Abstract:
In Part I of an article on "Cultural Action for Freedom," Freire advocates a theory and practice of the adult literacy process based upon authentic dialogue between teachers and learners. Becoming literate is truly an act of knowing, through which a person is able to look critically at the world and to reflect and act upon it.

In this article, Part I of Cultural Action for Freedom, Paulo Freire rejects mechanistic conceptions of the adult literacy process, advocating instead a theory and practice based upon authentic dialogue between teachers and learners. Such dialogue, in Freire's approach, centers upon the learners' existential situations and leads not only to their acquisition of literacy skills, but also, and more importantly, to their awareness of their right as human beings to transform reality. Becoming literate, then, means far more than learning to decode the written representation of a sound system. It is truly an act of knowing, through which a person is able to look critically at the world he/she lives in, and to reflect and act upon it.

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 a 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 that 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 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,
innate 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 that begins to emerge here. 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 "undernourished," 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 "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 that 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 sociocultural 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 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 árvores "John takes care of the trees."

O pai de Carlinhos se chama Antonio. Carlinhos " 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....7

Se voce trabalha com martelo e prego, tenha cuidado para nao 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.] 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 that, in fact, cannot be borne out. This naivete 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 that unfolds in that world.

A asa e da ave, Eva viu a uva, o gallo canta, and o cachorro late, are linguistic contexts that, 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 that 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, that is, 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—that is, 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: 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 percent of Brazil's population, almost 90 percent of Haiti's, 60 percent of Bolivia's, about 40 percent of Peru's, more than 30 percent of Mexico's and Venezuela's, and about 70 percent 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 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 counselors, 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 freedom; they will never question the very reality that 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 ever greater clarity as to what, at times without his conscious knowledge, illuminates 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.

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 that 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 that 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 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," that is, 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 also 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 that 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
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 that 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.13

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.14

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,15 or representation of the existential situations of the learners.

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 decodification16—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 that 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 that 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 act 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 that mediates between them. The aim of decodification is to arrive at the critical level of knowing, beginning with 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 that 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 esthetic sense, but with a special philosophical connotation.

To "ad-mire" is to objectify the "not-I." It is a dialectical operation that 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-admire" 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 "read-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 that 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 that 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.

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 that 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." 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, constitute 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. "Read-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.

We do not mean to suggest that critical knowledge of man-world relationships arises as a verbal knowledge outside of praxis. Praxis is involved in the concrete situations that 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 that provides objective 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 that 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 rather a person constantly readjusting 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 the act 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 by 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 that explain the form of reality. Thus, to know is not to remember something previously known and now forgotten. No can doxa be overcome by logos apart from the dialectical relationship of man with his world, apart from men'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, that is, as linguistic signs that 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 that it does not have among whites), and (b) for their phonetic difficulties that 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 that mediate between the knowing subjects, educator-learners, learner-educators. Their act of knowing is elaborated in the circulo de cultura (cultural discussion group) that functions as the theoretical 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 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 cliches and assume a more scientific attitude. They may avoid saying that the illiteracy, alcoholism, and crime of the slum, 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 that 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 presupposed 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 that 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 and annunciation. Our pedagogy cannot do without a vision of man and of the world. It formulates a scientific humanist conception that 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 a 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 a 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 education is no longer utopian,
that is, 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 that 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 that
the Third World may learn from the metropolitan societies there is this that is fundamental:
not to replicate those societies when its current utopian 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 denounced 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 that corresponds to the specifically human mode of being, which is historical.

There is no annunciation without denunciation, just as every denunciation generates
annunciation. 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 that is being
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.23

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, that is, 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 that 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.

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 Edi Ferreira, a sociologist from the Santiago team working at 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 analysis of "the culture of silence." In the culture of silence, to exist is only to live. The body carries out orders from above. Thinking is difficult, speaking the word, forbidden.

"When all this land belonged to one latifundio," 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 asentamiento, I am responsible not only for my work like 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 experience 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 word?" "I was happy because I discovered I could make words speak," he replied. Dario Salas reports,26 "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 only to learn how to sign my name. I never believed I would be able to read, too, at my age'; 'Before, letters seemed like little 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 and write. "27

The following words were taped during research on "generative themes."28 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 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 team 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 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 interdisciplinary 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 on 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 reading, 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.

[Footnote]
* The author gratefully acknowledges the contributions of Loretta Slover, who translated this article, and Joao da Veiga Coutinho and Robert Riordan, who assisted in the preparation of the manuscript.

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Notes

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1. 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 article. [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 (1963; rpt. London: Virago, 1980) for a
different treatment of the concept of generative words at the thematic level.-Editor]

[Footnote]
3. The digestive concept of knowledge is suggested by "controlled readings" by classes that consist only of lectures; by the use of memorized dialogues in language learning; by bibliographical notes that indicate not only which chapter, but which lines and words are to be read; by the methods of evaluating the students' progress in learning.
4. See Paulo Freire, "La alfabetizacion de adultos, critica de su vision ingenua; comprension de su vision critica," in Introduccion a la Accion Cultural (Santiago: ICIRA, 1969).

[Footnote]
5. 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, Carlos Lacerda, in 1963.) (2) in Chile, the ESPIGA collection, despite some small defects. The collection was organized by Jefatura de Planes Extraordinarios de Educacion de Adultos, of the Public Education Ministry.
6. Since at the time this article 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.

[Footnote]
7. [The English here would be nonsensical, as is the Portuguese, the point being the emphasis on the consonant "d."-Editor]
8. The author may even have added here, ". . . If, however, this should happen, apply a little mercurochrome."
9. [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]

[Footnote]
11. [Here Freire stresses that learning to read and write is not just a mechanical acquisition of decoding skills, using the example of a decontextualized "family" of syllables. "Families" of syllables are often used in syllabic languages such as Portuguese and Spanish.-Editor]
12. Freire, "La alfabetizacion de adultos."
15. [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]
16. [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 decoding, or word-recognition.-Editor]
18. See Fanon, The Wretched of the Earth; Freire, Pedagogy of the Oppressed.
20. 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.
22. Re the utopian dimension of denunciation and proclamation, see Leszek Kolakowski, Toward a Marxist Humanism (New York: Grove Press, 1969).
23. "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." Kolakowksi, Toward a Marxist Humanism, pp. 71-72.
24. "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 & Row, 1966), p. 31.
25. After the disappropriation of lands in the agrarian reform in Chile, the peasants who were
salaried workers on the large latifundia become "settlers" (asentados) during a three-year period in which they receive varied assistance from the government through the Agrarian Reform Corporation. This period of "settlement" (asentamiento) precedes that 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.


[Footnote]
27. 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.

28. An analysis of the objectives and methodology of the investigation of generative themes lies outside the scope of this article, but is dealt with in the author's work, Pedagogy of the Oppressed.
Cultural action and conscientization

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Abstract:
In this article, Part II of Cultural Action for Freedom, Paulo Freire explains the process of conscientization as an intrinsic part of cultural action for freedom. He rejects the mechanistic and behaviorist understanding of consciousness as a passive copy of reality. Instead, he proposes the critical dimension of consciousness that recognizes human beings as active agents who transform their world. He makes specific reference to the political and social situation in Latin America in the 1960s and 1970s, discussing the need for cultural action in order to break the existing "culture of silence."

Existence in and with the World

It is appropriate at this point to make an explicit and systematic analysis of the concept of conscientization.

The starting point for such an analysis must be a critical comprehension of man as a being who exists in and with the world. Since the basic condition for conscientization is that its agent must be a subject (that is, a conscious being), conscientization, like education, is specifically and exclusively a human process. It is as conscious beings that men are not only in the world, but with the world, together with other men. Only men, as "open" beings, are able to achieve the complex operation of simultaneously transforming the world by their action and grasping and expressing the world's reality in their creative language.

Men can fulfill the necessary condition of being with the world because they are able to gain objective distance from it. Without this objectification, whereby man also objectifies himself, man would be limited to being in the world, lacking both self-knowledge and knowledge of the world.

Unlike men, animals are simply in the world, incapable of objectifying either themselves or the world. They live a life without time, properly speaking, submerged in life with no possibility of emerging from it, adjusted and adhering to reality. Men, on the contrary, who can sever this adherence and transcend mere being in the world, add to the life that they have the existence that they make. To exist is thus a mode of life that is proper to the being who is capable of transforming, of producing, of deciding, of creating, and of communicating himself.
Whereas the being that merely lives is not capable of reflecting upon itself and knowing itself living in the world, the existent subject reflects upon his life within the very domain of existence, and questions his relationship to the world. His domain of existence is the domain of work, of history, of culture, of values-the domain in which men experience the dialectic between determinism and freedom.

If they did not sever their adherence to the world and emerge from it as consciousness constituted in the "admiration" of the world as its object, men would be merely determinate beings, and it would be impossible to think in terms of their liberation. Only beings who can reflect upon the fact that they are determined are capable of freeing themselves. Their reflectiveness results not just in a vague and uncommitted awareness, but in the exercise of a profoundly transforming action upon the determining reality. Consciousness of and action upon reality are, therefore, inseparable constituents of the transforming act by which men become beings of relation.2 By their characteristic reflection, intentionality, temporality, and transcendence,3 men's consciousness and action are distinct from the mere contacts of animals with the world. The animals' contacts are a-critical; they do not go beyond the association of sensory images through experience. They are singular and not plural. Animals do not elaborate goals; they exist at the level of immersion and are thus a-temporal.

Engagement and objective distance, understanding reality as object, understanding the significance of men's action upon objective reality, creative communication about the object by means of language, plurality of responses to a single challenge-these varied dimensions testify to the existence of critical reflection in men's relationships with the world. Consciousness is constituted in the dialectic of man's objectification of and action upon the world. However, consciousness is never a mere reflection of, but a reflection upon, material reality.4

If it is true that consciousness is impossible without the world that constitutes it, it is equally true that this world is impossible if the world itself in constituting consciousness does not become an object of its critical reflection. Thus, mechanistic objectivism is incapable of explaining men and the world since it negates men, as is solipsistic idealism since it negates the world.

For mechanistic objectivism, consciousness is merely a "copy" of objective reality. For solipsism, the world is reduced to a capricious creation of consciousness. In the first case, consciousness would be unable to transcend its conditioning by reality; in the second, insofar as it "creates" reality, it is a priori to reality. In either case man is not engaged in transforming reality. That would be impossible in objectivistic terms, because for objectivism, consciousness, the replica or "copy" of reality, is the object of reality, and reality would then be transformed by itself.5 The solipsistic view is equally incompatible with the concept of transforming reality, since the transformation of an imaginary reality is an absurdity. Thus in
both conceptions of consciousness there can be no true praxis. Praxis is only possible where the objective-subjective dialectic is maintained.6

Behaviorism also fails to comprehend the dialectic of men-world relationships. Under the form called mechanistic behaviorism, men are negated because they are seen as machines. The second form, logical behaviorism, also negates men, since it affirms that men's consciousness is "merely an abstraction."7 The process of conscientization cannot be founded upon any of these defective explanations of man-world relationships. Conscientization is viable only because men's consciousness, although conditioned, can recognize that it is conditioned. This "critical" dimension of consciousness accounts for the goals men assign to their transforming acts upon the world. Because they are able to have goals, men alone are capable of entertaining the result of their action even before initiating the proposed action. They are beings who project:

We presuppose labor in a form that stamps it as exclusively human. A spider conducts operations that resemble those of a weaver, and a bee puts to shame many an architect in the construction of her cells. But what distinguishes the worst architect from the best of the bees is this, that the architect raises his structure in imagination before he erects it in reality.8

Although bees, as expert "specialists," can identify the flower they need for making their honey, they do not vary their specialization. They cannot produce by-products. Their action upon the world is not accompanied by objectification; it lacks the critical reflection that characterizes men's tasks. Whereas animals adapt themselves to the world to survive, men modify the world in order to be more. In adapting themselves for the sake of survival, without ends to achieve and choices to make, animals cannot "animalize" the world. "Animalization" of the world would be intimately linked to the "animalization" of animals, and this would presuppose in animals an awareness that they are incomplete, which would engage them in a permanent quest. In fact, however, while they skillfully construct their hives and "manufacture" honey, bees remain bees in their contact with the world; they do not become more or less bees.9

For men, as beings of praxis, to transform the world is to humanize it, even if making the world human may not yet signify the humanization of men. It may simply mean impregnating the world with man's curious and inventive presence, imprinting it with the trace of his works. The process of transforming the world, which reveals this presence of man, can lead to his humanization as well as his dehumanization, to his growth or diminution. These alternatives reveal to man his problematic nature and pose a problem for him, requiring that he choose one path or the other. Often this very process of transformation ensnares man and his freedom to choose. Nevertheless, because they impregnate the world with their reflective presence, only men can humanize or dehumanize. Humanization is their utopia, which they announce in denouncing dehumanizing processes.
The reflectiveness and finality of men's relationships with the world would not be possible if these relationships did not occur in a historical as well as physical context. Without critical reflection there is no finality, nor does finality have meaning outside an uninterrupted temporal series of events. For men there is no here relative to a there that is not connected to a now, a before, and an after. Thus men's relationships with the world are per se historical, as are men themselves. Not only do men make the history that makes them, but they also can recount the history of this mutual making. In becoming "hominized" lo in the process of evolution, men become capable of having a biography. Animals, on the contrary, are immersed in a time that belongs not to them, but to men.

There is a further fundamental distinction between man's relationships with the world and the animal's contacts with it: only men work. A horse, for example, lacks what is proper to man, what Marx refers to in his example of the bees: "At the end of every labor-process, we get a result that already existed in the imagination of the laborer at its commencement."II Action without this dimension is not work. In the fields as well as in the circus, the apparent work of horses reflects the work of men. Action is work not because of the greater or lesser physical effort expended in it by the acting organism, but because of the consciousness the subject has of his own effort, his possibility of programming action, for creating tools and using them to mediate between himself and the object of his action, of having purposes, of anticipating results. Still more, for action to work, it must result in significant products, which while distinct from the active agent, at the same time condition him and become the object of his reflection. 12 As men act upon the world effectively, transforming it by their work, their consciousness is in turn historically and culturally conditioned through the "inversion of praxis." According to the quality of this conditioning, men's consciousness attains various levels in the context of cultural-historical reality. We propose to analyze these levels of consciousness as a further step toward understanding the process of conscientization.

Historical Conditioning and Levels of Consciousness

To understand the levels of consciousness, we must understand cultural-historical reality as a superstructure in relation to an infrastructure. Therefore, we will try to discern, in relative rather than absolute terms, the fundamental characteristics of the historical-cultural configuration to which such levels correspond.

Our intention is not to attempt a study of the origins and historical evolution of consciousness, but to make a concrete introductory analysis of the levels of consciousness in Latin American reality. This does not invalidate such an analysis for other areas of the Third World, nor for those areas in the metropolises that identify themselves with the Third World as "areas of silence."
We will first study the historical-cultural configuration that we have called "the culture of silence." This mode of culture is a superstructural expression that conditions a special form of consciousness. The culture of silence "overdetermines" the infrastructure in which it originates.13

Understanding the culture of silence is possible only if it is taken as a totality that is itself part of a greater whole. In this greater whole we must also recognize the culture or cultures that determine the voice of the culture of silence. We do not mean that the culture of silence is an entity created by the metropolis in specialized laboratories and transported to the Third World. Nor is it true, however, that the culture of silence emerges by spontaneous generation. The fact is that the culture of silence is born in the relationship between the Third World and the metropolis. "It is not the dominator who constructs a culture and imposes it on the dominated. This culture is the result of the structural relations between the dominated and the dominators."14 Thus, understanding the culture of silence presupposes an analysis of dependence as a relational phenomenon that gives rise to different forms of being, of thinking, of expression, those of the culture of silence and those of the culture that "has a voice."

We must avoid both of the positions previously criticized in this article: objectivism, which leads to mechanism; and idealism, which leads to solipsism. Further, we must guard against idealizing the superstructure, dichotomizing it from the infrastructure. If we underestimate either the superstructure of infrastructure it will be impossible to explain the social structure itself. Social structure is not an abstraction; it exists in the dialectic between super- and infrastructures. Failing to understand this dialectic, we will not understand the dialectic of change and permanence as the expression of the social structure.

It is true that the infrastructure, created in the relations by which the work of man transforms the world, gives rise to superstructure. But it is also true that the latter, mediated by men, who introject its myths, turns upon the infrastructure and "overdetermines" it. If it were not for the dynamic of these precarious relationships in which men exist and work in the world, we could speak neither of social structure, nor of men, nor of a human world.

Let us return to the relationship between the metropolitan society and the dependent society as the source of their respective ways of being, thinking, and expression. Both the metropolitan society and the dependent society, totalities in themselves, are part of a greater whole, the economic, historical, cultural, and political context in which their mutual relationships evolve. Though the contest in which these societies relate to each other is the same, the quality of the relationship is obviously different in each case, being determined by the role that each plays in the total context of their interrelation. The action of the metropolitan society upon the dependent society has a directive character, whereas the object society's action, whether it be response or initiative, has a dependent character.
The relationships between the dominator and the dominated reflect the greater social context, even when formally personal. Such relationships imply the introjection by the dominated of the cultural myths of the dominator. Similarly, the dependent society introjects the values and lifestyle of the metropolitan society, since the structure of the latter shapes that of the former. This results in the duality of the dependent society, its ambiguity, its being and not being itself, and the ambivalence characteristic of its long experience of dependency, both attracted by and rejecting the metropolitan society.

The infrastructure of the dependent society is shaped by the director society's will. The resultant superstructure, therefore, reflects the inauthenticity of the infrastructure. Whereas the metropolis can absorb its ideological crises through mechanisms of economic power and a highly developed technology, the dependent structure is too weak to support the slightest popular manifestation. This accounts for the frequent rigidity of the dependent structure.

The dependent society is by definition a silent society. Its voice is not an authentic voice, but merely an echo of the voice of the metropolis—in every way, the metropolis speaks, the dependent society listens.15

The silence of the object society in relation to the director society is repeated in the relationships within the object society itself. Its power elites, silent in the face of the metropolis, silence their own people in turn. Only when the people of a dependent society break out of the culture of silence and win their right to speak—only, that is, when radical structural changes transform the dependent society—can such a society as a whole cease to be silent towards the director society.

On the other hand, if a group seizes power through a coup d'état, as in the recent case of Peru, and begins to take nationalist economic and cultural defense measures, its policy creates a new contradiction, with one of the following consequences. First, the new regime may exceed its own intentions and be obliged to break definitively with the culture of silence both internally and externally. Or, fearing the ascension of the people, it may retrogress, and re-impose silence on the people. Third, the government may sponsor a new type of populism. Stimulated by the first nationalist measures, the submerged masses would have the illusion that they were participating in the transformations of their society, when, in fact, they were being shrewdly manipulated. In Peru, as the military group that took power in 1968 pursues its political objectives, many of its actions will cause "cracks" to appear in the most closed areas of Peruvian society. Through these cracks, the masses will begin to emerge from their silence with increasingly demanding attitudes. Insofar as their demands are met, the masses will tend not only to increase their frequency, but also to alter their nature.

Thus, the populist approach will also end up creating serious contradictions for the power group. It will find itself obliged either to break open the culture of silence or to restore it. That
is why it seems to us difficult in Latin America's present historical moment for any government to maintain even a relatively aggressive independent policy towards the metropolis while preserving the culture of silence internally.

In 1961, Janio Quadros came to power in Brazil in what was perhaps the greatest electoral victory in the nation's history. He attempted to carry out a paradoxical policy of independence towards the metropolis and control over the people. After seven months in office, he unexpectedly announced to the nation that he was obliged to renounce the presidency under pressure from the same hidden forces that had driven President Getulio Vargas to commit suicide. And so he made a melancholy exit and headed for London.

The Brazilian military group that overthrew the Goulart government in 1964, picturesquely designating their action a revolution, have followed a coherent course according to our preceding analysis: a consistent policy of servility towards the metropolis and the violent imposition of silence upon their own people. A policy of servility towards the metropolis and rupture of the internal culture of silence would not be viable. Neither would a policy of independence towards the metropolis while maintaining the culture of silence internally.

Latin American societies were established as closed societies from the time of their conquest by the Spanish and Portuguese, when the culture of silence took shape. With the exception of post-revolutionary Cuba, these societies are still closed societies today. They are dependent societies for whom only the poles of decision of which they are the object have changed at different historical moments: Portugal, Spain, England, or the United States.

Latin American societies are closed societies characterized by a rigid hierarchical social structure; by the lack of internal markets, since their economy is controlled from the outside; by the exportation of raw materials and importation of manufactured goods, without a voice in either process; by a precarious and selective educational system whose schools are an instrument of maintaining the status quo; by high percentages of illiteracy and disease, including the naively named "tropical diseases" that are really diseases of underdevelopment and dependence; by alarming rates of infant mortality; by malnutrition, often with irreparable effects on mental faculties; by a low life expectancy; and by a high rate of crime.

There is a mode of consciousness that corresponds to the concrete reality of such dependent societies. It is a consciousness historically conditioned by the social structures. The principal characteristic of this consciousness, as dependent as the society to whose structure it conforms, is its "quasiadherence" to objective reality, or "quasi-immersion" in reality. The dominated consciousness does not have sufficient distance from reality to objectify it in order to know it in a critical way. We call this mode of consciousness "semi-intransitive."

Semi-intransitive consciousness is typical of closed structures. In its quasiimmersion in
concrete reality, this consciousness fails to perceive many of reality's challenges, or perceives them in a distorted way. Its semi-intransitiveness is a kind of obliteration imposed by objective conditions. Because of this obliteration, the only data that the dominated consciousness grasps are the data that lie within the orbit of its lived experience. This mode of consciousness cannot objectify the facts and problematical situations of daily life. Men whose consciousness exists at this level of quasi-immersion lack what we call "structural perception," which shapes and reshapes itself from concrete reality in the apprehension of facts and problematical situations. Lacking structural perception, men attribute the sources of such facts and situations in their lives either to some super-reality or to something within themselves; in either case to something outside objective reality. It is not hard to trace here the origin of the fatalistic positions men assume in certain situations. If the explanation for those situations lies in a superior power, or in men's own "natural" incapacity, it is obvious that their action will not be orientated towards transforming reality, but towards those superior beings responsible for the problematical situation, or toward that presumed incapacity. Their action, therefore, has the character of defensive magic or therapeutic magic. Thus, before harvest time or sowing, Latin American peasants, and the peasants of the Third World in general, perform magical rites, often of a syncretistic religious nature. Even when those rites evolve into cultural traditions, they remain instrumental for a time; the transformation of a magical rite into an expression of tradition does not happen suddenly. It is a process involving, once again, the dialectic between objectivity and subjectivity.

Under the impact of infrastructural changes that produced the first "cracks" in Latin American societies, they entered the present stage of historical and cultural transition-some more intensely than others. In the particular case of Brazil, this process began with the abolition of slavery at the end of the nineteenth century. It accelerated during World War I and again after the depression of 1929, intensified during World War II, and continued with fits and starts to 1964, when the military coup violently returned the nation to silence.

What is important, nevertheless, is that once the cracks in the structure begin to appear, and once societies enter the period of transition, immediately the first movements of emergence of the hitherto submerged and silent masses begin to manifest themselves. This does not mean, however, that movements towards emergence automatically break open the culture of silence. In their relationship to the metropolis, transitional societies continue to be silent totalities. Within them, however, the phenomenon of the emerging masses forces the power elites to experiment with new forms of maintaining the masses in silence, since structural changes that provoke the emergence of the masses also qualitatively alter their quasi-immersed and semi-intransitive consciousness.

The objective datum of a closed society, one of its structural components, is the silence of the masses, a silence broken only by occasional, ineffective rebellions. When this silence coincides with the masses' fatalistic perception of reality, the power elites that impose silence
on the masses are rarely questioned. When the closed society begins to crack, however, the new datum becomes the demanding presence of the masses. Silence is no longer seen as an inalterable given, but as the result of a reality that can and must be transformed. This historical transition, lived by Latin American societies to a greater or lesser degree, corresponds to a new phase of popular consciousness, that of "naive transitivity." Formerly the popular consciousness was semi-intransitive, limited to meeting the challenges relative to biological needs. In the process of emerging from silence, the capacity of the popular consciousness expands so that men begin to be able to visualize and distinguish what before was not clearly outlined.

Although the qualitative difference between the semi-intransitive consciousness and the naive transitive consciousness can be explained by the phenomenon of emergence due to structural transformations in society, there are no rigidly defined frontiers between the historical moments that produce qualitative changes in men's awareness. In many respects, the semi-intransitive consciousness remains present in the naive transitive consciousness. In Latin America, for example, almost the entire peasant population is still in the stage of quasi-immersion, a stage with a much longer history than the present one of emergence. The semi-intransitive peasant consciousness introjected innumerable myths in the former stage that continue despite a change in awareness towards transitivity. Therefore, the transitive consciousness emerges as a naive consciousness, as dominated as the former. Nevertheless, it is now indisputably more disposed to perceiving the source of its ambiguous existence in the objective conditions of society.

The emergence of the popular consciousness implies, if not the overcoming of the culture of silence, at least the presence of the masses in the historical process applying pressure on the power elite. It can only be understood as one dimension of a more complex phenomenon. That is to say, the emergence of the popular consciousness, although yet naively intransitive, is also a moment in the developing consciousness of the power elite. In a structure of domination, the silence of the popular masses would not exist but for the power elites who silence them; nor would there be a power elite without the masses. Just as there is a moment of surprise among the masses when they begin to see what they did not see before, there is a corresponding surprise among the elites in power when they find themselves unmasked by the masses. This two-fold unveiling provokes anxieties in both the masses and the power elites. The masses become anxious for freedom, anxious to overcome the silence in which they have always existed. The elites are anxious to maintain the status quo by allowing only superficial transformations designed to prevent any real change in their power of prescription.

In the transitional process, the predominantly static character of the "closed society" gradually yields to a dynamism in all dimensions of social life. Contradictions come to the surface, provoking conflicts in which the popular consciousness becomes more and more demanding, causing greater and greater alarm on the part of the elites. As the lines of this historical
transition become more sharply etched, illuminating the contradictions inherent in a dependent society, groups of intellectuals and students, who themselves belong to the privileged elite, seek to become engaged in social reality, tending to reject imported schemes and pre-fabricated solutions. The arts gradually cease to be the mere expression of the easy life of the affluent bourgeoisie, and begin to find their inspiration in the hard life of the people. Poets begin to write about more than their lost loves, and even the theme of lost love becomes less maudlin, more objective and lyrical. They speak now of the field hand and laborer not as abstract and metaphysical concepts, but as concrete men with concrete lives.23

In the case of Brazil, such qualitative changes marked all levels of creative life. As the transitional phase intensified, these active groups focused more and more on their national reality in order to know it better and to create ways of overcoming their society's state of dependence.

The transitional phase also generates a new style of political life, since the old political models of the closed society are no longer adequate where the masses are an emerging historical presence. In the closed society, relations between the elite and the quasi-immersed people are mediated by political bosses, representing the various elitist factions. In Brazil, the invariably paternalistic political bosses are owners not only of their lands, but also of the silent and obedient popular masses under their control. As rural areas in Latin America at first were not touched by the emergence provoked by the cracks in society, they remained predominantly under the control of the political bosses.24 In urban centers, by contrast, a new kind of leadership emerged to mediate between the power elites and the emerging masses: the populist leadership. There is one characteristic of populist leadership that deserves our particular attention: we refer to its manipulative character.

Although the emergence of the masses from silence does not allow the political style of the formerly closed society to continue, that does not mean that the masses are able to speak on their own behalf. They have merely passed from quasi-immersion to a naive transitive state of awareness. Populist leadership thus could be said to be an adequate response to the new presence of the masses in the historical process. But it is a manipulative leadership-manipulative of the masses, since it cannot manipulate the elite.

Populist manipulation of the masses must be seen from two different perspectives. On the one hand, it is undeniably a kind of political opiate that maintains not only the naivete of the emerging consciousness, but also the people's habit of being directed. On the other hand, to the extent that it uses mass protest and demands, political manipulation paradoxically accelerates the process by which the people unveil reality. This paradox sums up the ambiguous character of populism: it is manipulative, yet at the same time a factor in democratic mobilization.25
Thus, the new style of political life found in transitional societies is not confined to the manipulative role of its leaders, mediating between the masses and the elites. Indeed, the populist style of political action ends up creating conditions for youth groups and intellectuals to exercise political participation together with the people. Although it is an instance of manipulative paternalism, populism offers the possibility of a critical analysis of the manipulation itself. Within the whole play of contradictions and ambiguities, the emergence of the popular masses in transitional societies prepares the way for the masses to become conscious of their dependent state.

As we have said, the passage of the masses from a semi-intransitive to a naive transitive state of consciousness is also the moment of an awakening consciousness on the part of the elites, a decisive moment for the critical consciousness of progressive groups. At first there appears a fragile awareness among small groups of intellectuals who are still marked by the cultural alienation of society as a whole, an alienation reinforced by their university "formation." As the contradictions typical of a society in transition emerge more clearly, these groups multiply and are able to distinguish more and more precisely what makes up their society. They tend more and more to join with the popular masses in a variety of ways: through literature, plastic arts, the theater, music, education, sports, and folk art. What is important is the communion with the people that some of these groups are able to achieve.

At this point the increasingly critical consciousness of these progressive groups, arising from the naive transitivity of the emerging masses, becomes a challenge to the consciousness of the power elites. Societies that find themselves in this historical phase, which cannot be clearly understood outside the critical comprehension of the totality of which they are a part, live in a climate of pre-revolution whose dialectical contradiction is the coup d'etat.

In Latin America, the coup d'etat has become the answer of the economic and military power elites to the crises of popular emergence. This response varies with the relative influence of the military. According to the degree of its violence and that of the subsequent repression of the people, the coup d'etat "reactivates" old patterns of behavior in the people, patterns that belong to their former state of quasi-immersion. Only this "reactivation" of the culture of silence can explain the passivity of the people when faced with the violence and arbitrary rule of Latin American military coups (with the sole exception, up to now, of Peru). It must be emphasized that the coups d'etat in Latin America are incomprehensible without a dialectical vision of reality; any attempt to understand them mechanistically will lead to a distorted picture. Intensely problematical, unmasking more and more their condition of dependency, Latin American societies in transition are confronted with two contradictory possibilities: revolution or coup d'etat. The stronger the ideological foundations of a coup d'etat, the more it is impossible for a society to return afterwards to the same political style that created the very conditions for the coup. A coup d'etat qualitatively alters the process of a society's historical transition and marks the beginning of a new transition. In the original transitional stage, the
The coup was the antithetical alternative to revolution; in the new transitional stage, the coup is defined and confirmed as an arbitrary and antipopular power, whose tendency before the continuing possibility of revolution is to become more and more rigid.

In Brazil, the transition marked by the coup d'etat sets up recapitulation to an ideology of development based on the handing over of the national economy to foreign interests, an ideology in which "the idea of the great international enterprise replaces the idea of the state monopoly as the basis for development." One of the basic requirements for such an ideology is necessarily the silencing of popular sectors and their consequent removal from the sphere of decisionmaking. Popular forces must, therefore, avoid the naive illusion that this transitional stage may afford "openings" that will enable them to reestablish the rhythm of the previous transitional stages, whose political model corresponded to a national populist ideology of development.

The "openings" that the new transitional phase offers have their own semantics. Such openings do not signify a return to what has been, but a give and take within the play of accommodations demanded by the reigning ideology. Whatever its ideology, the new transitional phase challenges the popular forces to find an entirely new way of proceeding, distinct from their action in the former period when they were contending with the forces that those coups brought to power.

One of the reasons for the change is obvious enough. Due to the repression imposed by the coup, the popular forces have to act in silence, and silent action requires a difficult apprenticeship. Further, the popular forces have to search for ways to counter the effects of the reactivation of the culture of silence, which historically engendered the dominated consciousness.

Under these conditions, what is the possibility of survival for the emerging consciousness that has reached the state of naive transitivity? The answer to this question must be found in a deeper analysis of the transitional phase inaugurated by the military coup. Since revolution is still a possibility in this phase, our analysis will focus on the dialectical confrontation between the revolutionary project (or, lamentably, projects) and the new regime.

Cultural Action and Cultural Revolution

It would be unnecessary to tell the revolutionary groups that they are the antagonistic contradiction of the Right. However, it would not be inexpedient to emphasize that this antagonism, which is born of their opposing purposes, must express itself in a behavior that is equally antagonistic. There ought to be a difference in the praxis of the Right and of revolutionary groups that defines them to the people, making the options of each group explicit. This difference between the two groups stems from the utopic nature of the
revolutionary groups, and the impossibility of the Right to be utopic. This is not an arbitrary distinction, but one that is sufficient to distinguish radically the objectives and forms of action taken by the revolutionary and rightist groups.

To the extent that real utopia implies the denunciation of an unjust reality and the proclamation of a pre-project, revolutionary leadership cannot:

a) denounce reality without knowing reality;

b) proclaim a new reality without having a draft project which, although it emerges in the denunciation, becomes a viable project only in praxis;

c) know reality without relying on the people as well as on objective facts for the source of its knowledge;

d) denounce and proclaim by itself;

e) make new myths out of the denunciation and annunciation-denunciation and annunciation must be anti-ideological insofar as they result from a scientific knowledge of reality;

f) renounce communion with the people, not only during the time between the dialectic of denunciation and annunciation and the concretization of a viable project, but also in the very act of giving that project concrete reality.

Thus, revolutionary leadership falls into internal contradictions that compromise its purpose, when, victim of a fatalist concept of history, it tries to domesticate the people mechanically to a future that the leadership knows a priori, but which it thinks the people are incapable of knowing. In this case, revolutionary leadership ceases to be utopian and ends up identified with the Right. The Right makes no denunciation or proclamation, except, as we have said, to denounce whoever denounces it and to proclaim its own myths.

A true revolutionary project, on the other hand, to which the utopian dimension is natural, is a process in which the people assume the role of subject in the precarious adventure of transforming and recreating the world. The Right is necessarily opposed to such a project, and attempts to immobilize it. Thus, to use Erich Fromm's terms, the revolutionary utopia is biophilic, whereas the Right in its rigidity is necrophilic, as is a revolutionary leadership that has become bureaucratic.

Revolutionary utopia tends to be dynamic rather than static; tends to life rather than death; to the future as a challenge to man's creativity rather than as a repetition of the present; to love as liberation of subjects rather than as pathological possessiveness; to the emotion of life rather
than cold abstractions; to living together in harmony rather than gregariousness; to dialogue rather than mutism; to praxis rather than "law and order"; to men who organize themselves reflectively for action rather than men who are organized for passivity; to creative and communicative language rather than prescriptive signals; to reflective challenges rather than domesticating slogans; and to values that are lived rather than myths that are imposed.

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 the emotion of living; gregariousness rather than authentic living together; organization men rather than creative and communicative language; and slogans rather than challenges.

It is indispensable for revolutionaries to witness more and more the radical difference that separates them from the rightist elite. It is not enough to condemn the violence of the Right, its aristocratic posture, its myths. Revolutionaries must prove their respect for the people, their belief and confidence in them, not as a mere strategy but as an implicit requirement to being a revolutionary. This commitment to the people is fundamental at any given moment, but especially in the transition period created by a coup d'etat.

Victimizing the people by its violence, the coup re-imposes, as we have said, the old climate of the culture of silence. The people, standing at the threshold of their experience as subjects and participants of society, need signs that will help them recognize who is with them and who is against them. These signs, or witnesses, are given through projects proposed by men in dialectic with the structure. Each project constitutes an interacting totality of objectives, methods, procedures, and techniques. The revolutionary project is distinguished from the rightist project not only by its objectives, but by its total reality. A project's method cannot be dichotomized from its content and objectives, as if methods were neutral and equally appropriate for liberation or domination. Such a concept reveals a naive idealism that is satisfied with the subjective intention of the person who acts.

The revolutionary project is engaged in a struggle against oppressive and dehumanizing structures. To the extent that it seeks the affirmation of concrete men as men freeing themselves, any thoughtless concession to the oppressor's methods is always a danger and a threat to the revolutionary project itself. Revolutionaries must demand of themselves an imperious coherence. As men, they may make mistakes, they are subject to equivocation, but they cannot act like reactionaries and call themselves revolutionaries. They must suit their action to historical conditions, taking advantage of the real and unique possibilities that exist. Their role is to seek the most efficient and viable means of helping the people to move from the levels of semi-intransitive or naive-transitive consciousness to the level of critical consciousness. This preoccupation, which is alone authentically liberating, is implicit in the revolutionary project itself. Originating in the praxis of both the leadership and the rank and
file, every revolutionary project is basically "cultural action" in the process of becoming "cultural revolution."

Revolution is a critical process, unrealizable without science and reflection. In the midst of reflective action on the world to be transformed, the people come to recognize that the world is indeed being transformed. The world in transformation is the mediator of the dialogue between the people, at one pole of the act of knowing, and the revolutionary leadership, at the other. If objective conditions do not always permit this dialogue, its existence can be verified by the witness of the leadership.

Che Guevara is an example of the unceasing witness revolutionary leadership gives to dialogue with the people. The more we study his work, the more we perceive his conviction that anyone who wants to become a true revolutionary must be in "communion" with the people. Guevara did not hesitate to recognize the capacity to love as an indispensable condition for authentic revolutionaries. While he constantly noted the failure of the peasants to participate in the guerrilla movement, his references to them in his Bolivian diary did not express disaffection. He never lost hope of ultimately being able to count on their participation. In the same spirit of communion, Guevara's guerrilla encampment served as the "theoretical context" in which he and his companions together analyzed the concrete events they were living through and planned the strategy of their action.

Guevara did not create dichotomies between the methods, content, and objectives of his projects. In spite of the risks to his and his companions' lives, he justified guerrilla warfare as an introduction to freedom, as a call to life to those who are the living dead. Like Camilo Torres, he became a guerrilla not out of desperation, but because, as a lover of men, he dreamt of a new man being born in the experience of liberation. In this sense, Guevara incarnated the authentic revolutionary utopia as did few others. He was one of the great prophets of the silent ones of the Third World. Conversant with many of them, he spoke on behalf of all of them.

In citing Guevara and his witness as a guerrilla, we do not mean to say that revolutionaries elsewhere are obliged to repeat the same witness. What is essential is that they strive to achieve communion with the people as he did, patiently and unceasingly. Communion with the people-accessible only to those with a utopian vision, in the sense referred to in this article-is one of the fundamental characteristics of cultural action for freedom. Authentic communion implies communication between men, mediated by the world. Only praxis in the context of communion makes conscientization a viable project. Conscientization is a joint project in that it takes place in a man among other men, men united by their action and by their reflection upon that action and upon the world. Thus men together achieve the state of perceptive clarity that Goldman calls "the maximum of potential consciousness" beyond "real consciousness."
Conscientization is more than a simple prise de conscience. While it implies overcoming "false consciousness," overcoming, that is, a semi-intransitive or naive transitive state of consciousness, it implies further the critical insertion of the conscienticized person into a demythologized reality. This is why conscientization is an unrealizable project for the Right. The Right is by its nature incapable of being utopian, and hence it cannot develop a form of cultural action that would bring about conscientization. There can be no conscientization of the people without a radical denunciation of dehumanizing structures, accompanied by the proclamation of a new reality to be created by men. The Right cannot unmask itself, nor can it sponsor the means for the people to unmask it more than it is willing to be unmasked. With the increased clarity of the popular consciousness, its own consciousness tends to grow, but this form of conscientization cannot convert itself into a praxis leading to the conscientization of the people. There can be no conscientization without denunciation of unjust structures, a thing that cannot be expected of the Right. Nor can there be popular conscientization for domination. The Right invents new forms of cultural action only for domination.

Thus, the two forms of cultural action are antagonistic to each other. Whereas cultural action for freedom is characterized by dialogue, and its preeminent purpose is to conscienticize the people, cultural action for domination is opposed to dialogue and serves to domesticate the people. The former problematizes, the latter sloganizes. Cultural action for freedom is committed to the scientific unveiling of reality, to the exposure, that is, of myths and ideologies, it must separate ideology from science. Althusser insists on the necessity of this separation. Cultural action for freedom can be satisfied neither with "the mystifications of ideology," as he calls them, nor with "a simple moral denunciation of myths and errors," but must undertake a "rational and rigorous critique [of ideology]." The fundamental role of those committed to cultural action for conscientization is not properly speaking to fabricate the liberating idea, but to invite the people to grasp with their minds the truth of their reality.

Consistent with this spirit of knowing, scientific knowledge cannot be knowledge that is merely transmitted, for it would itself become ideological myth, even if it were transmitted with the intention of liberating men. The discrepancy between intention and practice would be resolved in favor of practice. The only authentic points of departure for the scientific knowledge of reality are the dialectical relationships between men and the world, and the critical comprehension of how these relationships are evolved and how they in turn condition men's perception of concrete reality.

Those who use cultural action as a strategy for maintaining their domination over the people have no choice but to indoctrinate the people in a mythified version of reality. In doing so, the Right subordinates science and technology to its own ideology, using them to disseminate information and prescriptions in its effort to adjust the people to the reality that the "communications" media define as proper. By contrast, for those who undertake cultural action for freedom, science is the indispensable instrument for denouncing the myths created
by the Right, and philosophy is the matrix of the proclamation of a new reality. Science and philosophy together provide the principles of action for conscientization. Cultural action for conscientization is always a utopian enterprise. That is why it needs philosophy, without which, instead of denouncing reality and announcing the future, it would fall into the "mystifications of ideological knowledge."

The utopian nature of cultural action for freedom is what distinguishes it above all from cultural action for domination. Cultural action for domination, based on myths, cannot pose problems about reality to the people, nor orientate the people to the unveiling of reality, since both of these projects would imply denunciation and annunciation. On the contrary, in problematizing and conscienticizing cultural action for freedom, the annunciation of a new reality is the historical project proposed for men's achievement.

In the face of a semi-intransitive or naive state of consciousness among the people, conscientization envisages their attaining critical consciousness, or "the maximum of potential consciousness." This objective cannot terminate when the annunciation becomes concrete. On the contrary, when the annunciation becomes concrete reality, the need becomes even greater for critical consciousness among the people, both horizontally and vertically. Thus, cultural action for freedom, which characterized the movement that struggled for the realization of what was announced, must then transform itself into permanent cultural revolution.

Before going on to elaborate upon the distinct but essentially related moments of cultural action and cultural revolution, let us summarize our preceding points about levels of consciousness. An explicit relationship has been established between cultural action for freedom, conscientization as its chief enterprise, and the transcendence of semi-intransitive and naivetransitive states of consciousness by critical consciousness. Critical consciousness is brought about not through an intellectual effort alone, but through praxis-through the authentic union of action and reflection. Such reflective action cannot be denied to the people. If it were, the people would be no more than activist pawns in the hands of a leadership that reserved for itself the right of decisionmaking. The authentic left cannot fail to stimulate the overcoming of the people's false consciousness, on whatever level it exists, just as the Right is incapable of doing so. In order to maintain its power, the Right needs an elite who think for it, assisting it in accomplishing its projects. Revolutionary leadership needs the people in order to make the revolutionary project a reality, but the people in the process of becoming more and more critically conscious.

After the revolutionary reality is inaugurated, conscientization continues to be indispensable. It is the instrument for ejecting the cultural myths that remain in the people despite the new reality. Further, it is a force countering the bureaucracy, which threatens to deaden the revolutionary vision and dominate the people in the very name of their freedom. Finally, conscientization is a defense against another threat, that of the potential mythification of the
technology, which the new society requires to transform its backward infrastructures.34

There are two possible directions open to the transitive popular consciousness. The first is growth from a naive state of consciousness to the level of critical consciousness-Goldman's "maximum of potential consciousness." The second is the distortion of the transitive state of consciousness to its pathological form-that of the fanatic or "irrational" consciousness.35 This form has a mythical character that replaces the magical character of the semi-intransitive and naive-transitive states of consciousness. "Massification"-the phenomenon of mass societies-originates at this level. Mass society is not to be associated with the emergence of the masses in the historical process, as an aristocratic eye may view the phenomenon. True, the emergence of the masses with their claims and demands makes them present in the historical process, however naive their consciousness-a phenomenon that accompanies the cracking up of closed societies under the impact of the first infrastructural changes. Mass society, however, occurs much later. It appears in highly technologized, complex societies. In order to function, these societies require specialties, which become specialisms, and rationality, which degenerates into myth-making irrationalism.

Distinct from specialties, to which we are not opposed, specialisms narrow the area of knowledge in such a way that the so-called "specialists" become generally incapable of thinking. Because they have lost the vision of the whole of which their "specialty" is only one dimension, they cannot even think correctly in the area of their specialization. Similarly, the rationality basic to science and technology disappears under the extraordinary effects of technology itself, and its place is taken by mythmaking irrationalism. The attempt to explain man as a superior type of robot originates in such irrationalism.36

In mass society, ways of thinking become as standardized as ways of dressing and tastes in food. Men begin thinking and acting according to the prescriptions they receive daily from the communications media rather than in response to their dialectical relationships with the world. In mass societies, where everything is prefabricated and behavior is almost automatized, men are lost because they don't have to "risk themselves." They do not have to think about even the smallest things; there is always some manual that says what to do in situation "a" or "b." Rarely do men have to pause at a street corner to think which direction to follow. There's always an arrow that deproblematicizes the situation. Though street signs are not evil in themselves, and are necessary in cosmopolitan cities, they are among thousands of directional signals in a technological society that, introjected by men, hinder their capacity for critical thinking.

Technology thus ceases to be perceived by men as one of the greatest expressions of their creative power and becomes instead a species of new divinity to which they create a cult of worship. Efficiency ceases to be identified with the power men have to think, to imagine, to risk themselves in creation, and rather comes to mean carrying out orders from above.
Let it be clear, however, that technological development must be one of the concerns of the revolutionary project. It would be simplistic to attribute responsibility for these deviations to technology in itself. This would be another kind of irrationalism, that of conceiving of technology as a demonic entity, above and opposed to men. Critically viewed, technology is nothing more nor less than a natural phase of the creative process that engaged man from the moment he forged his first tool and began to transform the world for its humanization.

Considering that technology is not only necessary but part of man's natural development, the question facing revolutionaries is how to avoid technology's mythical deviations. The techniques of "human relations" are not the answer, for in the final analysis they are only another way of domesticating and alienating men even further in the service of greater productivity. For this and other reasons that we have expounded in the course of this article, we insist on cultural action for freedom. We do not, however, attribute to conscientization any magical power, which would only be to mythify it. Conscientization is not a magical charm for revolutionaries, but a basic dimension of their reflective action. If men were not "conscious bodies," capable of acting and perceiving, of knowing and re-creating, if they were not conscious of themselves and the world, the idea of conscientization would make no sense—but then, neither would the idea of revolution. Authentic revolutions are undertaken in order to liberate men, precisely because men can know themselves to be oppressed, and be conscious of the oppressive reality in which they exist.

But since, as we have seen, men's consciousness is conditioned by reality, conscientization is first of all the effort to enlighten men about the obstacles preventing them from a clear perception of reality. In this role, conscientization effects the ejection of cultural myths that confuse the people's awareness and make them ambiguous beings.

Because men are historical beings, incomplete and conscious of being incomplete, revolution is as natural and permanent a human dimension as is education. Only a mechanistic mentality holds that education can cease at a certain point, or that revolution can be halted when it attains power. To be authentic, revolution must be a continuous event. Otherwise it will cease to be revolution, and will become sclerotic bureaucracy.

Revolution is always cultural, whether it be in the phase of denouncing an oppressive society and proclaiming the advent of a just society, or in the phase of the new society inaugurated by the revolution. In the new society, the revolutionary process becomes cultural revolution.

Finally, let us clarify the reasons why we have been speaking of cultural action and cultural revolution as distinct moments in the revolutionary process. In the first place, cultural action for freedom is carried out in opposition to the dominating power elite, while cultural
revolution takes place in harmony with the revolutionary regime—although this does not mean that it is subordinated to the revolutionary power. All cultural revolution proposes freedom as its goal. Cultural action, on the contrary, if sponsored by the oppressive regime, can be a strategy for domination, in which case it can never become cultural revolution.

The limits of cultural action are set by the oppressive reality itself and by the silence imposed by the power elite. The nature of the oppression, therefore, determines the tactics, which are necessarily different from those employed in cultural revolution. Whereas cultural action for freedom confronts silence both as external fact and introjected reality, cultural revolution confronts it only as introjected reality. Both cultural action for freedom and cultural revolution are an effort to negate the dominating culture culturally, even before the new culture resulting from that negation has become reality. The new cultural reality itself is continuously subject to negation in favor of the increasing affirmation of men. In cultural revolution, however, this negation occurs simultaneously with the birth of the new culture in the womb of the old.

Both cultural action and cultural revolution imply communion between the leaders and the people, as subjects who are transforming reality. In cultural revolution, however, communion is so firm that the leaders and the people become like one body, checked by a permanent process of selfscrutiny. Both cultural action and cultural revolution are founded on scientific knowledge of reality, but in cultural revolution, science is no longer at the service of domination. On two points, however, there is no distinction between cultural action for freedom and cultural revolution. Both are committed to conscientization, and the necessity for each is explained by the "dialectic of overdetermination."

We have spoken of the challenge facing Latin America in this period of historical transition. We believe that other areas of the Third World are no exception to what we have described, though each will present its own particular nuances. If the paths they follow are to lead to liberation, they cannot bypass cultural action for conscientization. Only through such a process can the "maximum of potential consciousness" be attained by the emergent and uncritical masses, and the passage from submersion in semi-intransitiveness to full emergence be achieved. If we have faith in men, we cannot be content with saying that they are human persons while doing nothing concrete so that they may exist as such.

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Notes

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1. [Conscientization refers to the process in which men, not as recipients, but as knowing subjects, achieve a deepening awareness both of the sociocultural reality that shapes their lives and of their capacity to transform that reality. See p. 493.-Editor]
2. Re the distinction between men's relationships and the contacts of animals, see Paulo Freire,

3. Transcendence in this context signifies the capacity of human consciousness to surpass the limitations of the objective configuration. Without this "transcendental intentionality," consciousness of what exists beyond limitations would be impossible. For example, I am aware of how the table at which I write limits me only because I can transcend its limits, and focus my attention on them.

4. "'Man, a reasoning animal,' said Aristotle. 'Man, a reflective animal,' let us say more exactly today, putting the accent on the evolutionary characteristics of a quality which signifies the passage from a still diffuse consciousness to one sufficiently well centered to be capable of coinciding with itself. Man not only 'a being who knows' but 'a being who knows he knows.' Possessing consciousness raised to the power of two.... Do we sufficiently feel the radical nature of the difference?" Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, The Appearance of Man, trans. J. M. Cohen (New York: Harper & Row, 1965), p. 224.


6. In a discussion of men-world relationships during a "circulo de cultura," a Chilean peasant affirmed, "I now see that there is no world without men." When the educator asked, "Suppose all men died, but there were still trees, animals, birds, rivers, and stars, wouldn't this be the world?" "No," replied the peasant, "there would be no one to say, this is the world."

7. We refer to behaviorism as studied in John Beloff’s The Existence of Mind (New York: Citadel Press, 1964), Introduction.


9. "The Tiger does not 'de-tigerize' itself," said Ortega y Gasset in one of his works.


11. Karl Marx, Capital.

Footnote

12. This is proper to men's social relations, which imply their relationship to their world. That is why the traditional aristocratic dichotomy between manual work and intellectual work is no more than a myth. All work engages the whole man as an indivisible unity. A factory hand's work can no more be divided into manual or intellectual than ours in writing this article. The only distinction that can be made between these forms of work is the predominance of the kind of effort demanded by the work: muscular-nervous effort or intellectual effort. Concerning this point, see Antonio Gramsci, Cultura y Literatura (Madrid: Ediciones Peninsula, 1967), p. 31.


14. Jose Luis Fiori, in a letter to the author. Jose Luis Fiori was an assistant to the author on his Chilean team to ICIRA, one of the best institutes of its type in the Third World.

15. It is interesting to note how this happens with the churches. The concept "mission lands"
originates in the metropolis. For a mission land to exist, there must be another that defines it as such. There is a significant coincidence between mission-sending nations and metropolises as there is between mission lands and the Third World. It would seem to us that, on the contrary, all lands constitute mission territory to the Christian perspective.


17. This mode of consciousness is still found to be predominant in Latin American rural areas where large property holdings (latifundios) are the rule. The rural areas constitute "closed societies" that maintain the "culture of silence" intact.


20. It is essential that modernization of backward structures ejects the sources of the magic rites that are an integral part of the structures. If not, while it may do away with the phenomenon of magic rites themselves, modernization will proceed to mythologize technology. The myth of technology will replace the magical entities that formerly explained problematical situations. Further, the myth of technology might be seen, not as the substitute for the old forces that, in this case, continue to exist, but as something superior even to them. Technology would thus be projected as all-powerful, beyond all structures, accessible only to a few privileged men.

21. The abolition of slavery in Brazil brought about the inversion of capital in incipient industries, and stimulated the first waves of German, Italian, and Japanese immigration to the south-central and southern Brazilian states.

22. Although we have not made a precise study of the emergence of black consciousness in the United States, we are tempted to state that, especially in southern areas, there are divergencies between the younger and older generations that cannot be explained by psychological criteria, but rather by a dialectical understanding of the process of the emerging consciousness. The younger generation, less influenced by fatalism than the older, must logically assume positions qualitatively different from the older generation, not only in regard to passive silence, but also in regard to the methods used by their protest movements.


24. In Latin America, the Mexican, Bolivian, and Cuban revolutions broke open the closed structures of rural areas. Only Cuba, however, succeeded in making this change permanent. Mexico frustrated its revolution, and the Bolivian revolutionary movement was defeated. Nevertheless, the presence of the peasant in the social life of both Mexico and Bolivia is an
indisputable fact as a result of that initial opening.

25. Francisco Weffort, in his introduction to Paulo Freire's Educacao como Pratica da Liberdade, points out that ambiguity is the principal characteristic of populism. A professor of sociology, Weffort is one of the best Brazilian analysts of populism today. The Center for the Study of Development and Social Change in Cambridge, Massachusetts, has recently issued a translation of this introduction, by Loretta Slover, for restricted circulation.

26. By the same phenomenon of the people's reversion to silence, Althusser explains how it was possible for the Russian people to put up with the crimes of Stalin's repression.


31. Freire, Pedagogy of the Oppressed, discusses both these forms of cultural action.


[Footnote]

33. One must reject the myth that any criticism of necrophilic bureaucracies that swallow up revolutionary proclamation strengthens the Right. The opposite is true. Silence, not criticism, in this case would renounce the proclamation and be a capitulation to the Right.

34. See Freire, Pedagogy of the Oppressed.


36. In a recent conversation with the author, the psychoanalyst Michael Maccoby, Dr. Fromm's assistant, stated that his research suggests a relationship between mythologizing technology and necrophilic attitudes.

37. "Professionals who seek self-realization through creative and autonomous behavior without regard to the defined goals, needs, and channels of their respective departments have no more place in a large corporation or government agency than squeamish soldiers in the Army.... The social organization of the new Technology, by systematically denying to the general population experiences which are analogous to those of its higher management, contributes very heavily to the growth of social irrationality in our society." John MacDermott, "Technology: The Opiate of Intellectuals," New York Review of Books, No. 2 (July 31, 1969).

38. Even though these statements on cultural revolution can be applied to an analysis of the Chinese cultural revolution and beyond, that is not our intention. We restrict our study to a sketch of the relationship between cultural revolution and cultural action, which we propose.