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BLOOMSBURY
REVELATIONS

PAULO FREIRE

**EDUCATION FOR
CRITICAL
CONSCIOUSNESS**

'Paulo Freire demonstrated – more than anyone – that education was the foundation of all freedoms; that it alone can give people mastery over their destiny.'

FEDERICO MAYOR ZARAGOZA
UNESCO DIRECTOR GENERAL
1987–99

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Bloomsbury Academic

An imprint of Bloomsbury Publishing Plc

50 Bedford Square
London
WC1B 3DP
UK

175 Fifth Avenue
New York
NY 10010
USA

www.bloomsbury.com

© 1974 by Sheed and Ward Ltd

First edition published 1974

This edition published 2013 by Bloomsbury Academic

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British Library Cataloguing-in-Publication Data

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

EISBN: 978-1-7809-3745-8

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

A catalogue record for this book is available from the Library of Congress.

Typeset by Newgen Imaging Systems Pvt Ltd, Chennai, India

Contents

Introduction vii

Preface xv

Part One Education as the Practice of Freedom 1

- 1** Society in Transition 3
- 2** Closed Society and Democratic Inexperience 19
- 3** Education versus Massification 29
- 4** Education and Conscientização 39
- 5** Postscript 55
- 6** Appendix 57

Part Two Extension or Communication 81

Chapter I 83

Chapter II 99

Chapter III 121



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Introduction

To think dialectically is to decree the obsolescence of cherished concepts which explain even one's recent past. One of the marks of a true dialectician, however, is the ability to "move beyond" the past without repudiating it in the name of new levels of critical consciousness presently enjoyed. No contemporary writer more persistently explores the many dimensions of critical consciousness than Paulo Freire, a multi-cultural educator with the whole world as his classroom notwithstanding the totally Brazilian flavor of his emotions, his language, and his universe of thought. Freire never tires of looking for new forms of critical consciousness and unearthing new links between oppression in a variety of settings and the liberating effects of "conscientização." The unifying thread in his work is critical consciousness as the motor of cultural emancipation.

The publication in English at this time of two essays written by Freire in 1965 and 1968, respectively, aims at recapturing for U.S. readers what Paulo Freire calls the "*naïveté* of his thought" at the time of writing. Faithful to the historicity of human experience, Freire refuses to disown, even while transcending, his past writings and actions. If such fidelity troubles readers who would make of "conscientização" or of Freire himself a myth or an object of consumption, so be it! Freire is the first to rejoice in thus gaining a new weapon against mystification.

"Education as the Practice of Freedom" grows out of Paulo Freire's creative efforts in adult literacy throughout Brazil prior to the military coup of April 1, 1964, which eventually resulted in his exile. Were the piece to be written today, I feel certain that its title would become "Education as the Praxis of Liberation." For although Freire's earlier work does view action as *praxis*, the precise symbiosis between reflective action and



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an (implicit) ideology of paternalism, social control, and non-reciprocity between experts and “helpees.” If, on the other hand, one is to adopt a *method* which fosters dialogue and reciprocity, one must first be *ideologically* committed to equality, to the abolition of privilege, and to non-elitist forms of leadership wherein special qualifications may be exercised, but are not perpetuated. In rejecting the language and practice of extensionism, therefore, Freire does not negate the value of bringing agricultural technology or skills to peasants. But he asserts that those who have such knowledge must engage in dialogue wherein they may learn, together with peasants, how to apply their common partial knowledge to the *totality* of the problematized rural situation. Implied here is the judgment, which Freire makes unequivocally, that there can be no valid “aid” and that there is no room in development language for the terms “donors” and “recipients.” For this reason, therefore, “Extension or Communication” may strike readers in this country as a radical attack on U.S. foreign-aid policy and U.S. treatment of the domestic “poverty” issue. This exegesis of the oppressive character of all non-reciprocal relationships can best be read in tandem with *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* and *Cultural Action for Freedom*.

In his preface to the Spanish version of the essay, Jacques Chonchol, Minister of Agriculture in Chile’s Allende government, correctly draws attention to Freire’s analysis of the relations between technology and modernization. As Chonchol puts it, Freire “shows how to avoid the traditionalism of the status quo without falling into technological messianism.” And both conclude that “while all development is modernization, not all modernization is development.” One glimpses here the dialectic at work in Chile between the language of development and the vocabulary of liberation. This cross-fertilization is explicit in Freire’s discussion of “mechanistic modernization.” For him modernization is a purely mechanical process, responsive to the catalytic action of technicians, or manipulators who keep the locus of decisions outside the society undergoing change. This approach prevents that society, in short, from becoming the subject of its own transformation. But true agricultural development, like genuine land reform, requires that new structures and practices emerge from the old ones, thanks to the creativity generated by critical exchanges between “advanced technology and the empirical techniques of the peasants.” As used here the term “empirical” evokes not the realm of social-science



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Preface

In this essay, Paulo Freire, the internationally renowned Brazilian educator who recently lived and worked in Chile, analyzes how technicians and peasants can communicate in the process of developing a new agrarian society.

Freire's thought is profound and at times difficult to follow but penetrating; its essence reveals a new world of truths, relations among these truths, and a logical ordering of concepts. We perceive that words, their meaning, their context, the actions of men, their struggle to dominate the natural world and to create their culture and their history form a totality in which each aspect has significance not only in itself but in function of the whole.

More than just an analysis of the educational task of the agronomist (mistitled an "extension agent") the present essay seems to me to be a profound synthesis of the role Paulo Freire attributes to education understood in its true perspective: that of humanizing man through his conscious action to transform the world.

Freire begins his work by analyzing the term "extension" from different points of view: the linguistic meaning of the word, a criticism based on the philosophical theory of knowledge, and a study of the relations between the concepts of extension and cultural invasion. Subsequently he discusses agrarian reform and change, demonstrating the profound opposition which exists between extension and communication. The agronomist-educator, like teachers in general, must choose communication if he genuinely wants to reach men—not by being abstract, but by being concrete, within a historical reality.

Reading this essay makes us realize the poverty and limitations of the concept of agricultural extension which has prevailed among us and many other Latin-American countries, in spite of the generosity



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Part One

Education As The Practice Of Freedom

Translated and Edited by
Myra Bergman Ramos



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and behaving; by more or less generalized attitudes. The concrete representations of many of these aspirations, concerns, and values, as well as the obstacles to their fulfillment, constitute the themes of that epoch, which in turn indicate tasks to be carried out.⁴ The epochs are fulfilled to the degree that their themes are grasped and their tasks solved; and they are superseded when their themes and tasks no longer correspond to newly emerging concerns.

Men play a crucial role in the fulfillment and in the superseding of the epochs. Whether or not men can perceive the epochal themes and above all, how they act upon the reality within which these themes are generated will largely determine their humanization or dehumanization, their affirmation as Subjects or their reduction as objects. For only as men grasp the themes can they intervene in reality instead of remaining mere onlookers. And only by developing a permanently critical attitude can men overcome a posture of adjustment in order to become integrated with the spirit of the time. To the extent that an epoch dynamically generates its own themes, men will have to make "more and more use of intellectual, and less and less of emotional and instinctive functions . . ." ⁵

But unfortunately, what happens to a greater or lesser degree in the various "worlds" into which the world is divided is that the ordinary person is crushed, diminished, converted into a spectator, maneuvered by myths which powerful social forces have created. These myths turn against him; they destroy and annihilate him. Tragically frightened, men fear authentic relationships and even doubt the possibility of their existence. On the other hand, fearing solitude, they gather in groups lacking in any critical and loving ties which might transform them into a cooperating unit, into a true community. "Gregariousness is always the refuge of mediocrities," said Nikolai Nikolaievich Vedeniapin in *Dr. Zhivago*. It is also an imprisoning armor which prevents men from loving.

Perhaps the greatest tragedy of modern man is his domination by the force of these myths and his manipulation by organized advertising, ideological or otherwise. Gradually, without even realizing the loss, he relinquishes his capacity for choice; he is expelled from the orbit of decisions. Ordinary men do not perceive the tasks of the time; the latter are interpreted by an "elite" and presented in the form of recipes, of prescriptions. And when men try to save themselves by following



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silence in the name of their own freedom. Men and institutions began to divide into two general categories—reactionaries and progressives; into those men and institutions which were *in* the process of transition and those which were not only *in* but *of* transition. The deepening of the clash between old and new encouraged a tendency to choose one side or the other; and the emotional climate of the time encouraged the tendency to become radical about that choice.

Radicalization involves increased commitment to the position one has chosen. It is predominantly critical, loving, humble, and communicative, and therefore a positive stance. The man who has made a radical option does not deny another man's right to choose, nor does he try to impose his own choice. He can discuss their respective positions. He is convinced he is right, but respects another man's prerogative to judge himself correct. He tries to convince and convert, not to crush his opponent. The radical does, however, have the duty, imposed by love itself, to react against the violence of those who try to silence him—of those who, in the name of freedom, kill his freedom and their own.⁹ To be radical does not imply self-flagellation. Radicals cannot passively accept a situation in which the excessive power of a few leads to the dehumanization of all.

Unfortunately, the Brazilian people, elite and masses alike, were generally unprepared to evaluate the transition critically; and so, tossed about by the force of the contending contradictions, they began to fall into sectarian positions instead of opting for radical solutions. Sectarianism is predominantly emotional and uncritical. It is arrogant, antialogical and thus anticomunicative. It is a reactionary stance, whether on the part of a rightist (whom I consider a "born" sectarian) *or* a leftist. The sectarian creates nothing because he cannot love. Disrespecting the choices of others, he tries to impose his own choice on everyone else. Herein lies the inclination of the sectarian to activism: action without the vigilance of reflection; herein his taste for sloganizing, which generally remains at the level of myth and half-truths and attributes absolute value to the purely relative.¹⁰ The radical, in contrast, rejects activism and submits his actions to reflection.

The sectarian, whether rightist or leftist, sets himself up as the proprietor of history, as its sole creator, and the one entitled to set the pace of its movement. Rightist and leftist sectarians do differ in that one desires to stop the course of history, the other to anticipate it. On the



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consciousness. For without an increasingly critical consciousness men are not able to integrate themselves into a transitional society, marked by intense change and contradictions. Assistencialism is thus both an effect and a cause of massification.

The important thing is to help men (and nations) help themselves,¹⁶ to place them in consciously critical confrontation with their problems, to make them the agents of their own recuperation. In contrast, assistencialism robs men of a fundamental human necessity—responsibility, of which Simone Weil says:

For this need to be satisfied it is necessary that a man should often have to take decisions in matters great or small affecting interests that are distinct from his own, but in regard to which he feels a personal concern.¹⁷

Responsibility cannot be acquired intellectually, but only through experience. Assistencialism offers no responsibility, no opportunity to make decisions, but only gestures and attitudes which encourage passivity. Whether the assistance is of foreign or national origin, this method cannot lead a country to a democratic destination.

Brazil in transition needed urgently to find rapid and sure solutions to its distressing problems—but *solutions with the people and never for them or imposed upon them*. What was needed was to go to the people and help them to enter the historical process critically. The prerequisite for this task was a form of education enabling the people to reflect on themselves, their responsibilities, and their role in the new cultural climate—indeed to reflect on their very *power* of reflection. The resulting development of this power would mean an increased capacity for choice. Such an education would take into the most serious account the various levels at which the Brazilian people perceived their reality, as being of the greatest importance for the process of their humanization. Therein lay my own concern to analyze these historically and culturally conditioned levels of understanding.

Men submerged in the historical process are characterized by a state I have described as “semi-intransitivity of consciousness.”¹⁸ It is the consciousness of men belonging to what Fernando de Azevedo has called “circumscribed” and “introverted” communities,¹⁹ the consciousness which prevailed in the closed Brazilian society and



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Notes

- 1 In the English language, the terms “live” and “exist” have assumed implications opposite to their etymological origins. As used here, to exist is more than to live, because it is more than being in the world; it is to be with the world as well. And this capacity for communication between the being which exists and the objective world gives to “existing” a quality of critical capacity not present in mere “living.” Transcending, discerning, entering into dialogue (communicating and participating) are exclusively attributes of existence. One can only exist in relation to others who also exist, and in communication with them. In this regard, see Karl Jaspers, *The Origin and Goal of History* (New Haven, 1953), and *Reason and Anti-reason in our Time* (New Haven, 1952).
- 2 See Erich Kahler, *Historia Universal del Hombre*.
- 3 See Hans Freyer, *Teoria de la época atual* (Mexico).
- 4 See Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (New York, 1970), pp. 91–92. (Translator’s note.)
- 5 Zevedei Barbu, *Democracy and Dictatorship, Their Psychology and Patterns of Life* (New York, 1956), p. 4.
- 6 (New York, 1960), pp. 255–256.
- 7 See Karl Popper, *The Open Society and Its Enemies* (Princeton, 1966).
- 8 A “massified” society is one in which the people, after entering the historical process, have been manipulated by the elite into an unthinking, manageable agglomeration. This process is termed “massification.” It stands in contrast to *conscientização*, which is the process of achieving a critical consciousness. (Translator’s note.)
- 9 Every relationship of domination, of exploitation, of oppression, is by definition violent, whether or not the violence is expressed by drastic means. In such a relationship, dominator and dominated alike are reduced to things—the former dehumanized by an excess of power, the latter by lack of it. And things cannot love. When the oppressed legitimately rise up against their oppressor, however, it is they who are usually labelled “violent,” “barbaric,” “inhuman,” and “cold.” (Among the innumerable rights claimed by the dominating consciousness is the right to define violence, and to locate it. Oppressors never see themselves as violent.)
- 10 See Tristão de Ataíde, *O Existencialismo e Outros Mitos do Nosso Tempo* (Rio de Janeiro, 1956).
- 11 For a further discussion of radicalization and sectarianism, see *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, pp. 21–24. (Translator’s note.)
- 12 At that time, radical positions in the sense I have described them were being taken principally, although not exclusively, by groups of Christians who believed with Mounier that “History,” both the history of the world and



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. . . In Brazil people say that the slave needs three "P's": *pau, pão e pano* (cudgel, bread and cloth). The phrase begins badly, with punishment, but would God that eating and clothing were as abundant as the punishment which so often is given for the slightest offense.⁴

The large estates, with highly self-sufficient economies, functioned as closed systems with a climate favoring despotism, decrees, and the "law" of the master.

In truth, there are laws which impose certain limits to the will and the ire of the masters, such as that which fixes the number of whiplashes it is permitted to inflict at one time to a slave without the intervention of the authorities; however, as I have said before, these laws are without force and perhaps are even unknown to the majority of the slaves and masters. On the other hand, the authorities are located so far distant that in reality, the punishment of a slave for a real or imaginary fault and the bad treatment resulting from the caprice and the cruelty of the master are limited only by the fear of losing the slave through death or through flight, or by respect for public opinion.⁵

The excess of power which has characterized our culture from the start created on the one hand an almost masochistic desire to submit to that power and on the other a desire to be all-powerful.⁶ This habit of submission led men to *adapt* and *adjust* to their circumstances, instead of seeking to integrate themselves with reality. Integration, the behavior characteristic of flexibly democratic regimes, requires a maximum capacity for critical thought. In contrast, the adapted man, neither dialoguing nor participating, accommodates to conditions imposed upon him and thereby acquires an authoritarian and acritical frame of mind.

The social distance characteristic of human relationships on the great estate did not permit dialogue. Even the more humane relationships between masters and slaves which prevailed on some estates produced not dialogue but paternalism, the patronizing attitude of an adult towards a child.

The proper climate for dialogue is found in open areas, where men can develop a sense of participation in a common life. Dialogue



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. . . The right to gallop or canter through the streets of the cities was the prerogative of officers and militiamen, the prerogative of men dressed and shod in European style . . . it was forbidden in the city of Recife, as of December 10, 1831, "to shout, scream, or cry out in the streets," a restriction directed against the Africans and their outbursts of a religious or festive nature.¹⁷

And it was upon this vast lack of democratic experience, characterized by a feudal mentality and sustained by a colonial economic and social structure, that we attempted to inaugurate a formal democracy. Acting in accord with our state of cultural alienation, we turned to societies we considered superior to ours in search of a prefabricated solution for our own problems. And so we imported the structure of the national democratic state without first considering our own context, unaware that the inauthenticity of superimposed solutions dooms them to failure. Not only did we lack experience in self-government when we imported the democratic state; more importantly, we were not yet able to offer the people either the circumstances or the climate for their first experiments in democracy. Upon a feudal economic structure and a social structure within which men were defeated, crushed and silenced, we superimposed a social and political form which required dialogue, participation, political and social responsibility, as well as a degree of social and political solidarity which we had not yet attained. (We had reached only the level of private solidarity, demonstrated by such manifestations as the *mutirão*.)¹⁸

And which of our historical conditions might have produced a genuinely popular, permeable, and critical consciousness upon which Brazil could authentically have founded a democratic state? Our feudal economic structure? The total power of the landholding masters? Our exaggerated habit of submission and obedience? The absence of dialogue? The force of the various governors and officials? The lack of attention to popular education? The artificially created urban centers? The self-sufficiency of the great estate, which suffocated urban life? The prejudice against manual or mechanical labor which we inherited from slavery? Our external and internal isolation as a colony? The innumerable prohibitions against any industrial production that might affect the interests of the mother country? The Colonial municipal councils, in which common men could not participate? The growing



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Chapter 3

Education versus Massification

From the start of the Brazilian transition, it became essential to achieve economic development as a support for democracy, thereby ending the oppressive power of the rich over the very poor. This development would necessarily be autonomous and national in character. It could not limit itself to technical questions or “pure” economic policy or structural reform, but would also have to involve the passage from one mentality to another: the support of basic reforms as a foundation for development, and development as a foundation for democracy itself.

The special contribution of the educator to the birth of the new society would have to be a critical education which could help to form critical attitudes, for the naïve consciousness with which the people had emerged into the historical process left them an easy prey to irrationality. Only an education facilitating the passage from naïve to critical transitivity, increasing men’s ability to perceive the challenges of their time, could prepare the people to resist the emotional power of the transition.

For as the people emerge into a state of awareness, they discover that the elite regard them with contempt;¹ in reaction, they tend whenever possible to respond aggressively. The elite, in turn, frightened at the threat to the legitimacy of their power, attempt by force or by paternalism to silence and domesticate the masses; they try to impede the process of popular emergence. These circumstances exacerbate the prevailing irrational climate, stimulating sectarian positions of various casts. And in large part the people, emerging but disorganized, illiterate and semi-literate, naïve and unprepared, become pawns of that irrationality.



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trend toward democratization but reinforced our lack of democratic experience.

We needed, then, an education which would lead men to take a new stance toward their problems—that of intimacy with those problems, one oriented toward research instead of repeating irrelevant principles. An education of “I wonder,” instead of merely, “I do.” Vitality, instead of insistence on the transmission of what Alfred North Whitehead has called “inert ideas—that is to say, ideas that are merely received into the mind without being utilised, or tested, or thrown into fresh combinations.”⁷

Critics of the Brazilian taste for verbosity have customarily accused our education of being “theoretical,” mistakenly equating theory with verbalism. On the contrary, we lacked theory—a theory of intervention in reality, the analytical contact with existence which enables one to substantiate and to experience that existence fully and completely. In this sense, theorizing is contemplation (although not in the erroneous connotation of abstraction or opposition to reality). Our education was *not* theoretical, precisely because it lacked this bent toward substantiation, toward invention, toward research.

Our traditional curriculum, disconnected from life, centered on words emptied of the reality they are meant to represent,⁸ lacking in concrete activity, could never develop a critical consciousness. Indeed, its own naïve dependence on high-sounding phrases, reliance on rote, and tendency toward abstractness actually intensified our naïveté.⁹

Our verbal culture¹⁰ corresponds to our inadequacy of dialogue, investigation, and research. As a matter of fact, I am increasingly convinced that the roots of the Brazilian taste for speeches, for “easy” words, for a well-turned phrase, lie in our lack of democratic experience. The fewer the democratic experiences which lead through concrete participation in reality to critical consciousness of it, the more a group tends to perceive and to confront that reality naïvely, to represent it verbosely. The less critical capacity a group possesses, the more ingenuously it treats problems and the more superficially it discusses subjects.

It was the climate of transition which had finally led us to identify with our reality in a systematic way. I was concerned to take advantage of that climate to attempt to rid our education of its wordiness, its lack of faith in the student and his power to discuss, to work, to create. Democracy and democratic education are founded on faith in men, on



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- 12 As Jacques Maritain has pointed out, "If we remember that the animal is a specialist, and a perfect one, all of its knowing-power being fixed upon a single task to be done, we ought to conclude that an educational program which would only aim at forming specialists ever more perfect in ever more specialized fields, and unable to pass judgment on any matter that goes beyond their specialized competence, would lead indeed to a progressive animalization of the human mind and life." *Education at the Crossroads* (New Haven, 1943), p. 19.



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adults how to read in relation to the awakening of their consciousness. We wished to design a project in which we would attempt to move from naïveté to a critical attitude at the same time we taught reading. We wanted a literacy program which would be an introduction to the democratization of culture, a program with men as its Subjects rather than as patient recipients,² a program which itself would be an act of creation, capable of releasing other creative acts, one in which students would develop the impatience and vivacity which characterize search and invention.

We began with the conviction that the role of man was not only to be in the world, but to engage in relations with the world—that through acts of creation and re-creation, man makes cultural reality and thereby adds to the natural world, which he did not make. We were certain that man's relation to reality, expressed as a Subject to an object, results in knowledge, which man could express through language.

This relation, as is already clear, is carried out by men whether or not they are literate. It is sufficient to be a person to perceive the data of reality, to be capable of knowing, even if this knowledge is mere opinion. There is no such thing as absolute ignorance or absolute wisdom.³ But men do not perceive those data in a pure form. As they apprehend a phenomenon or a problem, they also apprehend its causal links. The more accurately men grasp true causality, the more critical their understanding of reality will be. Their understanding will be magical to the degree that they fail to grasp causality. Further, critical consciousness always submits that causality to analysis; what is true today may not be so tomorrow. Naïve consciousness sees causality as a static, established fact, and thus is deceived in its perception.

Critical consciousness represents "things and facts as they exist empirically, in their causal and circumstantial correlations . . . naïve consciousness considers itself superior to facts, in control of facts, and thus free to understand them as it pleases."⁴

Magic consciousness, in contrast, simply apprehends facts and attributes to them a superior power by which it is controlled and to which it must therefore submit. Magic consciousness is characterized by fatalism, which leads men to fold their arms, resigned to the impossibility of resisting the power of facts.



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cultured, he answered with the same emphasis, "Because I work, and working, I transform the world."⁸

Once the group has perceived the distinction between the two worlds—nature and culture—and recognized man's role in each, the coordinator presents situations focusing on or expanding other aspects of culture.

The participants go on to discuss culture as a systematic acquisition of human experience, and to discover that in a lettered culture this acquisition is not limited to oral transmission, as is the case in unlettered cultures which lack graphic signs. They conclude by debating the democratization of culture, which opens the perspective of acquiring literacy.

All these discussions are critical, stimulating, and highly motivating. The illiterate perceives critically that it is necessary to learn to read and write, and prepares himself to become the agent of this learning.

To acquire literacy is more than to psychologically and mechanically dominate reading and writing techniques. It is to dominate these techniques in terms of consciousness; to understand what one reads and to write what one understands; it is to *communicate* graphically. Acquiring literacy does not involve memorizing sentences, words, or syllables—lifeless objects unconnected to an existential universe—but rather an attitude of creation and re-creation, a self-transformation producing a stance of intervention in one's context.

Thus the educator's role is fundamentally to enter into dialogue with the illiterate about concrete situations and simply to offer him the instruments with which he can teach himself to read and write. This teaching cannot be done from the top down, but only from the inside out, by the illiterate himself, with the collaboration of the educator. That is why we searched for a method which would be the instrument of the learner as well as of the educator, and which, in the lucid observation of a young Brazilian sociologist,⁹ "would identify learning *content* with the learning *process*."

Hence, our mistrust in primers,¹⁰ which set up a certain grouping of graphic signs as a gift and cast the illiterate in the role of the *object* rather than the *Subject* of his learning. Primers, even when they try to avoid this pitfall, end by *donating* to the illiterate words and sentences which really should result from his own creative effort. We opted instead for the use of "generative words," those whose syllabic elements offer,



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together, to arrive at the recognition of the vowels. The card presenting the phonemic families has been called the “discovery card.”¹⁵ Using this card to reach a synthesis, men discover the mechanism of word formation through phonemic combinations in a syllabic language like Portuguese. By appropriating this mechanism critically (not learning it by rote), they themselves can begin to produce a system of graphic signs. They can begin, with surprising ease, to create words with the phonemic combinations offered by the breakdown of a trisyllabic word, on the first day of the program.¹⁶

For example, let us take the word *tijolo* (brick) as the first generative word, placed in a “situation” of construction work. After discussing the situation in all its possible aspects, the semantic link between the word and the object it names is established. Once the word has been noted within the situation, it is presented without the object: *tijolo*.

Afterwards: *ti-jo-lo*. By moving immediately to present the “pieces” visually, we initiate the recognition of phonemic families. Beginning with the first syllable, *ti*, the group is motivated to learn the whole phonemic family resulting from the combination of the initial consonant with the other vowels. The group then learns the second family through the visual presentation of *jo*, and finally arrives at the third family.

When the phonemic family is projected, the group at first recognizes only the syllable of the word which has been shown:

(ta-te-ti-to-tu), (ja-je-ji-jo-ju), (la-le-li-lo-lu)

When the participants recognize *ti*, from the generative word *tijolo*, it is proposed that they compare it with the other syllables; whereupon they discover that while all the syllables begin the same, they end differently. Thus, they cannot all be called *ti*.

The same procedure is followed with the syllables *jo* and *lo* and their families. After learning each phonemic family, the group practices reading the new syllables.

The most important moment arises when the three families are presented together:

ta-te-ti-to-tu

ja-je-ji-jo-ju THE DISCOVERY CARD

la-le-li-lo-lu



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- 3 No one ignores everything, just as no one knows everything. The dominating consciousness absolutizes ignorance in order to manipulate the so-called “uncultured.” If some men are “totally ignorant,” they will be incapable of managing themselves, and will need the orientation, the “direction,” the “leadership” of those who consider themselves to be “cultured” and “superior.”
- 4 Álvaro Vieira Pinto, *Consciência e Realidade Nacional* (Rio de Janeiro, 1961).
- 5 “Breakdown”: a splitting of themes into their fundamental nuclei. See *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, p. 113ff. “Codification”: the representation of a theme in the form of an existential situation. See *Pedagogy*, pp. 106–107 and pp. 114–115. (Translator’s Note.)
- 6 Karl Jaspers, *op. cit.*
- 7 See Jaspers, *op. cit.*
- 8 Similar responses were evoked by the programs carried out in Chile.
- 9 Celso Beisegel, in an unpublished work.
- 10 I am not opposed to reading texts, which are in fact indispensable to developing the visual-graphic channel of communication and which in great part should be elaborated by the participants themselves. I should add that our experience is based on the use of multiple channels of communication.
- 11 “Educação de Adultos e Unificação de Cultura,” *Estudos Universitários, Revista de Cultura*, Universidade de Recife, 2–4, 1963.
- 12 Luís Costa Lima, Professor of Literary Theory, has analyzed many of these texts by illiterate authors.
- 13 “A Fundamentação Teórica do Sistema Paulo Freire de Educação,” *Estudos Universitários, Revista de Cultura*, Universidade do Recife, No. IV, 1963.
- 14 See p. 78 of the Appendix.
- 15 Aurenice Cardoso, “Conscientização e Alfabetização—Visão Prática do Sistema Paulo Freire de Educação de Adultos,” *Estudos Universitários, Revista de Cultura*, Universidade do Recife, No. II, 1963.
- 16 Generally, in a period of six weeks to two months, we could leave a group of twenty-five persons reading newspapers, writing notes and simple letters, and discussing problems of local and national interest. Each culture circle was equipped with a Polish-made projector, imported at the cost of about \$13.00. Since we had not yet set up our own laboratory, a filmstrip cost us about \$7–\$8. We also used an inexpensive blackboard. The slides were projected on the wall of the house where the culture circle met or, where this was difficult, on the reverse side (painted white) of the blackboard. The Education Ministry imported 35,000 of the projectors, which after the military coup of 1964 were presented on television as “highly subversive.”



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