Adult Education* (Syracuse, N.Y.: University College, Syracuse University, 1956). Jack R. Gibbs, "Learning Theory in Adult Education" in *Handbook of Adult Education in the United States*, edited by Malcolm S. Knowles (Chicago: Adult Education Association of the U.S.A., 1960). J.R. Kidd, *How Adults Learn* (New York: Association Press, 1959). Malcolm S. Knowles, *The Modern Practice of Adult Education* (New York: Association Press, 1970). Harry L. Miller, *Teaching and Learning in Adult Education* (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1964)
6. Paulo Freire, *Cultural Action for Freedom*. Monograph Series No. 1 (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Educational Review and Center for the Study of Development and Social Change, 1970), p. 18.
7. *Pedagogy*, p. 58.
8. Benjamin S. Bloom, (ed), *Taxonomy of Educational Objectives the classification of educational goals: Handbook I Cognitive Domain*. (New York: David McKay Co., Inc., 1956)

9. *Cultural Action*, p. 25.
10. *Pedagogy*, p. 134.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 169.
12. *Ibid.*
13. *Ibid.*, p. 170.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 171.
15. *Ibid.*, pp. 23-24.
16. *Ibid.*, pp. 179-180.
17. *Ibid.*
18. *Cultural Action*, p. 44.
19. *Pedagogy*, p. 128.
20. *Ibid.*, p. 162.
21. *Ibid.*, p. 183.

ON THE GREATNESS OF BEING UTOPIAN

by

Pierre Furter

In this article, Pierre Furter springs to the defence of Paulo Freire and his approach to adult education.

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Professor W.S. Griffith * reproaches Paulo Freire with being a Utopian. But he makes this reproach in such an offensive manner that I, as a friend of Paulo Freire, feel it only just to point out, first of all that it is hard to carry on a discussion in such an atmosphere of intellectual terrorism. We shall, nevertheless, try to circumvent this by reading Griffith's article three times, and discuss each level of reading as they arise.

I. First of all, this is obviously a personal attack. The writer does not hesitate to reproach Paulo Freire with his "lack of humanity" (p. 68) or with being simplistic (p. 70). Above all he blames him for not being "sophisticated", in other words, for not being *the* teacher he should be. This is why Professor Griffith perfidiously quotes the sections of Paulo Freire's biography that show him to have been incapable of using all the academic resources made available to him. But is this not a gratuitous attack? It is possible that Paulo Freire..... *did not want to be the* "Herr Professor Ph. D." that Professor W.S. Griffith wished him to be. Perhaps, on the contrary, Paulo Freire consciously chose to be the popular and even populist** exponent that Griffith reproaches him with being? If this is so, the whole of this base attack is nothing but a wretched slap in the face which is better simply ignored.

* W.S. Griffith, "Paulo Freire: utopian perspective on literacy education for revolution", *Paulo Freire: a revolutionary dilemma for the adult educator*, edited by Stanley M. Grabowski, (Syracuse University Publications in Continuing Education, Syracuse, N.Y., 1972).

** E. de Kadt, *Catholic radicals in Brazil* (London, 1970), p. 102.

II. So one reads the article at a second level. Basically, Prof. W.S. Griffith, from the height of his university morgue, not only repeatedly takes umbrage at Paulo Freire's success, but also blames him for not knowing the existing "literature" on adult education. This is to forget that in the first place Paulo Freire is practically self-taught. Studying in Recife is not the same thing as studying in Chicago or Boston; it is slightly more difficult. Furthermore, his actual knowledge does not come from books, nor from teaching students, but from *practical experience*: with the servants, shop assistants, workers and the unemployed of Gran Recife. As many commentators have pointed out, Paulo Freire claims not to theorize, but to reflect on his experiments. This is why the literature of others is digested with a view to the needs of this 20th century cannibalism. Prof. Griffith shows the nature of his concern when he more or less bewails the fact that the general public reads Paulo Freire, but not the five writers he names on page 68. But what do these five writers - all North Americans, naturally - have in common? The pedantry and deadly boredom found in so many works on education. The proof of my assertion is provided by our students. While they read Paulo Freire (and Illich, Reimer, etc.) *without being asked*, they find the academic writers we force them to read insufferable. This means that in Paulo Freire's success we can re-discover one of the basic principles of adult education or any education: *do not bore!*

Griffith is doubtless right to point out that Paulo Freire does not always say new "things"; that he does not always offer "new ideas". I freely grant him this. But he says them, and writes them, in *A new way*. This *style* is new. Now, when I read a book, I consider its writer's ability to hold my attention of supreme importance, and I hate to read anything that makes me yawn at every line. Is there not today far too wide a gulf between the academic style (pompous, pedantic, boring, dusty and, heaven knows, somewhat long, drawn out) and the needs of a population

which has, of course, been sensitized to reading, but which has become accustomed to something brief, energetic, provocative;..... in short well-written texts? Now it would be going rather too far to deduce from this that people are, consequently, stupid and simplistic. If Paulo Freire enjoys such success, - quite unexpectedly - it is on account of a certain something that attracts, irritates or captivates his readers. He knows how to grip the public. This was in fact one of the reasons for the hatred he sometimes stirred up in university circles, when professors saw their lecture-halls emptying as Paulo Freire took the stage. I know that this is a bitter experience, but after all a prophet has always had greater drawing-power than doctors.

Here we reach the main point. Prof. W.S. Griffith considers that Paulo Freire is a classic case of "Utopism". At this point Prof. W.S. Griffith's vocabulary plumbs the unfathomable depths of disdain and irony. Now Professor Griffith might have consulted, if not Karl Mannheim, - who is no longer in Chicago's good graces - but, for example, the special issue of a journal as "sophisticated" as DAEDLUS *, or else the very grave W. Moore, former President of the American Society of Sociology, who has held forth to his sociologist colleagues, announcing the re-birth of Utopian thought.** In short, Prof. W.S. Griffith need only have consulted a bibliography in order to realize that "utopian" has the same ambivalence in English as "utopique" in French, or "utopico" in Portuguese. The term may designate the illusory, the fantastic and the unattainable, as well as refusal to accept this "status quo"; contestation, re-appraisal, and a demand for the possible and great, as

* Re-edited by F.E. Manuel under the title *Utopies and utopian thought*, (sic) (Boston, 1965)

** W.E. Moore, "The utility of utopies" *American Sociological Review*, (Dec. 1966), p. 756-772.

opposed to the mediocre. Consequently, we regret that W.S. Griffith, who considers himself a professor, is so ignorant of the basic literature on Utopian thought that he uses the word "utopian" without appreciating all its dimensions. Before reproaching others with an unfamiliarity of this or that, might it not be useful to start with self-criticism?

III. Lastly, we can contemplate a third reading of Mr. Griffith's text. He is not able to do justice to Paulo Freire because he overlooks one of the basic rules of comparative education: contextualization*. Indeed, how can we understand Paulo Freire if we forget or minimize the fact that he is:

- a) a Brazilian;
- b) a provincial on two counts;
- c) bound to a particular movement in time;
- d) a practising Catholic.

Let us examine these several factors:

a) Paulo Freire is a Brazilian. He is a citizen of one of those gigantic modern nations that can depict itself without reference to the rest of the world. All too often we forget that it has been, and will continue to be, possible to have a brilliant career and to succeed professionally in Brazil without knowing any language other than Portuguese. This means that the originality of a Brazilian cannot be measured only in comparison with this "gringo" or that "mosiù"**, but in comparison with other Brazilians. Whether one is today a partisan of this government or a supporter

* G.Z.F. Bereday, *Comparative method in education*, (New York, 1964).

** "mosiù" in Spanish, refers to all people who are neither Latin-American, nor North American; "gringo" means North American.

of that régime, all are agreed that Paulo Freire has made a decisive contribution to thinking on adult education, and education in general, in Brazil. I shall stand by this allegation until Mr. Griffith has the grace to show us that Paulo Freire has not given a new perspective to adult education in Brazil and that he is neither a great educationalist nor an important innovator*. I do not know whether his contribution is universally valid. Personally, nothing irritates me more than Paulo Freire's disciples of every shade and hue from Tanzania to the U.S.A., from Switzerland to Chile, who believe that all the prophet has said can be applied. Paulo Freire himself today is actively fighting against this form of hero-worship.

b) Paulo Freire is a provincial on two counts. On the one hand, with respect to the São Paulo - Rio de Janeiro axis (or the São Paulo-Brasilia-Rio de Janeiro triangle) it was only very late that Paulo Freire discovered the industrial and post-industrial Brazil of the megalopolises in the south of his country. He sees himself as a provincial from the north-east. He is also provincial in so far as he prefers *speaking* to writing. This is not merely anecdotal; it plays a fundamental role in his work. Mr. W.S. Griffith has not noticed - inter alia - that Paulo Freire's major innovation is his daring affirmation that in *all education* (including literacy), expression *precedes* reading and writing; that one must *first* learn to write, before learning to read; that the aim is freedom of speech, and not the sly subjugation of the new literates to the writings of the lettered**. In this sense, Paulo Freire is more than a revolutionary; he

* V. Paiva, *Educação popular e educação de adultos*, (São Paulo, 1973).

** P. Furter, *De la lutte contre l'analphabétisme au développement culturel* (From the Fight against Illiteracy to the Cultural Development), being printed.

is an anarchist, or more precisely a populist*.

c) Not only is Paulo Freire bound to one historical era, but I would even go so far as to say that his works date. Indeed, one ought to bear in mind that in practice his work was thought out before 1964, at a time when many people ingenuously believed it would still be possible to construct a socialist, independent, nationalist, etc. Brazil before the end of the decade; that most of his work *was written* during the Frey period in Chile, in other words before *President Allende's assassination*. In my opinion, this explains a certain political naivety, resulting from participation in gigantic projects. Today, the world is different and somewhat less elating.

d) Lastly, curiously enough, Mr. W.S. Griffith "forgets" that Paulo Freire is, has been and apparently always will be, not only a convinced Christian, but a practising Catholic. Like all good Christians, Paulo Freire believes - perhaps wrongly - that it is always possible to persuade an individual; that an individual will always bow to the truth. This explains why Paulo Freire, imprisoned in the barracks of the Olinda Artillery division, near Recife, in the spring of 1964, thought he would "conscientize" the colonel interrogating him and bent on his destruction at all costs. Paulo Freire actually believed he had succeeded! This is obviously disquieting, but it explains why Paulo Freire has never been able to accept the liquidation of his enemies.

In short, we feel that Prof. W.S. Griffith has correctly detected a certain amount of weak points in Paulo Freire's thinking, such as:

- a leaning towards dichotomized analysis resulting in facile rhetorical effects;
- ignorance of a certain scientific literature dealing with the subjects near to him;

* E. de Kadt, *op. cit.*, p. 36.

- a contempt for organizational problems;

Nevertheless, Mr. W.S. Griffith has employed such a tone, such baseness in his argumentation, that his study borders on calumny and seems to be unworthy of a university professor, at least according to what I expect of my chosen calling.

REFLECTIONS ON GRIFFITH, FREIRE AND BEYOND

by

John A. Bugbee

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He has been closely associated with the work of Freire, and feels that anyone who has worked in the field of literacy training and project development, as has Bugbee, must find it difficult not to feel the sincerity, urgency and sense of practice which Freire brings to the formation and communication of his views.

"The Freire approach to Literacy" was explained in a recent article Bugbee contributed to *Literacy Discussion* (Functional Literacy: One Approach to Social Change. v. IV, no. 4, December 1973.)

It is the purpose of this writing to take up certain points raised by W.S. Griffith in his article "Paulo Freire: Utopian Perspectives on Literacy Education for Revolution." In this regard, I shall 1) re-state in synthesized form Griffith's major arguments; 2) raise objections or point to problems with some of his claims; 3) take up certain of his points and redirect them at Freire's methods in terms of the problems they highlight.

I.

Griffith states it is his intention to evaluate Freire's view from an adult education perspective especially with regard to 1) whether it is indeed a new (revolutionary) approach to literacy education; 2) whether it is a sound (reasonable) plan for revolution; 3) whether its recent and widespread notoriety (popularity) can be explained.

1. With respect to the question of whether Freire's theory/methods cut any new ground in the field of adult education, Griffith's response is unambiguously negative. In addition to arguing that Freire's criticisms of the field of literacy education are simply not useful, he goes on to say that those criticisms are phrased archaically when one compares them with the considerable literature in the field which identifies the same problems much more precisely. He points out that not only does Freire fail to acknowledge that there are other writers in the field who have made these criticisms better, but also hints at Freire's audacity to offer his ideas to literacy teachers who are woefully ignorant of the really good approaches abounding in the literature on adult literacy education.

2. With respect to the soundness of Freire's views as a plan for revolution, Griffith's judgment is again, on the whole, negative. Here the thrust of his objections is concerned with the consequences of acting upon Freire's program. For example, he points out that Freire counsels the curtailment of dialogue with the oppressors and a systematic mistrust or suspicion of the oppressed in the process of liberation. Further, that Freire's ideas are at variance

with the main thrust of democratic educational philosophies; that his concept of authority is vague and circular; that the oppressor-oppressed analysis is simplistic; and that the process of leader-emergence and the criteria for distinguishing authentic from opportunistic leaders are likewise unclear. Finally, Griffith suggests that lacking any directives which advance social development in a positive sense, Freire's pedagogy is utopian in the sense that it does anticipate and provide guidance for the complex tasks which make up a revolution - in essence, Griffith points to Freire's disposition to justify revolution rather than to provide the concrete, effective strategies and tactics for its achievement.

3. Griffith seeks to account for the phenomenon of the relatively widespread American acceptance of Freire's pedagogy. In this regard, he reiterates some of his prior criticisms and adds to them the notion that Freire's ideas are much too dependent upon spontaneity, especially as concerns the emergence of leaders from the literacy process. The only explanation for the "uncritical" acceptance of Freire's ideas to which Griffith can appeal is that there exists a pervasive disillusionment with public education in America and that "the quality of the intellectual leadership on college campuses" is such that the rhetoric of revolution is not carefully scrutinized. Griffith further suggests that Freire's ideas are deeply marred by their invocation of love as a norm to guide the "authentic" process Freire advocates and must, therefore, be seen as an appeal to a being beyond the comprehension of human reason - in effect, a "cop-out."

Each of these negative evaluations of Freire's ideas deserves consideration. In the following section I shall take up certain of them as seems appropriate.

II.

1. With respect to the claim that Freire's objections to certain tendencies in adult education as well as his attempts to frame methods for a more positive approach to literacy training are essentially not new, archaically phrased and largely reflecting an ignorance of already articulated ap-

proaches in the field, it seems appropriate to offer the following observations: First, if newness is not to become fetish in itself, it must be acknowledged that old, partially-conceived or previously articulated ideas/methods can and often do have a new significance when interpreted in contexts or ambiances other than those which originally occasioned them. The point, it seems, is not to be able to identify who said what first, but to focus upon the interpretation of a given set of conditions which the creative use of those ideas permits. What - or whoever - may be Freire's acknowledge or unacknowledged intellectual forebearers, it seems fair to say that he has attempted a creative, suggestive and singular interpretation of the ideas related to the places where he worked and those with whom he labored. Second, one wonders if Griffith grasps the effort which Freire is attempting to make in the articulation of a process which is partisan - on behalf of the interests (however conceived) of the illiterates/oppressed. Clearly what Freire is saying is that most literacy training programs do not serve the interests of their clients - especially when those interests tend to be articulated in economic and political terms. Hence, it may be argued that the sense of "innovation" on Freire's part is his underscoring of the nature of the commitment which a literacy worker/learner who uses his methods must be prepared to make. Third, given the apparent partisan character of his thought/methods, it must be acknowledged that Freire seeks to articulate the necessary linkage between the process of becoming literate and one's insertion into the process of social change on his or her own group's behalf. The fact that Freire ties the essentially purposive quality of that process to the movement of a class of people represents a step beyond others who have expressed themselves in this field.

2. With respect to the claim that acting upon Freire's programme leads to unsound consequences, it seems that Griffith may be "right" but not for the reasons he adduces. For example: Griffith is concerned that Freire's writings are not clear as regards the concept of "authority"; that there are no clear-cut criteria for distinguishing "authentic" leaders who are to emerge from the literacy process; that the "oppressor-oppressed" analysis is simplistic; that Freire is

"utopian" in that he is inexplicit on the plethora of specifics attending a successful revolution; and that concrete strategies are lacking. Now, to the degree that Griffith expects a fully-drawn blueprint down to the last detail in terms of the whole range of anticipated consequences of acting on Freire's methods, he is indeed justified in drawing the conclusion that the methods are "unsound". After all, if one cannot tell in advance what will certainly happen with respect to a set of plans in a given situation, then one is "right" in counseling caution or unacceptance or inaction.

The latter point is not made in ridicule. Rather, it seems clear that there are two confusions on Griffith's part with respect to grasping both the nature of the situation to which Freire addresses himself and the terms in which he makes the address. In a situation of oppression - whether economic, racial or sexual - the nature of a programme of response which takes as its purpose the radical alteration of the conditions of that situation must have a highly contingent character. Such a course of action has a necessarily risky - even at times scandalous - character to it. There is a sense in which many a "sound thinker" might well draw back from the kinds of commitments which such an inherently uncertain situation demands. (One may note in passing that it is precisely this contingent character of revolution and the successive understanding and control of it that Freire stresses at length in his use of dialectics). Further, in his insistence upon criteria, highly explicit strategies, fully articulated formulations of all anticipated situations, Griffith seems to misunderstand what I take to be one of the essential features of Freire's discourse: his writing is programmatic rather than descriptive. Freire is attempting to present an accurate, but even more so, persuasive picture of the situation on which he focuses. His attempt is to articulate a process which will alter consciousness and behavior with respect to a state of affairs. Such a purpose does not exempt him from criticism for fuzzy thinking (which can have tragic consequences) nor from criticism from the perspective of more developed points of view (as will be suggested below), but it does exempt him from being judged as though his central task is that of trying to offer a fully descriptive characterization of his work and thought.

If accurate, perhaps these same confusions on Griffith's part are responsible for his objections that Freire's methods lead to a curtailment of dialogue with the oppressors; to systematic suspicion or mistrust by the leaders of those undergoing the literacy process; and to a clear opposition to the "democratic ideals and all educational philosophies." The point here again is that Freire is addressing a situation of significance where learning entails the realization and understanding of selves in a power context. To be sure, where one can assume that the conditions exist which foster philosophical/pedagogical pluralism, one can then condemn the call for partisan thought and action. But Freire points out that such benign conditions do not obtain where he has worked, that the non-reciprocal power of a few reigns and that, indeed, even the prevailing pedagogical concepts serve to bolster that power. Accordingly, he characterizes his methods as *of* and *for* the oppressed - they seem to have a highly partisan character. With Griffith, one may wish this were not necessary but this intention in itself does not alter concrete social conditions.

3. With respect to Griffith's speculation that Freire's popularity in the American context is to be understood in terms of the wide disenchantment there with public education and the (poor) quality of the intellectual leadership on college campuses, one may simply offer a counter-suggestion. Perhaps Freire has indeed articulated in a meaningful and persuasive way certain of the characteristics of domesticating education which some have recognized in the American educational edifice. Perhaps too, the changes which his methods suggest are possible have caught the imagination of some and sparked efforts at creative, if risky, adaptations to the American scene.

More serious, and, indeed more in need of answers, are Griffith's final sallies to the effect that Freire's methods rely too heavily upon spontaneous recognition of "authentic" leaders as well as the invocation of love as a guide to the actions of those who go through the process. It is to some lingering problems with Freire's methods occasioned by Griffith's remarks that the final section is devoted.

III.

As I have attempted to argue above, one can ask too much of a theorist of social/educational change when one is not clear regarding the nature of the task and/or the necessary limitations which that task imposes upon the theoretical means at one's disposal. Nonetheless, while granting these limitations and bearing in mind the human significance of the changes sought, one can identify and legitimately call for further elaboration where conceptual ambiguity exists. It is with regard to such matters that these final comments are relevant.

Simply stated, Griffith's concern regarding the ambiguity of the key-concepts of "authority", "authenticity", "oppressor and oppressed", "spontaneity", and "love" may be approached from another perspective. In essence, what are the *interests* at stake with respect to the people who pass through the literacy process these concepts denote? Said differently, is it possible for Freire to identify in more concrete terms the *basis* of the authority he envisions, the authenticity he values, the interests contending in the oppressor-oppressed struggle, the quality of spontaneity and love desired or prized?

The point here is a question which perhaps only Freire can answer: *is it in the nature of his set of ideas/methods that the concrete basis of these concepts must remain unspecified except at the particularistic level of each individual literacy group and project?* That is, is the character or quality of his partisanship open conceptually but pointed only in its individual interpretation relative to context and the perceptions of individuals?

One is tempted to reply to these queries in a characteristic Freire-like fashion to the effect that he will not "name" the world for another; that he will not usurp a person's or group's ontological vocation to interpret their reality; that he will not be proprietary with anyone's past, present or future. Insofar, Freire labels himself a radical, non-sectarian, humanist - and he is consistent.

Nonetheless, while respecting Freire's intentions, the peculiar exigencies of a situation of oppression and struggle and the risky quality of any effort which offers guidance in that kind of context, it seems fair to ask for further analysis at the level of these key concepts.

In this connection, one can hope that Freire will choose to address himself to the claims that he abstracts from the concrete specifics of the class struggle in his oppressor-oppressed analysis; that he will clarify the role that he accords to ideas as an agency of history; and that he will no longer leave open the whole matter of a political programme to be framed by those who would use his methods. Some response to these points on Freire's part, could add considerably both to a greater understanding of his ideas/methods and to a clearer grasp of their limitations and potentiality in the field of adult education and beyond.

In a recent interview with IOAC (Institute of Cultural Action) Freire is questioned precisely along the lines suggested by author Bugbee. The ten page text of that interview has been published by IRFED, Paris.

AN ORIENTATION :

RESEARCH METHODS

by

Paulo Freire

The following article consists of excerpts from a presentation given by Freire at a seminar "Studies in Adult Education" conducted at the Institute of Adult Education, University of Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania, on July 20, 1972.

The text, in slightly edited and abridged form, is reprinted with permission of the Institute of Adult Education at Dar-es-Salaam University. In it, Freire first discusses his conception of social research and then puts forward a suggestion for Tanzania. The article expresses Freire's opinion of how his ideas, born in a Latin American context, might be applied in Africa.

1. *The Epistemology of Research*

First of all, I want to discuss some questions of research methodology. I would like, in fact, to begin with a discussion of social science.

One of the first problems that I think we are faced with when we are interested in knowing some aspects of a given reality, either that of a rural area or of an urban one, is to know what the concrete reality is. Secondly, there is the question of what we *consider* to be the concrete reality in that area.

The concrete reality for many social scientists is a list of particular facts that they would like to capture; for example, the presence or absence of water, problems concerning erosion in the area or those of production or productivity. For me, the concrete reality is something more than isolated facts. In my view, thinking dialectically, the concrete reality consists not only of concrete facts and (physical) things, but also includes the ways in which the people involved with these facts perceive them. Thus in the last analysis, for me the concrete reality is the connection between subjectivity and objectivity; never objectivity isolated from subjectivity. If I come to Tanzania to do research, I know this reality completely only to the extent that I understand the dialectical relation between the subjectivity and objectivity in this area - that is, when I begin to know how people in this area perceive themselves in their dialectical relationships with the objectivity.

Let us suppose that a rural area presents a problem of erosion or insects which has resulted in the destruction of crops. I only know the actual phenomenon of erosion to the extent that I also understand how the peasants perceive this phenomenon.

In my view, it is necessary to start an investigation with a pre-occupation in trying to understand the dialectical relations between subjectivity and objectivity. If I perceive reality as the dialectical relationship between objectivity and subjectivity, then I have to use methods for investigation which involve the people of the area being studied as researchers. They should take part in the investigations

themselves and not serve as the passive objects of the study.

If as a sociologist, I think of myself as a neutral or impartial scientist, I will view both people and reality together as the object of my research. Thus, I analyse them as if the world were an anatomy laboratory in which a body is analysed.

This is not for me. I have to go back, and instead of taking the people here as the object of my research I must try, on the contrary, to have the people dialogically involved also as subjects, as researchers with me: If I am interested in knowing the people's ways of thinking and levels of perception, then the people have to think about their thinking and not be only the objects of my thinking. This method of investigation which involves study and criticism of the study by the people is at the same time a pedagogical process. Through this process of investigation, examination, criticism and reinvestigation the level of critical thinking is raised among all those involved.

Thus, in doing research, I am educating and being educated with the people. By returning to the area in order to put into practice the results of my investigation, I am not only educating and being educated: I am also researching again, because to the extent that we put into practice the plans resulting from the investigations, we change the levels of consciousness of the people, and by this change, research again. Thus, there is a dynamic movement between researching and acting on the results of the research.

I think that it is important to point out again that the scientists' question is essentially an epistemological one. This, of course, implies a particular ideological way of thinking and a political choice. This is true regardless of whether it is clear to the scientists or not.

2. *Sets of Objectives*

Let us take two sets of objectives which are political and ideological. Let us suppose that I am working as a social scientist in a process of modernization of the country. In this case, it is seen as the modernization of the structures of society in order to improve the efficiency of production.

It is not in the interests of the ruling class to involve the people as subjects of their change in the transformation of the structure of society. The pre-occupation is a bourgeois, capitalist one. It is the policy of this capitalist society both economically and culturally to emphasize modernizing society. But in this process of modernization, there is no interest in involving the people as authors of the transformation. Educational projects exist only to offer those few clues necessary for more efficient production. They are to be transformed into good producers, but with only that additional education necessary for implanting the system in their heads.

If I think only in terms of productivity, then my tendency will be to emphasize that *technology is neutral, technical education is neutral*. I will attempt to convince every single person of this. It means that work is not discussed politically; it implies that to do so would be a waste of time. We need good workers, so they have to be trained in technical skills: how to use machines in the best way in order to improve the country's productivity. This is a bourgeois policy, the capitalist method.

It is deplorable to find people calling themselves socialists thinking like that. This is a total contradiction. If you read the writings of Nyerere, you will discover that Nyerere's policy is different. Even though Nyerere has not written about this directly, by reading what he has written I can sense what he thinks of this. When he speaks about the meaning of development, for example, he says that "Just as I cannot develop a man, a woman, a person, unless he or she develops, I can also not develop a nation without people." It is necessary to understand all the implications of this statement, one of which is that education for the workers has to be a political event and not an exclusively technical one.

If the objective is very clear, as in Tanzania, if people here are interested in creating a socialist society, then research requires different methods and concepts of knowledge and different organization. People have to participate in the research, as investigators and researchers and not as mere objects. Of course, the social scientists of the First World say that to the extent that we invite people to participate

in the research about them we are interfering scientifically: that is, we are interfering in the research process and the results will not be in a pure form as if it were possible to have any kind of results in social science in a pure form! When the very scientists who emphasize this concept are at home trying to write up reports they cannot escape from their own subjectivity. Their subjectivity is interfering with the "pure form" of the findings. In the second place, the very physical presence of the researcher in the field interferes with the reality there.

3. *A Suggestion for Tanzania*

Based on this principle, I have thought about the possibility of the Institute of Adult Education trying something in this perspective, but with some very clear objectives.

For example, if it fell within the interests, convictions and facilities of the Institute, a research project might be developed which would not only provide experience in alternative research strategies, but would also be the basis for an adult education pilot project. This strategy would also be a challenge to the entire university concerning its relations with the people. The team, presumably having a certain clear understanding of the area of Dar-es-Salaam, would choose a kind of mixed rural/urban area, an area in transition, in which to do research in order to try to develop an adult education programme.

First of all the team should acquaint itself with all previous research - no matter what method had been used. The team would need to explore all possible secondary sources. Secondly, the team should try to understand or to delimit the area geographically, - recognizing, of course, that there are no frontiers, culturally speaking. The team would also try to identify possible popular and official institutions, like, for example football clubs, dancing clubs, or co-operatives. The team would go to these popular institutions in order to talk with their leaders.

There should be no dishonesty in the conversation. The team would say: "We work for the Institute of Adult Education in Dar-es-Salaam and we have come here to discuss the possibility with you for all of us to hold discussions and work

together." This means that if the people of this area do not accept this proposal then we cannot work. What we mean is that we would like to discuss the realities of the area with the people. We would like to summarize these discussions.

This process would continue until the point is reached where everyone involved, the university people and those from the area, *together* feel they understand the realities of the area and can formulate a plan of action. We then say to the people: "What do you think about it?"

Suppose the people say: "Yes, there will be a discussion". The team would have a meeting not only with the leaders but with the people who are engaged in some way with that institution. The team would proceed in this manner with each institution in turn. What happens next?

The team would try to have a series of discussions once a day for maybe one week. The length of time would depend on the schedules of the various people involved. They would discuss with the people the topics and the place in which to hold the discussions. Let us suppose that there are five to six rooms in which to hold meetings. If each room holds perhaps 30 people, then 160 people could be engaged in discussions at the same time. The discussion groups might involve as many as 1,500 inhabitants. It is very important for us to have a perception of the whole.

When the people have agreed, the team would come with one or two representatives of the Institute - sociologists, psychologists or educators in each group. Records of the discussions would have to be made. The team should not go to the meetings with an already prepared list of questions. At the beginning of the meeting a chairman would be elected by the group. The role of the team would be an advisory one and they would begin to discuss the concrete conditions of that area (with each group). What do they think about education in that area? For example: Are there enough primary schools? Are they good or bad? Why? Everyone should be involved in the discussion.

4. *The Objective*

We have to be very clear about the objective of this work: it is the people themselves, not the advancement of science. If, however, the people are silent then we have to provoke them, because we are not neutral.

We might discuss for one hour the subject of education, for example, and find out just how the people see education. At this point, education ceases to be something abstract; and secondly it ceases to be merely a question that the University or the Ministry thinks about. Education now starts to become something quite concrete, because the people are talking about it. If I am to discuss education with the people then I have to start from *their* perception of education and not from my own perception. This is a mistake that we have made in many instances. We have to admit that we often labour under the opinion that we possess the truth. By discussing education, a lot of other subjects, of course, appear and we begin to provoke the team to go on with the discussion.

Let us assume that five groups have been functioning each time a discussion is being staged. After perhaps five meetings, the team itself says: "We don't want to discuss these questions further. We have analysed how we now see these realities." Justice, education, the government, industries, and many other topics, have been discussed.

At this point the groups, each with its reporter, would have a general session of the 160 people and the researchers together. In this general assembly, each reporter would speak about the reality of the area, reporting the results of his group's perceptions of the situation. The reporter, if possible, should be one of the people themselves and not one of the researchers. The researchers can be advisers, of course. In my view, it is better that the reporter comes and speaks full of confidence so that the people will see that they are able to do that which previously only officials, researchers or "specialists" had done.

I would quote here Mao Tse-tung: "More and more the intellectuals must become workers; more and more the workers must become intellectuals: Thus if we really want a

a socialist society, let us stop intellectualism. Let us begin to believe in the possibilities of the people, even if they display many deficiencies. We also have many deficiencies.

Let us return to our hypothetical case. Assume that the reporter of Group A makes the summary of the discussions the people have had. A general discussion on the report would follow. As each reporter makes his or her report there is collective discussion.

5. *The Next Stage*

At this point, the next stage of the research - the critical study of the people's discourse - begins. We have to understand the multiple implications that are discovered in the collective discussions. For example, by studying these implications, the people's levels of perception of reality can be determined. In order to do this, of course, we need to put the discussion on paper, so that the members of the groups and the groups of researchers can have an account of the discussions in all five groups. In studying these implications, the people also need to be present. This discourse cannot be analysed by the researchers alone. The reporters, acting as representatives of the people, should work side by side with the social scientists.

At this stage, the Institute of Adult Education could ask for the collaboration of other departments in the University. It might invite lecturers from the political science department to help the Institute in its interpretation of the discourses. Some economists could be invited and so on.

This method of research might also introduce the University to direct communications with the people as equals in an investigatory process. Some of those who are elitist may be fearful and say that this is the destruction and corruption of the University. But if they are not elitist, but really revolutionized and committed, they will say: "This is fantastic. Now I have the people within the University." In the last analysis, this is a pedagogical project.

The presence of a linguist is extremely important in such an analysis in order to analyse the semantic aspects of the language, and the syntax of the people. Sometimes people use the

same words that we use and we have the feeling that the people are using these words in the same context and understand our meaning when, in actual fact, they are thinking of something different. For example, a certain team proved through linguistic analysis that when the workers - at least the peasants - said "trabajo," which means "work," they were not saying what we understood by "trabajo."

By "work", I understand "praxis", or the action of human beings working. For them, work was something like a magical entity as if it were outside the range of activity. They used expressions like: "There are people who were born for work; there are others who are born for no work." We found many examples. Therefore, it is very important for us to understand the semantical differences between us and the people.

6. *The Final Stage*

The last stage of this hypothetical project would be for the team, together with the people, to draft a proposal for subsequent action. This proposal would deal with the provision of adult education.

When there is a possible programme to be put into practice, it would be necessary to return once more and hold another meeting with the 160 people to discuss the plans for the programme which resulted from the analysis of the research. People would discuss the programme, accept it or reject it, and would possibly add to it. After this, one could start the programme - *with* the people, not *for* the people. In this way ministries could also be engaged. Not only the Ministry of Education, but also that of Agriculture and Planning. In other words, we have to recognize that development is a global process; we have to start on different levels of Government and in the Party. Such work would challenge many party members to help with developing a kind of mobilization in their area for the people.

To the extent that we put the programme into practice we would be researching again in order to change the programme. The programme cannot be something static - this is a naive perception of the problem. One cannot regard a programme

abstractly and metaphysically - it has to be created as a result of reality and has to be changed, dependent on the reality. So, all the time the programme is in movement, it is something which is dynamic and not static.

Let us suppose that it proves possible to carry out this project, and that you get some good results. The first result is that by doing it you learn to do it better, because by putting this methodology into practice you are creating methodology.

The main point is to discover methods with which to work whereby the people are not objects. This is self-reliance. Secondly, if it is possible in one area, then maybe you could go on to analyse other areas, so that at one stage in 3 or 4 years' time the Institute of Adult Education of Dar-es-Salaam University would have a kind of map showing the levels of perception of people, of reality. Not, of course, a rigid map, because by the fact that the Institute would be increasing the action, these levels must necessarily change. The first person, for example, elected to be the reporter will be changed in certain ways by his or her praxis of being reporter of that meeting, because he or she had a different praxis before. But in the last analysis, at the same time in which you would be helping other institutions to work with the people, you would be trained in order to train educators. One thing is to clarify some aspects of adult education and some objectives of educational research. The other thing is to organize seminars for future educators based on this. This enables you to say to the students: "Now we will begin to discuss the experience made during research in area A in Dar-es-Salaam. We would like to discuss with you how people in this research reveal their perception." You can then begin analysis, clarifying point by point the ideological and political choices.

AN ADAPTATION :

"CONSCIENTIZATION" AND SIMULATION GAMES

by

William A. Smith

This article is based upon "Conscientização and Simulation Games issued as Technical Note No. 2 by the Ecuador Non-Formal Education Project. Sponsored jointly by the Ecuadorian Ministry of Education and the University of Massachusetts' Center for International Education, the project is assisted financially by the United States Agency for International Development.

The author relates the concept and purpose of Paulo Freire's ideas to the instructional technique of simulation/gaming.

The full text of this article which appears here in abbreviated and edited form is available from the Center for International Education, University of Massachusetts, Amhurst, Mass. 01002, U.S.A.

1. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this paper is to suggest a bridge which might be built between the philosophy of Paulo Freire and the instructional methodology of simulation/gaming. While a brief section will be dedicated to explaining the author's understanding of Freire's concepts, no critical analysis of those concepts will be undertaken. The author is quite willing to present himself, for the purposes of this article as an uncritical advocate of Freire's position. As regards simulation/gaming, a brief definitional review will be offered but only for the purpose of laying a foundation for the central intent of the paper.

In *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* Paulo Freire goes further than simply stating a philosophy. He proceeds to outline both the practical implementation of that philosophy and to define, ever so briefly, a method for realizing it. Indeed, it was his method and its acclaimed success that first attracted attention to his philosophy. The assumptions upon which this paper is based stem from the relationship between Freire's philosophy and his methodology and include the following:

- 1) that the attractiveness of Freire's ideas rests as much on their translation into concrete activities as they do upon their internal logic and intellectual appeal.
- 2) that the concrete activities suggested by Freire are not exclusive; that is, that other educational methodologies (although not all) might be adapted to meet Freire's demands for a liberating education.
- 3) that due to certain special characteristics which will be outlined later in this article, simulation/gaming offers a powerful possibility for becoming one of those "other" methodologies.
- 4) and finally, that it is necessary to expand the methodological options open to individuals interested in designing a liberating education.

2. WHAT ARE SIMULATION/GAMES ?

When most people hear the word game they think of "fun". Rarely are games associated with serious activity. The fact is, however, that games, and their modern counterpart, simulations, have played a very serious role in history, in social science, in business, and most recently in education. A game is simply a prestructured experience involving players and having an outcome or winner. A simulation is a game which attempts to replicate some real-life, abstract (as in the case of mathematics), or hypothetical experience for the purpose of study or amusement. War games, first exploited by the Germans in the 19th century, were used to study the possible outcomes of military alternatives. Social science has used simulations to help predict the results of social interactions; business began using games and simulation as training devices; and education has begun only recently to appreciate the learning benefits of games and simulations.

For the purposes of this paper we will use the term simulation/game (hereafter referred to as S/G) which is best defined as 1) a replicated real-life experience 2) involving two or more players 3) who are required to operate under clearly defined constraints 4) for the purpose of achieving a predetermined goal 5) in a concentrated period of time. A simulation game is a special kind of learning experience. In order to understand how it differs from other forms of games, simulated experiences and more traditional learning tools, we will look for a moment at each of these essential components*.

Unlike roulette, and some forms of mathematical simulations, S/G's model complex social situations such as life on a Hacienda or the nutritional cycle of food. Through a careful analysis of the real-life situations, important

* McFarlane, Paul T., "Simulation Games as Social Psychological Research Sites," *Simulation and Games, An International Journal of Theory, Design and Research*, II, No. 2, 149.

variables are identified for use in the S/G. Also the constraints that life imposes are built into the S/G. It is important that the learners find the situations and constraints a convincing representation of reality. Finally, a goal is established, one which corresponds to a real-life goal and serves as the objective of the game which the learner seeks to achieve.

The format of such S/G's may range from the board game-type, most commonly known as "parlor games," to the role-play style which emphasizes personality interaction between players. Most of the S/G's described in this paper are combinations of two formats utilizing both the visual representation of a board and the powerful interaction process of the role-play.

Simulation/games may involve either competition between players, or competition against an outside norm. In some cases, competition may be of secondary importance or even entirely excluded if it proves to be unrelated to the real-life situation being replicated.

Chance mechanisms may also play an important role in a simulation/game. They serve not only to replicate the part played by "fate" in everyday life, but also provide an easy way to distribute resources among the players. In *Hacienda*, for example, the hacienda-owner commands a significantly larger share of the wealth and of the advantages in the game. It is considered that the roll of the dice accurately reflects the "accident of birth" by which one player becomes hacienda owner and another is a peasant laborer. In a culture in which fatalism looms large it is important that players begin to objectify "fate" and discuss its implications. This may seem a simple gimmick for individuals schooled in an achievement-oriented society, but for rural farmers who willingly accept everything they cannot understand as the "will of God", the opportunity to discuss "why" one man is Hacienda-owner and another Peasant is a major contribution to Freire's concept of *conscientizacao*.

In other cases, CHANCE may play an incidental role in the S/G. In *Food*, for example, which attempts to replicate the nutritional choices which peasants confront, chance is of less importance than the logical outcomes of the decisions made by players regarding their purchase and use of food.

The number of participants may vary from two to as many as twenty, or even more. There are no inherent restraints on the number of players.

Finally, simulation/games may be designed to achieve different educational goals. Most, however, serve one or more of the following goals:*

- a) *Information-transfer*: Most S/G's contain a great deal of new information for the learner. This new information is provided in such a way that the learner must use it immediately in order to achieve his own objectives. Experience with this type of information transfer has proven less painful than memorization-for-its-own-sake and consequently more efficient in most cases.
- b) *Analysis and Synthesis of Information*: Because the learner is required to apply the information he has learned to a problem he must solve, he is also required to analyze its relative importance and synthesize it with other bits of information as they are made available to him. This is a real-life process which a well-designed S/G will replicate just as effectively as it provides new information.
- c) *Evaluation of the learner's own actions*: Because a S/G replicates a real-life situation the learner

*Gordon, Alice Kaplan, "Games for Growth," *Science Research Associates*, Palo Alto, California, 27-32.

not only acts but he receives feed-back on his action through the "ups and downs" experience in the course of the play. Thus, he is immediately aware of the consequences of his actions. This *immediate* feedback allows him to evaluate his own actions and make corrections for a future opportunity.

- d) *Evaluation of other actions:* Because S/G's are usually small group activities, an individual learner not only sees the results of his own behavior but also the results of other players' activities and he can make judgements, or learn therefrom.
- e) *Verbal and interpersonal skills:* Many simulation/games which combine both the board-game and role-play formats provide the learner with an opportunity to practice, and consequently develop, verbal skills of persuasion and eloquence, as well as interpersonal skills such as bargaining, advising and responding to a challenge.
- f) *Perception of the interrelatedness of events over time:* Perhaps the single most powerful aspect of a simulation/game is its ability to concentrate a reality, which normally occurs over months or even years, into a short span of time. This concentration allows the learner to grasp the implications of facts and events as they are related to one another. When in real life a *campesino* invests in fertilizer he must wait several months for his "pay-off". Sometimes the "pay-off" never comes because of intervening events, like bad weather or bad seed. Even if he does manage to increase his yields, it is hard for him to understand that fertilizer was the important variable. The time-lag between treatment and result is simply too great. *Hacienda* lasts from two to five hours. Players are encouraged to improve their land by investing in fertilizer and irrigation. The pay-off for such investments are graphically illustrated

on the property cards which players receive. Farmers begin to see (in a simplistic fashion, but see, nonetheless) that investment in fertilizer can have real benefits. Similar relationships are illustrated when loans made by the credit co-op are compared to the high interest rates of the Bank, by the investments that farmers decide to make in education, or the risks they decide to take in marketing their goods. In each case the simulation is focusing a whole series of complex and interrelated events in a way that enables the player to weigh their importance and act on the basis of his analyses.

3. *HOW DO SIMULATION/GAMES MEET FREIRE'S REQUIREMENT OF A LIBERATING EDUCATION?*

A. *FREIRE:*

"Knowledge emerges only through invention and re-invention through the ceaseless impatient, continuing, hopeful inquiry men pursue in the world, with the world, and with each other."⁴

Players in simulation/games are the masters of their own destinies within the restraints of the S/G. They are able to make decisions, to cause events, and to control outcomes. Simulation places the learner in a world over which he personally has some influence. When a player is assigned a role, it is his interpretation of that role which brings it to life. Thus, the player is forced to bring his own experience to bear on the learning environment. That experience then becomes part of the group's experience.

Pedagogy of the Oppressed, p. 58

B. FREIRE:

" In order to move, men must perceive their state not as fated and unalterable, but merely as limiting - and therefore challenging." *

This is precisely the function of the constraints operating in a S/G. They act to challenge, but not to stifle activity. The player is forced to act on his own behalf. That is, perhaps, the best definition of "play" itself.

Simulation/games are replicas of real-life situations. The content of education is reality itself scaled-down, and concentrated so as to be both manageable and useful to the learner.

FREIRE:

"Accordingly, the point of departure must always be with men in the here and now, which constitutes the situation within which they are submerged, from which they emerge, and in which they intervene." **

The process Freire describes as problem-posing parallels very closely the same process used to develop simulation/games. An initial "investigative" phase must precede any actual design work on the simulation. It is essential that visits be made to target areas. Community people are interviewed and careful notes kept of their perceptions of the basic aspects of community life. If the S/G is to have specific roles such as Hacienda-owner, Indian, or Tienda-owner, then a knowledge of the manner in which these people are perceived by the players is essential. Gradually, a pilot S/G begins to take form. This pilot corresponds to Freire's

* *Ibid.*, p. 73.

** *Ibid.*, pp. 72-73.

initial "codes." Rules are not written down nor do they become fixed. Small groups of individuals from local communities are brought together to play the pilot S/G which is taught to the participants orally. It is made clear that they should make any changes in the S/G which they feel will make it more realistic. These sessions correspond to the initial "decoding" process which Freire requires to check out the validity of the initial codes. Game play is recorded when possible for later analysis. In the case of *Hacienda*, one group felt the need for a lawyer role to be added. The lawyer became the holder of information about the "rules". He was able to sell information to other players and while he took no active part in the S/G he became a pivotal element in its development. At the pilot stage, appropriate changes are made and the S/G is put in a semi-final form. We say semi-final because the S/G never becomes dogmatized. It is seen as a vehicle through which individual communities can express their own reality, and not as an instrument of banking education which provides pat answers.

D. The student-teacher relationship is totally redefined when using a simulation/game. Indeed, it is valid to ask if there exists a "teacher" role at all. Certainly there is no one individual who is the source of truth. The S/G itself, through the interaction of the players, creates its own truth deriving from the constraints imposed by the oral rules and structure. Truth is the *result* of the S/G. And those results are rarely simplistic. For one player there may be large pay-offs for investing in fertilizer; for another his ruin. Fact is not based upon the imposition of outside authority, but rather on the interaction of forces which should, if the game is properly designed, reflect real-world forces. The results of a simulation/game form a new reality which may be discussed and analyzed by both participants and observers.

No one has special insights into the results of the game because no one can accurately predict those results. They vary with each group and with each set of decisions made by those groups. Even in cases where an authority figure might be present, he participates on an equal footing with all the players because both are being asked to

analyze a shared experience. There is no "teacher" able to say, "but I know and you do not." Both educator and student bring their own special insights to the process they have just experienced. When a farmer says, "I did not invest in fertilizer because I would have had no money left in case my wife got sick" (a CHANCE card), there is no "right" answer to his dilemma. His friends may share or dispute his feelings about taking such risks, but ultimately the decision is up to him.

Because the shared experience is concrete and familiar, many students are encouraged to speak out, to become aggressive defenders of their point of view which they are now able to defend utilizing the S/G to make their point. Role playing allows timid players to use their roles as a mouthpiece from which to speak in safety. "But I was acting the way tienda owners act, not what I myself would do." Still others who prefer to remain silent, though they do not speak out initially, gain confidence over a period of time as they see their performance in the game improve.

In this way the simulation/games can play the role of liberating educator, rather than banking-teacher. It organizes information and imposes constraints in the form of rules and structure. But it is open-ended, allowing groups of players to change rules which they, as a group, feel are unrealistic. Once, however, that the group has agreed upon a rule, that rule stands as unyielding as any real-life restraint. The S/G provokes participants into action, forcing them to make decisions. And finally, it provides a platform from which participants can speak out as equals discussing and analyzing, a common experience. The content of education is transformed from some external reality to an internal one.

E. FREIRE:

"Those truly committed to liberation must reject the banking concept in its entirety, adopting instead a concept of men as conscious beings, and consciousness as consciousness intent upon the world. They must abandon the educational goal of deposit-making and

replace it with the posing of problems of men in their relations with the world."*

This theme of problem-posing which Freire so strongly advocates is the central theme of simulation/gaming, as well. The nature of the game is to pose a problem abstracted from a real-world situation. But the problem is posed in such a way that the learner is able to act in order to resolve it. When a player is faced with the choice of investing in fertilizer for his next year's crop or passing this opportunity by, he is faced with a real-life dilemma. Is a possible future return worth the risk required? The solution to that problem is complex and depends as much upon the learner's perception as objective analysis of the situation. Simulation/games focus upon both the internal and the external factors involved in decision-making.

FREIRE:

Students as they are increasingly posed with problems relating to 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.**

F. As we have pointed out a simulation/game such as *Hacienda* or *Monopoly* brings a large number of interrelated problems to bear on the learner. The decision to invest in fertilizer must be weighed against a whole series of other alternatives; investing in education, acquiring a bank loan, having a reserve against bad luck at the market, or encountering an unexpected illness in the family. The S/G

* *Ibid.*, p. 66.

** *Ibid.*, p. 69.

concentrates a series of crucial decision-points, which might normally occur over a long period of time, into a time-span which allows the learner to critically match decision with consequence.

G. At no point in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* does Freire say that learning should be fun. But this aspect of simulation/games cannot be overlooked. The fact is that most people enjoy playing them if they are well designed. Even individuals who may find competition odious enjoy the opportunity to play a role or make decisions which affect the outcome of the game. Experience in the use of simulation/games with rural adults in Ecuador has indicated that S/Gs work well in various cultural settings. Simulation/games were absolutely unknown to the villages of Ecuador's sierra, and yet after only three months we found men carrying *Hacienda* on foot for miles in order to play it with some friends. It is still necessary to introduce S/Gs to a much broader cultural spectrum, but at this point we are optimistic that they are applicable in a variety of different cultural environments.

In summary, it has been recognized that simulation/games alter the relationship between the educator and the learner by mediating that relationship and creating a new experience which brings both *together as equals*. We have suggested that simulation/games are powerful tools for focusing the content of education on real-world problems related to the experiences which learners encounter in their everyday life. And finally, simulation/games pose *open-ended problems* which the learner resolves through his interaction with other players and the real constraints imposed by the S/G.

4. WHY DO WE NEED SIMULATION/GAMES AS A TOOL OF LIBERATING EDUCATION?

Freire's prerequisite for problem-posing models of education imposes impossible limitations on most traditional forms of educational methodologies. The task of transforming a lecture, a reading assignment, or a test into a form of liberating education is too great a challenge for even the most enterprising of educators. But Freire offers

us his own methodology and a proven record of success; is that not enough? In the author's opinion, it is not.

When conscientization becomes a widely accepted goal of education, and let it be clear that presently it is not, it will become subject to the criteria applied to all forms of mass education. At the moment, the cost of applying Freire's method on a mass scale will have to be determined. The problems of training manpower for his approach is likely to be expensive because it relies heavily upon attitude development rather than "skills" training. Training an educator to be hopeful and loving is a different and more challenging problem than teaching him to give a lecture in such a way that his students are able to hear him clearly.

Our experience in Ecuador has indicated that locally-selected facilitators are able to use simulation/games such as *Hacienda* effectively with small groups of their peers during evening classes. Additional evidence in the United States comes from a national program called "Youth Tutoring Youth" in which teenage underachievers in high school are using games which they themselves have created to tutor younger underachieving peers.* The surprising result in this program has been a significant increase in the tutor's achievement level. In both of these programs, games help the paraprofessional educators by offering a challenging structure in which both they and their students may interact as equals. These experiences make us hopeful that simulation/games offer a practical vehicle for avoiding the costly and often times unsuccessful attempts at attitude training which Freire's method would seem to require.

Freire himself has stressed the need to adapt his methodology to different social and cultural environments. Speaking in Tanzania recently, he clearly formulated such a challenge for the African participants. But let us agree for a moment that Freire's cultural circles are the best

* Gartner, Alan, Kohler, Mary and Riessman, Frank, *Children Teaching Children*, Harper & Row Publishers, New York. Chapter 3, 53-73.

means of promoting a liberating education for some. Modern educational dogma tells us that this will not be so for everyone. Experts recognize the existence of different learning styles and the importance of matching learning styles to appropriate instructional treatments. If it can be shown that simulation/gaming can also be an effective instrument for *conscientização*, we have increased the number of people we can reach by increasing the diversity of available means and methodologies.

To date the majority of educational research done on simulations has been performed within the context of the school or business environment. In a recently published doctoral dissertation, Alfred S. Hartwell says

Efforts to evaluate the effectiveness of simulation at the secondary school level have also failed to substantiate claims that it excels other techniques in producing cognitive skills.*

Dr. Hartwell goes on to point out that one possible explanation for the discrepancy between the enthusiasm of educators who have used simulations and the research findings which indicate their lack of superiority over other instructional strategies is that the concurrent research approaches are simply "not measuring the potency of simulation as an instructional method."** Add to this the fact that practically no serious research has been done using simulation strategies with non-literate populations and we are left with a powerful argument for continued experimentation in a variety of different instructional settings.

It has been the intent of this paper to indicate how simulation/games might bring a new educational methodology

* Hartwell, Alfred S., *The Effects of Role Playing in an Instructional Simulation*. Dissertation, University of Massachusetts, School of Education, 1972. 14.

** *Ibid.*, p. 15.

to bear upon the philosophy of *conscientização*. The author is acutely aware of the propensity of a new idea like *conscientização* to attract both charlatans and the naive to its cause. Consequently, the intended outcome of this paper is not the enshrinement of simulation/games in the pantheon of Freire methodology, but rather to propose consideration and experimentation with simulation/games as a possible new approach to achievement of Freire's purposes. The experimentation has already begun in Ecuador as illustrated in other technical notes in this series. But to date, it is too limited to provide us with the breadth of information we need to offer simulation/games as a truly cross-cultural and liberating educational methodology.

REVIEWS ON PAULO FREIRE'S WORKS

Freire, Paulo. *L'éducation: pratique de la liberté*.
(Education: practice of freedom). Preface by Francisco
C. Weffort. Translated from the Portuguese. Paris, Editions
du Cerf, 1971. 154 p. Ill.

ABSTRACT

Preface

The preface reflects Paulo Freire's opinions on the educational system and illiteracy in Brazil, opinions which are based on his personal experience as an educator. It explains the new educational movement founded on the liberation of the masses. It also stresses the unity of theory and action in its approach to education, and shows why it failed from the political point of view, since its ideology led to a climate of conflict.

The preface provides its writer with the opportunity of analysing the history of the education movement in Brazil over the past ten years in comparison with the political situation of the country; a movement which is succeeding in awakening the political awareness of the masses.

Part I. Brazilian society in transition

Brazilian society today is in a period of transition. In the past decade the masses have had no choice, no power of criticism or personal freedom and in general were submerged gregariously, a tool for the all-powerful social elite of the community. At present, however, the values of the past are struggling to survive against the people's emerging

new sense of values. The starting point of this period of change through which Brazil is going, was the élite, a closed society controlling the economy, practising slavery, anti-democratic, and completely ignoring the populace. The people were prisoners of an unfair "order". A new society began to open up in the wake of industrial development. The people had to be assisted to take their place in development. This could be accomplished only through education, which must pass through various stages: the initial stage of total obscurantism, the post-primary stage in which man is restricted to a purely vegetative activity, and the pre-critical stage, directed towards social and political responsibility. In Brazil, however, sectarian irrationalism soon began to obstruct this educational action.

Part II. A closed society and lack of democratic experience

The historical background of the country is responsible for its lack of experience in democracy. Political autonomy has always been denied to the people on account of the conditions of colonialization. This was founded on economic exploitation by the large estate owners opposed by definition to the freedom of the people. The Portuguese colonists were interested only in the commercial exploitation of the territory, and ignored the cultural domain. This system created an ideal setting for dominating oppression and authoritarianism, forestalling "dialogue" with the people. The result was a certain masochistic love of submission and compromise, excluding all sense of criticism. When the Portuguese Government set itself up in Rio, a first wave of reforms brought about an increase in the power of the towns and a decline of the powers of the rural patriarchate. But this transfer of power worked to the advantage of the wealthy bourgeoisie in the towns and not to that of the ordinary citizen. Only at the turn of the century was a democratic political structure imported from Europe. This, however, was superimposed on a social situation of oppression, and proved to be a failure. The people still remained on "the outside" of events.

Part III. Education versus "massification"

An examination of the history of Brazil led educationists to assist the popular masses during this transitional period by proposing an education which developed the critical faculties. Such an education would allow the mass of people to progress from a post-primary awareness to a pre-critical awareness and to resist the pressures exerted by the élite. These pressures are induced by the emancipation of the popular masses and lead to a climate of irrationalism of which the people are victims. Economic development, by suppressing the oppression of the poor, assists in their emancipation and favours democracy.

The new educational system should give the individual enough critical sense to resist "massification", the spirit of gregarity and rigidity, which are opposed to the changes inherent in any democracy. The Brazilian had to be helped to adapt himself to democracy by the practice of participation, and not by theory and verbalism in the manner of traditional education. Two experiments illustrate the success of the new educational system: the ISEB (Higher Institute of Brazilian Studies) has inculcated the notion of a national culture adapted to local needs and not copied from European or North American civilization. Its example has been followed by the University of Brasilia.

Part IV. Education and conscientization

Here the author sets out the balance sheet of the quantitative and qualitative deficits of education in Brazil; his opinions are strengthened by the personal experience he acquired as the director of various educational movements.

Next he describes his educational method which has to be sufficiently active to provide training in critical judgment and must be based on dialogue. It comprises five phases:

1. making an inventory of the illiterates' verbal universe;
2. choosing the key-words in this list according to richness of sound, phonetic difficulty and pragmatic content;

3. thinking up pictures of situations connected with the illiterates' lives;
4. preparing cards to help the discussion leaders control debates;
5. designing cards grouping the phonemic sequences corresponding to the key-words. The first picture is then projected along with its corresponding key-word. De-coding of the picture leads to understanding of the picture and actual semantic activity.

Unfortunately, this programme was suppressed by the political upheaval in 1964 and the author was exiled.

APPENDIX

The graphic presentation of ten pictures and key-words, accompanied by commentaries, facilitates comprehension of the text.

CRITICAL REVIEW

Paulo Freire, a man of thought and of action, conceives the finalities, contents and methods of adult education in relation to specific aspects of the recent history of Brazil, the political awakening of the popular classes, the crisis of the ruling élites, and the political upheaval of 1964.

The first three chapters of this work are; therefore, devoted to an analysis of Brazilian society in transition and the educational implications of the results of such analysis. The last chapter deals more specifically with the methodological aspects of teaching illiterates, or rather, to use the terminology proposed by the writer, the *critical education of literacy students*.

Certain characteristic features of the Brazilian people - lack of democratic experience, submission, mutism - were revealed during the colonial period in the system of *latifundium*, the large estate holdings. Various subsequent events contributed to the destruction of an economy based on the exploitation of the huge landed estate. Today, Brazil is going through a period of transition, changing from a closed into an open society. Certain choices, therefore, have to be made, particularly in the field of education. Its role should be to propose reflection on themselves, their times and their responsibilities to the people. A critical awareness of the problems and difficulties to be surmounted should serve, among other things, to fight against despair.

But, as Paulo Freire insists, "there can be no conscientization - which is on a higher level than simple awareness - without human action to transform social reality in depth."

Various stages can be distinguished in the process of conscientization:

1. At the *primary awareness* stage, man's interests are centred on the most vegetative aspects of his life. Furthermore, the individual considers himself free to interpret facts in a subjective and arbitrary fashion.
2. *Post-primary or magical awareness* is characterized by a certain over-simplification in interpreting facts, to which docile submission is expected. This results in a fatalistic attitude towards economic and social reality.
3. At the *pre-critical awareness* stage, man substitutes logical responses for magical explanations and tries to verify *a priori* affirmations.
4. Finally, *critical awareness* leads to a perception of facts as they are, within their logical and empirical relationships.

The progress from the first to the second level of conscientization goes hand in hand with the transformation of

Brazilian society. But systematic educational effort is necessary for accession to the higher stages.

Such educational effort relies on the principle according to which man, considered as an incomplete being capable of further growth can, at the same time, apprehend the world, conceived as an objective reality, and become part of it; in other words, lend himself to reality while he is engaged in transforming it. Here, Paulo Freire opposes *integration* to certain instinctive types of behaviour such as *adaptation* or *accommodation* which lead to *deracination* and "detemporization."

In order to fight *massification* effectively, education must be oriented towards decision and the practice of social and political responsibility. It should provide the student with the means of resisting the forces of *deracination*, and teach him methods that are valid in all scientific activity. Lastly, it should place the student in a situation of permanent dialogue with others.

These principles were defined progressively by Paulo Freire in the course of the 15 years he devoted to adult education up to 1962. After this date, he worked out new teaching methods in his work for the Popular Culture Movement in Recife: the transformation of the class into a cultural club, the division of programmes into learning units, and the conception of the student as a group participant. These methods were later extended to work with literacy students.

Paulo Freire's methodology follows three guide-lines:

1. Implementation of an active pedagogy, based on dialogue and criticism.
2. Organization of educational content centred on the notions of *nature* and *culture*. Whereas nature's role is that of mediator in inter-human relationships, culture results from man's labour and creative effort whatever his particular activity may be.
3. Use of new techniques, such as the reduction of the concept of culture to its essential components and the decoding, by the students, of pictures representing life situations.

The production of teaching materials also comprises several tasks: inventory of the verbal universe of the work groups, choice of key-words, preparation of pictures showing situations familiar to the group members in their daily life and preparation of work cards for the discussion leaders. In the selection of key-words, or *generative words*, three criteria are applied: the richness of sound, phonetic difficulty and pragmatic content of the words.

The end of the book offers detailed, practical advice concerning the application of the method. In addition, the author presents, as an Appendix, ten pictures with their respective commentaries, and the list of seventeen key-words (shanty-town, rain, plough, land, etc.) chosen for the State of Rio.

In conclusion, it should be noted that the use of these different teaching methods allows an adult to become literate in 45 days, according to the author.

The theoretical and practical information contained in the work of Paulo Freire's book cannot fail to be of the greatest interest to all organizations concerned with literacy problems or, more generally, with adult education. But can one agree with the opinion of F.C. Weffort stated in his preface, that Paulo Freire's educational ideas are valid for all Third World countries? Does not the author himself constantly refer to the special features of the transitional period in which Brazil at present finds itself? In any case, it would appear difficult to extend these ideas to the literacy of migrant workers, who are faced with problems of linguistic and cultural interference.

It would, however, be worthwhile to make use of the methods proposed by Paulo Freire as a means of accelerating conscientization, in a sequence of steps which recall the *law of the three states* formulated by Auguste Comte, in order to account for the evolution of humanity and the development of the individual. But can one accede to a scientific knowledge of the world when one starts with only a collective reflections on experience of life? Doubtless this experience, in conjunction with economic changes, is a necessary condition

of this accession; but nevertheless it is not the only one. The pedagogy of dialogue must be associated with an effort to assimilate the capital of concepts and knowledge accumulated by earlier generations. Such effort does not imply a perfectly symmetrical relationship between teacher and student. Nevertheless, as the author points out, one cannot separate the assimilation of knowledge from action intended to transform the world. Perhaps the modalities of educational intervention should be re-defined for each of the levels of conscientization. One could then draw a distinction between the universal values of science and technology and the values peculiar to each specific culture.

In any case, Paulo Freire's experience is a remarkable example of the integration of the pedagogical act into the realities of our time.

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* * *

Freire, Paulo. *Pedagogy Of The Oppressed*. New York, Herder and Herder, 1970. 186 p.*

In the three years since this work has been known to exist in manuscript, it has become respected in North America as a small classic of pedagogical theory. Its high status is partly a charismatic extension of the respect properly accorded its author for the courage and dedication shown in

* This critical review is reprinted with permission from *Comparative Education Review*. Vol 15, no. 3, October, 1971.

his work among the peasants of the Brazilian backlands, prior to his exile from that country; and partly to publicity given to Freire's work through his former associates at CIDOX in Cuernavaca - surely the world's most exciting center for education thought, especially with reference to the cultural conflicts of Latin-American countries. It is also, I suspect, partly a consequence of his good fortune in having written in Portuguese - a factor, which till the present, wooden translation appeared, effectively prevented most North American readers from forming their own judgment of the book.

There is certainly no honor to be gained by putting down work so well-intentioned and generally well-received. But there is a certain satisfaction, for this is, in the English version at least, a truly bad book, even judged on terms the author would, if consistent, have to accept. His central point, above all, is that peasants and the poor must be approached by those who would educate them in a spirit of mutuality and acceptance of their world-view, with respect for their experience of life in all its concrete particularity. There are writers who indeed approach the poor in this way, both in sharing and in recounting their lives: Robert Coles, Todd Gitlin and Nanci Hollander, notably. The late Oscar Lewis was not, I think, quite the equal of these in authenticity; but he was considerably more convincing in his response to the lives of the poor than Freire - and Lewis was a gringo writing about Mexicans and Puerto Ricans.

In *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Senhor Freire is not, of course, writing ethnography; and is under no obligation to provide detailed accounts of daily life among the oppressed. But one might expect the book to deal concretely with what, in fact, takes place in the dialogues with which Freire hopes to replace the stilted and biased conventionalities of the classroom; and that in scenes involving the participation by peasants in their own education (which, as Freire rightly insists, is the heart of the matter) the peasants and the scenes would both seem real. Instead, the following passage is quite characteristic:

"In one of the themematic investigations* carried out in Santiago, a group of tenement residents discussed a scene

* This particular investigation was, unfortunately, not completed.

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 souse 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.

There are two important aspects to these declarations. On the one hand, they verbalize the connection between earning low wages, feeling exploited, and getting drunk - getting drunk as a flight from reality, as an attempt to overcome the frustration of inaction, as an ultimate self-destructive solution. On the other hand, they manifest the need to rate the drunkard highly. He is the "only one useful to his country because he works, while the others only gab." After praising the drunkard, the participants then identify themselves with him, as workers who also drink - 'decent workers.'

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 virtue."

I have inserted so long a quotation in a brief review because this excerpt, footnotes and all, captures so well both the book's essential viewpoint and its weaknesses: the

* The psychiatrist Patricio Lope, whose work is described in *Educação como Prática da Liberdade*.

pedantic style, the consistent underestimate of the opposition "moralistic educators", indeed; if it were only that simple! and the very peculiar avoidance of Freire's own extensive experience as a source of illustrative material, in preference for fragments of published work. This is not altogether discreditable to the book because, in a sense it helps fortify Freire's point. He himself is an educated Brazilian of the highest order. Richard Shaull, in his Foreword, states that Freire's "thought on the philosophy of education was first expressed in 1959 in his doctoral dissertation at the University of Recife, and later in his work as Professor of the History and Philosophy of Education in the same university, as well as in his early experiments with the teaching of illiterates in the same city." This sums up the conflict quite nicely while its depth and the fact that it still influences Freire's work after a decade should convince any reader that Brazilian education is even more formidable an obstacle to human communication than Freire insists. His positive achievement in recognizing that formal education in such - and perhaps in any - society is counter-revolutionary and oppressive is therefore all the more notable. And the political function of education that this insight implies cannot be stated more specifically than Freire does in the concluding passage of the book:

"The oppressor elaborates his theory of action without the people, for 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."

The Brazilian peasant, considering the oppressive climate, probably needs a weatherman. Paulo Freire isn't one. And the the American reader intent, like Freire, on using education as a subversive activity has an array of sharper and more comprehensive sources at his disposal, though most of these are not the work of persons whose primary interests lie in

education, but in the peculiar and malignant dynamics of American society itself. That society - and Brazilian, too, I suspect - is pretty educational. You just can't beat the Indochina war and what Freire would call its epiphenomena as a source of audio-visual material.

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Reviewed

by

Nathan Kravetz*

This volume is intended as a prototype of others yet to come in communicating the problems of adult education in Canada. For this reason, I must note from the outset that benefits from such a document are to be sought in at least two dimensions.

One must be as a reflection of, and response to, the conditions in Canada (and often, by reasons of similarities and evident proximity, to the United States) which concern the educator of adults. This must, of course, refer also to the policy-makers, planners and administrators of adult education if not to the client himself.

A second dimension for ascertaining value in the publication is with regard to the problems of adult education on a much broader scale. That is,

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can adult educators in such countries as England, Scandinavia, Germany, Argentina, or Japan derive value from these discussions and proposals.

We must note that the adult education "target" in the developed countries cannot be equated with the focus to be placed on the needy adult of nations still in the development process, with as yet un-attained desired levels of literacy and universal education.

The book, in fact, is of considerable value and should be an important resource to adult educators who work in conditions comparable to those in Canada. On the other hand, it would be of interest, particularly as regards certain aspects of policy-making and of teaching methods, for adult education workers in less-developed countries. It would require, in most other aspects, some rather difficult and unprofitable "leaps" to apply with relevance a large part of the volume's discussions.

With the foregoing *caveat*, I note with special commendation such articles as B.M. Webb's on "Canada's Sub-Literate Adults: Can They, or Should They Return to School?" Webb states that even in the advanced Canadian context adult sub-literacy affects substantial numbers: they are under-educated and illiterate in relation to the rising expectations of individuals and the increasing complexity of society's demands.

As causes, he points to the numerous inadequacies of the school as an educational and social institution. Its resources are too often insufficient, irrelevant, and without sufficient flexibility to allow for self-evaluation and change. Economic factors are also indicated by Webb as contributing to illiteracy and under-education: poverty, enforced immobility, and abrupt technological shifts.

Webb stresses, in addition, the personal-motivational characteristics of individuals which may