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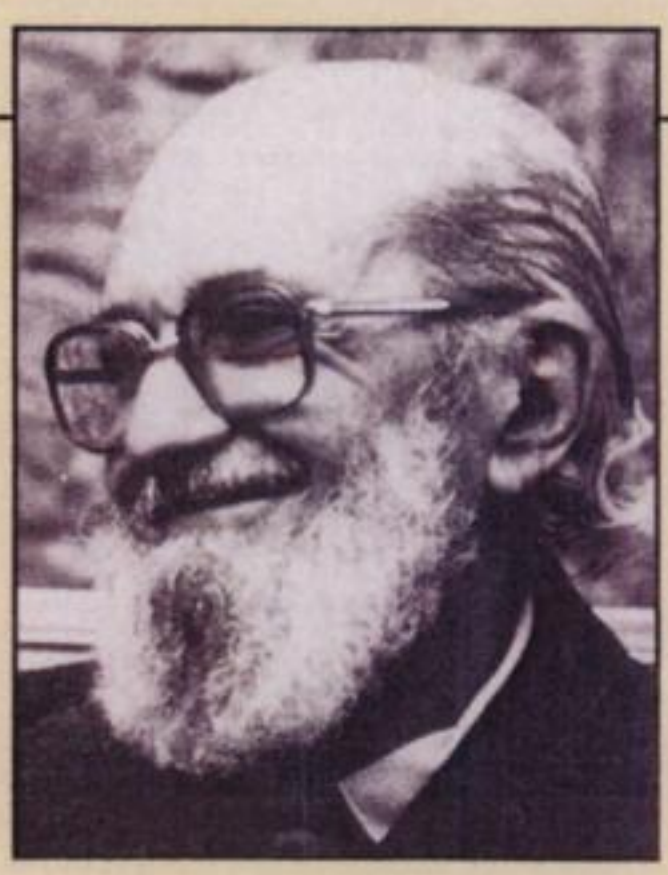

PAULO FREIRE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

A DIALOGUE AT THE NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF MEXICO

Miguel Escobar, Alfredo L. Fernández,
and Gilberto Guevara-Niebla
with Paulo Freire

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Emilio Ribes, Professor, Department of Psychology, UNAM (Iztacala campus).

Blanca E. Solares, Professor, Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, UNAM.

Guillermo Villaseñor, Professor, Division of Humanities and Social Sciences, UAM (Xochimilco campus).

Felipe Rueda, Professor, Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, UNAM.

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nation."[2] Of course, what happens as a result is that the domestic economies of Latin America fail to possess the productive capacity to satisfy the most basic needs of most of the population. This is because "the only active sector is the one that produces commodities either for the indigeous elite or exotic staples for the core, metropolitan market."[3] The contact between Latin America and foreign capital certainly does encourage peripheral economies to develop, but such development—if you can call it that—is almost always uneven; consequently, such contact forces the peripheral economy to underdevelop its own domestic spheres.

When there is economic dependency, cultural dependency often follows in its wake. However the capitalist culture industry is not simply superstructural but constitutive in that the masses—in both First and Third Worlds—do not simply consume culture passively as mindless dupes. There is often resistance at the level of symbolic meaning that prevents the culture industry from serving simply as a vehicle of repressive homogenization of meaning. According to Ross, the elites of the peripheral nations are the first to acquire access to Westernized popular culture, because of the limited access of the indigenous population to the media, the media generally serve to encourage affluent groups to adopt the consumer values of the most developed countries.[4] The elites basically serve in a supervisory capacity when it comes to the cultural consumption of the indigenous peasantry. However, the continuing ties of the peasantry to their own ethnic cultures does help them become less dependent on Western information. Foreign mass-produced culture is often interpreted and resisted at the level of popular culture, and we must remember that First World cultural values can also be

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follows: pedagogies constitute a form of social and cultural criticism; all knowledge is fundamentally mediated by linguistic relations that inescapably are socially and historically constituted; individuals are synechochically related to the wider society through traditions of mediation (family, friends, religion, formal schooling, popular culture, etc.); social facts can never be isolated from the domain of values or removed from forms of ideological production as inscription; the relationship between concept and object and that between signifier and signified is neither inherently stable nor transcendentally fixed and is often mediated by circuits of capitalist production, consumption, and social relations; language is central to the formation of subjectivity (conscious and uncounscious awareness); certain groups in any society are unnecessarily and often unjustly privileged over other, and while the reason for this privileging may very widely, the oppression that characterizes contemporary societies is most forecefully secured when subordinates accept their social status as natural, necessary, inevitable, or bequeathed to them as an exercise of historical chance; oppression has many faces and focusing on only one at the expense of others (e.g., class oppression vs. racism) often elides or occults the interconnection among them; power and oppression cannot be understood simply in terms of an irrefutable calculus of meaning linked to cause-and-effect conditions, and this means that an unforseen world of social relations awaits us; domination and oppression are implicated in the radical contingency of social development and our responses to it; and mainstream research practices are generally and unwittingly implicated in the reproduction of systems of class, race, and gender oppression.[5]

Freire's work certainly reflects this list of assumptions to different degrees; and while his corpus

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objectivity can no longer hide or deny its subjectively based interests—a situation that has serious implications for the role of the intellectual in contemporary North American society. He writes:

> For intellectuals it is suggested that our texts and objects now fail to connect with everthing but *our own simulacra, image power, formation of exchange*. In doubting and negating everthing, in affirming and consecrating everything, intellectuals remain prisoners of the futile role of the subject-in-consciousness and enforce the pretense that our efforts *translate and represent* for the truth of others, the reality of the world.[12]

For Cohen, as for Freire, the dilemma of the intellectual lies in the failure to forcefully challenge the perils of capitalism. In response to this dilemma, Cohen mounts an articulate and vigorous attack on the U.S. professoriate. University discourse and practices are condemned as mobilizing the academicization and domestication of meaning through a modernist process of historicization—a process that, in effect, amounts to creating various self-serving theologies of the social that enable professors to speculate on the future in order to justify their social function as intellectuals. Resulting from this process are acute forms of antiskepticism leading in many instances to a debilitating cynicism. According to Cohan, universities and their academic gentry operate as a discursive assemblage directed at creating a regime of truth, a process that fails to undertake the important task of "inventing systems independent of the system of capital."[13] In this instance, academic criticism is crippled by its inability to break from conventional catagories such

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The problem, as Merod sees it, is that there exists within the North American academy no political base for alliances among radical social theorists and the oppressed. He writes:

> The belief among liberal humanists that they have no "liberation strategy" to direct their steps is a vivid reminder of the humanities' class origin. Yet intellectuals always have something to fight for more important than their own professional position. North American intellectuals need to move beyond theory, tactics, and great dignified moral sentiments to support, in the most cencrete ways possible, people harmed or endangered by the guiltless counterrevolutionary violence of state power. . . .The major intellectual task today is to build a political community where ideas can be argued and sent into the world of news and information as a force with a collective voice, a voice that names cultural distortions and the unused possibilities of human intelligence.[27]

One important task of the critical educator is to translate cultural difference. This is certainly the challenge for Freirian educators. The act of translation is, in Bhabha's (1990) cultural languages are to a certain extent foreign to themselves and from the perspective of otherness it is possible to interrogate the contextual specificity of cultural systems.[29] It is in this sense, then, that "it becomes possible to inscribe the specific locality of cultural systems—their incommensurable differences—and through that apprehension of difference, to perform the act of cultural translation."[30]

All forms of cultural meaning are open to translation, because all cultural meanings resist totalization and

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It is important to point out amidst all of this criticism that West does recognize the enabling aspects of the Marxist revolutionary model in its promotion of critical consciousness and its criticisms of dominant research programs within the bourgeois academy.

The Foucaultian postmodern skeptic model invoked by West investigates the relationship among knowledge, power, discourse, politics, cognition, and social control. It offers a fundamental rethinking of the role of the intellectual within the contemporary postmodern condition. Foucault's "political economy of truth" is viewed by West as a critique of both bourgeois humanist and Marxist approaches through the role of Foucault's specific intellectual. The specific intellectual, according to West

> shuns the labels of scientificity, civility, and prophecy, and instead deves into the specificity of the political, economic, and cultural matrices within which regimes of truth are produced, distributed, circulated, and consumed. No longer should intellectuals deceive themselves by believing—as do humanist and Marxist intellectuals—that they are struggling "on behalf" of the truth; rather the problem is the struggle over the very status of truth and the vast institutional mechanism which account for this status.[43]

West summarizes the Foucaultian model as an encouragement of "an intense and incessant interrogation of power-laden discourses."[44] But the Foucaultian model is not a call to revolution. Rather, it's an invitation to revolt against the repressive effects of contemporary regimes of truth.

Selectively appropriating from these three models, West goes on to propose his own "insurgency model,"

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lation and further underdevelopment in the peripheral and semiperipheral countries of Latin America.

We are reminded of Freire and his colleagues not to engage in controversies about difference but rather to be encouraged to dialogue about difference. It is in this sense that the university is invited to beome truly plural and dialogical, a place where studetns are required not only to read texts but to understand contexts. A place where educators are required to learn to talk about student experiences and then form this talk into a philosophy of learning and a praxis of transformation.

I have recently witnessed in Brasil an experiment using Freire's work in conjunction with contributions by critical educators in Europe and the United States at Escola 1.º e 2.º Graus José César de Mesquita. The project is currently supported by the Sindicato des Trabalhadores nas Indústrias Metalúrgicas Mecãnicas e Material Eléctrico de Porto Alegre. Here, the curriculum has been forged out of dialogues among teacher, researchers, and scholars from many different countries in both First and Third Worlds. While there exists a great deal of political opposition to this school for workers (a public school and high school consisting of a thousand students who live in an industrial zone in Porto Alegre) from both reactionary and neoliberal educators, administrators, and politicians, the experiment itself is a testament to the Freirean vision of transcultural alliances and geopolitical realignment.

Critical pedagogy argues that pedagogical sites, whether they are universities, public schools, museums, art galleries, or other spaces, must have a vision that is not content with adapting individuals to a world of oppressive social relations but is dedicated to transforming the very conditions that promote such conditions. This means more than simply reconfiguring or collectively refashioning

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Introduction
Intellectuals and University Life: Paulo Freire on Higher Education

Paulo Freire on Higher Education reflects some of the key themes of the Freirean agenda, including the relationships between education and power, curriculum in higher education, and the role of intellectuals and universities. The dialogues presented in this book took place at the National University (UNAM) in Mexico City during the first semester of 1984.

Every dialogue takes for granted a context—historical, political, and experiential—which is shared to some extent by the participants. Thus there are implicit many themes, hypotheses, assumptions, and premises, all of which structure the conversation. This dialogue between Paulo Freire and university professors in Mexico is no exception.

The purpose of this introduction is to provide the American reader with the basic historical-structural and political-symbolic context to understand even the more subtle implications of this book. We hope this introduction will help to bridge the theoretical implications of this book, deeply rooted in the Latin American tradition, with the experience of American universities, intellectuals, and students.

The academic and political life of autonomous public universities in Latin America reflects the texture and dynamics of the relationships between universities and the state. The first section, of this introduction offers a succinct yet critical appraisal of the relationships between

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The University Reform Movement of 1918 greatly influenced university and political life throughout Latin America. Starting in Córdoba on March 13, 1918, the movement quickly spread in the region; its reformist goals surpassed those of the institutional reform and had profound political implications for the transformation of conservative political regimes.[6] The reform of 1918 opposed the oligarchical university by attempting to break the ties between liberal thought and oligarchical domination and at the same time to establish the basis for a democratic legitimation of the academic task founded upon a substantial democratic consensus.

The importance of the 1918 university reform of Córdoba cannot be ignored. The reform affected the Latin American university in general and in some cases, as with Haya de la Torre y Mariátegui in Peru, its effects were felt specifically in the politics of particular countries.[7] Another example is the debate between Antonio Caso and Lombardo Toledano in Mexico.[8] This debate contrasted two types of universities, one that is politically committed (in Lombardo Toledano's proposal the university will endorse a variant of socialism), and another, (Antonio Caso's position) that relies on university autonomy and freedom of choice and speech. This debate typified many of the issues raised by the university reform, at the same time that the university began to contemplate the concurrent transformations taking place in Latin American capitalism and politics.

But what type of university does the reformist movement confront and what kind of democratic proposal does it advance? The reform confronts a university that is intimately linked to political power (from this fact stems the demand for autonomy) and that is hierarchical and conservative, with professors who receive perks and

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Mexico (190,000), and Argentina (65,000). In the same manner, Brunner characterizes this massification as a *mesocratization*, given the growing participation of middle and lower sectors, consistent with the arguments of the project Desarollo y Educación en América Latina y el Caribe (DEALC) directed more than a decade ago by sociologist Germán Rama. Brunner incorporates the DEALC findings that in addition to massification identify the *feminization* of the enrollment in higher education.[18] One of the causes of this feminization is the *regionalization* of higher education—the growing number of institutions of higher education established outside the metropolitan areas of the principal cities of the country and the provinces. Similarily, a *tertiarization* of enrollments, occurred, with students electing careers that pertain to the social sciences, education, commerce, and business administration. Finally, a *privatization* of the enrollment took place, reaching one-third of that in private institutions of higher education.[19]

6. For Brunner, this massification is associated with a growing differentiation, both horizontally (within each institution) and vertically (among institutions). In terms of *horizontal differentiation*, in the last three decades there has been an increase in graduate training (and its resources) to the detriment of the studies at the undergraduate level, as well as a growing investment of resources in the institutions and centers of investigation to the detriment of teaching activities in the faculties and schools. Similarily, the *vertical differentiation* has resulted in the effort to establish institutional hierarchies based on institutional tradition, quality of the

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this model are the absolute reduction of the state sector, the liberalization of salaries and prices, and the reorientation of industrial and agricultural production toward exportation.[25] The combined pressure of the conditionalities of the IMF and World Bank loans and the financing difficulties created by the external debt crisis have generated new educational policies of the region.[26]

There are new efforts to pass the costs of these services on to the clientele by increasing the participation of the private sector in education (i.e., privatization), by reorienting educational investments toward areas of study that the World Bank has considered to render the greatest rates of return (i.e., primary education and basic education) by reducing the cost of education, (which affects salary levels and for that matter teacher training—teachers are considered overeducated and their university training leads them to have higher salary expectations than what the countries can finance[27]) and by promoting a deconcentration and or decentralization of educational services as a means of redefining the power and educational relations among national (federal), provincial, and municipal governments.[28]

At the time that this conversation between Freire and university professors took place at the UNAM in Mexico City in 1984, the process of structural adjustment and drastic changes of the Latin American states were just beginning. Thus, to understand the unity in the diversity of topics, themes, and discussions presented in this book, we need to understand the historical, structural, and political background presented above. It is evident that political changes affecting the universities not only transform academic work, but also drastically modify the relationships between intellectuals and higher education institutions. The next section discusses the role of intellectuals and Paulo Freire's views.

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rhetoric, activism, and encyclopedism practiced by part-time professors who are at the same time full-time liberal professionals or state bureaucrats. They are, in short, ideological zealots who construct their careers and the social imaginary by resorting to their powerful oratory, prose, and poetry. They are either *pensadores*, *intellectuals*, or *doctrinaires*, but certainly not *scholars*, because they lack the scholar's professional ethics, scientific practices, and commitment to research and teaching as a full-time profession.

This is not the place to assess whether the distinction between pensadores, intellectuals, and scholars is a useful one. It is commonplace to define as a scholar someone who has esoteric expertise in a scientific, humanistic, technical, or cultural domain, and who has proven this expertise by conducting research that is sanctioned as acceptable by his or her peers according to the rules of the academic community and norms of science. One may take exception with such a definition of scholarship if it masks the political implications of scientific work, neglects the intersubjective evaluation of academic work as a proxy for an elusive scientific objectivity, or simply if scholarly work is considered exclusively as a technocratic practice, rigorously regulated and legislated through standardized rules of professions or disciplines. Likewise, one may take exception with any sharp distinction between scholars and intellectuals as representing mutually exclusive or incommensurable practices (and roles) in society.

From a Marxist perspective, James Petras has sharply criticized what he considers the metamorphosis of Latin American intellectuals.[32] Petras sees two diametrically opposed intellectuals in Latin America: the *organic intellectual* in the Gramscian sense of the sixties,

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freedom and democracy will make him a liberal intellectual, thus putting him at odds with the revolutionary project.

In a recent visit to post-Pinochet Chile, twenty years after that interview, Freire's insistency on the importance of class for political and educational practices caused reactions in many intellectual circles, and he was accused of being a romantic, bringing back "themes" of the sixties. Freire commented laconically that although he still resorts to class analysis and although the concepts of democracy and freedom are key elements of his research and pedagogical agenda, many of his critics of the sixties have drastically switched positions.[43]

Freire cannot be easily classified as an organic intellectual of the sixties in Petras's taxonomy nor can he be accused of being an institutional intellectual. Freire's experience as secretary of education of the municipality of São Paulo between 1989 and 1991 took place under the rubric of a socialist and democratically elected Workers Party (Partido dos Trabalhadores), a rara avis political experience in the context of neoliberal governments in Latin America.

Freire is a different kind of intellectual. His emphasis on an epistemology or theory of knowledge as a precondition to learning, his perception that every pedagogical act is a political act, and his criticism of the notion of intellectual as scholar narrowly defined as a specialist situates Freire in the tradition of the nineteenth-century Latin American pensadores while embracing many of the themes of the critical intellectual that emerge with the movement for reform of 1918, becoming more radicalized with the revolutionary experiences of the sixties and early seventies. His research and practical agenda transcends the modernist university, however, and the reverberations of his work reach postmodern criticism.

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professors who may be prisoners of the Cartesian discourse, detached from the idea of praxis. Freire's legacy and his dialectical thinking and emphasis on dialogue, however, show a more complex understanding of the relationships between university life, academic policies, and politics. While emphasizing the notions of curiosity, creativity, and risk taking as essential attributes for intellectual inquiry, Freire also argues that when he started not to be sure of his own certainty, he realized that he has become more sure, because the only way one may have to be sure is by not being sure. This is perhaps the reason why he cannot be easily classified as a traditional, modernist, or postmodern intellectual.

Freire's dialectical views of intellectuals and the role of university are inspired by what he considered the great lesson of his exile: "One thing I also learned in exile, maybe the best thing I ever learned, is that I could not continue being sure of my certainty."[47] This is obviously a lesson for every intellectual and for the pursuit of academic work.

Carlos Alberto Torres

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point of view toward education I could also lapse into a certain "pedagogism"—that is, a naive optimism as concerns the practice of education.

Within the "pedagogistic" perspective, you would change or reduce all transformation to pedagogy, and this has something to do with one of your questions: I think that I did not lapse into pedagogism, which to me would be regrettable, yet some of my critics say that I made that mistake, that I have reduced revolutionary transformation to education. In other words, they mean to say that I made a mistake when I considered education to be the lever for revolutionary transformation. Even Francisco Weffort says this, in his preface to my first book, *Educación como practica de la libertad* [Paulo Freire. La educación como práctica de la libertad. Mexico, Sigloxxi Editores, 1969.] which is really a very naive book, but in its naïveté pointed out some criticisms. I think that certain critics are mistaken when they are not capable of perceiving the dialectics between naïveté and "criticity," when they cannot perceive certain naïvetés.

This was one of the texts that I wrote in 1977, and I either rewrote or added things that were not originally included, for example, among others, an old university thesis that I had written in 1958 or 1959, because I was never inclined to believe that education could be the lever for revolution, precisely because I was absolutely convinced of something that in the 1970s seemed very well defined, very much emphasized, which was the reproducing role of school, of systematic education, the reproducing role of the dominant ideology, the ideology in power.

Education and Social Reproduction

But my optimistic position is nowadays more clearly defined in the following: I am also absolutely convinced

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education is not the lever for transformation. Nonetheless, there is a space, however small, in the practice of education, in the educative system as a subsystem; there is a minimum space that we must use to our advantage.

I return to the same issue as you did, Gilberto, when you were asking if it is possible to consider a global, radical transformation of society through education. I have already seen that it is not possible, but we must think a bit more; education is not the lever of transformation, of revolution, and yet revolution is pedagogic, and I am not playing with words. There is a pedagogic testimony in the practice of social transformation; it is the process of mobilization which is automatically also a process of organization. There is no mobilization without organization, so to differentiate one from the other seems to me naive; it is not dialectic, since one does not first mobilize and subsequently organize. The essence of mobilization itself contains organization; the process of organizational mobilization is profoundly pedagogic.

For example, in Brazil, during the so-called direct elections, we held the first meeting for elections in January 1984, and the political leaderships of the parties were not very convinced that the popular masses would respond in a positive manner to the invitation to go out into the streets and the public spaces to discuss the need to have direct elections. Nevertheless, 300,000 people were present at the first central meeting, and the leaderships, even those of the Workers Party, to which I belong, did not expect this; it was an extraordinary and complete challenge.

In April of that year during the last popular meeting before the elections, 1,700,000 people gathered in the streets of São Paulo, singing the national anthem, joining hands. Newspaper releases stated that they did not

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always said that revolution also is closely related to epistemology. Revolution is not guessing, although there is a guessing dimension within revolution. Revolution is something very serious, precisely because it involves the issue of power, and the party is a fundamental vehicle for mobilization, for putting into practice the revolutionary dream. Just thinking out loud, without trying to make any categorical statements: one thing that began to trouble me during the 1970s when I was in Europe, in relation to the parties, was the sometimes chaotic and sometimes overwhelming surfacing of popular social movements of rebellion.

I recall that in conversations with some fellow friends of the left in Europe during the 1970s, talking for example about the women's rights movements, the gay and the ecologists' movements, I said that in my opinion, there is something new, historic, which is beginning to appear, and that this will be related to a new way of understanding the role of the political parties. Some of my comrades said that it was foolish to think that, because these movements do not speak of class struggle. I myself felt that Marx must be understood in a Marxist manner, that is, we must not immobilize Marx; that would be profoundly antidialectic and antihistorical. Furthermore, in the world today one should not try to reduce everything that happens, even drinking a cup of coffee, to class struggle. One should understand the different moments in which class struggle manifests itself in the city, but in a dual manner, and in my opinion those movements of this decade are going to bring something into our politics, which is going to demand that we reformulate, or at least find a different, more historical way of thinking of the role of the parties. At that time I used to say that it was necessary to look beyond, and discover in the intimacy and the dynamics

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reproduction of bourgeois ideology, with the revolution in power our task is precisely that of creating a new ideology, a new foundation. To the extent that we are not idealists in the philosophical sense, we believe that the latter kind of education cannot be decreed if the new society that is in accordance with it does not yet exist.

In the transition stage there is no new society; there is only a society of transition. The new, revolutionary education does not yet exist, and cannot exist. At this stage, bourgeois education is no longer acceptable, because it has nothing to do with the formation of the new revolutionary society, but you still do not have the new education because you are as yet lacking time in space for its creation. This for me has to do with the question of power, because if we make any mistakes we run the risk of immobilizing the revolution, in a certain sense.

Pedagogy of Transition

G. Guevara-Niebla: I think that we can reach a new development in our meeting. It is evident that the problematic involved in the relationship between education and power is a very broad problem that we could not cover or discuss completely in a minimum working session such as this one. But perhaps we could use it to maximum advantage by directing our meeting toward some problems that we consider of relevance to all of us. A first aspect that derives from the position that we just heard is that it implies a descent from the more general level to particular aspects. For example, in relation to the last part of what Paulo was saying to us, about the nature of political power in society and the need of conceiving a "transition pedagogy," so to speak, one asks

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P. Freire: Look, in the 70s I tried to be intensely preoccupied with this problems at that time, it was closely associated with the word *conscientization*, and it was something incredible: wherever I went, I would find word associated with my project, which was, to a great extent, objectively reactionary, regardless of its sometimes being subjectively naive and sometimes clever. What I mean to say is that sometimes one is objectively reactionary, and yet, naively or cleverly so when one knows oneself to be reactionary. So, at that time I said to myself, there are only two ways to face this: the first is that what is the use of using the word *conscientization*? (And after 1987, you will no longer find the word *conscientization*; I participated in a seminar with Ivan Illich in Geneva, during which he once again used the concept of *descholarization* and I the concept of *conscientization*. It was there that I used this word for the last time. Naturally, I never abandoned the comprehension of the process which I had called conscientization, but I gave up the word).

The second thing that I had to do, and I think that I did in texts and in interviews, was to try to clarify and define the most naive and obscure concepts of my previous works that lent themselves to objectively reactionary uses of my ideas. I was also partly to blame for this. All of us, when we write, sometimes leave a margin for the misuse of what we say, and at that point I began to worry about this.

What has been happening since then is that I have been misused and misunderstood, especially by the right, and by the liberals too; and sometimes by some representatives of the left, who say, for example: "Paulo Freire is a serious intellectual, he is a man who is trying to make things over, but he has not as yet said that the class struggle is the moter of history." Therefore I say this,

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through which we advance and from which we acquire the conceptions of everything that we seek.

For me it is very important to keep in mind the time in which Marcuse was situated—precisely in the '60s—when on one hand, apparently after an experience of the workers' movement, based on social-democratic participation, and on the other hand, all the stabilization process, new alternatives for change were proposed, alternatives that are above all external to the directly productive process. The movements appear in feminism, in proletarianism, in the universities; but it seems that the revolution or the revolutionary subject mentioned earlier, is a subject that is no longer proletarian, but another kind of subject, one who is, once again, outside of the productive process. Besides, this new subject even doubts Marxism, especially when the labor movement is once again immersed in the capitalistic process, which absorbs it and provides benefits. At the same time, Marxism is discredited among the socialists, and no longer seems to be the strategic weapon that Marx thought could be used for the subject's liberation; it is just another theory. I am concerned about the same thing in the discourse as Elīas. It may well be a discourse in which the problem of the revolution is posed; it can be used either by representatives of the bourgeoisie or by a school where the goal is the reproduction in society. At the same time, it can be a discourse that provokes enthusiasm toward working in a literacy campaign or that encourages the Latin American socialist revolutions, because this discourse can be so ambivalent that it may be used in one way or another. While reading one of your books [*Pedagogy of the Oppressed*], I tried to see exactly what the essence of the discourse was, to see what exactly was the essence of the revolution that you were proposing,

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into the productive process, the less knowledge the working class has." This is the truth; a few years ago there was a myth that in an advanced capitalist economy, there would have to be more training in scientific knowledge for the dominated class. This is a myth; today it has been proven that in the most advanced capitalist society, specialized workers are trained in three hours, three-hour courses, to do precisely the minimum in a production line, changing from one to another.

Popular Culture and Alienation

I think this is a problem that we have all faced; nevertheless, it is necessary for the left-wing intellectual to know, not just by reading a book, but by conviction acquired in practice, that the less rigorous level of knowledge on which we find the working class has nothing to do with the nonexistent ontology of this class.

By this I mean to say that the level or levels of popular wisdom cannot be explained metaphysically, but historically and socially; I do not hold the working class and the popular classes responsible for incompetence, as if we could say: as intellectuals, we know, and the working classes do not know because they cannot.

We sometimes have practices that reveal these metaphysics, which are absolutely false. What Marx proposed was not this; Marx knew that in the structures of a capitalist bourgeois society, the workers' education is one that reproduces them as workers in said society, and the education of the bourgeois is one that reproduces him as dominant. We must, therefore, have the conviction that the levels of alienation, the levels of less rigorous knowledge, are a result of the social, political, economical, and cultural level on which the working classes are to be found.

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would have to be something that we ourselves would do. But I would like to ask if we can detect some basic factors of influence in higher education on which tactics should be tried out in order to materialize the possible dream.

P. Freire: I think that Gilberto can elaborate on this subject. There is no doubt in my mind that today one of the characteristics of international bourgeoisie in the capitalist systems, be they highly developed or similar to ours, is a more authoritarian attitude, which is evident in the reproducing role of dominant ideology.

I think that it is not so important to ask ourselves, Could education at the university level be like this? but rather, Is it possible that we, in a political perspective of transformation, will be able to use to our advantage the university space created by society? That would be the question, because we are only asking, Is it possible that university education could propose a new form of education? I think not, because this would be equivalent to asking the dominating class if it is planning a type of education that would rebel against its domination. Naturally, it would have to say no, because up to now there has never been a dominating class in history that committed suicide, and there is no reason to expect that this should occur in Latin America. It seems to me that the question of interest to us is, Will we, or will we not have the possibility of taking full advantage of the spaces—we as doctors, biologists, chemists, physicists, political scientists, psychologists, etc.? I think that we should hold private congresses, without microphones, without intervies, without the press or anything like that; congresses for ourselves alone, in order to discuss what we can do, and I think that we can do many things. Because if it were not possible to do something, I should

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dimension of the problems involved in education and those of the revolution. What is the program? What are the national specifications of a pedagogical program of transition? What is the influence of our national specificity when dealing with these subjects? For one thing, it is not possible to use, without mediation, certain categories that originate in advanced, metropolitan countries—for example, the concept of alienation proposed by Marcuse. And then Blanca introduced another relevant problem, that of the relation between education and production, and he mentioned something important, in asking to what extent liberating education is in the end constricted, compelled, forced to accept that it must form productive abilities, and that finally, one way or the other, any form of education is linked to certain production plans. Blanca asked how we can liberate if we preserve this link that enslaves us to certain forms of production; this problem seems to have a specific dimension in the United States and it must have a different one here.

P. Freire: In regard to your question, in the first place think that it is absolutely fundamental that we (and this is probably a specificity, that we can ask about this) as educators, as professors, should be able to offer a theoretical contribution to a revolutionary practice outside of the university, because obviously the university cannot be the vanguard of any revolution; this is not the nature of the institution. The same is true for the church.

In trying to answer your question, we are necessarily led to other questions: among them, one belonging to the field of epistemology, which means that we are asking ourselves about science, about scientific precision, what is exactness, what is science, what is scientific knowledge.

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advances in this concept, with references to science and to popular culture, but my fear is that now UNESCO, too, has appropriated these terms and has practically incorporated them into its international language, the same as it did with the concept of *participative research*, which also originated precisely within our geographical boundaries. My second reflection has to do with the real possibility of transforming the institutions of higher education. Is it going to be by means of their practice, by that of the curriculum, or is it going to be through their links with the external environment, which seems to absorb the institution of education?

Each day we advance with a greater vigor toward scholarization, even though a few years ago, precisely due to Ivan Illich's arguments, there was the belief that to descholarize was an alternative in order to be able to advance toward revolutionary change, thus freeing ourselves from that which operated in the opposite way. In spite of what has been said here, I think that there still exists, for the great majorities, an enormous optimism toward the institution of education, and that this is an angle that must be analyzed in order to determine if the convenient thing is to continue supporting this demand for more education, without a critical sense, or to go back to the starting points of fifteen years ago.

My third reflection has to do with the great changes that have occurred in Latin America in the field of social sciences. We advance in economic and social theory when dependency is postulated as a form of explaining the relationship between the developed and underdeveloped countries; we advance in political science when the concepts of the state and the theories of the state are incorporated in order to explain the function fulfilled by it in underdeveloped countries. We advance in education,

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written discourse that curiosity must be stimulated, that the critical and creative aspects of the children must be stimulated, it does this in a restricting manner.

The Revolution Is Loving

For me, the point is not to stop using words such as *curiosity* or *creativity*, only because the dominating class has started to use them; I also think that it is absurd to stop using the word *love*. There is no revolution without love; the revolution is loving; The fact that the bourgeoisie has distorted an important word has nothing to do with me. My struggle has to do precisely with restoring their meaning to words. It is by living curiosity with the students that I defend curiosity, and not by talking about curiosity without being curious, because there are many noncurious ways of talking about curiosity, such as the authoritarian way, for example.

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it simply appears "written on paper," ignored in the practice. For this reason I am not interested in succumbing to the temptation of reading another word since it too would be limited; what I do care about is to question whether I accept that curiosity is fundamental or not. If I accept that it is, then I would try to experience it with the students, and on living this with them, I would state the process itself in which the word is "depleted." Declaring the process of depletion by limitation principally means living the declaration and not only speaking of it.

Curiculum and Conceptual Wear-and-Tear

P. Freire: I have spoken on the subject of curiosity, but I could elaborate a long list of words or concepts that have been "depleted." In fact, it would be good if we carried out a type of investigation among ourselves on the groups of concepts that have been depleted, in order to experience them and revive them, really putting them in practice. I feel that curiosity sometimes coexists in several of us, although we may have progressive and radical political opinions, in a strange manner coincide with the vigor of authoritarianism. I do not know if you observe these phenomena here in Mexico, but they exist in Brazil. There is certainly a mistrust of every live, more democratic, more open work procedure that seems to go against the strict scientific academy. In this sense there's a tendency to consider some colleagues spontaneous and allied with a progressive (I do not want to call it revolutionary since I have a great respect for the meaning of the word—it's grand!) position for the simple reason that they work together with the students and are set on stimulating their creativity. Nevertheless, such colleagues

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PAULO FREIRE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

A DIALOGUE AT THE NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF MEXICO

Miguel Escobar, Alfredo L. Fernández,
and Gilberto Guevara-Niebla with Paulo Freire

Dedicated to a transformation of education so that it becomes an instrument of liberation rather than oppression, Freire discusses in unprecedented depth the implications and consequences of his pedagogical theory concerning three main problems faced by contemporary higher education: power and education, curriculum and social reality, and the role of intellectuals. This "dialogue" with Freire enlarges the body of knowledge regarding his thinking about educational emancipation and the role of higher education in encouraging self reliance.

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