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RETEXTURING THE WORD AND THE WORLD: LITERACY
AND CONTRADICTION IN THE TEXTS OF PAULO FREIRE

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The completing of a major piece of research causes to re-echo Eliot's whistful sigh: "To make an end is to make a beginning. The end is where we start from." It is a cliché, but perhaps true because of that, that one is now in a position, having done all the work, to start where one wished one could have started so long ago.

The fact, however, that this particular work is now completed is due, in very large part, to the help and support of many people, of whose attention and involvement I have always been conscious. When I say to myself, with satisfaction, "This study is all my own work", it is they who will smile, for they will know deeply that, without them, the work would never have been realised.

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ABSTRACT

Most studies of Freire concentrate on his method and techniques. This present work seeks to go beneath the obvious practice of Literacy teaching, to analyse the construction of his pedagogy and to explore the contradictions posed both by Freire's life (bio-texts) and by his work (grapho-texts).

The study therefore proposes the most detailed Biography of Freire which is yet currently available, identifying the main stages of his career and exploring the development of his educational philosophy.

Following a brief review of his Method, there is a detailed presentation of the Sources and Influences which lie behind Freire's pedagogy, which reveal his comprehensive eclecticism but which also place him firmly within the classical tradition of European education. This section reveals for the first time some of the key taproots of Freirean philosophy.

This textual archaeology and genealogy is also used to construct an analysis of this philosophy through a detailed examination of the concepts of Dialogue and Conscientisation, trying to reconcile the fundamental disjunction which appears between Freire's rhetoric and his practice.

That "Dialogic Education" may be a contradiction in terms is further explored through a unique examination of the Teaching Material which Freire used in his programme. The fundamental contradiction is exposed: that Literacy, which means "learning to read" can never achieve its ideals of Dialogue.

The study is itself structured on the Freirean Methodology of Coding and Decoding. In ends by placing Freire's pedagogy within the wider context (con-text) of the recent Literacy debate, confronting the nature of Literacy itself, the construction of Power and Knowledge through Writing and the further contradiction contained in the idea of "Functional Literacy". The conclusion is that Literacy is its own multi-faceted Pharmakon: of its essence, Literacy is an agent of Control and an agent of Change.

The strength of the study is in its detail and in its extensive bibliographic research. It concludes that Freire's attempt to retexture Literacy, to renovate the inherent contradictions of teaching and learning, is a major contribution to Pedagogy, not because it is successful but because it authentically and exhaustively Problem Posing. The "Metodo Paulo Freire" is a contradictory pedagogy, but it is also a Pedagogy of Contradiction.

It is regrettable that so much of the vigour and commitment of those who write and teach against oppression is vitiated by sexist language.   Sadly, if we construct the struggle for freedom as an engagement for "man's liberation", we may be contributing to the suppression, invisibility or powerlessness of women.

It is perhaps time to reject the outmoded, classicist language that obdurately claims that she and her are to be assumed in he and his.   We can no longer inhabit a world where "men are oppressed" and where we try to educate people that a man can "liberate himself" and can achieve "his ontological vocation through his own efforts."

I have discussed this problem of sexist language in my correspondence with Professor Freire.   He has indeed confirmed that it was certainly not his intention to cause offence by the apparently sexist translations of his work, and he agreed wholeheartedly that such "old forms of writing" should be avoided.

Professor Freire willingly agreed that I should re-translate his early works, avoiding sexist language and in keeping with his own efforts, since 1975, to find more acceptable linguistic expressions.   This I have tried to do where I have had the original text to hand.   In other cases, I have reworked, or reworded, the available translations.

Equally, I have rephrased other texts used in this study, albeit without permission.   I have tended to use person or humankind, she/he and their, but I have also circumvented the linguistic problems of certain texts by using the formula of we, us, and our.   The essential meaning of the texts has not been altered, but there may be a nuance of direct, personal expression which is more evident here than in the original sources.

The task of trying to create a discourse on liberating education that is anti-sexist has been difficult.   It is hoped that any strain experienced by the reader because of unfamiliar linguistic forms will be tolerated in the light of my underlying intention to engage all those who wish, as Subjects, to enter an authentic and authenticating dialogue.

INTRODUCTION

Paulo   Freire,   educator,   philosopher,   political
activator, has the capacity to excite and frustrate friends
and critics alike.   He is not, apparently, a man about
whom one remains neutral.

We   have to take seriously the man of whom Illich
said, "He is my master and my teacher"[1], and whom Reimer
(Ohliger, 1971:7) called "the greatest living educator".
Lovett (1975:15) regards his work as the most radical
analysis of working class adult education, while McLaren
(1986:394) places him in the "front ranks of that "dying
class" of modern revolutionaries who fight for social
justice and transformation", asserting that Freire's
pedagogy has assumed a legendary and epoch making status.

But is that an epoch that is dying or one that is
coming to birth? Is Freire O'Shaughnessy's "dreamer of
dreams", an opportunist educator who expounded a discourse
which was fashionable in the late 60's and early 70's but
which since has been tainted with disillusion and middle
age? Was he an "earth-mover and earth-shaker" who was
empowered by the same missionary endeavour and idealism
which Reimer obviously shared in saying that "As an

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1. Illich, I. _Yesterday I could not sleep because
   yesterday I wrote my name_. Centre for the Study of
   Democratic Institutions, Santa Barbara, California,
   undated audio-tape.

educator, Freire is mainly concerned with the educational means of freeing people from the bondage of the culture of silence." (1976:69)

This is explained, in the same epochal discourse but with more detail, by Haviland (1973):

> "The direct outcome of his work in Brazil and Chile has been that various groups of oppressed people, who have lived for years in a world where they have been imprisoned by mental and physical poverty, now have a new hope, a renewed desire to live a life as full, human beings, a belief that they can affect their own destinies and a desire to become educated. He has provided them with the tools to liberate and educate themselves."

Yet is this, was this ever, really the case? In what sense can education be linked causally to the complex processes of liberation? Does education combat "mental poverty" as it does "physical poverty", even supposing that the former denotes a meaningful, social or individual deprivation?

Freire himself has recognised the difficulty. As MacEoin (1972) notes:

> "For years I have been searching for an instance in which peasants have broken out of their oppression, even at a local level, but I have found none. When I asked Freire, he admitted that neither has he."

Others have proffered the more positive response that the so-called Freirean method is not primarily concerned with education but with a much greater human need, viz. the freedom of the individual and the development of a just society.

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This may sound a grandiose claim, but it is one that underlies Harman's (1971) suggestion (and he is by no means alone) that the Pedagogy of the Oppressed, for example, should not be read as a "revolutionary pedagogy" but as a "pedagogy for revolution."

Some readers (e.g. Berger, 1975) question the validity of this distinction, pointing to the political naïveté which Harman illustrates. Others blame Freire himself for the lack of clarity and for creating a magma of texts, analyses and reflections beneath the apparently solid crust of his literacy method.

It is certainly true that Freire has provoked a sustained chorus of criticism: there is the contorted manner of his writing (Knudson, 1971), his lack of human experience (Boston, 1972), his circular logic and confusing repetitiveness (Collins, 1972); he is obscurantist (O'Neill, 1978), too mystifying (Egerton, 1975), too abstract (Mackie, 1980:128), too psychological (Barndt, 1980), too utopian (Griffith, 1974); his method requires a high level of social manipulation (Jerez, 1971) and can be used equally to domesticate as to liberate (Kidd, 1982).

It is these contiguous elements of confusion, criticism, contradiction and commendation that make any study of Freire difficult. Yet we cannot allow his appeal: "Many people say I am a contradictory man, and I say I have the right to be contradictory. Let me be in peace with my

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contradictions." (1979:11)   This may have been a felt need
on his part, but it is inconsistent with that process of
conscientisation   which actively encourages people   to
"refuse to be inactive readers and to become agents of
their own learning."(1976)   Dialogic education must also
be   dialectic education, and we have to reject   the
homogenisation of knowledge and seek to "problematise", to
bring into question what is given by exploiting the
contradictions, by finding those contra-dicta that mean
that something can be "said against" the status quo.

        In refusing Freire his contradictions, however, we
are not simply attempting to rationalise his system.   We
cannot demythologise Freire by imposing an illusion of
coherence on his inconsistencies. Pedagogic or cultural
exegesis is not condemned to find a coherent Freire inside
the disparate texts which are available.   Just as there is
a danger in any intellectual biography of making earlier
works anachronistic by imposition of an author's later
understandings, so too there is the temptation to "read
between the lines" and so find or implant tHe fil
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conducteur. that inner thread of consistency and logic.

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2. This important point on adjusting the biographical lens
    owes much to Skinner (1969), whose caution about
    parochialism, that is, "misdescribing, by a process of
    historical foreshortening, both the sense and the
    intended reference of a given work" should also be
    noted.
    My insistence that a dialogic pedagogy must allow
    inconsistency is paralleled in Freinet's method and
    pedagogy.   His principle of tâtonnement, trial and
    error, demands that the educator be able to exploit and
    celebrate the possibility of error. See: Clanché, P.
    (1989).

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We may have to accept as inevitable, even desirable, that a method founded on the principles of dialogue should be exposed by the evidence of incomplete premises and even downright contradiction.

A history of ideas will take account of the fact that key terms and core principles are changed and developed with time. The exegete, in that case, can only fall back upon the internal evidence for what the author is trying to communicate. Beyond that, there is the corroborating evidence of the external text or contexts which "explain" the texts.

With Freire, this is no easy task. His sincerity is not in doubt; not even a casual reader could miss the passion and strength of his commitment. The difficulties lie rather in establishing the Freirean Corpus, i.e. an image of the man himself and the corps or canon of his work. What do we know of Freire's life, what has he said and written, and to whom was he speaking and writing?

It is important to note that there is as yet no accredited biography of Freire. I have formed only an incomplete jig-saw picture, using pieces gleaned from his writings and interviews and from people who knew him. Although he often asserts that "any statement on education implies a statement about a person's relationship with the world", he has been less than expansive in dealing with his own biography.

Paradoxically, this strengthens the hand of Freire as auto-biographer. He has always insisted on writing his own life in his own script. The kind of popular biography that many seek, he would regard as necrophilic. As Sturrock wrote of Barthes, "A biography is a treacherous memorial because it is logical and necessarily centripetal, and that means life-denying."(Sturrock, 1974)

The centrifugal force of Freire's pedagogy flies outwards in search of dialogue and the possibility of change. He harnesses Aristotle's dictum that each person is capable of being "other" to a method that is more focussed on what we can become than on what we are. Yet this does not distance him from his own lived context. On the contrary, the absence of local colour, Freire's refusal to illustrate each point by a narrative that firmly places him in the setting of North-east Brazil, actually reinforces the authenticity of his speech.[3]

Freire can thus attempt to "write the world" without denying that he is essentially a very provincial person. He can accept Griffith (1974) who notes that Recifé, which was both the cradle and the crucible of Freire's thought, was also a long way away, geographically, culturally and politically, from the industrial and post-industrial Brazil

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3.   The point is forcefully made by Borges in his "The
     Argentinean Writer and Tradition" that, in the Quor'an,
     that Arabian book par excellence, there are no camels.
     When one is truly native, one can dispense with local
     colour. See: Labyrinths. 1987:215.

of the larger cities to the South.

He cannot accept, however, Furter's argument (1974) that he is provincial because he prefers speaking to writing. In Furter's mind there is the colonial construct of "non-provincial" that is co-terminous with the dominant cultures and class of the capital. The assumption is that the provinces are less cultured, and thereby less literate, than the capital. Freire rejects this, and although he admits that he is "more used to talking than to writing" (1975d), he values this fact in a very different way. For him, speaking, even with a provincial accent, is the pre-requisite of literacy. His method demands that one learns to speak before one can write and read, not least because speaking is the essential mode of dialogue: "In the last analysis, you are recreating yourself in dialogue to a greater extent than when you are solitarily writing, seated in your office, or in a small library". (1987a)

This preference of Freire for speaking a text, rather than writing a text, is marked in the reprint of dialogues and conversations (1985), in his "talked book" with Shor (1987a), and in the further dialogues and reflections with Macedo (1987b).

This raises the technical question of the authorship and ownership of the Freirean corpus. The fact that a "book" is largely spoken, makes Barthes écrivain more a dictator. and it takes less than a Derridean twist of

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language to expose the power/knowledge relationship that that evokes.

To whom, then, belongs the "author-ship", the author-ity, of his books. McLaren (1988:219) suggests that Macedo, for example, brings

> " a complementary and critical voice both to the
> theoretical and the practical aspects of Frairean
> pedagogy... He helps to clarify some of Freire's
> positions on the pedagogical implications and
> applications of his work."

It is perhaps significant that Freire's early work was "authored" alone (Education as the Practice of Freedom, Pedagogy of the Oppressed, and _Letters to Guinea Bissau_), while his later work has been "co-authored" (with Faundes post 1978,[4] with Betto (1985b), with Shor (1987a) and with Macedo (1987b).

Is it possible now to hear the voice of Freire without listening also to his acolytes? Freire has clearly worked and re-worked the core of his ideas and publications, often through dialogue. So besides the question of authorship, there is the further problem, if we want to trace the development of his ideas, of establishing a proper chronology.

His work, which has been translated in 17 languages,

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4. In 1987b:62, 114, Freire refers twice to a book which
   he wrote with António Faundes and which answered
   criticism made about his work in Guinea Bissau.
   However, although a footnote is actually numbered in
   the text, no reference is given.

appears, in the main, in Portuguese, Spanish, English,
French and German.   Not only does that create a mixed
vocabulary (for example: Educação, Educacíon, Education;
Conscientização, Conscientizacion, Conscientisation;
Culture Circle, Circulo de Cultura) where the apparently
similar words are nuanced and do not necessarily mean the
same, but it also frequently causes his work to suffer
either from cross-translation (for example, does
"Bewußtseinsbildung" convey the meaning of "education for
critical consciousness"?) or from repeated publication, or
from both.

Some work has even been translated back into
Portuguese by Freire: "My best writing on the "culture of
silence" is the Portuguese edition of <u>Education as the
Practice of Freedom</u> of which I have lost the original and
so had to translate it back from the English edition."
(Costigan, 1983).

One can also find, for example, an article which is a
1974 English translation of a Spanish version of a
discussion originally conducted in Portuguese.[5]   Even
material in the same language can appear at first glance to
be two different texts but which, in the event, prove to be
the same substantive material translated by different

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5.   "Conscientisation and Liberation" appeared in
      <u>Communio Viatorum</u>, 1974, No.3, pp.118-122:   It was
      produced in English in 1973 as: An Interview at the
      Institute of Cultural Action, Geneva, IDAC, Document 1,
      acknowledging that it was a transcript of a discussion
      in Portuguese held in the previous year.

people with differing perspectives.6   Finally, editorial
presentation can result in noticeable differences even
between two translations of major texts.[7]

These difficulties in establishing a Freirean canon
serve to provide an important caveat.   It needs to be
noted that the use of phrases like "Freire's philosophy" or
"the Freirean method" are somewhat misleading.   They
should be better seen as a shorthand, a way of referring to
what is a complex package of ideas and techniques the
authorship of which is not always clear.   On the contrary,
what becomes increasingly obvious to the reader of Freire
is that his words are not only his own.   He is highly
eclectic:

> "He has reached out to the thought and experience of
> those in many different situations and of diverse
> philosophical positions: in his words, to "Sartre,
> Mounier, Eric Fromm and Louis Althusser, Ortega y
> Gasset and Mao, Martin Luther King and Che Guevara,
> Unamuno and Marcuse"".(Shaull, 1982:10)

The list is impressive, but again misleading.   Nowhere in

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6.   "Notes on Humanisation and its Educational Implications"
from the seminar _Tomorrow Began Yesterday_. Rome,
November, 1970, translated from the Portuguese original
by Louise Bigwood.   This was retranslated by Donaldo
Macedo in Freire (1985a:111-119) as "Humanistic
Education".

7.   The most significant example is that of the English and
French versions of _Pedagogy of the Oppressed_.   A
number of paragraphs of the original Portuguese do not
appear in the same place in either of the two
translations.   Critically, the English version
sometimes includes quotations in the body of the text,
where the French uses footnotes.   Equally, where the
English merely cites the author, the French text often
provides a detailed reference with the title, date and
page.   A comparison of the three texts shows how the
editor has become a co-author.

his writing does Freire make an explicit reference to
Unamuno,[8] while two of the most important influences on him,
Karel Kosik[9] and Lucien Febvre are not mentioned here.

What this degree of eclecticism means is that we
cannot find or study Freire without also exploring the
genealogy of his ideas. He is not a pedagogic Copernicus
who, alone, found a new way of looking at the universe. He
is rather a syndicate of theories and insights. His
particular genius lies in his ability to construct out of
all these disparate ingredients a recipe that produces both
a philosophy and a practice of literacy. His achievement,

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8. It may not always be necessary to seek "cause and
effect" in the inter-textuality of two or more authors,
so that one can clearly be seen to have influenced the
other. Although Unamuno, in his The Tragic Sense of
Life provides a framework of ideas and understandings
that greatly illumine the reasoning and culture of
Freire (viz. Catholic, Aristotelian, and Manichean,
where the boundaries and causes of pain and loving are
often intertwined), what we find is more an affinity of
ideas and interpretation than a direct influence.

Perhaps what Freire found most in Unamuno was the echo
of his own voice, and therefore he did not feel the
need to acknowledge that by direct quotation.

9. Illustrative of the above argument is the fact that an
English version of "Politische Alphabetisierung:
Einführung ins Konzept einer humanisierenden Bildung"
(which first appeared in the Lutherische Monatshefte in
October, 1970) was available shortly after from IDAC,
Geneva, under the title "The Political Literacy
Process: an Introduction". Both the German and this
English version refer to Kosik and to his
"extraordinary book Dialectica de lo Concreto,
Grijalbo, Mexico, 1967", and note that there is a
German edition of this book. The translation in Freire
(1985a) by Macedo is presumably from a Portuguese or
Spanish draft of the article, but it does not include
the detailed reference to Kosik, mentioning only a
later edition of his book, and equally it fails to
include extended references to Hegel and Marcuse which
are in the German original.

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more Newtonian than Copernican, was to analyse the gravitational pull between power and knowledge and then to assert the possibility of changing the core elements (literacy and power) in that chain reaction of teaching and control in order to create a new fusion, the process of which is dialogue (speaking the word) and the product of which is liberation (writing and righting the world).

This substantial problem is also a "problematic of substance" (McKenna, 1978:366). The establishing of the Freirean *corpus* involves a triple redaction: the auto-text or biotext which interlinks biographical details; the graphic-text, penned or dictated, of his books, articles and interviews; the altero-text or con-text which is supplied by his co-"writers", and particularly by other acknowledged or unacknowledged sources.

The very fabric (textus) of the Freirean *corpus* presents us with a complex morphology that is considerably more than Leach's (1982) "concentric ripples in a pool in which a stone has been thrown." Freire cannot truly be the subject of the premise (ibid:185) that

> "the pattern of his work, which can be traced through from the early essays to *Pedagogy in Process*, contains a central core of beliefs or "principles". In each successive work these fundamental principles are repeatedly restated in different ways".

The Text of Freire is not neatly stratified, an onion that can be peeled away, layer by layer, to reveal the core. There is no simple, evolutionary logic that provides the infrastructure to his life and works. On the contrary,

there is the complex physiognomy of the corpus which is no
less than the triple-helix of textuality, (auto-, grapho-,
and altero-) outlined above.

Within this textus, difference and contradiction are
as important as resemblance and consistency.   Together,
they constitute Foucault's "discursive regularities", the
episteme which is the totality of all their varying inter-
relationships.

> "Les homogénéités (et hétérogénéités) énonciatives
> s'entrecroisent avec des continuités (et des
> changements) linguistiques, avec des identités (et
> des différences) logiques, sans que les unes et les
> autres marchent du même pas ou se commandent
> nécessairement." (Foucault, 1969:191) **

It is this entrecroisement which weaves Freire's discourse
and which demands that the exegete engages with a
"discourse analysis" in a way that is more than the simple
narrative of a history of ideas.   Following Foucault, it
is essential that the analysis does not rest "dans le débat
de la structure (confrontée à la genèse, à l'histoire, au
devenir)".   It must progress into "ce champ où
se manifestent, se croisent, s'enchevêtrent, et se
spécifient les questions de l'être humain, de la
conscience, de l'origine, et du sujet" (ibid:26).

It is the interweaving of this triple text that
provides the elements of this study: who is Freire, what is
his pedagogy and what is his praxis.   Equally, it is this

**   Where it was felt that a point was best made by
direct quotation, the original language has been
retained in the text and a translation provided in an
Appendix, p391.

textualising of Freire which exposes the warp of
contradiction: for example, that an upper-class Brazilian
lawyer should become the pedagogue of the oppressed masses,
not just in his own country but throughout the Third and
First Worlds; that his successful literacy method is based
on flawed theorising; that Dialogic Education may only be
a benign form of Banking Education; that this very South
American approach to education is firmly within mainstream
European traditions; and that, despite the contradictions
and inadequacies, Freire offers a unique insight into the
way Literacy presents and manages the fundamental
relationship of Power and Knowledge.

With that in mind, we can apply Freire's method to
Freire himself. We will first consider the polyphony of
texts and contexts which make up his life, method and
intellectual roots. Then we shall explore the main themes
of his philosophy, before making a detailed analysis of the
teaching materials which he used in his literacy programme.
Finally, we shall use the framework of that analysis to
consider Literacy itself and the fundamental questions
about learning to read and to write which Freire so
forcefully exposes.

In effect, this is to reconstruct the very process
which underpins Conscientisation; encoding the essential
questions in order to produce the generative words and
themes; decoding to get below the surface of the given and
so create a critical perception of what is really there;
and action, where reflection returns upon itself in Praxis.

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PART 1: THE STATEMENT OF THE QUESTION

CHAPTER 1. THE LIFE AND WORK OF FREIRE
CONSTRUCTING THE BIO-TEXT AND CONTEXTS

CHAPTER 2. THE "METHODO PAULO FREIRE"
GENERATIVE WORDS AND GENERATING IDEAS

CHAPTER 3. BACKGROUNDS AND BORROWINGS

A REVIEW OF SELECTED SOURCES AND INFLUENCES

1.1   Introduction

Freire's life and work has many stages and many
facets, as befits a man always in transit.   He has lived
through anonymity and fame in Brazil, acclamation and
success in the wider world of Africa and Europe, and is now
back in South America, living on remembrances rather than
on new creativity.

He was born into a comfortable, middle class family
the privileged position of which he slowly discovered.
Until he started work as a Trade Union lawyer, his only
exposure to the working and the non-working classes had
been when the family suffered severe financial difficulties
during the depression.

This had almost prejudiced his schooling. He could
read before he went to school, taught by his father who
used a method of word parsing that he himself would use to
effect much later.   However, poverty or hunger, or lack of
ability, caused him to repeat two years of education,
allowing him a delayed entry into University.

Socially back on course, Freire studied Law, in a
Brazilian, but very French, University.   The structure,
content and presentation of the course was strongly
influenced by the core group of French intellectuals who

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were a major influence in the development and expansion of the universities in Brazil. It was through the resources of their libraries and teaching that Freire was introduced to the works of Althusser, Foucault, Fromm, Lévi-Strauss, Maritain, Mounier and Sartre, among others.[10]

This clearly suited Freire, the intellectual, but it gave him little sense of direction as he left University. He was quickly a lawyer, High-School teacher of Portuguese, and then adult educator, married but unsure whether his career options would be curtailed by family responsibility.

Looking back, one has the impression that those

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10. In Brazil, although there were Institutes of Higher Education from 1808, in Medicine and Law, and a widespread growth in the 1920's of Technical Colleges and Polytechnics which were judged to be essential for economic development, the first universities were founded only in 1934 (São Paulo) and 1935 (Rio de Janeiro).

The new **Faculdade de Filosofia, Ciências e Letras** at São Paulo was seen, academically and politically, to be the cornerstone of the University. Its first director, Teodoro Ramos, was sent to Europe to recruit an eminent cadre of professors/academics in the Social Sciences. Eight of the ten were French, and the French Government contributed to the scheme sufficient books to form the basic libraries in each of the Departments (Philosophy, Social Sciences, History, Geography and Humanities).

The academic system (examinations, degrees, doctorates) with its core but elite curriculum of Law and Social Science, through which Freire passed, was modelled on the French system.

The visiting professors, individually and collectively, had an enormous influence on intellectual life in Brazil. They included Roger Bastide, Claude Lévi-Strauss, Fernand Braudel, Lucien Febvre, Gérard Lebrun and Michel Foucault.
See: Capelato and Prado (1989).

experiences between 1944 and 1959, about which little has ever been said, are almost "lost years" for Freire.   In the event, a career was thrust upon him.   By the genius of Fate, Freire was the right man in the right place at the right time, qualified by the rare mix of his experiences and skills, who was invited to direct the literacy programme in the North-east State.

From there, the details of his life are better known. Regional success led to national recognition as his programme expanded.   As educator and government consultant, he created the base for radical reform in both the education and the electoral systems.   It was this success that first led to his downfall and exile (1964), and then to his rehabilitation as an international figure. He worked first in Chile, then in Harvard (1969), and then in Geneva as Consultant to the World Council of Churches, through a period of upheaval and transition that produced his most important writings.

For some, this represented the height of his career. He was recognised world-wide, speaking at conferences and maintaining consultancies throughout the Third and the First World, a government advisor and fêted academic.   He was one of the central figures of the 1970's.

This is still how Freire is most widely remembered, but he is, in fact, an exile returned.   In 1981, he relinquished his role in Geneva to take up a post at the

Catholic University of São Paulo. He has returned to his
two, confirmed great loves: Brazil and teaching. His
present work has produced little new writing, but maybe
more writing is not necessary. At the age of seventy,
Freire can still point to the Pedagogy of the Oppressed and
argue that it is still as valid now, although it has become
a "classic text", as it was when it was first
"revolutionary" and just published.

The question is: Is the Freire who returned to Brazil
in 1981 the same man who left it in 1964? To answer that,
and to see if there is a development in his pedagogy, we
need to review his bio-text in more detail.

1.2 Early Life

Paulo Freire was born in Recifé, North-east Brazil,
on 19th. September, 1921. He was one of several children
(Gerhardt, 1979:46) in a comfortable, middle-class but
average family.[11]

His parents were bourgeois and of liberal attitudes
(Jerez, 1971:498). The father, Joaquin Temistocles, held
an officer's post in the military police, and he tolerated,

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11. Freire (1987b:31) describes what he calls "an old but
    average house": bedrooms, attic, hall, terrace,
    backyard, with the family cats, the father's dog, Joli,
    and grandmother's fat chickens, all surrounded by
    roses, jasmine and mango trees, in a street lit by gas
    lamps.

rather than approved of, the fact that Edeltrudis, his wife, held strongly Catholic convictions. He himself frequented a local spiritualist circle (Gerhardt, 1979:40).

Joaquim Freire was concerned that his son should have a good education. Freire (1978:132) called his father his "first teacher", remembering how he wrote words with a stick in the sand in the back yard and helped the children to make new words out of the parsed syllables. By the time he went to Eunice Vascancello's private school, Freire was already literate (1987b:32).

That early progress, however, was impeded by the severe financial reverses which the family suffered during the Great Depression, 1928-32. Freire experienced real hunger, a fact by which he explained his poor showing at school. He had to repeat a year twice, entering secondary school two years behind his age group (Collins, 1977:5). O'Neill (1973) and Jerez (1971) both report that he was considered by some of his teachers to be mentally retarded.

"We shared the hunger", says Freire (Mackie, 1980:3), "but not the class"[12], a fact which Freire later recognised had enabled him to continue his schooling (Jerez, 1971:499).

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12. Despite the setbacks, Freire's father maintained a semblance of respectability: "las aparencias y los símbolos que correspondían a una posición económica desahogada". He kept on the house, devoid now of non-essential furniture except for a German piano, and he continued to wear a tie. (Jerez, 1971).

When his older brothers started working, the family's position improved and Freire was able to complete successfully his high school Baccalaureate (1987a:29). He entered Recifé University to study Law and Philosophy but he also read Linguistics. It was, according to Gerhardt (1979:42), a standard route for the intellectual middle classes, and it gave Freire his first University degree.

This was the fruit of privilege which Freire later came to see as "my university training -perhaps, to be more accurate, I should say by my elitist university training" which was facilitated by his class position (1978:117).

In his detailed appraisal of Freire and of his early work, Mashayekh (1974:4) also formed the view that schooling in Recifé was a privilege enjoyed only by the minority.

> "That Freire's mind and future vocation was shaped by the social situation into which he was born and in which he grew into manhood seems evident. It was this schooled minority which dominated the social and economic institutions of society and enjoyed the benefits they produced. The majority lived in circumstances of grinding poverty and oppression. They were to be seen in the streets and served in the shops and homes, but were not "heard". They lived in what Freire called a "culture of silence, condemned to passivity."

Since those university days, Freire, mainly because of his education and class, has never been poor or unemployed. Yet with the security of a job, a wife and family, even with house servants (1978:10), he felt empowered to create a pedagogy of the oppressed. In what personal and cultural context was this possible?

1.3 North-east Brazil

North-east Brazil is "one enormous region of a
country, as large as a continent, one of the most backward
areas in the country, marked by truly appalling social
conditions - 60,000 square miles of suffering."   Here, in
Death in the North-east, Josué de Castro (1969:viii,22) is
writing passionately about the deprivation of his home
region.[13]   In his earlier work, **The Geography of Hunger**
(1952:76-98) he notes that the area was celebrated only for
" the misery of the great majority of its inhabitants, for
it periodic, natural catastrophes and for a system of land
ownership which was incredibly unjust."

A comparable historical and sociological analysis,
which Freire used[14] and which later provided him with one
of his key images of oppression - the senhor de enghéno:
the mill owner - is equally forcefully written in Freyre's
The Masters and the Slaves.[15]   All the ingredients are

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13. Written between October, 1962 and February, 1964, the
     book was published just before the coup, 1964.

14. Freire, 1987a:20. "There were some very good writers in
     Brazil who saved me. By reading them in my early 20's
     I was saved.   Jose Lins do Rego and Graciliano Ramos
     are two of these writers;   Gilberto Freyre, the great
     sociologist and anthropologist who writes so well was
     another important influence on me."

15. This first appeared, in Portuguese, **Casa-grande e
     Senzala**, in 1933 but was the last of Freyre's major
     works to be translated into English (1970).   Two other
     important studies had already been translated: **The
     Mansions and the Shanties**, (1963), and "The Patriarchal
     Basis of Brazilian Society" in **The Politics of Change
     in Latin America** ed. Maier, J.M., New York, Praeger,
     1964.

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there for Freire to find in his society, in his own family
and in the eclectic, individual and collective Brazilian,
national identity, namely, cultural invasion, social and
political domination, patriarchy, power and punishment,
colonisation, agrarianism and slavery.[16]

Freire never explains how he was "saved" by reading
Freyre or whether he recognised there the values and
social patterns of his own family and upbringing. However,
if he read Freyre in his study and looked through the
window at that Recifé with

> "ses aspects vénitiens, ses magnifiques colonnades de
> cocotiers au long d'une mer étonnamment verte -qui
> vit jadis se traîner sur elle, gonflées comme des
> ventres de femmes enceintes, tant de nefs chargées de
> dépouilles orientales que les Lords du Sucre se
> disputaient entre eux...- Recifé et Olinda qui
> domine, toutes églises dehors" (Febvre, 1974:13),

was he also able to see the poverty and the misery which
Freyre and de Castro describe in such detail?

What was the reality at that time? As a brief
indicator, we are able to compare the North-east in 1960
and in 1970 -the decade which encompasses Freire's literacy
efforts in Latin America.

In their Pastoral Letter (1973) Eu Ouvi os Clamores
do meu Povo (I have heard the cries of my people), the
Catholic Bishops of the North-east stated that:

> "Data from the 1970 census revealed that only 3.3% of

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16. For a survey of the Northeast, and a useful, brief
    history of modern Brazil, see: Barnard, C. (1980).

the economically active population in the North-
east earned more than 500 cruzeiros ($83 per month,
and only 0.86% earned more than 1000 cruzeiros
($166). In Piaui and Maranhão, for an economically
active population of 1,470,000 persons, only 95%
earned more than 2000 cruzeiros ($333) per month.

"Infant mortality in the North-east as a whole is
100/1000 live births. In the capital, where medical
assistance is concentrated, it is still 98/1000.
In the total of all deaths, 47% occur before five
years of age."

Drummond (1975), who in 1972 was attempting to
develop a nutritional education programme on Freirean
lines, noted the evidence of poverty as a major factor in
the serious problem of malnutrition.

"Virtually all the children admitted to the São Luis
hospital are undernourished, and 3/5 of them have
manifest signs of kwashiorkor, including bilateral
oedema."

Ten years earlier, in 1960, Tad Szulc, writing in the
New York Times, explicitly criticised the United States for
having done so little to help the area around Recife in
peacetime, despite the fact that it was the support base
for a string of guided missile tracking stations in the
South Atlantic for the United States Air Force.

"There are sections of the Northeast where the annual
income is about $50. About 75% of the population is
illiterate. The average daily intake in 1,664
calories. Life expectancy is 28 years for men and 32
for women. Half the population dies before the age
of 30.

"In two villages in the State of Piaui, taken at
random, not a single baby lived beyond one year."

These reports, from very differing sources, cover
periods either side of the coup, yet they show very little
change in the stark picture of poverty despite the fact

that many people, in Brazil and certainly in Europe, saw this period as the time of Brazil's economic miracle.[17] Fernandes (1985) reveals the contradiction: the GNP was growing at an average 10.1% each year, moving Brazil from twenty-first to fourteenth in rank among developing countries, based on per capita GNP.

However, there was a darker side seen when the results of the 1970 census were tabulated:

> "The share of the total national income of the lower 50% of the population decreased from 14.5% in 1960 to 13.9% in 1970. The lowest 10% of the population saw their share decrease from 1.9% in 1960 to 1.2% in 1970. The exclusion of the majority of wage earners from the windfall of economic growth, together with the high profits of an increasingly de-nationalised industrial sector, brought about the conditions for social movements of dissent and grass roots organisation." (ibid).

This was the context in which Freire was working in the mid 1960's: no doubt many saw his Literacy Programmes as one of those social movements of discontent. Yet, maybe Freire had only ever seen poverty from the exterior, from his "average house". The statistics dispute his

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17. This contradiction is compounded by the fact that such conspicuous, economic development at this time was based on the already dramatic changes achieved in the Kubitschek period. The promised "fifty year's progress in five" was very real: between 1956 and 1961, Brazil witnessed the most extraordinary industrial expansion. Industrial production grew by 80%, the steel industry by 100%, mechanical industries by 125%, electrical and communications industries by 380% and transportation equipment industries by 600%. The effective real rate of growth was 7% per annum, approximately three times that of the rest of Latin America. (Skidmore, 1967:164, based on Celso Furtado's detailed study Diagnosis of the Brazilian Crisis, Berkley, 1965).

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assessment of what was _average_, and illustrate his position
of privilege in those early years.   Although he considered
himself to have been poor, he was not forced into dissent
by his own experience of that poverty and hunger.   He was
never "of the poor" for, ultimately, he had never shared
their class.

> "My childhood was partly in Recifé and then in
> Jabotao.   My family left Recifé in order to survive
> the economic crisis of the Depression in the 1930's.
> A great moment of my life was the experience of
> hunger.   I needed to eat more.   Because my family
> lost its economic status, I was not only hungry but I
> also had very good friends both from the middle class
> and from the working class.   Being friends with kids
> from the working class, I learned the difference of
> classes by seeing how their language, their clothing,
> their whole lives expressed the totality of the class
> separations in society.   By falling into poverty, I
> learned from experience what social class meant."
> (1987a:28)

Freire encountered the dominated classes through this
discovery of his own middle-classness.   There is indeed a
sense in which one hears an echo of self-guilt as he became
aware of himself as one of those "assimilados" who profited
from colonialism and whose privileged position is reflected
in those works of Fanon (1985) and Memmi (1966) which he
knew so well.

At the time, however, he was uncritical of his social
context and he followed what was simply the normal,
educational paths appropriate to his class: "Er steht damit
in der Tradition brasilianischer Intellectueller, die das
Studium der Rechtwissenschaften als "studium generale"
anstreben" (Gerhardt, 1979:42).   Freire himself says:

> "A critical view of my experience in Brazil requires
> an understanding of its context.   My practice, while

social, did not belong to me. Hence my difficulty in
understanding my experience ...without comprehending
the historical climate where it originally took
place" (1985:12).

1.4. The First Steps into Literacy

This difficulty which Freire has had in identifying
and coming to terms with his past may well merit a detailed
psychological analysis. However, it does perhaps explain
why, at this stage, biographical details remain vague and
unexplored.

Jerez (1971:499) suggests that, after University,
Freire worked for several years as a Legal Assessor in the
Trades Union: "trabajo durante varios anos de assessor
legal de los sindicatos obreros", through which,
indirectly, he became involved in education. Drummond, on
the contrary, prefers to see Freire as a pedagogue and less
as a lawyer. She says that (1975:4), having finished law
school but after being presented with his first case and
talking with the young dentist, Freire "decided he was not
meant to be a lawyer. He turned to the field of
education." Both she and Brown (1974) then take up the
story from 1959, the date of Freire doctoral thesis
Educacao e Actualidade Brasileira at the University of
Recifé.

Both these biographical traditions, which are part of
the "Freirean mythology", gloss over the critical years of
1948 -1959. Little is known of this period in Freire's

life other than some small detail about his marriage and
some generalised reflections on his increasing involvement
in education.

The key may lie in the importance of Elza Maia Costa
Oliveira. Freire (1987a:29) records that, "at some point
between 19 and 23 years" -the vagueness is instructive-,

> "I was discovering teaching as my love. Also
> important at this moment, in my affective life, was
> when I met Elza, who was my student, and then we got
> married. I was her private tutor. I prepared her
> for an exam to qualify for school principal."

In this rare autobiographical passage, Freire does
not mention his law studies nor his work as a lawyer. He
speaks only of himself as a High School teacher, who later
became involved in adult education and through that earned
some part-time hours at the University of Recifé. He
emphasises his early interest in the philosophy of language
and his interest, at 18 or 19, in structuralism and
linguistics.

He says elsewhere (1985:175) that "it was Elza who
lead me to pedagogy" and he recognises that "she influenced
me enormously". Yet notwithstanding the more than
standard acknowledgement of authors, (1972:19):

> "Here I would like to express my gratitude to Elza,
> my wife, and first reader, for the understanding and
> encouragement which she has shown my work, which
> belongs to her as well",

there is no misunderstanding the relationship of patriarchy
which is revealed in the statement: "She was my student...I
prepared her for the exam."

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Elza was to bear him three daughters and two sons (Collins, 1977:6), but Freire has spoken remarkably little about his family. One son, who is a good classical guitarist, was with him in Geneva in 1976 (Freire, 1985:191) but no other reference is made to the family, to his own children or to his brothers and sisters, and no account is offered, for example, about what happened to the family after his arrest, how or if the children left Brazil with him in 1964, how they managed the separation or not as he worked in Chile, then Harvard and then in Geneva.

Freire conveys this deep uncertainty about his role as father or husband, in part cultural and in part personal,[18] in talking about the professional relationship which he shared with his wife. Undoubtedly, he "loved to love Elza" (1985:198); Literacy: Reading the Word and the World is eloquently dedicated to her memory. Yet, although Freire talks of "later as we were teaching"...describing "that praxis which was ours in Brazil", there is no evidence that Elza was directly involved in his work in Brazil. On the other hand, he notes (1987b:63) that "since 1976, my wife Elza and I have tried to contribute to adult education in São Tomé and Principé", but the ensuing discourse continues emphatically in the first person: "my practice renders me a colleague of

18. In a conversation with Macedo, (1985, p.198) Freire admits that "As a young man, I thought that living and sleeping with a woman might interrupt my intellectual life. I found that..my family did not interfere with my writing and my writing did not interfere with my love for my family."

the national people."

There is here more than a hint of the Borgesian "I",
where Freire, the intellectual, recognised himself more in
his books than in the reality of his daily life.

> "The other one, the one called Borges, is the one
> things happen to... I am destined to perish,
> definitively, and only some instance of myself can
> survive in him. Little by little, I am giving
> everything over to him, though I am quite aware of
> this perverse custom of falsifying and magnifying
> things" (Borges, 1987:282).

So Freire, the "both of him", came to live more or less
comfortably with his image as both iconoclast and myth-
maker.

An objective biographer of those days might simply
say that Freire was able to turn his initial interest in
language and communication to his longer term, career
advantage. In this way, we can then understand that
he might have wanted, consciously or not, to play down the
elitist education which lead him from private school to the
Bar, while, on the other hand, at the height of his
popularity and fame, he preferred to emphasise his
pedagogical roots as a teacher and linguist. Collins,
(1977) may therefore be very accurate in his summary that,
at that time,

> "Freire was doing more reading in education,
> philosophy and the sociology of education than in
> law, a discipline in which he claims he was only an
> average student. In fact it later turned out that,
> after passing the bar, he quickly abandoned law as a
> means of earning his living in order to work as a
> welfare official."

Freire's path from Portuguese to Literacy is, therefore, traced through his involvements with Elza. Although he may have tutored her, it was she who directed his path from "teaching privately, in order to get some money, tutoring high school students or young people working in stores who wanted to learn grammar." (1987a:27). He starting teaching in a secondary school, working by intuition rather than by confirmed pedagogy, and gradually he became more and more involved in teaching adults (ibid:28).

This was a period of intense reading and study which justifies the much quoted references to Freire's eclecticism: (Freire, 1982:10)

> "He has reached out to the thought and experience of those in many different situations and of diverse philosophical positions: to Sartre and Mounier, Eric Fromm and Louis Althusser, Ortega y Gasset and Mao, Martin Luther King and Che Guevara, Unamuno and Marcuse."

In his own words (1985:175),

> "My interests were in studying the Portuguese language, and Portuguese syntax in particular, along with certain reading I did on my own in areas of linguistics, philology, and the philosophy of language, which lead me to general theories of communication."

At the same time, through Elza, Freire became involved in the Catholic Action Movement, although he never became a full-member. At that time, 1944, the Church was still a very conservative force and only gradually was it "conscientised" to the realities of poverty and oppression which it was supporting (de Kadt, 1970). Freire, could be said to have undergone a similar development. He was, and

has remained, a practising Catholic.19   A short period of
adolescent doubts ended with his marriage to Elza, and with
the pressure or support from his mother (Gerhardt, 1979).

Catholic Action, however, was not the answer for
Freire.   It was rather a very disheartening experience as
he discovered the intransigence of the middle classes.   At
this point, Freire says he made a conscious choice: "We
decided not to keep working with the bourgeois and instead
to work with the people" (Mackie, 1980).   That "we",
however, sounds to have included the choice which Elza had
already made before meeting Freire.

Through his close friendship with Dom Helder Camara,
the Bishop of Recifé, Freire became closely involved in the
Comunidades Eclesiales de Base which were developing a
pastoral ministry based on community groups that sought to
relate their biblical study to local, social and personal
issues.   During the 1940's and 1950's, this movement had
grown to accept the need for a clearer identification with
the poor, and for a theology of liberation relevant to
grass-roots community groups (Fernandes, 1985).[20]

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19. It was, however, not until much later (1972) that
    Freire was able to publish an objective critique of the
    Church: see 1972c and 1973a.
    A useful evaluation and explanation of Freire's
    humanist theology is contained in Elias (1976).

20. Behind these changes can be heard the powerful voices
    of Jacques Maritain and Gustavo Gutierrez whose works
    were well used by Freire.   A useful summary of the
    emergence of Latin American social or liberation
    theology can be found in Chopp, (1986).

It was through his involvement in the Church that
Freire was invited by what he called a "private industrial
institute" that was, more accurately, a Trade Union
Educational Project. He was appointed as Coordinator of
the Adult Education Programme of the Popular Culture
Movement. It allowed him, however, what he himself saw
as a second chance to

> "reknow what I had learned about working life. It
> was precisely my relationship with workers and
> peasants then that took me into more radical
> understandings of education" (1987a:29).

It was this contact with the Trades Unions that
introduced him to the "Culture Circles" where his primary
concern, paradoxically, was less with literacy than with
post literacy: "I paid little attention to whether the
participants in the Culture Circles were literate or not"
(1978:116). This did, however, provide him with a key
structure for his ensuing literacy programme.

These circles or groups were not however new: they
had there origins in Brazil in the so called Peasant
League, a Union movement of the 1930's. They had been
re-activated in the 1950's in the Northeast by Francisco
Julião, a radical, socialist lawyer. The movement had
taken on a new vigour in the 1950's, a major catalyst in
opening up "new discussions about nationalism, remission of
profits, development and illiteracy" (Sanders, 1968), just
at the time that Freire had been invited to respond to the
major problem of illiteracy among the local workforce.

De Castro's (1969:177) own appraisal of Julião was
that he had "made a tenacious effort to free the peasants
from their muteness, by talking to them and by teaching
them to talk."[21]

This "tap-root" of dialogic learning has more than
anecdotal significance. Firstly it sets the scene for the
educational study which Freire presented for his doctoral
thesis in 1959, Educação e Actualidáde Brasileira, although
it scarcely explains his motivation for writing it.[22] Why,
at the age of 38, married and with a secure job, did he
feel compelled to write up his ideas on adult education?
Was it that he was looking to hasten the offer of the
teaching post at the University which did, in fact,
materialise shortly afterwards? We may never know, but it
is clear that that work experience, plus the doctorate,
provided the incentive for a confrère of Julião, Miguel

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21. Julião's (de Castro, 1969:172) case was that:
    "We wish to make it clear that having begun, some years
    ago, a work of agitation in the Pernambuco countryside,
    which later spread to the whole of the country, the
    only title that we wish to receive at the end of this
    journey, if we deserve it, is that of a simple social
    agitator, in the patriotic sense of someone who brings
    a fundamental problem before the people so that it
    might be frankly debated".

22. There is some confusion over this doctorate. Jerez
    (1971:499), who is right on other details, says that
    Freire was awarded a Doctorate Honoris Causa from the
    University because of the success of his education
    programme, and that it was this doctorate that enabled
    Freire to teach in the university. "Cuando su
    filosofía y sus programas educacionales le habían hecho
    ya famoso en gran parte de Brasil, la Universidad de
    Recife le otorgó el grado de Doctor Honoris Causa en
    Pedagogía. Desde entonces enseño filosofía de la
    educacion en dicha universidad."

Arraes, then the Mayor of Recifé, to invite Freire to
construct a literacy programme for the city council in
1961.

Arraes, according to de Castro (1969:178) had no
doubts about what that programme should yield:

"He surrounded himself with a team of technical
advisers, among whom there were Communists, but also
Socialists, devout or nominal Catholics, and simple
economists and technicians, many of whom had a horror
of ideological embroilment. They all worked together
to achieve a common goal - the socio-economic
transformation of the State of the Northeast."

The direct, political implications of this concerted
social development seems to have escaped Freire at this
point. He may refer (1978:176) to "those political-
pedagogical activities in which I have be engaged since my
youth", but his later reflection appears more accurate
(1985:179): "When I began my educational practice, I was
not clear about the potential political consequences."

Thus it was not his personal, political association
with Arraes and Julião that provided the driving force for
what quickly became a very effective literacy programme.
The simple motivation was Freire's delight in teaching.
He was not one of Julião's social agitators: he was an
educator, perhaps occupying that position of neutrality
which later he came to condemn.

As an educator, in 1961, Freire was writing his first
book: <u>A Propòsito de Uma Administracào</u>. This was

essentially an appeal for the University to become more relevant to the lives of ordinary people and to create learning that reflected the true situation in Brazil.

In this light, it has been suggested (Elias, 1972) that Freire did not promote literacy for its own sake, but saw it rather as bringing about the democratisation of culture among the rural and urban illiterates in Brazil). If this is true, then Freire's project did indeed constitute a major effort against the elitism of the university based education system. In the pilot project, some 300 workers became "literate" within 45 days (Mashayekh, 1974).

Freire's position of "in but against" the University, plus the success of his pilot project, made him the ideal candidate, academically and politically, for the post of Director of the newly created Cultural Extension Service at the University of Recifé.[23] In post from early 1961, he had the resources to bring thousands of illiterate peasants throughout the North-east into literacy Culture Circles.

A discussion is needed later about the content of being "literate" in this way. At this stage, it will

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23. Brown (1974) seems to be alone in remembering that from October, 1962 to January, 1964 the Cultural Extension Service received considerable financial assistance from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). A pragmatic compromise perhaps on Freire's part, or a naive acceptance of offered resources which later he would see as cultural invasion (see 1969f).

suffice to note that, whatever the pedagogic content of
this first initiative, its social and media impact at a
national level was such that Freire was invited, in 1963,
to become the Director of a National Literacy programme.

A National Development Plan was produced which aimed
to enrol some 2,000,000 people and to teach then in Culture
Circles of 25 people, each circle lasting three months, at
the extraordinary, direct cost of some $5 to $7 per Circle
(Freire, 1976).[24]   Freire was clearly influenced by the
success of the Cuban Literacy Project which had been
completed a year before.   Much of the organisational
structure of this Brazilian National Plan, which Freire
would use substantially again in Guinea Bissau, owes much
to the Cuban experiment.[25]

This was not just a simple plagiarising of the Cuban
programme.   It may well have been that the populist,
Goulart Government (1961-1964), riding on the wave of
radical reforms in agriculture, social services and labour
relations, was not wanting to be compared unfavourably with
Cuba, and was actually seeking a consolidating programme
which could be seen as equally "modernising" and effective

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24. The Polish projectors cost $2.50 each and the film $1,
    hence the cost effectiveness of the programme.   The
    fact that Freire had bought materials from Poland later
    aggravated charges against him that he was a communist
    and was undermining the national economy by "attempting
    to Bolshevize the country" (Freire, 1976:57).

25. For an absorbing and enthusiastic account of the Cuban
    Literacy Programme, see: Kozol, 1978.

as the Cuban model (Skidmore, 1967:244-256).

The forces for change in the two countries, however, were very different, and Freire found that he had unleashed some unexpected, and not altogether desired, developments.

For example (Mashayekh, 1974), in the State of Sergipé, the number of literate people went from 9,000 to 80,000, and in Pernambuco from 800,000 to 1,300,000. The implications both for regional and national democracy, and thereby for the ruling classes, were enormous. Under the legacy of Portuguese colonialism, only those who could read and write were eligible to vote (Gerhardt, 1989). Brazil in 1964 had a population of some 34.5 million people of whom only 15.5 million were eligible to vote (Collins, 1977).[26]

Almost overnight, therefore, the whole electoral base of the country had been overturned, a fact which suggests that the motivation of the peasants was not just a simple desire for literacy. The central demand of the Trades Unions and of the Movement for Popular Culture in Recifé, viz. the demand for the vote (and thereby power over further economic and industrial reform, e.g. the right of

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26. Freire's estimates for 1964 were: four million school
    aged children lacked schools; sixteen million
    illiterates of fourteen years and older (1976, p.41).
    The contemporary situation is described in Braslavsky,
    C. (1988) who posits that some 30% of all children aged
    7-14, some 7,553,741, are not receiving a full-time
    education.

free association and security of land tenure), had not only been acquired without bloodshed but had even been given to them by a governmental, literacy campaign (Sanders, 1968).

Freire was criticised immediately, for example, in the powerful Rio de Janeiro daily, O Globo, for bringing the country to the verge of revolution. In fact the country had been on the verge of revolution throughout the Goulart presidency, but it is not surprising that Freire should have been a target of the right-wing, middle class backlash that brought about the coup in 1964.[27]

However, to understand that lack of surprise we need to throw a force-field of political assessment around the simple narrative of dates and events. While it is true that Freire may have been regarded as a somewhat maverick professor of an otherwise traditional university, and that he was a director of a national literacy programme, he was nonetheless marginalised geographically by working from Recifé, and the scale of his success was more regional than national. According to de Kadt (1970),

> "Freire's work at the time of the coup was still
> characterised by potential rather than actual
> achievements. Incitement to revolt was never
> Freire's objective as an educator, although

27. Skidmore (1967:254) notes Freire's association with Acao Popular and with the Basic Education Movement's (MEB) programme of mass literacy. Freire was identified as a target by "the traditional patrons of the agrarian sector who did not view with indifference the nascent mobilisation of the agrarian masses. Landowners increased their stock of arms and strengthened their opposition to the agrarian reform measures."

democratisation was."

Freire (1976:20) might agree with this assessment that the
main characteristic of his programme was its potential:

> "During the Brazilian transition, as the emotional
> climate became more intense and sectarian
> irrationality (especially of the right) grew
> stronger, there was increasing resistance to an
> educational programme capable of helping the people
> move from ingenuity to criticism."

In the event, Freire was deemed guilty by
association. He was seen to have been part of that
socialist/communist _tomada de consciencia_, awakening of
consciousness, which had destabilised the country.[28] So
Gannon (1970):

> "a sure sign of the impact that conscientisation had
> is that the oppressive regime tried to put it down.
> Because it had effectively mobilised the people, it
> was a threat to the power structures."

Gerhardt (1989:541), who was actually working in Brazil at
the time, converges on the same point, but with a much
sharper critique:

> "Les premières campagnes d'alphabétisation fondées
> sur le "système" de Freire menées dans le nord-est du
> Brésil (1961-1964) montrent à quel point les
> alphabétiseurs avaient épousé les objectifs
> politiques des organisateurs, c'est à dire du
> gouvernement provincial réformiste. En effet, le but
> de ces campagnes était manifestement d'ordre
> politique."

He goes on to argue that only when they saw the decreasing

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28. It is difficult to reproduce in English the power of
    the expression _tomada de consciencia._ As in the French
    prise de conscience, the verb is as important as the
    conscience, consciousness or awareness. _Tomar_ and
    prendre have that added sense of "taking, taking
    seriously, taking possession of" which signifies both a
    conscious, responsible act and an identifiable result
    of some consequence.

numbers of enrolments in the programme did they begin to put the emphasis on functional literacy.

Was Freire, the enthusiastic but naive academic, simply used by the socialist coalition for their own political ends? Was he exiled because of their political downfall? Two arguments support this demythologised view.

The first is that, although Freire later came to clarify his own commitment to socialism or Christian humanism and was not in disagreement with the aims of the regional government and their objectives for the literacy campaign, he was aware of the naïveté of his involvements.

> "Considering my present and more pronounced experience, I am also becoming aware of this kind of mistake in some of my earlier activities and also from pedagogues who do not see the political dimensions and implications of their pedagogical practice." (Freire, 1985:169-170, my emphasis added).

In effect, Freire is admitting that he was involved as an apolitical actor in a process of education, in which he had not considered the political consequences.[29]

Others, however, were clear and had long been observing the consequences. Freire (1976:31) saw only with hindsight that "the country had begun to find itself. The people emerged and began to participate in the

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29. After his first night working in adult literacy, he jested to Elza (1985:186), "After what I saw today, what I experienced today, possibly I will be jailed." He had, however, no understanding of why he might be jailed: "I was still not totally clear about the political nature of education. My first book reveals this lack of clarity" (ibid.).

historical process." Yet the New York Times had seen that
as early as 1960 and was already warning of revolution
(O'Neill, 1973). Skidmore (1967) documents the fears
of the American State Department in his appendix entitled
"The United States role in Joao Goulart's fall": he clearly
felt no need to add a question mark.

Freire, whose USAID support had been stopped in
January, 1964, was listed among those who were anti-
American.[30] Worse, through his associates, he was listed as
being pro-communist. He was among some 10,000 government
officials who were dismissed or forcibly retired.

1.5 Exile and Return

The first response of the new government, however,
was the complete suspension of his political rights. He
was imprisoned and interrogated, but the details again
remain vague. On his release, he sought refuge in the
Bolivian embassy, through whom he was able to arrange an
exit visa to Bolivia. It is one of the ironies of fortune
that Bolivia itself experienced a coup fifteen days after

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30. Skidmore (op.cit) notes the Americans' doubt that a
socialist Brazil could re-organise its foreign debts
and their fear of a sharp turn to the left with some
Peronist-type solution to economic and social problems.
There is then the fact that the interim government of
Ranieri Mazzilli was recognised by Lyndon Johnson
within hours of the coup. As a result, the new,
Brazilian government gained a very favourable aid
package from the States, and the States gained an
unequivocally pro-American ally for their foreign
policy, especially in the Dominican Republic.

his arrival and he was forced to seek further refuge in
Chile (Mackie, 1980).

Freire himself does not mention this passage to and
then from Bolivia. His selective recall is that (1985:181)

> "After those 75 days, I was taken to Rio de Janeiro
> for further questioning. And there I was told via
> the newspapers that I ought to be jailed again. My
> friends and family convinced me that it would be
> senseless for me to stay in Brazil. So I went into
> exile in Chile."

Jerez (1971) suggests that the choice of exile was imagined
rather than real: "Setenta dís más tarde le dejaron en
libertad, y le "invitaron" a abandonar el país." [31]

A further element which confirmed his exile, but
which, because of his association with Camara, may also
have contributed to his safe passage from the country, is
that the Catholic Church initially supported the coup,
motivated by a felt need for an anti-communist government
that would protect Brazil's Christian civilisation
(O'Neill, 1973; Camara, 1969). Prior to the Church's

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31. Although Freire recalls the detail of his five-by-two
foot cell (1985:154), there is some uncertainty about
how long he was in prison. He says, "I was jailed
twice before I was exiled, for a total of seventy five
days" (1985:180). No-one else records the two periods
of imprisonment, although Mashayekh (1974) and Mackie
(1980) also count 75 days. Other biographers and
commentators closer to Freire count only 70 days:
Gleeson (1984), Shaull (1972), McLaren (1988) and Brown
(1974). Brown, whose work was well known to Freire, is
alone in recording that "Freire was under house arrest
until June, imprisoned for 70 days, and finally sought
refuge in Chile"(1974:25).
Freire (1987a:63) recalls that he only spent one day
and a night in the small closet-cell, but was otherwise
in a cell with five or six other colleagues,
doctors, intellectuals, liberal professionals.

radical defence of human rights and its clear statement of
opposition to government policies at Medellin, Columbia, in
1968, "the Brazilian coup d'etat was at first supported by
the major part of the country's Catholic Church."
(Fernandes, 1985, strongly supported by de Kadt, 1971).

In Chile, where he immediately felt he was "born
again with a new consciousness of politics, education and
transformation (1987a:), Freire was able to secure a post
at the University of Chile, Santiago.   Here he was
contacted by Waldemar Cortes and invited to work as a
UNESCO consultant in a literacy programme which was being
proposed by the Department of Special Planning for the
Education of Adults.   At the time, the government of
Eduardo Frei was committed to a dual programme of literacy
and agrarian reform.   In this way, Freire became involved
with the Chilean Agrarian Reform Corporation where he then
worked until 1969.

While involved in the training of extension workers,
Freire was also writing creatively.   In 1967, he published
Educacao como Practica da Liberdade, the notes of which he
had begun in prison in 1964. This was followed, early in
1969, by ¿Extensión o Comunicación?[32] These two books or
extended essays (the manuscripts of which were completed in

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32. The strength of Freire's integration into Chile is
    perhaps illustrated by the fact that the introduction
    to this essay was written by Jacques Chonchol, a
    leading academic and economist who was later the
    Minister of Agriculture in Chile's Allende government.

1965 and 1968) were published in English only in 1974, four
years after the publication of Pedagogy of the Oppressed.[33]
-a chronology which explains why many English-speaking
readers consider this latter work to be Freire's most
important book.

Freire (1985:198) has also noted the importance of
Pedagogy of the Oppressed: it was

> "radical, etymologically speaking, coming from the
> depths of fragments of Latin American history and
> culture...a marriage between me and the many parts of
> the world knowledge I had lived and experienced where
> I lived, and where I worked and taught with
> commitment, feelings, fear, trust and courage."

We shall see later what Freire may have meant by this
"world knowledge" which he claims to have had by 1968.
Despite his involvement in the Literacy campaign, he was
clearly not satisfied to stay in Chile.   In 1969, some
months before the election of the Marxist Allende
government in Chile,[34] he was invited to Harvard to be
Visiting Professor at the Centre for Studies in Education
and Development.

The challenging reactions which his views provoked at
Harvard provided Freire with the impetus and encouragement

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33. Pedagogy of the Oppressed was written in Portuguese and
    completed in 1968.   It was poorly translated by Myra
    Bergman Ramos and the first, full English edition was
    published by Herder and Herder, New York in 1970.

34. It is interesting to note that, later, immediately
    after the successful, American-backed coup against
    Allende, General Pinochet declared Freire persona non
    grata in Chile (Mackie, 1980).

to publish two articles in the May and August editions of the Harvard Educational Review, 1970, which later where published together as Cultural Action for Freedom.

It was the publication of these two articles, plus the impact of Pedagogy of the Oppressed and its contribution to the movement of educational reform post 1968, that established Freire's reputation. It was this, rather than any tangible activities and quantifiable results in literacy programmes, that influenced the World Council of Churches to invite Freire in 1970 to be a consultant in their Office of Education at Geneva.

There he set up the Institute of Cultural Action through which he had the opportunity of more direct involvement in the struggles of other Third World countries, mostly in Africa. His consultancies, as well as a host of seminars and international conferences, took him to Mozambique, Peru, Angola, Tanzania, São Tomé and Principé, and Guinea Bissau.

This was a seminal experience, which is reflected in the Pedagogy in Process: Letters to Guinea Bissau. These letters, written to educators and politicians between 1975 and 1976, show Freire moving towards a much clearer position about the power relationships between learning, conscientisation and freedom.

Ironically, at the very point at which he had moved

towards a clearer political statement about literacy and conscientisation, he found himself included, contrary to the expectations of many, in a general amnesty granted by the Figueredo government in Brazil in September, 1979. Freire, ever Brazilian, returned to Recifé in June, 1980 to work initially at the Centre for Educational Studies -Centro de Estudos em Educacão - and then to take up a post as Professor of Philosophy of Education at the Pontificia Universidade Católica de São Paulo and the public Universidade de Campinas in São Paulo.

So commenced a period of re-integration, marked by no major publications in English until The Politics of Education: Culture, Power and Liberation, in 1985. This is essentially a re-print of selected articles and interviews, although it aims to "to stimulate more discussion on current major issues in education" (p.xxvii).

The same themes re-emerge in his next publication in 1987, A Pedagogy for Liberation: Dialogues on Transforming Education.[35] This is a series of dialogues with Ira Shor which have been transcribed, the "talking book" being itself a device to create a "dialogue" with the reader who can then both see and hear Freire's explanation of the development of his pedagogy.

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35. Interesting, for the point of authorship versus status, is the fact that the book is commonly attributed to Freire, although the copyright actually belongs to Shor.

The same device forms the base of Freire's most recent book in English, <u>Literacy: Reading the Word and the World</u> (1987b) which concentrates less on the techniques of literacy teaching (which so marked his early works), and more restating the goals of literacy as the acquiring of the <u>language of possibility</u>. This pedagogy of liberating remembrance, to borrow Giroux sumptuous phrase, is embedded in History. It is a Literacy which is an act of knowledge but in which "it is no longer possible to have the text without the context" (1987b:43).

The contemporary Freire, teaching in a modernised Brazil,[36] can reflect upon the changes in text and context through which his pedagogy has lived. It is not possible to live today in other than a textualised world: Literacy cannot be disinvented. But it can be re-invented. The pen, the hand of the mind, is engaged in writing (in) the society. For Freire, that writing, a new logographia as the writing of reason, is still different only in degree, from the righting of wrong.

Freire's biography has given us a bio-text of his experience and the grapho-text of his works. Both assert the possibility of a liberating pedagogy. This we must now examine by looking at the practicalities of his method.

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36. The influence of his current work, through his teaching and through directing post-graduate studies, is explicit in Braslavsky (1988) and in the review by Francisco Gomes de Matos (1989) of eight recent, Brazilian publications on literacy.

2.1 Methodological Principles

Freire's Method (1976b:61-84), which is both a
process of literacy acquisition and a process of
conscientisation, is based on the simple but fundamental
technique of problematising.   This is the antithesis of
banking education and consists of daring to interrogate
what is given, bringing into question known structures,
examining conventional or taken-for-granted "explanations"
of   reality,   thus   discovering   and   confronting
contradictions.

Three existential questions underpin this pedagogy
and identify the three discrete stages of the learning
process which are also reflected in the structure of this
thesis.   First, there is a NAMING stage where one poses
the question: what is the problem, what is the question
under discussion ?   Secondly, there is a REFLECTION stage:
why is this the case? How do we explain this situation ?
Finally, there is the ACTION stage: what can be done to
change this situation?   What options do we have?

It is a process-oriented pedagogy which Freire
(1971a) insists is a

> "permanent, critical approach to reality in order to
> discover it and discover the myths that deceive us
> and help us to maintain the oppressing, dehumanising
> structures.   It leaves nobody inactive.   It implies
> that people take the role of agents, makers and
> remakers of the world".

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This method was not, however, Freire's creation. It parallels a process popular in the 1960's within the Basic Ecclesiastic Communities (Comunidades Eclesiais de Base: C.E.B) in Brazil. As the basis of their social education programme, especially in the literacy campaign broadcast nationwide by the Church's Basic Education Movement (M.E.B.), they used a method known widely as See-Judge-Act: what is the case, why is it so, and what can be done about it? The method found favour, particularly within the Catholic Church, partly because it was simple and practical, and partly because it represented the secular application of the three stages of prayerful meditation as taught within the Jesuit tradition since Ignatius of Loyola.[37]

Freire was thus using a tried and tested method, as Cartesian as it was Catholic, within a learning context which was equally well known to many people both through the CEB and through the Trades Union, namely the Culture Circles. These groups became very much associated with his Method, although the idea behind the Culture Circle is again neither new nor particularly South American. Their main purpose within the Method is that "the act of knowing is elaborated in the circulo de cultura which function as the theoretic context" (Freire, 1970h:219). They set the

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37. Brookfield (1984:5) finds the same rural-radio link in the Canadian Association of Adult Education and their Farm Forum broadcasts in the 1940's. The motto of the scheme was "Read, Listen, Discuss, Act", which he describes as an early implementation of a Freirean praxis.

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scene for the codified theme of man-world relationships in general, even before "the analysis of the learners' existential situations and the generative words contained in them."[38]

The rationale for these groups, the acquisition of literacy,[39] is based on two, fundamental premises:

a) that adults can learn to read with ease words with which they are already orally familiar and which are, therefore, immediately meaningful. In Freire's expression, "No-one is orally illiterate."

b) that it is possible to identify a small number of words which would contain all the phonemes of the language. Given the nature of Portuguese, which is primarily a phonetic, syllabic language, this is a more practical task than it is, for example, in English.

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38. The practice of small group, community based learning is so widespread that its origins are difficult to trace. Brookfield (1984:90) traces the existence of such groups prior to their widespread use in the American labour movement of the 1920's to the Juntos proposed by Franklin in 1727, the Lyceum Movement in the 1820's and the Settlements in England in the 1880's. Hall (1978) finds Workers' Circles well established in St. Petersburg in 1887, and Study Circles in Sweden effective from the turn of the century. Spies-Bong (1989) highlights the key role of the Learning Circle in Petersen's 1927 "Iena Plan".

39. Fernandes (1985) illustrates how these groups were used by the CEB for political goals. "The political consciousness-raising of the CEBs has contributed to a significant increase in the strength of popular grass roots movements. The CEBs strengthen internal democratic participation that values each human being and brings forth his or her full potential as an agent of change." The principals were Freirean, the politics were not.

Freire (1976b:49-53) describes the five stages or phases of the literacy programme.

Phase 1: Researching the vocabulary of the groups with which one is working.

In this phase, the educators visit the area and make contact with the community, recruiting co-investigators to examine all the basic needs, interests and activities of that community.

Phase 2: Selection of the generative words.

By analysing the responses and conversations of the community, the educators develop a short list of selected words, using three criteria:

a: **the phonemic value of the word**: researchers had found that, in Spanish and Portuguese, only some 16-17 words were needed to represent all the syllabic variants of the language.

b: **the phonetic difficulty of the word**: the sequence of presentation of the words is critical. Firstly, the initial word must be trisyllabic, such that each syllable consists of one consonant and one vowel, e.g. favela = slum, tijolo = brick. Secondly, less common or more difficult words should come at the end of the sequence, e.g. the phonetically complex sounds of x, z, q, and ão should come late in the list.

c: **the pragmatic tone of the word**: words that name concrete and familiar objects should appear early in the sequence, while words of a more abstract, social or political values should come later.

Phase 3. The creation of the "codifications".

The selected or <u>generative words</u> are set into codifications, graduated according to their phonetic difficulty. <u>Codifying</u> is the process of creating typical situations which the group would recognise and which would serve as a basis for discussion in

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the Culture Circle. From the familiar, local
situations the group can widen the discussion to
include regional and national problems.[40]

Phase 4: The elaboration of agendas.

The educators prepare a structure for the discussion
groups, which should primarily be used as a guide
rather than as a rigid schedule. Freire (1987b:136)
notes as a major problem the need to instruct the
team of coordinators, not so much in the
technicalities of the scheme but in the creating of
the required attitude, i.e. a willingness to enter
into a dialogue.[41] The period of instruction, he
insists, must be followed by dialogic supervision, to
avoid the temptation of anti-dialogue on the part of

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40. Gerhardt (1989:541) suggests that the first
codifications used in Freire's programme were overtly
political, espousing the objectives of the reformist,
regional government and that only later did they
highlight the practical advantages of literacy, e.g.
being able to read labels.

Freire has never admitted the direct politicisation of
his early programmes, but later re. São Tomé he comes
very close to asserting as a principle what Gerhardt
offers as a criticism: "When an adult literacy campaign
evolves around the syllabification of "ba-be-bi-bo-bu"
instead of discussing the national reality with all its
difficulties, and instead of raising the issue of the
people's political participation in the reinvention of
their society, it creates false discourses" (1987b:66).

41. This point is reinforced by Ewert (1981). In his
experience the coordinators were often forced to adopt
a parent-child relationship simply because they were
considered to be there in order to solve the
communities' problems. Nevertheless, Ewert is clear
that "Freire concept of codifications has tremendous
conceptual power for transforming perspectives and
providing hope in the face of dominance" (p.32).

the coordinators.

Phase 5: The preparation of flash cards or slides.
These are cards with the phonemic families, the syllabic elements of each of the words, which are used in the process of word recognition and word creation.

2.2   Object Lesson: TIJOLO =Brick

First, a picture, "codification", of a construction scene is shown or projected. The group could then discuss, e.g. building houses in wood or in brick, how their own houses were built, the problems of housing allocations, use of building resources, etc.

A second picture is then projected, this time with a specific focus on the bricks used in the construction, and underneath which is written TIJOLO.

In a third picture, the card or the slide just shows the single word TIJOLO.   Additional cards are then shown in sequence, breaking down the syllabic variables of the word TI-JO-LO.   The coordinator reads out the word and the family of syllables: ti   ta te ti to tu.
Then there is another card, jo   ja je ji jo ju,
and, finally, a third: lo   la le li lo lu.

The three cards are combined into one "discovery

card": ta te ti to tu
ja je ji jo ju
la le li lo lu

The coordinator reads the discovery card once, vertically
and horizontally, and then asks the group to put together
other word combinations, using the range of syllabic
possibilities on the discovery card. For example:

luta = struggle   talo = stalk
loja = store   lata = tin can
jato = jet   tatu = armadillo
lula = squid   lote = lot
lajota = flagstone.

Obviously, not all the possible combinations of syllables
make actual words. In the State of Rio Grande do Norte, a
group called the combinations of syllables that were actual
words thinking words (palavras do pensamento), while other
combinations of non-words were called dead words (palavras
mortas) (Brown, 1974:36).

The group members are encouraged to go home and to
return the next day with as many words as possible which
they have made from the given syllables.

The group are further encouraged to write down, no
matter how basic the script, the words which they have
recognised orally.

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2.3 Regional Word Lists

In **Education: The Practice of Freedom**, Freire includes, after the sequence of ten pictures, the list of 17 Generative Words which he used in the State of Rio.

1.	favela	=	slum
2.	chuva	=	rain
3.	arada	=	plough
4.	terreno	=	land
5.	comida	=	food
6.	batuque	=	afro-Brazilian dancing
7.	poço	=	well
8.	bicicleta	=	bicycle
9.	trabalho	=	work
10.	salàrio	=	salary
11.	profissão	=	profession
12.	govêrno	=	government
13.	manque	=	swampland
14.	engheno	=	sugar mill
15.	enxada	=	hoe
16.	tijolo	=	brick
17.	riqueza	=	wealth

These words allegedly reflect his practice of negotiating the key words, the generative words of the community, and show how, from an initial trisyllabic word, the list ends with more complex phonemes. It does not easily show, however, the development recommended in Phase 2c above (p.51), that there should be a movement from concrete nouns to more abstract ideas.

A comparison with other word lists used in the programme is interesting. Brown includes four such lists in her **Literacy in 30 Hours**, but without making an analysis. The lists (see page 57) were used in literacy programmes in:-

> The State of Rio, used in a rural area and in a satellite of the city of Rio de Janeiro;
> List 4: this is the list quoted above by Freire.

Cajueiro Sêco, a slum in Recifé;
List 1:

Tirini, an agricultural colony near the city of
Cabo; List 2:

Macaio, a city on the sea coast;
list 3.

The four lists have 15, 16, 16 and 17 words respectively.

Of the 64 words, eight are used more than once, viz.

tijolo	= brick	voto	= vote
máquina	= sewing machine	engheno	= sugar mill
manque	= swamp	enrada	= hoe
comida	= food	trabalho	= work.

A further three ideas are expressed in two groups through
the use of different words:

milho)	= flour	terra)	= land	cacimba)	= well
farinha)		terreno)		poco)	

Only one word, tijolo/brick, appears in all four lists,
while two other words, voto/vote and engenho/sugar mill
appear in three of the lists (1.2.3. and 1,2,4.,
respectively).[42]

2.4   Commentary

2.4.1   Construction of the Word Lists.

Three of the lists, i.e. all except Freire's, begin
with the same two words, tijolo and voto, (brick, vote).
This immediately raises the question of how far the content
of each list was actually constructed with the group rather

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42.   Manque (lists 1 and 4) illustrates the problem of
decontextualising the written word.   It has both an
agricultural and an urban connotation: it is a swamp
or marsh, but it also refers in Rio to the "red light"
district of a city (Sanders, 1968).

Four Regional Word Lists

List 1.

From Cajueiro Sêco, a
slum in Recifá;

tijolo	brick
voto	vote
siri	crab
palha	straw
biscate	odd job
cinza	ashes
doenca	illness
chafariz	fountain
máquina	sewing machine
emprego	employment
engenho	sugar mill
mangue	swamp
terra	land, soil
enrada	hoe
classe	class

List 2.

From Tirini, an agricultural
colony in the city of Cabo.

tijolo	brick
voto	vote
rocado	manioc field
abacaxi	pineapple
cacimba	well
passa	raisin
feira	market
milho	corn flour
maniva	kind of manioc
planta	plant
lombriga	roundworm
engenho	sugar mill
guia	guide
barracão	small warehouse
charque	dried meat
cozinha sal	kitchen salt

List 3.

From Maceio, a city
by the sea.

tijolo	brick
voto	vote
casamento	wedding
carroca	cart
peixe	fish
jangada	fishing boat
balanca	scales
Brasil	Brazil
máquina	sewing machine
farinha	flour
coco	coconut
fome	hunger
comida	food
sindicato	union
trabalho	work
limpeza	cleanliness

List 4.

From rural and urban areas
in the State of Rio.

favela	slum
chuva	rain
arado	plough
terreno	plot of land
comida	food
batuque	popular dance
poco	well
bicicleta	bicycle
trabalho	work
salário	salary
profissão	profession
governo	government
mangue	swamp
engenho	sugar mill
enrada	hoe
tijolo	brick
riqueza	wealth

Source: Brown, C. "Literacy in 30 Hours: Paulo Freire's
Process in N.E. Brazil" in _Social Policy_. Vol.5.
No.2, 1974.

than imposed or suggested by the educators. It is highly
significant that TIJOLO is, in fact, the guide word which
Freire uses in his explanation of his Method in Education:
The Practice of Freedom, although in later explanations he
used FAVELA/slum. It seems evident that the educators and
their co-researchers were relying heavily on the model
which they had received. There is no other, immediate
answer why three groups, one in a city slum, another in a
coastal town, another in an agricultural colony, should all
select a brick as their key, generative word.

Again, the use of VOTO/vote seems to have been
imposed. The one list (again, Freire's) that does contain
key words of government, professions, and salary, does not,
perhaps surprisingly, include VOTO. However, the other
three lists which do have the word, do not have other words
which might suggest the context or the content of the
discussion around VOTO.

One conclusion is that, rather than reflecting the
principles of negotiated learning and the processes of
creating the generative words, the use of VOTO reflects
more the interests and personalities of some of Freire's
colleagues.

He himself was strongly against the use of primers or
prepared texts, mainly on the grounds that they were
mechanical, redolent of Banking Education and destructive
of the flexibility required on the part of the educators in

the Culture Circles. He believed that the generation of words, the use of those words, the decision about which formations of syllable were actual words and what messages the words should convey, should all be jointly undertaken by the non-literate adults and the coordinators.

However, two of Freire's colleagues in the Popular Culture Movement had written a short Primer _Viver é Lutar_ in which, using Freire's Method of syllabic parsing, they introduced initially just five words:

    povo = people   voto = vote
    vida = life   saúde = health
    pão   = bread

Their first sentence reads "O voto é do povo" (The vote belongs to the people). It ends with "The North-east will only have peace when the roots of its ills have been eradicated" and "Peace grows out of justice".

In the context of that Primer and of the large scale literacy programme which M.E.B. undertook through the Trades Unions in 1963-64, the content of lists 1-3 takes on a new focus. Tijolo was used to give an example of syllabic parsing, and voto was used to create the climate of the discussion which was overtly about oppression and liberation. The themes of the groups were about hunger, employment, food and exploitation, the senghor de engheno, and the role of the unions and the controls of the market.

The bass line provided to support the melody of this discussion is clearly that of a radical Marxist analysis.

The hint that Freire was not wholly in sympathy with this view is that, at the time of writing <u>Education: The Practice of Freedom</u>, he would have had these lists to hand, but he makes no reference to them, preferring instead his list from Rio even though that was not his own home area.

He may have rejected the analysis, -he had not at this stage begun to offer any economic analysis either of oppression or of the processes of liberation- but he certainly would also have argued that the success of such Primers (and there is evidence of their success[43]) actually illustrates the degree to which they are patronising and anti-dialogic.

Brown (1974:32) supports Freire on this point, perhaps indicating that she was aware of some degree of directing or imposing on the part of the coordinators.

> "The messages are not the direct opinions of the learners.   Because the ideas are those of the teachers, the book is an instrument of propaganda; in supposing what non-literates may believe, it tells them what they should believe.   As long as the message is donated, it domesticates those who accept it in the uncritical acceptance of whatever teachers and writers say should be believed."

It therefore appears that despite the claims of

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43. Brown (1974) quoting an interview with Anisio Teixeira, Director of the Brazilian National Institute of Pedagogical Studies: "This book effectively teaches reading... The words, the sentences, the phrases are those that would inevitably occur to the non-literate if he himself were writing his own Primer. ...This has been realised to an unprecedented extent in the <u>Primer for Adults</u>." (my emphasis added).

dialogic learning, the hidden or personal agenda of the educators has had a controlling influence on the formulation of the generative words. There is a directiveness required for the presentation of this programme —a view which is supported by the analysis of the ten "situations" offered by Freire- which contradicts the principles of negotiated learning in a way which is indeed anti-dialogic. The pedagogical discipline demanded by Freire has been ignored.

Furthermore, the four lists do not illustrate the principles which Freire had outlined for each phase of the creating of a literacy programme. In Phase 1, the research of the local "vocabulary universe" has been initiated only after certain of the 16-17 words had been nominated, viz. tijolo, voto, and engheno.

Secondly, none of the lists reflect the semiotic criteria on which the Method is based (page 51). There is no logical progression from concrete words to abstract ideas (e.g. list 2), difficult phonemes are introduced earlier rather than later (e.g. lists 1 and 2), and there is no obvious differentiation of pragmatic tone (e.g. in either list 3 or list 4).

The principles enunciated by Freire appear more as a post-hoc rationalisation of a practice which had proved itself to be effective. Albeit that the practice was more a form of enlightened Banking Education, the

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rationalisation is tempered with the values of dialogic
teaching and negotiated learning.

The word lists may confirm the trend of previous
analyses, but they do also open up new questions which
underpin the pedagogy of teaching/learning literacy.

2.4.2 The Content and Use of Words

It is interesting that, in a pedagogy constructed
around the idea of liberation and the fact that "no-one can
liberate themselves", and which is based on the social
nature of learning, not one of the lists includes words
relating to personal or family relationships: there is no
mention of wife/husband, children, parents or friends, no
mention of family or community.

Additionally, it is significant that all the words in
the four lists are all nouns.   There are no verbs,
propositions or adjectives.   That is to say that, not only
are there no words to describe relationships, but also that
there are no words with which can relate one word to
another.

It is as if, in learning a foreign language, one were
to learn only selected nouns (e.g. the man, the pen, the
table, the hat, the beer, etc.).   No matter how well one
might know the words, one could not converse, nor could one

read with any security what other people have written.

Freire, who himself was learning English at the time,
nowhere explains the process of language acquisition
through which one learns to connect the given nouns in such
a way that one can construct sentences.[44]

For example, a generative word list may have _voto /_
vote and _povo / people_, but how does one learn to read or
write: O voto é do povo

The vote is of (belongs to) the people ?

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44. This is all the more surprising in that his work in
São Tomé in 1976 represents a considerably advanced
methodology.   The word lists are still there, but
evidently not negotiated as before with the community.
The texts are "designed to meet the objectives of the
literacy campaign, namely, for the people to
participate effectively as subjects in the
reconstruction of the nation" (Freire, 1987b:65).

The word lists include: "school, plantation, land,
product, people, health, radio," as well as "unity,
discipline, work, vigilance".   However, the Primer,
which was published as two _Popular Culture Notebooks_,
also includes points of grammar.   Particular attention
is given to hypothetical clauses and to the use of the
relative pronoun _que_ which is said to be very common in
popular discourse.   However, no attention is given to
how pronouns and verbs are to be learnt, and no
explanation is given as to how, phonologically or
semiotically, pronouns and prepositions can be used as
generative words.

There is no doubt that the _Popular Culture Notebooks_
represent a more advanced literacy programme, and
certainly one that is overtly, politically oriented to
a degree that Freire found unacceptable in _Extension_
and Communication.   (For example: "Working with
perseverance, we produce more" and "the culture Circle
whose participants worked more received a
congratulatory letter from the Comrade president":
(1987b:89)).   It is, however, difficulty to see how
this approach aligns with Freire's pedagogical
principles or how it is not simply a benign form of
Banking Education and Cultural Invasion.

This is not simply the question as to whether one can learn a language or learn to read and write without some understanding of the Grammar of the language.   It is rather a question of whether it is possible to identify a list of words which are absolutely essential, if one is to communicate in that language, either through reading or writing.

Taking, as an illustration, just the last two sentences above, one can easily see the key nouns (fig.a), the generative words, but those words by themselves (fig.b) are not sufficient to carry the meaning of the sentences.

Fig.a   This is not simply the question as to whether one
        can learn a language or learn to read and write
        without some understanding of the Grammar of the
        language.   It is rather a question of whether it
        is possible to identify a list of words which are
        absolutely essential, if one is to communicate in
        that language, either through reading or writing.

Fig.b   .... question .. ..
        ... . language .. ..
        .... understanding .. ... Grammar .. ...
        language.   .. .. question .. ..
        .. .. list .. words ....
        ...., ...
        .... language, ...

If, however, we look at the reverse image and delete the nouns, it becomes immediately evident that reading requires an understanding of other, key semiotic variables:

Fig.c   This is not simply the .... as to whether one
        can learn a .... or learn to read and write
        without some .... of the .... of the
        ....   It is rather a .... of whether it
        is possible to identify a .... of ..... which are
        absolutely essential, if one is to communicate in
        that ...., either through reading or writing.

It is the transition from fig.b to fig.a that

summarises the fundamental processes of Freire's literacy programme, but his explanation of his Method by-passes the questions posed by fig.c.   Can one actually become literate, without considering the pronouns, prepositions and conjunctions without which even oral language is impossible?   The use of generative sight-words may indeed provide a base for animated and relevant discussion, but how does such discussion aid the transition to actual literacy ?   Is there a difference between "seeing" a word and "reading" that word ?[45]   If the use of sight words is valid, how does Freire's actual selection of words aid the process of alphabetisation?

Otto and Stallard (1976) made a major study of the use of sight words as an aid in the teaching of reading which is relevant here.   It shows that Freire's Method of selecting common, key words as a basis for reading has indeed a long pedigree, and there is evidence of word lists even from 20BC.   In more recent times, the development of **Look and Say** teaching methods have led to the revival of such aids.

Methodologically, the technique is simple.   The

45. Le Men (1985) raises a parallel point questioning the use of alphabetic learning: "_voir_ les lettres fait obstacle à la lecture.   L'alphabet n'est pas fait pour être lu mais pour être entendu et dit".   She contrasts synthetic literacy, that builds up words from individual syllables which in themselves have no meaning, and analytic literacy which is based on recognition of whole words which are given meaning by the reader.

lists are created through a frequency count of words that occur in oral and written samples of children's and/or adults' communication and Otto and Stallard conclude that, by comparing a wide range of such sight words, "it is possible to identify a list of one hundred words that could be accepted as _essential_ sight words with some confidence".

Two of their subsequent observations are also pertinent here; a) that the words that occur frequently in children's speech also tend to be frequent in adults' speech, and b) that the core words from adult writing are also the core words in children's writing.

It therefore seems reasonable to transpose this research to the question of literacy teaching, in supposing that the same essential words would be needed within any such programme.

In contrast to Freire's lists, Otto and Stallard include no nouns (see p.67). The largest number of words (32%) are basic verb forms, (be, have, see, come, go, be able, do, know, like, look, make, put, say, take, think, and want). 16% of the words are personal or possessive pronouns, and a further 16% are propositions. Essential adjectives (6%) include: big/little, new/old, good and right.

The advantage of such a list is that it creates the immediate possibility of what Freire would call the

One Hundred Essential Sight Words

a	down	it	out	three
about	for	just	over	to
after	from	know	put	too
again	get	like	right	two
all	go	little	said	up
an	good	look	saw	us
and	got	made	say	want
any	had	make	see	was
are	has	me	she	we
at	have	my	so	went
away	he	new	some	were
be	her	no	take	what
big	here	not	that	when
but	him	now	the	where
by	his	of	them	who
came	how	off	then	will
come	I	old	there	with
could	if	on	they	would
did	in	one	think	you
do	is	our	this	your

Source: Otto, W. and Stallard, C. "One Hundred Essential Sight Words", in <u>Visible Language</u>. Vol. 10, No. 3, Summer, 1976, pp. 247-252.

dialogue of literacy, the language of possibility. A
person who has the ability to read and write these words
can be the Subject of his or her own learning. Unlike
Freire's lists, this essential word-list leads the learner
towards the making of a statement which is, potentially,
immensely personal. I can write "I am", "I think", "I
have", and "I know". I can also write in relationship:
"you can", "you said" or "we want", "we are".

Phonetically, this list of one hundred words,
syllabically parsed according to the Freirean Method (hat,
het, hit, hot, hut; an, en in, on, un; etc.), covers most
of the essential phonemes even of the English language and
provides a framework for the constructing of sentences.
It may, initially, be more laborious in the
teaching/learning of how to read, but the fact that it
demonstrably reflects essential word units would greatly
facilitate the teaching/learning of how to write.

There is an almost shocking simplicity in the sight-
word list that is lost in the complexity of Freire's
process of literacy and conscientisation. Furthermore,
his pedagogy of annunciation is contradicted by the
limitations imposed on the discourse of literacy through
the use of only nominal, rather than prepositional and
pronominal, language.

The divergence between the two lists represents the
polarising of two traditional pedagogies. In Cartesian

terms, the processes of learning through the creation of a
synthesis and a logical progression from the simple to the
complex[46] are to be distinguished from those processes
which propose an analysis of what is complex so as to
perceive an underlying simplicity.[47]

Traditionally, i.e. within those frameworks which
Freire would identify with Banking Education, the teaching
of reading has been incremental and synthetic, building
upon the learner's gradual development of conceptual and
linguistic capacities. The word-list of Otto and Stallard
would be an essential tool in the early stages of that
process.

Freire's Method, while initially synthetic and

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46. Freire follows Descartes in seeking to name that
    reality which he can assert without doubt, even if he
    does not, or cannot, explain the leap from epistemology
    to ontology. His literacy method is a direct
    application of Descartes fundamental rules: "The second
    rule was to divide each difficulty into as many parts
    as possible... The third was to conduct my thoughts in
    an orderly fashion, starting with what was simplest and
    easiest to know, and rising little by little to the
    knowledge of the most complex, even supposing an order
    where there is no natural precedence among the objects
    of knowledge." (Descartes, 1960:50).

47. Most Look and Say literacy methods are based on such
    an analysis. Words are not constructed or made up of
    syllables: they are complete semiotic figures of
    reality. We do not say "what do these syllables
    mean?" but "what does this word mean?".

    Le Men (1985) argues that this method, even in the
    fifteenth and sixteenth century, found little favour
    among educationalists because it is based more on
    intuition and memory rather than on logic and
    repetitive learning. It is not without significance
    that the latter are more controllable and examinable
    than the former.

syllabic, is primarily analytic, asking the learner to confront the complexities of situations from his or her daily life. They are encouraged to "name their world", and, in the strict sense of the word, to do that they need the names -the nouns. Their freedom to name is predicted upon their ability to read the world. Each codification, which is never neutral and no matter what its form (visual, auditory, tactile or audio-visual) is a discourse to be read (Freire, 1978:91).

Using Chomsky's distinction, Freire argues (1970h) that all codification has both a superficial and a deep structure. Decoding or conscientising is the process of searching beneath the obvious, the given, in order to uncover a new, previously hidden, reality.

This radical pedagogy is revolutionary only in the sense that it is a return to, or restatement of, a classical literacy teaching. In effect, Freire is demanding, through the apparent simplicity of his codified cards and single nouns, a modern but oral restatement of Comenius' complex Orbis Pictus (1648).

Like Freire, Comenius provided an introduction to literacy through alphabetic learning and through reflection on "an ordered and carefully named universe" (Cohen, 1977). Yet while he asserts, in the preface to Orbis Pictus, the need to show pupils not just the picture but the real things, what we actually look at in his book is the

textualised _word_ which has become a decontexted _idea_.[48]
The Noun, or _nomen_ exists "in the book" but it remains
unusable because it is indeclinable.   It is neither
subject or object, because it is untouched by the
contingency of language.   There is no conjugation, either
grammatically or semiotically, between the word on the
paper and the word in reality.

     What such nominalist discerning of the word cannot
do, almost by definition, is to turn that process of naming
into a process of action.   This is the ultimate weakness
of Freire's Method, for such a process of action requires
the articulation or inter conjugation of verbs and the
pronouns, and it is here that his lists are eloquently
silent.

     The singular and most important outcome of that

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48.   Each page of Comenius could be seen as a discovery
       card, used to generate words and ideas, but the system
       rests firmly within Banking Education.   Indeed,
       adopting the linguistic currency of the current
       European market, it represents a World Banking System.
       Comenius subtitled his encyclopaedia "the art of
       teaching everybody everything totally" (omnibus omnia
       omnino docendi ars).

       Le Men (1985) assesses how this pictorial literacy has
       influenced the teaching of the ABC and reading/writing,
       although her analysis and that of Fugelsang (1973)
       severely questions the common assumption that people
       can easily "read pictures".
       Following Magritte, one has only to re-title Freire's
       picture of the brick as This is Not a Brick. to fully
       expose the decontexted semiotic.

       Support for this analysis would be found in the richly
       argued review of the development of alphabetic literacy
       in Hoskin (1984), and the difficulties of pictorial
       literacy presented by Derrida (1978).

analysis is that Freire's Method finds itself in contradiction: it can never realise its objective of **PRAXIS**, -that process of active reflection _and_ reflective action. The use of nominative word lists is fundamentally anti-dialogic, for it never allows the learner to personalise the processes of reading and writing. It explains Bernstein's view that the nominal forms lead to universalist perspectives, whilst the pronominal forms particularise.[49]

The learner then may be able to recognise the word for a brick, or a mill, or discuss the importance of the words re. employment, wages and the price of bread, but unless he or she can read and write "I can read" and "I can write" then there is a sense in which they are condemned to remain sub-literate. Only the person who can write "I can" is in a position to begin to change the world, for it is the I CAN which is the catalyst to the process of conscientising. This, in turn, breaks the bonds of the culture of silence and enables the learner, as Subject, to say I AM. Possum ergo sum requires only the nominative and no other nouns.

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49. Bernstein (1970) reads class distinctions in a story-telling study where middle class children used 13 nouns and 6 pronouns, but where working class children used only two nouns but 14 pronouns. However, the main point is that nominal forms led to universalist statements, while pronominal forms were particular and situation specific. I infer from this latter case a process which is deeply personalising: the use of multiple pronouns effectively says "The story may not be immediately comprehensible to you, but I know exactly what it means for me".

3.1   Introduction

The History of Ideas (Begriffsgeschichte) is more
than the tracing of a theme or a word in the Libraries of
Thought or in the Supermarkets of Concepts. There are no
easy, reach-me-down packets or book of ideas, condensed
thoughts which are hermetically sealed against
contamination and which are marked "untouched by human
history".   We cannot trace the development of an idea
in the same way as a biologist traces the genetic evolution
of differing species.

The fact that, diachronically, one can find the same
word or idea expressed in different cultures or epochs
neither ensures that there is an evolutionary and
consistent development of that idea, nor that an anterior
usage is an embryonic form of later discourse.   Equally,
differing expressions of an idea, viewed synchronically, do
not necessarily point to conceptual disagreements
(Friesenhahn, 1988).

In exploring the archaeology of Freire's philosophy,
and practice, therefore, there is no assumption that he was
linguistically or philosophically dependent on his sources.
Phonic or theoretical similarity will not necessarily prove
derivation (e.g. the influence of Freinet, Teilhard or

Unamuno) any more than it assumes that Freire is using a
word or idea in its original sense (e.g. his interpretation
of Aristotle and his relocating of that discussion within a
modern construct of personality).

What we can say is that there is a correspondence
between Freire and a complex web of other philosophies and
pedagogies which leave a shadow across all his work. To
say summarily that his thinking is eclectic is to
underestimate the degree to which he borrowed directly from
other sources, and the affinity which he found in other
authors and therefore on which he was confidently able to
rely for support. An avid reader, there is also no doubt
that he was an intellectual poacher who sought out and
repossessed other ideas in order to enlarge and restock his
own domain.

There is a sense, however, in which Freire's library
is syncretic rather than eclectic. His analysis of
history and culture leans heavily on Althusser, Fanon,
Lukacs, Mao, Marcuse, and Marx, as much as on Aristotle,
Descartes, Hegel and Rousseau. His theology is compiled
from Bonhoeffer, Gutierrez, Niebuhr and Rahner as well as
from Buber, Fromm and the traditions and practices of the
"Church Triumphant".

> "Freire's work and study on many continents enable
> him to quote at will from scores of philosophers,
> psychologist, sociologists, political scientists,
> educators, revolutionaries, and theologians. It is
> possible, however, to identify some of the major
> accents in his writings and the personalities whose
> thought to a greater or lesser degree contributed to
> his philosophy" (Collins, 1977:27).

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The efficacy of such syncretism means that it is not possible to unravel the diverse skeins of influence in the complex fabric (Mackie, 1980:93), the _textus_, of Freire's thought. What is possible is to paint in the background, identify the ingredients which Freire has used to make his own particular recipe, and within that to concentrate on those elements which have been formative in the creation of his pedagogy.

3.2. A European Heritage ?

3.2.1 The French Connection

We have already referred (Footnote 10) to the major influence on Freire's early reading of French academics, among whom was the much underrated figure of Lucien Febvre.

Febvre was one of the founders, with Marc Bloch, of the _Annales d'histoire économique et sociale_ which imposed on a traditional approach to the teaching of History the importance of the sub-disciplines of Economic and Social History. They demanded a contextualising of History that led to the investigation of culture and ideology as the construct of historical events. History is not the chronicling of dates and epochs but rather the intersecting of "cultural moments" which according to the mentality of the time (or according to the mentality of the historian) were deemed to be significant.

Subsequently, these later cultural studies focused on the centrality of language and a "history of mentalities". This was the subject of a series of Febvre's lectures in São Paulo University where he analysed the history of conscious and unconscious forms of thought. Freire was thus provided with a stratification of consciousness and with the tool (outil) of discourse analysis with which to reconstruct consciousness. His explanation of naive / critical consciousness in Pedagogy of the Oppressed is a development of Febvre's categorisation of consciousness, and the technique of decoding in the Culture Circles is effectively a specific application of discourse analysis.

For Freire and for Febvre, words are "witnesses" of their time and history (mots-témoins). Freire played much with this idea of historicising but reversed Febvre's logical current, arguing that history was evidenced, brought into being, by the Word: critical consciousness is where a person is able to insert themselves in their own history by "naming the word/world". The Word is their Reality (mots-choses).

It is worth noticing the network which a focus on Febvre reveals. It was he who, in the second year of the Annales, initiated a separate section in the journal which was entitled Les Mots et les choses, (Words and Things), in which he wanted to create an etymological archaeology, a history of words and ideas which was an analysis of the

socio-cultural contexts of those ideas.56

Beyond the importance of this structuring of consciousness, Febvre's other major contribution was that it was he who initiated, both through the <u>Annales</u> and through the University in São Paulo, the cooperation and involvement of many French intellectuals who came, some for periods of two years, other (like Roger Bastide) for many years, to teach at the University.   Many of them wrote for the <u>Annales</u>, and for Mounier's <u>Esprit</u> which, from the early 1960's, was available in Brazil in Portuguese translations.

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56.   <u>Les Mots et les choses</u> was the title of Foucault book (1966) which was translated as <u>The Order of Things</u>. (1970).   It is a study which "traces language as it has been spoken...what modalities of order have been recognised, posited,linked with space and time,in order to create the positive basis of knowledge as we find it employed in grammar and philology, in natural history and biology, in the study of wealth and political economy.   Quite obviously, such an analysis does not belong to the history of ideas or of science: it is rather an enquiry whose aim is to discover of what basis knowledge and theory became possible." (1970:xxi, my emphasis added).

This critical definition of the central question of Power-Knowledge is also clear in Foucault's <u>L'archéologie du savoir</u> (1969), where he makes the direct link between his approach and the <u>nouvelle histoire</u> of Febvre.   Importantly for Freire, Foucault restates the <u>locus</u> of the power-knowledge debate: "ces problèmes, on peut les résumer d'un mot: la mise en question du document....Le document n'est donc plus pour l'histoire cette matière inerte à travers laquelle elle essaie de reconstituer ce que les hommes on fait ou dit, ce qui est passé et dont seul un sillage demeure: elle cherche à définir dans le tissu documentaire lui-même des unités, des ensembles, des séries, des rapports.   Elle est le travail et la mise en oeuvre d'une matérialité documentaire (livres, textes, récits, registres, actes, édifices, insitutions, règlements, techniques, objets, coutumes, etc.)".   (1969:14, my emphasis added).   Foucault's textualising of the world and history is the obverse of Freire's writing the world.

Among those who, collectively and individually informed
Freire's thinking were Lévi-Strauss[51], Goldman[52],
Barthes[53], and Althusser[54].

3.2.2 L'Education Nouvelle

In that context of French teaching and reading,
Freire was introduced to more formal statements of
pedagogy, particularly that which came to be known as

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51. The structuralist ethnology pioneered by Lévi-Buhl
     found further expression in Levi-Strauss' _Anthropologie
     structurale_ (1958) which emphasised the contribution of
     linguistics in the social sciences.   This also gave
     Freire the idea of culture and art which underpins his
     use of Picture 7 in his literacy method (q.v.).
     Freire knew _La pensée sauvage_, 1962 and used the
     important distinction between the savage and the
     scientific mind, (naive and critical consciousness), as
     well as Lévi-Strauss construction of History. "History
     is never history, but history-for... History-for-me can
     make way for the objectivity of history-for-us" (p.307).

52. Freire used Goldman both in _Cultural Action and
     Conscientisation_, (in explaining the state of
     perceptive clarity which Goldman call "the maximum of
     potential consciousness" beyond "real consciousness"
     (1970i:471, 474), and in _Pedagogy of the Oppressed_, to
     express the difference between "real consciousness" and
     "potential consciousness" (1982:85,100) and the
     impossibility that reality can be transformed
     mechanistically.   The English text gives no reference:
     the French text quotes an English text of Goldman _The
     Human Sciences and Philosophy_, 1969, but nuances
     mechanistic change by translating it "la transformation
     de la réalité peut s'opérer automatiquement".
     Freire (1985:32) again refers to Goldman's transition
     of consciousness, but quotes an undated, Spanish
     translation: _Las Ciencias humanas y la filosfia_.

53. Barthes's "Histoire et littérature: A propos de Racine"
     in the _Annales_, Vol.15, 1960, pp.524-537.   He reflects
     the Febvre social history of literature in criticising
     the view that one can read social structures
     homologously as one can read texts, and highlights the
     Freirean question of how one can write text and so
     "write" society.

54. See footnote 88, page 143.

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l'éducation nouvelle. A number of key elements of this
approach, which Freire so assimilated that acknowledgement
is rare, can be found in his works, among which, most
notably, are the interconnecting influences of Freinet,
Decroly and Claparède.

Freire refers to Freinet as "one of the great
contemporaries in education for freedom" (1970:1). In
Africa he had seen a training seminar based on the teaching
principles of Freinet (1978:33), and he regarded him as a
"practical political pedagogue", placing him in the company
of "Amilcar Cabral, Samora Machel, Fidel, Nakarenko and
Nyerere" (1978:157).

Why, perhaps, Freinet caught Freire's attention was
because he centred his pedagogy on literacy, on enabling
the child or adult to write for themselves (Freinet, 1968)
but the context of the "live-in" school which Freire
visited in Guinea Bissau represents a wider con-
textualising of education. The central tenet of
l'éducation nouvelle was that education is nothing less
than life itself.

Freire arrives at the same point in his book with
Frei Betto (1985b): _Essa escola chamada vida_ (This School
called Life), but the initial assertion lies embedded in
French/German education of the late 1920's.

> "C'est justement pour préparer à la vie que
> l'éducation doit être une vie. Et si l'éducation se
> propose d'être une préparation à la vie, sans être
> elle-même une vie...elle ne prépare à la vie!"

So ends Claparède's L'éducation fonctionnelle in 1930. Here, while it is interesting to note in passing the wider focus on "functional education" some fifteen years before the expression "functional literacy" became popular, the important idea is that the lived-in-school is also the school-in-life.[55]

By strange coincidence, Freinet, Decroly and Peter Petersen all met at Locarno in 1927, when Petersen published what later became known at the Jena Plan.[56]   He

55.   Freire found close affinity with Claparède: in his L'éducation fonctionnelle, (1973), he insists that education is a way of living in which the educator is an agent of social change (p.189). The function of the teacher has to be transformed to allow the school to become a place of experimentation for work, play and social relations (pp.184, 154).   The teacher has to be able to learn from the pupil in a context where success is not guaranteed, but where the process of "trial and error" (tâtonnement), like dialogic education, may well result in failure.

      Claparède follows Vygotsky and Dewey (both of whom Freire knew well) in his proposition that learning is created by breaking into what is accepted and unquestioned: "au fur et à mesure qu'un acte s'automatise, il devient inconscient" (p.59). Through a process of decoding, the learner and educator can arrive at underlying needs.   Learning is predicated on identifying needs, the process of which parallels Althusser's ruptural principles: "la rupture d'équilibre est le moteur de toute l'activité" (p.51).

56.   See Petersen (1965) Der Kleine Jena-Plan: einer freien allgemeinen Volksschule. Weinheim, Julius Beltz, (first printed in 1927).   A more recent résumé of the main points of the Plan, plus a synthesis of other of Petersen's writings, is to be found in Spies-Bong, G. (1989), q.v.

      The occasion was the Fourth International Conference of the New Education Fellowship (August, 1927) whose theme was "The Meaning of Freedom in Education".   Among the participants at the conference, mostly from Europe and the United States, were representatives from South America, particularly from Chile.

was proposing a Lebensgemeinschaftsschule, a school-which-
is-the-living-community. Did Petersen foreshadow Freire,
or did Freire apply and develop Petersen?

According to Petersen, "l'éducation est une fonction
de l'existence aussi originelle et puissante que la vie
elle-même. En tant que telle, elle rend possible la
spiritualisation et la libération de l'homme" (Spies-Bong,
1989:91). Unmistakably here, the concept and practice of
spirituality and freedom would reinforce for Freire what he
would read in Maritain (1957:76):

> "I know myself as subject by consciousness and
> reflexivity. Subjectivity is known or rather felt in
> virtue of a formless and diffuse knowledge which, in
> relation to reflective consciousness, we may call
> unconscious or pre-conscious knowledge."

Petersen, and with him Decroly and Freinet, aligns
education with a change of consciousness, an idea that
provided Freire with a further rationalisation of the quest
for liberation and "hominisation" which he would find in
Teilhard de Chardin. That, plus the insistence by all
three pedagogues on the need for a change in the basic
relationship between student and teacher, would lead Freire
equally to redefine that relationship and to express the
process of such change within the spirituality of an
"Easter experience" (Freire, 1982:163).

In the nouvelle pédagogie, the core function of the
teacher is to create the possibility of questioning
(Freire's problematising), in a pedagogical situation where

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each person is active and empowered to take decisions.
Spies-Bong (1989:101) calls this "une pédagogie de
l'enseignement" which is but the parallax image of
Berthoff's description of Freire's "pedagogy of knowing"
(1987:xv).

The teacher is the animator of the conversation which
takes place in the Learning Circle ("Die Stammgruppe ist
eine Sozialform, die sich unter Führung eines erwachsenen
Erziehers planvoll gestaltet": Petersen, 1965:28).
According to Spies-Bong (1989:104):

> "Le cercle permettait de soulever les questions
> générales ou des thèmes d'actualité amenés par les
> enfants, des faits vécus par eux ou le résultat de
> leur observations.
>
> Le fait de se retrouver en cercle doit être
> bienfaisant: chaqun s'adresse à l'autre en tant que
> personne."

The fact that authentic, personal conversation is
prioritised in the Circles does not diminish the centrality
of the coordinator/teacher.   Whatever the equality of the
relationship in dialogue, there is still the need for
authority and control.   Petersen (1965:31) talks of the
fundamental Gesetz der Gruppe, a self imposed discipline
but where also "the teacher is the animator...but still
remains the expert."

Freire also never resolved this ambiguity of roles.
Despite his dialogic rhetoric, his practice reflects wholly
the principles of Petersen and Claparède: "In the
discussion, no concession should be made to violent or

disruptive oratory by participants" (Freire, 1978:116).
The teacher or coordinator is responsible for the
comportment of the group, and it is the former who have the
power to decide for the latter what is violent or
disruptive.

Plus ça change! Freire is clearly imbued with the
spirit and the practice of l'éducation nouvelle. This
provided him with a linguistic structure with which to
articulate his own specifically Brazilian learning
programme. It does also explain to a great degree why his
work is based on a psycho-pedagogy rather than on
functional competencies and applied apprenticeship.

What is clear, however, is that, when seen
schematically, Freire, Claparède, Freinet and Petersen are
all hanging their work on the same pedagogical skeleton.
For example, the three essential principles of Freinet
(Pomes:1989), namely, free expression, experimenting and
rehearsing, and action (expression libre, tâtonnement
expérimental et coopération) are themselves none other than
Freire's basic method of See-Judge-Act. His frequent
assertion that

> "knowledge emerges only through invention and
> reinvention, through restless, impatient, continuing
> and hopeful enquiry which people pursue in the world,
> with the world and with each other"

is perhaps only a culturally South American translation or
transposing of Petersen's equally culturally Germanic
Pädagogische Tatsachenforschung, that intense and continual
researching of knowledge and learning.

3.2.3 The Triptych of Personalism, Existentialism and Conscientisation.

Much has been made elsewhere of the influence on Freire of Maritain's **existentialism** and Mounier's **personalism** (Collins:1977; Mackie:1980). What has been overlooked, however, is that these philosophers and writers together gave Freire not just the text, but the intellectual context in which to forge a pedagogy of liberation. Paradoxically, their main influence was to be felt not in the classroom but in the Church.

Freire came to find himself cast on the horns of the Marcusian dilemma: "One of the decisive social tasks of affirmative culture is based on the contradiction between the insufferable mutability of the bad experience and the need for happiness to make such existence bearable" (Marcuse:1968:118). As an educator, Freire found himself committed to a process of cultural affirmation; as a Catholic, he found himself neutralised by the Church's palliative theology that explained undeserved injustice today by the promise of an earned happiness later.

In the early days of Freire's literacy programme, the Church was still emotionally and theologically a long way away from the declaration of Cieneguila in Peru, 1969, and from the statement in the same year made by Dom Helder Camara (Bishop of Recifé) and Dom Antonio Fragrosa (Bishop of Ceara) which was also signed by some 350 diocesan priests. They concluded that, faced with the obscenity of

social injustice, "the revolutionary option, which has scandalised so many, can well be the result of the purest act of conscience" (Gerassi, 1971:48).

All had been influenced by Mounier who had campaigned, particularly through _Esprit_, in support of the worker-priest movement, arguing that the Church should identify "authentically" with the people and that revolution was potentially the clearest expression of love.[57]

Authenticity was one of the key themes of the age. Mounier had come to reject the Augustinian view that _freedom to be_ was ultimately discrete from the _freedom to do_. Freedom could only mean "freedom in action". Hence the title of Freire's books are deeply significant:

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57. This affirmation has to be placed within the traditional teaching of the Church on social issues. On the condition of the working classes, the Papal Encyclical _Rerum Novarum_ (May, 1891) had stated: "The transference of property from private individuals to the community is emphatically unjust" (Para 3). This argument had been used to deny land reforms in Brazil and the breaking up of the large _latifundia_. Forty years later, _Quadragesimo Anno_ (1931) reaffirmed these principles and made it clear that "no catholic could subscribe even to moderate Socialism". Even as late as 1961, _Mater et Magistra: New light on Social Problems_ (sic) was stating that "The permanent validity of the catholic church's social teaching admits of no doubt" (Para 218).

The Catholic Church was far from the position of liberal Protestantism as evidenced by Paul Tillich: "First and foremost I owe to Marx an insight into the ideological character not only of idealism but also of all systems of thought, religious and secular which serve power structures and thus prevent.... a more just organisation of reality" (Tillich, 1973).

Cultural Action for Freedom, and Education: The Practice of Freedom. "Every educational practice implies a concept of humankind and the world" (1976h), but that concept is predicated on the values of authentic freedom.

For Freire (1976b:34), this contrasts with the massified society which makes people "passive, fearful and naive." What is required is the humanisation of man[58] which, both for Freire and for Mounier, was to be achieved through a Christian view of History, melding together "the unity of God, the unity of history and the unity of the human race" (Mounier, 1951:xv).[59]

This was to be nothing less than a spiritual

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58. While this expression clearly echoes Teilhard, it is actually a reference to Mounier's Be Not Afraid, here quoted from an English version, 1954. Earlier (p.12), Freire refers to a French edition of "Le christianisme et la notion de progrès" in La Petite Peur du XX Siècle.

It is interesting to note the re-emergence of a *leit-motif* which lies deep in Freire's psyche and which is reflected in a short bibliography of his references: Mounier's Be Not Afraid, Tillich's The Courage to Be, Fromm's The Fear of Freedom and To Have and to Be, and Sartre's Being and Nothingness.

59. de Kadt (1970:98ff) details Mounier's influence on the Church and on Brazilian intellectuals. Mounier stressed the importance of inter-personal relations, and brought a Christian-marxist analysis to bear on society and injustice. However, he saw change primarily as a process which concerned the individual and he made little analysis of institutions of power and oppression. Nonetheless, his demand for authenticity had to imply some measure of social change, simply because a society could not be authentic if the poor and the marginalised remained oppressed.

A Portuguese translation of Mounier's Le personalisme was available from 1964: O personalisme, Lisbon, trans. João Bénard da Costa.

revolution, the first steps of which were political and economic revolution (p.117), made possibly by the here-and-nowness of each person in their own History: "I am a me-now-here, perhaps even more heavily, a me-now-here-like this-with these people-with this past" (p.127).

It is in engagement with others that we are completely free: "There is no liberty for humankind except in creating engagement: there is no engagement without creating a liberty" (p.141). Engagement refuses the consciousness of solitude because it is in relationship "towards the other, in the other, towards the world and in the world before being in itself" (p.150).

"To be human is to be a being-in-the-world" (p.159) full of "wonder and interrogation" (p.164), whose liberty comes "not from following history"(p.166) but from making history.

This admittedly selective presentation of Mounier[60] is all that is required to reconstitute the main historico-social themes of Pedagogy of the Oppressed. Add

60. It is the whole fabric and concept of Pedagogy of the Oppressed which is rooted in Personalism, although it is easy to find particular quotations which sound like direct translations. For example, "The movement of enquiry must be directed towards humanisation -our historical vocation" (Freire, 1982:58). "Dialogue (Engagement) involves critical thinking, thinking which discerns an indivisible solidarity between the world and humankind admitting no dichotomy between them" (p.64). "Intervention in reality -historical awareness itself- thus represents a step forward from emergence" (p.81).

that to Maritain's Christian existentialism and the
foundation of Freire's pedagogy is almost complete.

Maritain (1957:83) restates the importance of
authenticity: "To be known as object, to see oneself in the
eyes of one's neighbour, is to be severed from oneself and
from one's identity."   For Freire, this severance from
identity, resembling the *non-being* of Heidegger and Sartre
(das nichts, les néants) is a central problem: "The
struggle begins with people's recognition that they have
been destroyed.... Teacher and students, co-intent on
reality are both Subjects" (1982:44).

As Subject, each person IS: they do not simply EXIST.
So Maritain's "To exist is not and cannot be cut off
from the primary concept of being, that-which-is" (1957:33)
is echoed with the same import in Freire (1988:89)[61]:

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61. The quotation also highlights the problem of
     translation.   The English edition of Pedagogy of the
     Oppressed carries the footnote "in English, the terms
     to live and *to exist* have assumed implications opposite
     to their etymological origins.   As used here, *live* is
     the more basic term, implying only survival; *exist*
     implies a deeper involvement in the process of
     becoming."   The footnote does not appear in the
     Portuguese or French editions.   Exactly the same
     footnote had already been used in the English edition
     of Education: the Practice of Freedom.

     The problem lies in the use of *viver* and *exister* in
     Portuguese, *estar* and *ser* in Spanish, *sein* and *leben* in
     German, the contrary use of *to be* and *to exist* in
     English, and the confused use of *être* and *exister* in
     French.   There is therefore a double process of
     interpretation underpinning the translation of Freire
     into English which also operated when Freire was trying
     to understand, for example, Heidegger's concept of in-
     der-welt-Sein through an English translation.

"Unlike animals, human beings not only live but exist" (Os homens, ao contrário do animal, não somente vivem, mas existem).

As such, each person is a "being in action", an expression which, for Maritain, is an existential tautology. Potential existence is only revealed through action -potentia dicitur ad actum (Maritain, 1957:45). Following a very Thomist view which Freire also accepted, Maritain states (1957:70,76): "Only subjects exist, with the action which emanates from them, and the relations which they bear to one another.... I know myself as Subject by consciousness and reflexivity."

Freire (1976b:146) restates that as "The prise de conscience. which is a human characteristic, results in a person's coming face to face with the world and with concrete reality, which is presented as a process of objectification."

This objectification is none other than Teilhard's Noogenesis. each person discovering themselves in their own mirror (Teilhard, 1965:261). It is a permanent process of conscientisation, of personalisation (Teilhard, 1965:192), "what Teilhard calls Humanisation, when human beings made themselves capable of revealing their active reality" (Freire, 1975e).

Consciousness is not a reflection of, but a reflection upon reality which transforms that reality,

humanising it (Freire, 1976i:454: Teilhard, 1965;183).
"Consciousness takes possession of itself, not just
knowing, but knowing that it knows".[62]

Freire here quotes directly from Teilhard, but mostly
he absorbs and applies his ideas: that intelligence must
overcome the encircling illusion of proximity, (Teilhard,
1965:239); that *thinking the world* gives it a form of
unity it would otherwise lack (Teilhard, 1965:274:); that
the evolution of a progressively more conscious mind is a
process of *complexification* (Teilhard, 1965:16).[63]

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62. Teilhard de Chardin played an important role in
    shaping Catholic intellectualism in the early 1960's,
    particularly prior to the Vatican Council.   His
    central tenet, as a scientist and palaeontologist, was
    that humankind is progressing to its goal, its Omega
    point, of complete socialisation (1965:334).   As such,
    we are all in a state of becoming (p.13), incomplete
    human beings seeking out our own personalisation or
    humanisation (p.192).

    A Spanish edition of his major work, El Fenómeno humano.
    Madrid, Taurus, was available in Brazil from 1963.   It
    is this text which Freire quotes in Humanistic
    Education. (1970:m).

63. Freire to some extent demystifies Teilhard, preferring
    in this case to speak of encircling proximity as limit
    situations.   "the   real   boundaries   where   all
    possibilities begin" (Freire 1982:71).   *Thinking the
    world* is analogous both to naming the world, speaking
    the word to transform reality (Freire, 1970h:213) and
    to the process whereby "There is no longer I think but
    We think.   The object is not the end of the act of
    thinking, but the mediator of communication" (Freire,
    1976b:135).   The *process of complexification* is
    exactly the applied technique of problematising: "If
    education is the relation between Subjects in the
    knowing process, then it must be problem posing"
    (Freire, 1976b:150).

3.3   A Marxist Infrastructure ?

Among all the commentaries on the sources and
derivations of Freire's theory and practice no attention
has been given to the important influence of Karel Kosik.[64]

Freire seems to have been struck initially by Kosik's
idea of a "concrete reality": that institutions, ideas and
concepts -what he would later come to collectivise as
Culture- are also a part of the reality of daily life which
human beings are able to change (Freire, 1982:73).
Earlier, he had argued that the adult literacy process, as
an act of knowing "implies the existence of two
interrelated contexts.   One is the context of authentic
dialogue...the second is the *real, concrete context of
facts*, the social reality in which people exist" (Freire,
1978h:214).

In both these instances, Freire quotes from a Spanish
edition of Kosik.[65]   The French version of Pedagogy of the

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64. Kosik was a militant Czech communist and Marxist
    philosopher.   Born in 1926, he was an active member of
    the Labour Movement and one of the few survivors of the
    Resistance during the war.   He was arrested by the
    Gestapo and deported to a concentration camp.   After
    the liberation, he completed his studies at Prague and
    later at Leningrad.
    He was professor of Philosophy at the University of
    Prague from 1962, and played an important role in the
    political and social debate that led to the
    liberalisation of the country.   After the "Prague
    Spring" of 1968, he was dismissed from his post and
    from the party.

65. Dialectica de lo Concreto, Mexico, Grijalbo, 1967.   The
    first Czech edition was also 1967.

Oppressed refers to the first Maspero edition (1970), and the latest Portuguese text of Pedagogy now quotes a Portuguese translation.[66] Freire (1970L) explicitly draws attention to the existence of a German edition.

Freire is therefore acknowledging Kosik in a way that he does not do with other authors (Fromm or Unamuno, for example), yet it is still very difficult to evaluate the importance of his contribution.

In Politische Alphabetisierung (1970L), Freire talks of our presence in the world which is always the "unity of action-reflection",[67] and he adds the footnote: "On this, see the extraordinary book Dialectica de lo Concreto by Karel Kosik, Grijalbo, Mexico, 1967". This note, which is retained in the original, typescript translation of the article into English at the World Council of Churches, Geneva, is suppressed in the most recent translation (1985a:Chapter 8). In Pedagogy in Process, Kosik is mentioned in a footnote, one of only fifteen references in the whole of the book.

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66. La Dialectique du concret, Paris, Maspero, 1970. Dialética do Concreto. Rio de Janeiro, Paz e Terra, 1985, 3a edição.

67. Perhaps because Kosik is not given as a reference against which to explain this expression, the translation of this text in The Politics of Education misses Kosik's (and Freire's) point about the symbiotic nature of action and reflection. "Like our presence in the world, our consciousness transforms knowledge, acting on and thinking about what enables us to reach the stage of reflection" (1985a:100 my emphasis added) is ultimately an inadequate translation.

On the other hand, Freire never refers to Kosik by
name in the text as he does with Althusser, Gramsci, Marx,
Niebuhr, and Teilhard, amongst others.   So why did he feel
that Kosik's book was so extraordinary and how important
was it as an influence on Freire?

On the basis of a textual analysis only, some
tentative conclusions are possible.

Freire first read Kosik in 1967 when he was working
in Chile in a political context where the pro-Marxist
Allende government was seeking radical social reforms which
included his national literacy campaign.   The popular
discourse of the day was openly and militantly Marxist in a
way that had never been achieved in Brazil, even in the
early 1960's.   Freire, from his still deeply Catholic
background, then met this powerful statement of neo-marxism
which was argued as a critique, not just of Marx (although
that also gave Freire a much wider bibliography of Marx and
Lenin than he had previously known), but also of everyone
from Aristotle, to Descartes, Hegel, Husserl, Lukacs and
Wright Mills.[68]

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68.   Freire's references to C. Wright Mills date from this
      period and may well have come through Kosik: see Freire
      1982:83   and 1985a:4.   The method   which   Freire
      encouraged the field investigators to use in their
      collecting of generative themes, namely, registering
      every detail in notebooks, is a technique proposed by
      Wright Mills in his Sociological Imagination.   This
      source is acknowledged by Freire in the French and
      Portuguese versions of the Pedagogy, but the reference
      both in the text and as a footnote is missing from the
      English version.

Freire found in Kosik key points of convergence which allowed him to use the structure of Kosik's argument in his **Pedagogy of the Oppressed**. Both works have four main chapters, which can be presented schematically:

a: Freire

Chapter 1:   Justification for a pedagogy of the oppressed and explanation of the reality of oppression;

Chapter 2:   Banking education v problem posing education; man as a consciously incomplete being in the process of becoming more humanised;

Chapter 3:   Dialogue between people as Subjects, the social practice of freedom, and the stages of consciousness;

Chapter 4:   Dialogics and antidialogics: the matrices of praxis; Being in the world and the nature of oppression, conquest and liberation.

b: Kosik

Chapter 1:   Intellectual and social reproduction; the total, concrete reality;

Chapter 2:   Homo oeconomicus v social banking structures; the growth of rationality, conscious or unconscious views of reality; art as history and culture;

Chapter 3:   The reading of text and the reading of the world; human beings as Subjects/Objects, in the context of work and self fulfilment;

Chapter 4:   Praxis, history and freedom, the nature of humankind, consciousness and the reality of the world in History.

The correspondence between the two books is too close to be mere coincidence, and the essential point is not furthered by detailed quotation. That is not to say that Freire "copied" Kosik: but it is to argue that he so absorbed Kosik's neo-marxist position that he repossessed it as his own.

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Perhaps conscious of the similarity of content and
structure, Freire ceased to refer to Kosik in his writing.
The influence, however, remains. Kosik provided the
infrastructure for Pedagogy of the Oppressed, giving Freire
an acceptable introduction to Marxism and a critique of
"classical" philosophy. This enabled Freire to rework and
restate particularly his own understanding of Aristotle and
Hegel. Through Kosik, admiration, annunciation, theory-
practice-praxis, being-in-the world became not the hall
marks of traditional pedagogy but the prerequisites of a
new, revolutionary futurity (Freire, 1982:57).

3.4 A Classical Lecture Sequence ?

In constructing his pedagogy, Freire was seeking
something definitely other than what he saw negatively as
Socratic intellectualism and the other-worldliness of
Platonic dialogue (1970h:218). For him, pedagogy existed
in the world of the concrete, in that "relationship between
the theoretical context, in which representations of
objective facts are analysed, and the concrete context,
where these facts occur" (ibid:217).

We can hear now a double echo, firstly from Kosik,
but behind that, from Aristotle. This is not at all
surprising, given that Freire was in fact, initially, only
secondarily involved in literacy. Within the University
of Recifé in the early 1960's, his primary role was as
Professor of the History and Philosophy of Education at

Recifé University.

It was in this role that he presented a "classical" lecture sequence on the development of pedagogy which could have been entitled "From Aristotle, via Hegel to Rousseau."

It is worth looking at this in some detail because it reveals some of the structures of Freire's thinking, as well as the degree to which he first absorbed, then creatively retranslated, Aristotelian and Hegelian philosophy into his Pedagogy.

3.4.1   Aristotle

Freire, even in writing and then translating _Pedagogy of the Oppressed_, preferred to use _doxa_ and _logos_ rather than find a suitable expression in the vernacular (Freire, 1976b:110).   If such words are not intended simply to mystify, then they must signify something which Freire was trying to say but he could not express in any other way. Effectively, he had made Aristotle's language his own.

What seems to have attracted Freire, initially, was the Greek preoccupation with the debate about theory and practice.   Pythagoras described the _theoros_ [ϑεα .], the spectator, as the truly free person [ɐλɛυϑɛ.   ⁻ ⁻] because they could stand back and see things as they actually were.   According to Aristotle, that freedom does not exist without a context: it could only exist _in_ the

world, with its own purposes, its intentionality. In other words, *theoria* (theory -which today we might call "scientific enquiry", or which Freire might call "critical consciousness") is a reading of the world (Metaphysics, Epsilon, 1. 1026).

This idea conjoins the notion of rigour and "seeing reality" which is evident in Freire's understanding of conscientisation: he also would say that it exists in the world, and is not simply with the world (1982:49). It is also an understanding of reality which is not engendered by mere intellectual curiosity any more than it is created by practical necessity; rather it arises from a sense of wonder and an awareness of one's own ignorance. (Metaphysics, Book Alpha, 2.)

This awareness or theory is the prerequisite of true knowledge. In talking about doxa [δοξα] -the alienating knowledge, and logos [λογος]-true knowledge, Freire says "Knowledge begins with the awareness of knowing little...and knowing that they know little, people are prepared to know more" (1976b:117). Earlier, he had argued for "an education that would lead people to take a new stance [? like the spectator] to their problems, one oriented towards research [? θεωρια]. An education of "I wonder" instead of merely "I do"." (ibid:36).

Problem centred or problem-posing education, central to the Freirean methodology, is pure Aristotle. In the

Nichomachean Ethics. Aristotle categorises his whole philosophy as ἡ περὶ τὰ ἀνθρώπινα φιλοσοφία - a philosophy concerned with the problems of humankind (Ethics: 10.9. 1181).

"Merely doing", (Freire's activism. 1982:60), the phrase used to contrast with "admiring" is also Aristotelian. He frequently contrasts doing [ποίησις] with action [πράξις]. Essentially, doing only fulfils itself, is an end unto itself, acting upon objects: once it has stopped, it has no value. Praxis, on the other hand, is realised through the effect it has on others: it may not even exist without others -it is fundamentally exoteric, other-seeking, dialogic [ἐξωτερικὴ τρέχουσα]. It is that "productive quality exercised in combination with true reason -logos" (Ethics, 6.4. 1140).

In the light of Freire's argument about oppression, banking education and the people who have been marginalised, Aristotle is heard to say that "life is praxis not doing [ποίησις]". Mere doing is the function of a slave (Politics, 7.2. 1325 and 1.2. 1254).

What distinguishes human beings from slaves (the oppressed) and animals, is that human beings can create, can act for a purpose (ἕνεκα τινος). This is because humankind has a logos that has its own intentionality - διάνοια μετὰ ὀρέξεως - , calculation with deliberation (Ethics, 6.1. 1139). This intentionality,

which is the essence of consciousness (Freire, 1982:52) is
how Freire explains that knowing is the task of Subjects,
viz. those who are free, not slaves, not oppressed
(1976b:99).   He quotes the person from São Paulo who said
"I want to learn to read and to write so I can change the
world", adding his own observation that that person was
someone "for whom to know quite correctly means to
intervene in his reality" (ibid:50).

This purposeful action in the world, praxis ($\tau-\lambda \; \iota_\iota$)
cannot exist without theory ($\theta \dot{\epsilon}.\jmath \dot{\epsilon}_\iota$), because it is only
together that they constitute knowledge.   Theory and
practice, therefore, are not polarities but rather are two
dimensions of human existence that can be distinguished but
not separated.[69]

Freire (1982:Ch.2) speaks powerfully of reflective
action and active reflection (19).   In this "classical"
dialectic, he explains the same concept of admiring, the
ability to gain distance from an object, to objectify the
"not-I".   For him it is a "dialectic operation which
characterises human beings, differentiating them from

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69.   That this is valid interpretation of the "classical
      tradition" is further evidenced in Adam Smith's organic
      or symbiotic articulating of theory-practice, thought-
      action, in his teaching of English at Edinburgh, 1748-
      1751.   Albeit that his pedagogy sharply reflected his
      approach to laissez-faire economics, he regarded
      education as "neither a luxury nor a charity, but a
      necessary organic process of development without which
      humanity could not advance in its pursuit of the
      perfection of Nature and the improvement of the social
      order." (Court, 1985).

animals" (1970h: 215).   For Aristotle, it is the essential
requirement of knowledge, and a product of that role taken
by the spectator [θεωρός], which creates an "engagement
with reality" (Ethics Book 6).   Freire agrees but nuances
or reinterprets the idea by translating it as "a commitment
to", or "conversion to" reality (1982:Chapter 1).

Later Freire (1970h:218) presents a condensed summary
of the Ethics. Book 6, perhaps echoing the use of this
passage in a lecture:

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

What Freire (1982:71) calls the "dialectic operation
which most characterises human beings, differentiating them
from animals" is almost a direct translation of Aristotle's
λέγος δε μόνον άνθρωπος έχει τῶν ζώων ..-human beings alone
of the animals have logos (Politics, 1.1, 1253).   What is
meant here by logos, however, was not primarily our
rationality or our cognitive abilities.   Logos, above all,
means the ability to express oneself in speech: it is to
speak, to name one's world. To have logos, and the rights
to speak the word/the world that go with that, is to be
truly human.

For Aristotle, to be human is to be a political

being, REALTING (SOC) . It is against this background
that we must hear Freire insisting that dialogue (the
creating and using of authentic _logos_) is a human
(political) encounter, mediated by the world, in order to
name the world (1982:61).

Dialogue is, therefore, an existential necessity,
providing the means for achieving critical awareness.
That is why the process of conscientisation is also a
process of humanisation: "as human beings, as beings of
praxis, to transform the world is to humanise it" (1970i:
455).

That is also why the literacy process has "to relate
speaking the word to transforming reality, and to each
person's role in this transformation. At its most basic,
"learning to read and write ought to be an opportunity for
us to discover what **speaking the word** really means: a
human act implying reflection and action." (1970h:213).

Finally, Freire insists that the process of
conscientisation is never complete.   For him, the
uncovering of social reality and the discovery of the
person in that reality "is not something to be grasped as
something _which is_, but as something which is _becoming, in
the making_" (1975e:14).

This takes us to the essence of the challenge of
Aristotle. In talking of the freedom of the individual and

of what it means to be rationally human, he describes humankind as [illegible] , "capable of being other", having a capacity to see and make things, including themselves, other than what they are now (Metaphysics, Book Theta, 5.).

Aristotle recognises "potency limiting" factors of experience: "the question of what it is to be human is one thing; actually being human is another" (Analyt. Posterior 2.6, 9261). On the one hand, this is a way of recognising that we can only be human in this world. On the other hand, it is a way of emphasising that we need to look at the concrete history of being human, i.e. we must consider ourselves as historical beings in what Freire would call our "limit situations" (1982:71)

Pedagogy of the Oppressed could almost be retitled "a pedagogy in limit situations". Stated in that way, it is, in the full sense of the word, fundamentally Aristotelian.

As far as Freire's literacy programme is concerned, two final points are worth noting. Firstly, Aristotle also considered that words themselves might be a guide to help us understand the nature of things. In the Metaphysics, Book Delta, he collected instances of usages of common, key words, effectively compiling a lexicon of generative words.

Secondly, he was aware of the pedagogic potential of

alphabetising the language: in talking of causality and
the four most evident types of causes, he refers to matter,
fire and earth, the parts of the whole and the elements in
the case of syllables: - τὰ μεν γαρ πτωματα ιι.ι -ηι.ι.ι.
(Metaphysics, Book Delta, 12.19).

That reality can be dissected in a way wholly
comparable with the dissecting of a word into syllables is
an insight that lies at the root of Freirean pedagogy. It
is almost as if Freire read into, or read out of,
Aristotle's alchemy of learning his own psycho-pedagogy.
Thus he is able to assert, with Aristotle, that to think
correctly, to have logos, is to be able to construct and
reconstruct one's world.

3.4.2 Hegel

History has both an epistemological and metaphysical
perspective. It concerns itself both with that body of
knowledge of past human actions (the nature and possibility
of historical truth) and with that part of the theory of
reality which is concerned with meaning and the purpose of
history as it was and is being made.

In presenting his sequence of lectures, Freire found
the framework of the dialectic analysis of History which so
marked Education: the Practice of Freedom and Pedagogy of
the Oppressed in the lectures on the Philosophy of History
which Hegel delivered in 1822-23.

For Hegel, History was not to be ascertained simply
as so much fact, but as the reasons why the facts happened
as they did.   It is primarily the unfolding of the story
of the development of freedom, the twin magnetic poles of
which, attracting and repelling, were the development of
the idea of the State and the role of the Individual within
the State.   With that gravitational pull, History does not
seek to parade the past, any more than it can try to
predict the future: it aims instead to present the Now of
this moment.[70]

In this Now, this present moment, as Freire says
(1976b:3), "through reaching back to Yesterday, coming upon
Tomorrow through recognising Today", human freedom for any
individual is the same as their consciousness of their
freedom.   One cannot be free unless one is conscious of
being free.   To study the development of freedom is,
therefore, to study the development of consciousness.

This is a restatement of the Aristotelian logos, but
Hegel insists that what is important in human activity is
not the actions of people seen simply as events, but the

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70. Freire would find this web of ideas congenial. Hegel
had taken the focus on the present moment from Schiller
(as he took the idea of the world realising itself in
self-consciousness from Schelling, and the stages of
consciousness from Fichte) and from that tap-root of
history-which-explains-contemporaneity proposed in
Vico's Scienza Nuova.

It was from the same root (Vico's "Verum et factum
convertentur") that Marx developed the theme which was
so important to Freire, namely, that human beings make
their own history.

thought or consciousness of which the actions are outward
expressions.   It is logos, critical awareness, which is
the mainspring of History.   "The whole process of reality
is a teleological movement towards the actualisation of
self-thinking logos" (Copleston, 1965:208).[71]

For Hegel (1892:103), the thought processes which
underpin this actualisation or conscientisation are
logical.   Because they evolve dialectically, History
itself is inherently dialectical;   thesis provokes
antithesis, and the ensuing conflict or contradiction
between them is resolved in synthesis, leading to a new
thesis.

This gave Freire a disciplined mode of thinking which
protected him to some limited degree from the otherwise
circular Manicheism to which he was prone.   "People,
because they are aware of themselves and thus of the world
- because they are conscious beings- exist in a dialectical
relationship between the determination of limits and their
own freedom" (Freire, 1982:71).

In other words, people become aware of their freedom

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71. Hegel in summarising his view of History in the preface
to his Philosophy of Right as: "What is rational is
real and what is real is rational" exposes the Freirean
dilemma.   If what is rational is logos (correct
thinking or reason), then logos, correct thinking is
the means of making rational, (that is, humanising).
For Freire, this means that only what accords with
critical awareness can be accepted as authentically
human.   What is dehumanising and what is the product
of naive consciousness cannot be tolerated.

through the stages of consciousness by which they recognise "their not being free" (the limit situations), but they also recognise that these are not "given", they are not immutable. Accordingly they are able to intervene in those selfsame limit situations and create the possibility of them being otherwise:

> "Neither does the discovery by the oppressed that they exist in dialectical relationship as antithesis to the oppressor who could not exist without them (See Hegel's Phenomenology of Mind) in itself constitute liberation. The oppressed can overcome the contradiction in which they are caught only when this perception enlists them in the struggle to free themselves" (Freire, 1982:26).

The key influence here is Hegel's Phenomenology,[72] where he describes three phases or stages of consciousness. There is an historical or historicised progression from consciousness of the "object" (Bewußtsein) to that of consciousness of the "self" (Selbstbewußtsein) and finally to that of consciousness of reason (Vernunft) which is the actualisation of logos.

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72. In Pedagogy of the Oppressed, Freire quotes in English, even in the Portuguese text, from an English version of Hegel: The Phenomenology of Mind, Harper and Row, 1967. There is no reference to The Phenomenology in any of Freire's work prior to the Pedagogy which he wrote between December, 1967 and October, 1968.

The strong inference is that Freire read Hegel's Phenomenology via Kosik who makes the interesting link between Rousseau, Hegel and Marx and notes that "Si la *Phénoménologie de l'esprit* est le voyage d'une conscience naturelle qui accède à la science authentique (= Freire's "correct thinking")...afin qu' ayant une pleine conscience d'elle-même, elle puisse atteindre à la connaissance de ce qu'elle est en soi" (Kosik, 1988:118).

This final stage, which Hegel identifies as the synthesis of objectivity and subjectivity, surpasses the stoic or unhappy consciousness (das unglücklicke Bewußtsein) or what Freire (1976b:18) calls the passive, intransitive consciousness. Interestingly, the image given in explanation by Hegel is that of the master and slave, an image used extensively by Freire.[73]

For Hegel, while the consciousness of self demands the recognition of the self-hood of others, the master of the slave "by not recognising the slave as a real person, deprives himself of that recognition of his own freedom which he originally demanded" (Hegel, 1931: Part3; Freire, 1982:25). It is in this sense that Freire came to see the relationship of master/slave, oppressor/oppressed, and even teacher/learner, as <u>dehumanising</u>, because it is a denial of selfhood.

Humanisation, or the process of conscientisation, towards critical awareness can then be restated as a Hegelian progression which parallels or explains the Freirean transition from passive consciousness to critical consciousness and thence to liberation: "Reason/critical

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73. This is Freire's underlying model of the relationship between oppressor and oppressed (1982:16, 26, 46). Confirmation of Freire's possible encounter with Hegel's <u>Phenomenology</u> in 1967 is that <u>Education: The Practice of Freedom</u>, which was written early in 1967, also contains the important image of master-slave. Here, however, the theme is taken from Gilberto Freyre's detailed, historical study (1963) <u>The Mansion and the Shanties</u> (see Freire, 1976b:25) and not from Hegel's intellectualising.

awareness is brought about by the move from unreflective
life, in which human beings simply follow customs and
traditions of their community, to the form of culture in
which individuals are estranged from the unreflective
background and pass judgment on it.....It takes a form of a
community of free persons embodying the general will as a
living unity" (Copleston, 1965:226).

3.5   Conclusion

The disciplines which make possible a History of
Ideas are primarily those of the Archaeologist and the
Genealogist.   However, the fertile terrain of such
Begriffsgeschichte is not, in the first instance, verbal or
conceptual, but rather textual.   As illustrated in the
above arguments, the first decoding of Freire requires a
Redaktionsgeschichte, a critical analysis of how he has
used and fashioned a whole library of texts into his own
writings and lectures.

This does not diminish Freire nor deny the
originality of the fusion of ideas which are particularly
his.   However, it does expose those complex
stratifications of philosophy and pedagogy which lie
beneath the surface of his work.   This enlarged textuality
provides the reader with a lens that is both convex and
concave.   The latter brings into focus Freire's
specifically South American profile, educated and educating
as he was in a provincial University in North-east Brazil.

The former provides a much wider perspective which situates Freire firmly within the mainstream of European intellectualism, denying, by such a pedigree, that the pedagogy which he engendered is in any way novel, quaint or transient.

It is with this twin focus that we can now consider Freire's philosophy and practice.

PART 2: THE QUESTIONING OF THE STATEMENT

CHAPTER 4. EDUCATION AND LIBERATION: THE MEANS AND ENDS OF DIALOGUE AND CONSCIENTISATION

CHAPTER 5. GENERATING LITERACY DECODING FREIRE'S TEN LEARNING SITUATIONS

4.1   The Path into the Maze

Intellectual explorations do well to start with a map
on which they might find fixed compass points of
definitions and identifiable references as landmarks.
With Freire, this is simply not possible.   He has a
tendency to talk about and to describe, rather than to
analyse and to define.   He prefers to explore around,
rather than go straight to the point.

Freire's technique is more to present the obvious by
revealing the opposite, even at the risk of proposing
definitions or assertions that are essentially circular.
He rejoices in polarising: oppressed-oppressor, theory-
practice, dialogic-banking, teacher-taught, authenticity-
alienation; the list is considerable.   Yet what may be an
heuristic device of value often becomes a strategy to
deceive, for it is not always clear whether Freire poses
these dichotomies as hypotheses or as descriptors of
reality.

It is therefore essential that he be allowed to speak
for himself, to explain the complex components and
structures of his system.   This is not to remove the
contradictions from his work, to render it spuriously
coherent.   On the contrary, it is to clarify the nature of
such contradiction which is inherent in the very subject of

literacy, given that pedagogy, power and knowledge are themselves fundamentally contradictory.

Contradiction, however, does not justify confusion, and it is that, at least to the degree that it is avoidable, which we may want to eradicate from Freire's work. For example, the catholicity of Freire's culture encourages him to make the Anselmian leap from _ideal_ to _real_: that what is deemed to be the best, is taken to be the truth. So he has no difficulty in arguing that, _inter alia_, because ideally Education is a means of humanisation and liberation, such humanisation and freedom are the actual outcomes of dialogic education.

This global logic does not facilitate the analysis of the macro systems of class, dominance and oppression, nor the micro systems of individuals learning, working, living through their daily lives. By constantly changing or explaining one pole by the other, Freire blurs the discussion at the point were the clarity at the extremes does not match people's lived experience at the "in-between". So he has difficulty in assessing the role of the dialogic teacher who has to work in the formal, Banking Education system, or the social schizophrenia of the middle class "oppressors" who equally feel themselves to be oppressed by the situation in which they find themselves.

These are the key problems which this chapter will explore before identifying the essential contradiction

which lies at the heart of Freirean pedagogy: that the
discourse within which the pedagogy is expressed is
dislocated from the realities of its practice.
Ultimately, the force of such contradiction is that Freire
can legitimately only lay claim to a pedagogy which is
different in degree, but not in kind, from the repressive
and oppressive system which he repudiates.

4.2   Towards an Interpretative Methodology

"Reflection", says Freire (1973b:6), "is only
legitimate when it sends us back to the concrete context
where it seeks to clarify the facts."   That is why he was
so committed to the deconstructive methodology Codification
and Decodification which are the strategies by which he
seeks to conscientise and to achieve that praxis which is
based on naming, reflecting and acting.

It is, therefore, wholly appropriate to attempt to
place Freire in his own intellectual, political and social
context, allowing him to speak for himself, to "name his
own world."   This demands, on the part of the reader/
investigator, an ability to go beyond philosophical
voyeurism in search of a holistic archaeology to discover
the personality and pedagogy of Freire, with all his
complexities and contradictions.

In that sense, this study which is a creative
deconstruction of Freirean literacy is self-consciously

immersed in his methods.   In seeking to dissect the
trinitarian axis of power - literacy - knowledge in order
to reconstruct the singular nature of his praxis, we are
creating more than that Begriffsgeschichte which is a
linear, genealogical tracing of ideas or incidents that can
be used to make respectable a personal or intellectual
biography.

        Conventionally, a "history of ideas" tries to
understand (verstehen) its Subject/subject by identifying
with the person and their way of thinking, to come inside
that person and so explain their view of the world.[74]
However, this essentially emic perspective provides only a
lens that either magnifies or reduces the subject.   This
distortion, as Brookfield (1984:6) indicates, arises
because the study of learning and pedagogy does not yield
easily, if at all, to the discipline or methodology of

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74. A useful explanation of verstehen as an epistemological
     problem at the heart of sociological enquiry is
     contained in Hitzler and Keller, 1989.

     Rabinowitz (1977) has explored differences in critical
     ideologies through an examination not of the authored
     text (which seeks to identify the author's intentions)
     but of the audiences implicit or explicit in the text.
     He distinguishes four such audiences: the actual, the
     hypothetical, the narrative, and the ideal narrative.

     His main point is that one can enter the mind of the
     author by exposing the audience for whom that author
     was writing.   It is a provocative study underpinned by
     a verstehen ideology of historical criticism, viz. that
     one can understand history through entering the
     thought-world of its actors.

     The tension between this traditional approach to
     historical criticism and a more phenomenological style
     is explored well in Whiteside's clarification of
     Merleau-Ponty's debate with Raymond Aron, (1986).

scientific research. One cannot evaluate an educational theory by "defining the problem, formulating a hypothesis, testing that hypothesis and then reaching some conclusion, notwithstanding the objectivity and detachment on the part of the investigator, and the clarity and precision of his or her arguments."

What is therefore needed as a methodology is the prism of an _etic_ analysis which will ensure a more objective view of the subject by exposing its component parts but without destroying its integrality.[75]

This fundamentally holistic rather than diagnostically segmentalist approach again has the advantage of distinguishing, rather than separating, the

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75. The _emics_ and _etics_ analysis does not create two standpoints which are dichotomic, but rather two elements which compose a stereographic picture. Nonetheless, this study has emphasised the construction of an _etic_ perspective. _Inter alia_, this enables me to engage in a cross-cultural analysis, given that I am not of the same age, culture or language background as Freire.

An _etic_ analysis allows me to view Freire from the outside, thus finding his relevance to me and to education in a non-Third World, non-South American environment. Thirdly, it helps me to deal with contradiction and inconsistency, whereas an _emic_ view would seek the functional integrality of all the elements, biographic, intellectual and historical.

Finally, an _etic_ formulation provides a legitimate entrée into the hyper-complexity of Freire's thinking and practice. It does so because it can accept that this is not an exhaustive study of the total Freire but rather a partial (in both senses), empathetic but critical re-writing of an extra-ordinary pedagogy.

For the definition and application of the _emic/etic_ distinction, see: Headland (1990) and Hymes (1964).

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elements of Freire's life, his philosophy and his pedagogy within the context in which he was working. Archaeologically, we can go back through the strata of biographical events (bio-texts) and pick through the layers of meaning in his writing (grapho-texts).

This historical, cultural and linguistic enquiry through translation or transiting is not without problems[76], among which not least is the question of the validity of the actual process of translation.

On the one hand, there is the implicit hypothesis that a direct translation from one language to another conveys the totality of meaning and nuance of the original. We assume that we can have a clear understanding even of such apparently simple Freirean words as "oppression", "teach" or "learn". Yet language is socially constructed. Although other languages may have equivalent words (e.g. teacher, illiterate, oppressor), the words themselves do not necessarily carry the social connotation or usage which they have or had in Brazil. This does not, however, create the impasse of cultural specificity that argues

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76. As with so many of the ideas and concepts provoked by Freire, the notion of translation bears the ambiguity or bipolarity of a pharmakon: while it is both a physical movement from one place to another and an intellectual relocation in another language, it is also a traduction. i.e. a distortion, detraction and defamation of the person or the thought. The etymological exchange between the root words of tradere and traducere also fuel the dialectic between, for example, tradition: what is handed down, and treason: what is delivered up, betrayed.

that, because one cannot find an immediate or direct
translation of a particular word or phrase, there can be no
possible correspondence of ideas between or across the two
languages or cultures.   What it does create is the need to
view both cultures/languages holistically.[77]

This more than academic question exposes one key
theme of Freire - our ability to find the right word, to
"name our world", to find the word that can be spoken.   The
core limit situation of what can be expressed between two
people or between two cultures is verbal, not ideological
or epistemological.   Freire's literacy method, which is a
speaking of the word with meaning, leads us to create a
grammatocentric ecology which includes bio-text, context
and grapho-text, and which is sensitive, culturally,
politically, epistemologically and linguistically to the
dangers of theoretical imposition and academic invasion.

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77. Hoskin (1985) analyses this naive approach of the
     translator who seeks a word-for-word accuracy even when
     the complexity of such a process renders such a goal
     unachievable.   I draw from his analysis an important
     caution that the principle of _verbum de verbo_, which
     arose within the new, alphabetic copying cultures and
     which has been modified by extending the field of
     comprehension (sensum de sensu), is not primarily a
     principle of semiotics.   It is based rather on an
     imagined point of perspective, a meta-semiotic which
     transposes words (of which the ASCII codes that reduce
     many computer languages to a mathematical and
     interchangeable norm are a good example), but which
     conceals the fact that translation is also necessarily
     a process of interpretation.

4.3   Dialogue and Conscientisation

The very usage of the words Dialogue and
Conscientisation immediately challenges this objective, for
it is as easy to assume that we have experienced the
realities of Dialogue as it is bequeath to Conscientisation
a gnostic importance.

The two ideas are so closely associated with Freire,
and with the Pedagogy of the Oppressed, that they explain
both his frequent marginalisation and his cultic status.
The development of this association, however, is difficult
to date-mark.   Freire (1979:11) claims not to have used
the word Conscientisation since the early 1970's: "I
stopped using this word because the word was so corrupted
in Latin America and in the States.. It does not mean that
I reject the process which the word means."   Nonetheless,
he has never yielded to the pressure (1985a:185) to find an
appropriate English translation that represents his first
understanding of Conscientizacão.[78]

Freire claims that his use of the word has been
consistent.   Conscientisation is a process of developing
consciousness, but consciousness that is understood to have

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78.   Freire has never claimed to be the author of the idea.
It is now clear that the word conscientização emerged
from a discussion group within the Higher Institute of
Brazilian Studies.   It was popularised particularly by
Dom Helder Camara, the Bishop of Recifé, at a time in
the mid-sixties when the Catholic Church was
increasingly involved in the Moviemento de Educação de
Base (M.E.B.), successfully using radio learning and
the national media, for its literacy campaign.

the power to transform reality.   He denies (1979:3) that

> "objectivity is _created_ by consciousness, as if,
> somehow, we could transform reality through speech
> alone, through convictions.   I cannot transform the
> world inside my consciousness".

Merely thinking that one is free, or even asserting that
one is free, does not achieve "freedom".   Freire
frequently had to combat that allegation, and he was
adamant that he had never said that speech, literacy or
education could bring about social transformation.

However, he does claim the obverse, viz. that radical
social transformation, revolution in itself, is an
educational process.

> "it is naive to continue to insist that by education
> we can transform reality." (1975d:3)

> "Education rather _reproduces_ the dynamism which
> characterises the historical-social process.   It is
> an acting of knowing and a _means_ of action for
> transforming the reality which is to be known."
> (1972b:180-181).

The question remains: How does Freire break into this
cycle of causality?   On the one hand, he is asserting that
education is a means of transforming reality, by which he
means "the social reality".   On the other hand, he also
insists that the education system, or at least "radical
change in the educational system" is contingent upon the
radical transformation of society.   This begs the question
of how that radical, societal change is created,
particularly as he seeks to prevent us from considering the
educational option: "I have insisted on the impossibility
of considering the educational system as an instrument of

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social transformation." (1976a:79)

How then are we to consider the educational system:
is it not therefore an instrument of social control?
Freire will certainly want to argue that it is, that
"banking education" lies at the heart of oppression, yet it
seems that he fails to undertake any serious analysis of
the questions which underpin the debate about power and
knowledge, teaching and learning, schooling and society.
It may almost be that we have to confront the possibility
that "liberating education" i.e. that Dialogue which leads
to/results in Conscientisation is a contradiction in
terms[79].   To do that, we shall need to examine carefully
Freire's intentions and his claims for Dialogue and
Conscientisation.

Freire's initial goal, as stated in Education: the
Practice of Freedom (1976b:43) was "a literacy programme
which could be an introduction to the democratisation of
culture".   It is in this light that the dialogic theme of
Pedagogy of the Oppressed should be interpreted -viz. that
the naming and transforming of the world which is the

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79. This latent contradiction is exploited in Berger (1975)
     in his critique of Conscientisation as "consciousness
     raising".   This is a "project of higher class
     individuals directed at a lower class population who
     are in need of enlightenment.   Put differently, the
     concept allocates different levels to "them" and to
     "us", and it assigns to "us" the task of raising "them"
     to the higher level." (p.34)   For Berger, "a better
     term would be conversion, and anyone claiming to raise
     the consciousness of other people should be seen as a
     missionary." (p.35)

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democratisation of culture is a possibility because Dialogue is both a "human phenomenon" and "the encounter in which the united reflection and action of the dialoguers are addressed to the world which is to be transformed and humanised." (1982:61).

The need for a dialogic form of education arises directly from the unequivocal statement that "Education is not Neutral".

> "Education cannot be neutral because it is always an action either for the domestication of people or for their liberation." (1985a:99)

This dichotomy - the distinction between education as an instrument of domination and education as an instrument of liberation - is the very starting point of the how of conscientização, that process in which "we take the role of agents, makers and remakers of our world" in "a permanent, critical approach to reality in order to discover it and discover the myths that deceive us and help us maintain the oppressing, dehumanising structures." (1971a:24)

The next questions leap off the page: what are those myths, what are those dehumanising structures? There we are thrown onto the horns of a dilemma that recurs throughout any analysis of Freire. Do we work with him, within the terms by which he has defined the debate, or do we reject his way of articulating the debate and so refute his argument with a polite nego et consequens ?

The problem lies not just in the rhetoric but in the deep Manicheism which underpins Freire's thought. Constantly we are forced back onto the schism of reality, into a world which comprises teachers and the taught, the oppressed and the oppressors, the light and the dark, the necrophilic and the biophilic, the subjects and the objects, the liberators and the liberated.

This polarising is a useful heuristic device that can induce clarity. The problem arises where the device is allowed to create the reality, where this world of bi-polarity becomes the only known reality. It induces an overall simplicity that actually impedes the way in which we give meaning to experience.[88]

Freire relies heavily on this device, but the clarity of his argument allows us to see accurately only at the poles of the inter-arching continua which he has constructed: it allows little light into the central canopy of everyday life where most people live.

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88. The bi-polar presentation of reality is also a key device in Kelly's <u>construct theory</u>. So Bannister and Fransella (1977:172-173): "A person's construction system is composed of a finite number of dichotomous constructs." "Each construct discriminates between two poles, one at each end of its dichotomy".

Kelly's bi-polarity is essentially verbal rather than ontological, even though he uses that verbal construction to describe reality. He inhabits a world of hypothetical opposites. (See: Kelly, 1955; Bannister and Mair, 1968).

For Freire, these opposites are given existence through his Catholic Manicheism which imposes, effectively, an ontological imperative.

Is it possible that Freire has rationalised a world
of false dichotomies ?   Is it the case that Education, to
take but one of the constructs, is not simply either about
liberation or about domination but rather about both? [81]

For Freire, "every educational practice involves a
concept of the world and of what it is to be human", and he
starkly contrasts two forms of such practice: Banking or
Digestive Education and Dialogic or Liberating Education.
(1982:Chapt 4 and 2).

Freire's description of the former is well known and
highlights the emphasis on transferring knowledge, on the
passivity of the learner, on the distance of the teacher
from the learner, on the selective rather than the global
perception of reality and on the alienation created
personally and culturally for the learner who is regarded
as a "deposit" or " object".

The temptation is that, in order to combat banking
education, we simply accept Freire's Manicheism and try to
identify the elements which counter balance that form of

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81. Berthoff, in her introduction to Reading the Word and
    the World. (p.xix) actually avoids this question by
    positing a triadic rather than a dual construction in
    Freire's thought. For example, she suggests that he
    juxtaposes the traditional, liberal and prophetic
    church, or a consciousness that is naive, astute or
    critical. While this cannot be denied in the text, I
    would argue that Freire is only concerned with the
    transiting from one extreme/pole to the other and that
    his "middle terms" serve primarily as rhetorical
    pointers to the preferred direction.

education. In doing so, we arrive logically at the concept of "education for freedom", but without questioning whether, ontologically, this new, proposed pole can actually exist.

However, for Freire this is more than a step of logic. He claims that the ingredients of a counter-education can be identified, if posited on an act of knowing which is fused from two inter-related experiences. First, there is the creation of an authentic Dialogue between the learners and the educators as equally knowing subjects, and secondly, there is the awareness of the real, concrete context of facts, i.e. of the social reality in which we are living (1976j:214).

This again begs the question: whose reality constitutes the real, concrete context of our experience? Freire does not explain his own understanding of epistemology or ontology, yet those perspectives are fundamental to his argument. In an interesting lapse in _The People Speak Their Word_, he rhetorically asks: "What do we mean by challenging you to think correctly?", but he answers his own question by explaining only the word _challenge_. The definition of _correctly_ is stated but is not for question: "To think correctly means to try to discover and understand what is found to be hidden away in things and in facts that we observe and analyse.." (1987b:87) This act of knowing then becomes "a truly gnosiological situation" which enables the learner to

"truly enter into the problem" and thus to "make his or her own History." (1976b:145ff).[82]

But what does this mean in practice? In what way can a teacher and learner engage in a discourse or in a relationship which is not oppressive ?

The directness of this question makes it all the more significant that it is here that Freire is at his most mystical and abstruse. Authentic Dialogue, he says, requires the resolution of the teacher/learner dichotomy. In part this will come about as the learners achieve their own consciousness, but primarily it will be brought about by the "Easter Experience" or "Class Suicide" on the part of the teacher.

> "..the educator for liberation has to <u>die</u> as the unilateral educator of the educatees, in order to be born again as the educator/educatees of the educatees/educators.
>
> A educator is a person who has to live in the deep significance of Easter." (1976L:9)

This experience, Freire argues, brings about a different kind of learning, or at least the potential for a different

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82. Freire draws little distinction between epistemology and ontology. For him, the Cartesian <u>cogito ergo sum</u> becomes <u>cognosco ergo sum</u>, and he aligns himself with a classical Piagetian psychology which views cognitive development as personal development. (Freire, 1979, is entitled: <u>To Know and To Be</u>.) In this way, he focuses his view of reality through the lens of education. He can ascribe to the "education system" which constructs social reality an "epistemological cycle" which comprises gnosiological, logical and historical knowledge. He often speaks as if the system and the cycle were mutually interchangeable. Compare Freire 1976b and 1990.

kind of learning, because it can become "an act of knowing
and a means of action for transforming the reality which is
to be known."(1972b:180) The essential factor of this
form of learning is that it is problem posing, not
concerned with simplistic questions to be found only within
the given. It is about the "problematising of human
beings and the world, not the problematisation of human
beings isolated from the world, nor the world isolated
from human beings." (1976b:152)

Freire thus makes the relationship of an individual
with the world the pivotal link in the process of
Conscientisation, but misses the other cardinal point which
is the articulating (in both senses of the word) of the act
of knowing and the means of action for transforming the
reality of what is known.

4.4 **Praxis**

The result is that, for Freire, it is the locating or
annunciating of knowledge-education within history, rather
than the articulation or denunciation of knowledge-power,
which creates the possibility of praxis. Perhaps
"historical praxis" is itself a tautology, yet it is not
immediately evident how Freire wishes the idea to be
understood.

At one level, Freire might deny any underlying
tension between the Christian and Marxist elements which

converge in his use of the word "praxis", and in that he
may well be both a product of, and a mirror of, the
ambivalent response of the Catholic Church in Latin America
to Marxism.[83]

Marxism received a grudging baptism of ecclesial
approval: Freire (Mackie, 1980;126) was able to say "God
led me to the people and the people led me to Marx", but as
a confirmation of his orthodoxy he later asserts "when I
met Marx, I continued to meet Christ on the corners of the
street -by meeting the people." This then allowed Freire
to resort to the political and economic descriptors of
Marxism to describe the need for Dialogue, liberating
education and a counter-oppressive society. It gave him
the advantage of a linguistic and phenomenological currency
that had a known value and immediacy for many people of the
"oppressed   world".

Freire, however, was never converted to Marxist,
revolutionary politics. When he makes his appeal for the
creation of those conditions which will combat oppression,

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83. The Church's failure to distinguish Marxism from
Atheistic Communism has vitiated this debate which was
only gradually opened up by South American theologians
and intellectuals who needed, more and more, an
alternative paradigm with which to analyse society, to
reconstruct a valid, historical and sociological
perspective, and to explore new political options.
Chopp (1986:16) offers a useful resumé which does not
diminish the felt risk and threat to the Church in
those first steps into the Christian-Marxist dialogue:
"Marxism is as much a general attitude emphasising the
historical and transformative nature of all actions and
reflection as it is a specific political structure or
set of philosophical assumptions."

his core argument is couched not in the language of Marxism
but in the biblical terms of love, faith, hope and humility
(1982:62). As with his idealising of revolutionary
leadership, or his view that Conscientisation is primarily
a process of "humanisation" and that Dialogue itself is the
fulfilment of one's "ontological vocation", the language of
the Christian faith is more than the mere clothes for
dressing and presentation: they are actually the skeleton
or underpinnings of his philosophy and social analysis.

At this stage, we have to note that the accommodation
of Marxism and Catholicism does not create a marriage of
ideas out of which praxis is born.   On the contrary,
Freire's redefinition of the term creates a further tension
or polarity for it is based on an assumed, non-marxist,
dichotomy between theory and practice, reflection and
action.

Freire is clear in stating that praxis can be defined
as the action and reflection of people upon their world in
order to transform it.   He pillories those who are merely
busy - activists who are bent on expending their energies
for the cause, unthinking followers, doers.   Yet the
theorists, those who hide in the ivoried towers of policy-
making, educational administration or political rhetoric do
not escape.   What is actually required, according to
Freire, is active reflection and reflective action.   "The
role of reflection is to react to the action and to reveal
its objectives, its means and its efficacy" (1976b:110).

Reflection, in that sense is coterminous with "correct thinking":

> "Finally, true Dialogue cannot exist unless it involves critical thinking -thinking which discerns an indivisible solidarity between the world and people admitting of no dichotomy between them -thinking which perceived reality as process and transformation, rather than as a static entity -thinking which does not separate itself from action, but constantly immerses itself in temporality without fear of the risks involved." (1982:64)

As such, praxis may be easier to proclaim than to achieve. Clearly, it comprises three elements which have common valencies: "thought", "reality" and "perception". These adhere together to form that web of ideas spun by Freire around the deceptively simple concept of process. If reality is a process, Conscientisation is a process, humanisation is a process, Dialogue itself is a process, then we need to pause to question the nature of this process or these processes. What are they a process of?

With praxis providing the linkage between ontology and epistemology, one immediate answer is that they are all processes of the Practice of Education. We could even complete the circle and add to that the idea which Freire used as the title of one of his key, early books Education: The Practice of Freedom. It is almost as if the core ideas of process, praxis and practice might be mutually interchangeable. Within Freire's writing and lectures over the past twenty years, there has been this constant scoring of the three ideas to construct subtle variations on the theme.

How then is the <u>practice</u> of education or the <u>practice</u>
of freedom to be construed? What is it a practice of?

Carr (1987) raises this very point in an interesting
and pertinent analysis of the confusion that arises when
practice is defined or understood on a continuum opposed to
<u>theory</u>: (1987:164)

> "On this view, practice is everything that theory is
> not. Theory is concerned with universal, context-
> free generalisations; practice with particular,
> context-dependent instance. Theory deals with
> abstract ideas; practice with concrete realities.
> theorising is largely immune from the pressures of
> time; practice is responsive to the contingent
> demands of everyday life. Solutions to theoretical
> problems are found in knowing something; practical
> problems can only be solved by doing something."

This is a dichotomy which, on these terms, Carr and
Freire reject. One cannot simply dissect out the
principles of education from the practice of
teaching/learning. What is required is not the separation
of theory and practice but the ability to distinguish
between them.

> "This is the specific task of philosophical
> reflection. When this is done, what perhaps did not
> previously appear as the theory of action, is now
> revealed as such. If there is no dichotomy between
> theory and practice, reflection on our actions
> reveals the theory - without which the action or
> practice is not a true one." (1976b:110)

Essentially, Freire is wanting to assert the
distinction between theory and practice because, as in the
argument above, he wishes to contrast the nature of the
dialogic person who is Subject (who sees the theory behind
the reality) and the person who, without Dialogue, is

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oppressed as Object (who has only a naive consciousness of reality).

It is this further, all-embracing bipolarity, nonetheless, which serves to protect Freire from the critical debate which concerns the nature of this person. Whether I am conscientised or not, who is the me who is learner or teacher ? If I name my world, to use only one of the generative statements of his philosophy, who is the I ?

Following Carr's useful definition of an educational practice as "an ethical activity undertaken in pursuit of educationally worthwhile ends" (1987:166) we can look again at both the process of Dialogue and locate the I and the We of those who construct the Dialogue.

4.5   Dialogue and Transformation

Freire argues that the truly revolutionary project, enabled by the process of Dialogue and mediated by the outcomes of Conscientisation, creates a "process in which the people assume the role of subject in the precarious adventure of transforming and recreating the world" (1976i:486).   By "people", he means those who address themselves as "I" or "We", not in some nominative sense of the grammarian, but as Subjects.   The word has a flavour of independence, status, and integrity, reflecting the preferred value system by which he consistently asserts

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that Conscientisation, engendered by Dialogue, is the means
of transforming Objects into Subjects, the Oppressed into
the Liberated.[84]

The rhetoric is clear, but how it is to be realised
is not. The fact is that "transforming" and "recreating"
are primarily value judgments. How is transformation
achieved?

It is at this point that Freire remains mystical and
enigmatic. He would say that the purpose of problem-posing
education, that dialogic education which he also describes
as "revolutionary futurity", is to create a critical
awareness of the present, i.e. that reality were "I am" and
"We are" (1982:57). We have to re-educate ourselves to an
understanding that rejects the assumption "that we are
merely *in* the world, not *with* the world and with others:[85]

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84. An interesting grammatocentric and culturo-centric
comment, illustrative of the problems of translating
this debate across cultures and across languages. The
point is further made in Kristeva (1981:133)
"..qu'aujourd'hui encore le terme de sujet est absent
de la terminologie arabe."

It may be that the whole construction of the debate is
a product of post-Aristotelian literacy which defines a
singular nominative and accusative. Hindu cultures,
for example, prefer the social construct of personality
to a western prioritising of the individual Ego.

85. Although Freire knew Heidegger's Sein und Zeit, he does
not exploit the concept of in der welt sein which would
have clarified the social and temporal, and therefore
historical, construct of our existence. Instead,
Freire is still confined by his vision of that other-
worldliness offered by Christianity, and by the
believers compromise between being "in the world but
not of it."

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that we are spectators and not re-creators" (1982:47).   It
is this possession of a social consciousness, of being-in-
relationship, that identifies us as social and political
beings.

Freire describes the new consciousness which is
brought about by Dialogue in various ways, but most notably
he speaks of the "unmasking of reality" or as the
identifying of "limit situations".

> "Conscientisation...implies the critical insertion of
> the person into the demythologised reality. It is
> first of all the effort to enlighten people about the
> obstacles preventing them from a clear perception of
> reality." (1976i:36)

Demythologised reality presupposes a regard that is
biophilic. -a further bi-polarity which Freire took from
Fromm.   "Authentic thinking, thinking that is concerned
about reality, does not take place in ivory-towered
isolation, but only in communication" (1982:58)   Because
of the very processes through which it has evolved, new
learning, which is now also correct and authentic thinking,
does not leave the learner isolated:

> "The thinking subject cannot think alone.   There is
> no longer an I think but we think...   This co-
> participation of the subjects in the act of thinking
> is communication." (1976b:135)

The logic here is seductive, suggesting that five
premises accumulatively provide the infrastructure of a
pedagogy of the oppressed: namely,

a)   The individual deprived of Dialogue is oppressed.

b)   Dialogue is the Process and Practice of liberation.

c)   The individual engaged in Dialogue is liberated.

d)   Dialogue, by definition, requires more than one
      person.

e)   More than one person can be called a Society.

Given these premises, it must therefore be the case that

  the Process and Practice of Dialogue liberates Society.

     There is an interplay here of ideas and structures
some of which relate to the individual and some to the
society in which such individuals might find themselves.
It is, as it were, a deliberate fusing of micro and macro
perspectives.   The difficulty lies in trying to make sense
of what this fusion produces.

     At one level, Freire is construing society in an
almost scholastic sense, as something which is an entity
in itself, an ens a se.   Starting from the premise that

          "People, among the uncompleted beings, are the only
          ones which develop.   As historical, autobiographical
          beings for themselves, their transformation
          (development) occurs in their own existential time,
          never outside it",

Freire then creates the new hypothesis: "If we consider
society as a being...".   He then goes on to state:

          "It is obvious that only a society which is a "being
          for itself" can develop.   It is essential not to
          confuse modernisation with development.   In order to
          determine whether or not a society is developing, one
          must go beyond criteria based on indices of per
          capita income.   The basic, elementary criterion is
          whether or not the society is a "being for itself.""
          (1982:130)

     By now we can anticipate the dualism embedded in
Freire's thought.   By contrast to the developing society,

                                                    133

that being for itself, there is the metropolitan society which cannot develop because it is alienated. The political, economic and cultural decision-making power is located outside the society, in the invader society. By extension, it follows that the metropolitan society is an oppressed society: it is "massified", dehumanised and alienated (1976b:112).

So how is such a society, "being for itself" to be recognised? What are its economic structures, how is it administered, who within the society has power and responsibility? What is the relationship between the individual (that micro perspective which exposes questions of personal independence and liberty, self-development, and personal individuality) and the society itself (the macro perspectives which questions "the common good", the role of the state, those duties and responsibilities which make demands on the individual)? Nowhere does Freire confront these questions, a failing which considerably encourages his critics to question the relevance of his theorising.

All that we really know of Freire's utopian society is that it bears the hall-mark of Dialogue. In Cultural Action for Freedom, he refines further the content of Dialogue: it is about the processes of annunciation and denunciation.

> "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 alphabetisation and post-alphabetisation, which are in each case cultural action." (1970h:221)

It is thus tempting to see cultural action as social action, as one way of bridging the gap between the micro/personal and the macro/societal. What we do see, however, is that the process of Dialogue, manifested as the literacy/post-literacy process, is essentially an act of knowing:

> "Conscientisation 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 people's existential experience, but a dimension of their thought-language about the world." (1976h:222)

Freire is here using the means of Dialogue, the WORD, and the process of thought-language in a very specific way in order to "reflect critically on the process of reading and writing itself, and on the profound significance of language." (1976h:212)

> "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.
>
> Learning to read and write ought to be an opportunity for people to know what speaking the word really means: a human act implying reflection and action. As such it is a primordial right and not just the privilege of the 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 of participating in society's historical process."

The fact or the claim that learning to read and write ought to be an opportunity to speak the word clearly allows for the possibility that this is not necessarily the case. Indeed, Freire admits that for some "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" (ibid).

We are left with a caricature of what it may mean to
be both oppressed and literate. Like the illiterate, the
oppressed literate does not know that "human actions as
such are transforming, creative and re-creative". It is
not their actions which are different but the fact that
they do not know that their actions are different. There
is the exterior silence of oppression and the interior
silence imposed by the absence of critical perception.

The conclusion therefore is that there seems to be no
ontological imperative that necessarily correlates literacy
with transforming knowledge. At best, the wish can be
expressed that, through

> "calling forth the critical reflection of both the
> learners and educators, the literacy process must
> [may] relate speaking the word to transforming
> reality, and to each person's role in this
> transformation" (ibid).

What is significant is not the actual learning to read and
write but rather that relationship between the word,
reality and the ways in which the latter is transformed by
the former.

4.6 Critical Consciousness

This is the tension that underlies authentic
Dialogue: as the word is not static, neither is the
outcome of Conscientisation.

"It is important that the Conscientisation process,
the uncovering of social reality, be grasped not as
something which is, but as something which is
becoming, as something which is in the making.

"Conscientisation cannot stop at the stage of
revelation of reality. It is authentic when the
practice of revealing reality constitutes a dynamic
and dialogical unity which the practice of
transforming reality" (1975e:15).

What then is the causal connection between "revealing
reality" and actually "transforming that reality". What is
the content of "our ontological vocation" which Freire
recognises as Teilhard's "humanisation"? (1982:26)

Freire (1976m:4) does not help his cause by his
enigmatic explanation that this process of humanisation is
"the individual and instantaneous leap from instinct to
thought". However, elsewhere, he does identify a sequence
through which the individual consciousness could or must
develop. It is a process which he called the "archaeology
of consciousness", in contrast to the "archaeology of
irrationality" -the myth pursuing, falsification of
consciousness which is the hallmark of domesticating
education (1976n:16).

In outline, Freire sees the excavating or evolution of
critical consciousness as a move away from a state of
either naive consciousness or even magical consciousness.
The former, naive consciousness perceives causality as a
static, given fact, and is thus deceived in its view of the
changing world. The latter, magical consciousness,
apprehends change but attributes to it powers beyond human

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control, and is thus released from responsibility for it.

In rejecting both these perspectives of the world and of change as less than human, Freire argues that only "critical consciousness" perceives the true causality of the world and the human potential to direct and influence that change (1976b:44).

Later, in the Cultural Action for Freedom, Freire speaks of the stages of "intransitive awareness", "naive-transitive awareness" and, finally, of "critical-transitive awareness". In his view, these three stages correlate to those development stages experienced within a society which is closed, which then undergoes splitting and which then has to choose between becoming massified or actually achieving critical consciousness (1970i:457-467).

Again, we are faced with the tension or confusion of what happens to the individual and what happens to society. A closed society has, "as one of its structural components, the silence of the masses.... When this closed society then begins to crack, silence is no longer seen as an unalterable given"(1970i:462). What is not clear is whether this breaking of the silence, or splitting of the society, is the cause of Conscientisation and critical awareness, or whether it is the product of it. Freire is content to talk of the "awakening consciousness on the part of the masses", but he does not explain how this process is experienced by the individual. Unless some causative

connection or correlation can be found between the mind
changes which occur at the level of the individual and the
social changes which occur at the level of the masses, then
there must be the likelihood that the fundamental premises
of Freire's argument are flawed.

His rebuttal of this charge lies in his claim that
the connection is actually made through the process and
function of education, that is Dialogic Education, for he
is absolutely clear that the sine qua non of that process
is that education presupposes, by its very nature a
political intention (1980:1).

> "The pedagogy of the oppressed (is) a pedagogy which
> must be forged with, not for, the oppressed (be they
> individuals or whole peoples) in the incessant
> struggle to regain their humanity. This pedagogy
> makes oppression and its causes objects of reflection
> by the oppressed, and from that reflection will come
> liberation." (1982:25)

Yet even if this is the intention of the educator,
Freire is also clear that " a radical transformation of the
educational system is contingent upon the radical
transformation of society." (1976a:68)

It is important, therefore, to consider how society
itself contributes to Dialogue and Conscientisation and how
the inherent dualism re. the role of education is resolved.
If the role of oppressive, banking education is functional,
serving the interests of the elite, then Freire (1976a:70)
seems to be in a very weak position in insisting "on the
impossibility -which is evident to me - of considering the

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educational system as an instrument of social
transformation", but offering the consolation that "I do
not, however, deny the use of making serious efforts within
this system."

If there is a coherence to Freire's view at this
point, it would be found in the understanding that
education is not a system or element outwith society. On
the contrary, it is one of the primary elements without
which we cannot have an understanding of society.

Freire follows Jaspers in asserting that Dialogue
constitutes the essence of societal structure and societal
change:

> "Dialogue is the only way, not only in the vital
> questions of political order, but in all the
> expressions of our being. Only by virtue of faith,
> however, does Dialogue have power and meaning: by
> faith in humankind and in their possibilities, by
> faith that I can only become truly myself when other
> people also become themselves." (1976b:45)

So the core construct of Freirean Dialogue is revealed:
against the matrix that Dialogue is "loving, humble,
hopeful, trusting and critical", it expresses his
ontological view of humankind. More simply put, Freire is
arguing that, without Dialogue, one cannot be human. In a
very real sense, Dialogue precedes Monologue.

Dialogic Conscientisation, which we can now
understand in Tomas Atencio's phrase "awareness and
respondability" (Marrero, 1971), cannot be authentic unless
it elicits a creative and liberating response. Since his

experience in Africa, Freire has been consistent in saying
that this, ultimately, implies the "political organisation
of the oppressed to take and achieve power" (1975c:16).
This effort will be realised through "communication and
cooperation, unity and organisation that give witness to
the fact that the struggle is a common task, and cultural
action" (1982:135-148).

It is interesting that Freire has long since
preferred to talk of "cultural action" rather than of
"education". His first main text was Education: the
Practice of Freedom. but his Harvard papers were entitled
Cultural Action for Freedom. More recently, through
personal correspondence, he has indicated his own
preference that that should be properly understood as
"Cultural Action for Liberating".

What then is the relationship between cultural
action, dialogic education and liberation?

The choice of words here is important: education is
preferred to action, liberation to revolution, because
Freire has openly denied that his pedagogical methods had
as their goal or objective the bringing about of
revolution.[86]   However, he has always insisted that the

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86. This is an assertion which has evaded many of Freire's
    critics and followers alike.   Ewert (1981:32) is
    perhaps typical of many: "Unlike many of his
    colleagues, Freire has explicitly addressed the problem
    of exploitative social structures: his educative
    strategy amounts to a call for revolution".

processes which he advocated, especially that of Dialogue,
would be, in some sense, liberating.

This (dis)connection of literacy, literacy education
and development, and revolution is highly significant not
least because it exposes a development of Freire's thought.
In comparison with his early work, his later writing,
influenced particularly by his reading Fanon and then
Cabral, indicate a reinterpretation of his ideas of
Dialogue and Conscientisation from what might be seen as
his initial, "naive" position.

Frantz Fanon appears passim in the Pedagogy of the
Oppressed where his presence is acknowledged, although he
was far more instrumental in the formulating of the
argument in Cultural Action for Freedom where he is not
acknowledged. His shocking, violent book, Les Damnés de
la Terre Freire knew well, yet he never seems to have been
tempted to use either Fanon's illustrative case-studies or
the passion of his expression.[87]

The main significance of Fanon, in this context, is
that he proposed an overtly revolutionary model which
Freire did not use, despite the obvious parallels between
the experiences of colonialism in Brazil and Algeria. Of

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87. It was, however, from Fanon, that Freire took the idea
    of the metropolitan and dependent society, the
    colonists' "mission land", the closed society that had
    no authentic voice, and the personality schism whereby
    the "alienated" find themselves both oppressed and
    oppressors. (see: Fanon, 1985).

course, Freire never intended writing a primer of cultural
revolution, but why could he not have used Fanon to apply
his theory of Dialogue to concrete situations?

Despite his insistence on the historicising of
theory, it seems that Freire could not challenge the ikon
created by his rhetoric. To have placed his theory under
the lens of anti-colonial, anti-oppressive practice would
have created that ruptural principle (Althusser, 1969:99)
which would have taken pedagogy beyond Freire's control and
would have forced him into a directly revolutionary and
political statement.[88]

At that time, Freire was unable to resolve that
contradiction, perhaps because, in the final analysis, he
was being forced to a level of critical awareness about
himself and his own role as one of the assimilados. What
Freire's treatment of Fanon suggests to me is that, in this
"literacy phase", he wrote Cultural Action for Freedom as

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88. References to Althusser are scarce within Freire's
writings, although he is named as one of the major
influences on his thinking (1982:18). In fact, the
only references quoted all relate to Althusser's For
Marx (of which Freire had a copy in French), and to his
ideas on superstructure and overdetermination.

Freire was able to accept Althusser's structure as a
means of distinguishing economic, political and
ideological practices, but he clearly could not follow
his problématique - that theory and practice cannot be
considered in some kind of conceptual isolation -
through to the creating of that ruptural unity which
would have made revolution forcefully self-determining
and realisable. His selective reading or acceptance
of Althusser highlights his fragile linking of theory
and practice into (revolutionary) praxis.

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the intellectual outsider.

4.7 Conscientisation and Action

From a period of the mid-1970s, however, symbolised
most clearly by the publication of Pedagogy in Process in
1978, there is a change in the definition and
interpretation of these terms which is quite evident.[89]

The mood and the language has changed. "For me,
education for liberation implies the political organisation
of the oppressed to achieve power" (1975c:16) "Revolution
in itself is an educational task....Educators are also
politicians" (1979:4)   "The question is not only to
replace a certain social class by another one as regards
the power over the means of production, but above all it is
also a question of changing the whole approach towards
production" (1974c:3).

Dialogue and Conscientisation are now being explained

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89. Pedagogy in Process is the first instalment of a record
    and review of Freire's work in Guinea Bissau in 1975-
    76.   He had gone there from the World Council of
    Churches, following an invitation to assist the new
    government in the reconstruction of an education
    programme.   Guinea had achieved its independence in
    September, 1973, after years of violent struggle.   In
    preparing their visit, Freire speaks of how they had
    tried to "deepen their ability to understand the
    national reality and increase their knowledge about the
    liberation struggle, the experiments carried out by the
    PAIGC in the older liberated zones", and how they had
    begun "to read everything we could find, especially the
    works of Amilcar Cabral" (1978:9).

in terms that are clearly more radical and more Marxian.
Across this watershed lies the influence of Amilcar Cabral
and Freire's experience in Guinea Bissau.

Cabral was undoubtedly the pivotal figure in the
liberation movement in Guinea. He was assassinated by the
Portuguese early in 1973, but his extensive writings have
formed a primer both for African development and for the
anti-colonial struggle world wide.[90]

According to de Andrade (1980), Cabral was both a
theoretician and a man of action, a revolutionary leader of
outstanding ability who was "indefatigably in pursuit of
reality by revealing the deep roots, the fundamental
causes, so often blurred by the tumult of revolutionary
action". His was a radical practice and pedagogy which
seems to have provoked a change of focus, a new mind-shift,
a different conscientising of Freire.

It was from Cabral (from a widely reported speech in
Havana, January, 1966) that Freire took the notion of
"class suicide" where "the revolutionary petty bourgeoisie
must be capable of committing suicide as a class, to be
restored to life in the condition of the revolutionary
worker completely identified with the deepest aspirations
of the people to which they belong" (Cabral, 1980:136).

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90. Freire quotes from a French edition of his works, Unité
et Lutte, published in 1975, although a Portuguese text
had also been available since 1974.

Cabral (1986:83,44) also identified the "vegetable silence" to which the oppressed were subjected and to which they subject themselves. He insisted on the need to "acquire consciousness of reality" through which the oppressed would achieve the potential to transform that reality.

This consciousness reveals, without a sense of shock but as an obvious response to imperialism, that "the normal road to national liberation..is armed struggle" (1986:134). The very nature of national liberation demands not just the Conscientisation of the people (it is the oppressor who calls them the "masses") but the violent eradication of that principal characteristic, common to every kind of imperialist domination, viz.

> "...the denial of the historical process of the dominated people by means of the violent usurpation of the freedom of the process of development of the productive forces.
>
> The mode of production, whose contradictions are made manifest with more or less intensity through class struggle, is the principal factor in the history of the human whole" (Cabral, 1986:141).

What then was Freire's response to this kind of argument which was able to consider control of the means of production through violence as the key means of collective liberation? In my view, it altered his rationale for literacy training, enabled him to be more explicitly political, and engaged him in issues that previously he had circumvented.

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In illustrating those points, it is also interesting to note Kozol's reaction to the Pedagogy in Process. He emphasises the point that Freire's revolutionary posture is "unevasive". There is a "revolutionary passion" in which Freire has extended his vision and his consciousness of pedagogic struggle (Freire, 1978:2).

Kozol did not indicate how this vision has been extended, but I would suggest that there are three important points to be noted that impinge on our understanding of Dialogue and Conscientisation: the changed status of Conscientisation, the role of dialogic learning, and the relation of both of these to issues of the class struggle and control of the means of production.

Conscientisation is no longer a process of becoming aware of the oppressor and of understanding the means by which oppression is sustained. Nor is it the eradicating of the exterior, physical oppression which makes a person free. Freire has moved beyond that formula (which Cultural Action for Freedom may well represent) to insist that "being conscious is not a slogan but a radical form of being, of being human" (1978:24). It is more creative than recuperative. Reflecting Camara's view, (1969:33), that "the days of colonialism or oppression may be over, but internal colonialism still remains", Freire sees the need for a more directive form of Conscientisation, one which concerns itself with re-conversion, re-africanisation.

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Paradoxically, this shift into radicalism implies less political action and more cultural invasion than Freire's naive stance. Conscientisation has become more a psychotherapy, a "detoxifying" (to borrow Brookfield's power-aware phrase, 1986:151) that places the radix of the problem within the person of the oppressed. It re-echoes loudly the overt, political education-for-action of Moses Coady and his "mobilisation and attitudinisation" (Armstrong, 1977).

The force-field of Conscientisation, or in Bakhtin's term "the speech zone" of Dialogue (1981:427), clearly centres over the learner/oppressed person. The process of Conscientisation has become a process of changing the conceptual horizon of the victim. Dialogue has become the polyphony, or cacophony, of the authoritative discourse of the educator which is competing with the internally persuasive discourse of the learner (Bakhtin 1981:342ff)[91].

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91. According to Bakhtin, human coming-to-consciousness is the struggle between these two types of discourse: an attempt to assimilate more Words (ideas, statements, namings) into one's own world-view, and to free oneself from that authoritative discourse of the other person which previously held sway.

His idea of the "conceptual horizon", which in Russian is "the circle of one's vision", suggests also those rings of concentric circles which are not pushed out from the learner/subject centrifugally but are driven inwards, centripetally, by external powers, crushing the person/object.

By the savage inversion of images, a person who appears to be "marginalised" has actually been "centralised" -reduced to the minimum core necessary for them to stay alive. To be oppressed is to exist, but not to be.

This does not align with Freire's insight into oppression. If, in this analysis, each person is to be responsible for their own liberation, then they are equally responsible for their own domination. Yet that contradicts the lived experience of gnosiological, historical and cultural oppression. The matrix of power-knowledge has to be constructed around the society and not around the individual.

Consequently, although the initial logic of his language brings us to this micro-level, psychotherapeutic focus of Conscientisation, Freire turns steadfastly towards a macro-restatement, towards Conscientisation as it effects the system of education and society.

In choosing to disregard the individual, Freire is redefining the terrain of Conscientisation. In this new zone of development, the educator is now a militant whose actions have to be coherent with an overt, political and revolutionary stance (1978:12) of which Literacy is only one element in a range of social developments (1978:25):

> "If literacy efforts are to achieve their primary objective, that of contributing to national reconstruction effectively, then it would be necessary to establish a dynamic relationship between them and all other forms of social intervention in any way related to or dependent upon literacy".

Literacy is not about personal development but about national development: the concomitant process of dialogic learning has "to be seen within the context of literacy, post literacy and production and the total plan for society" (1978:16).

It is this total plan for society that is important,
and this for three reasons.

First, Freire, while talking about Dialogue and
Conscientisation, has moved away from a "revolutionary
pedagogy and its role in society" (e.g. Pedagogy of the
Oppressed) to talk about "a revolutionary society and its
use of creative literacy" (1978:11). The raison d'être of
his literacy programme is not now the primary need to read
and write but the demands of national reconstruction. He
is close to Camara's stated priorities (1969:26):

> "more important than the rudiments of education is
> the task of putting people on their feet, of opening
> their eyes and making them aware".

Secondly, the boundaries of what constitutes a
literacy campaign have widened, even replaced by a Basic
Education Programme that encompasses health education,
agricultural development, and management training needed to
support the growth of cooperatives (1978:31).

Finally, Pedagogy in Process, posited on the
contribution of Conscientisation to the national liberating
process and on the extended content of dialogic learning,
is now able to address the previously unconsidered issues
of class and the control of the means of production.

At this point, we have arrived at the broadest
possible statement of Education as Cultural Action which
redefines the means of that action (Dialogue) and its goals

(Conscientisation).   Dialogue is now a process within
which "the unity of theory and practice establishes the
unity between education and productive activity as a
dimension of the concrete order" (1978:21).   In the
emerging society, the role of education is to "create the
fundamental background necessary for the full participation
of every citizen in the development of the new society"
(1978:42), but the formulation of this programme of Basic
Instruction must be considered in its relationship to the
means of production (1978:56).   By 1979, Freire could even
say "We have to forget the concept of adult literacy
itself.   I think the only way is to increase our political
clarity and also our commitment to the oppressed class"
(1979:4).

4.8   Class Consciousness

There seems to be little difference between this
education in the national interest and the investment in
education described by Bowles and Gintis. At best, Freire
seems to have rendered benign a form of Banking Education
which is now oriented towards economic and political
liberation, and not just towards cultural autonomy.   Does
this mean that Conscientisation through Dialogue is now
seen as a strategy of the class struggle? Is Freire
suggesting, for example, that Marx' working class is the
same as his oppressed class?

Regrettably among the most conspicuous failures in

Freire is the absence of a clear definition of the
"oppressed/oppressor" (Stanley,1972) and the lack of
clarity about what constitutes "Class".[92]   This omission
is important firstly because the analysis of "class" would
allow us to look at both the causes and the consequences
of oppression or liberation (which exposes the way in which
inequality is conceptualised).   Secondly, we need to
distinguish the dialogue which takes place between
individuals, and the dialogue which takes place between
oppressors and oppressed, i.e. inter- and intra- groups.

    Freire (1982:31-33) assumes as incontestable the
generalisation that "any situation in which A objectively
exploits B or hinders their pursuit of self affirmation as
a responsible person is one of oppression".   Oppression
is essentially about preventing a person from being more
fully human: by definition, therefore, the peasants, the

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92. Even with his experiences in Guinea Bissau, Freire was
    not condemned, in what Olin Wright calls "Sociology's
    one independent variable" (Wright, 1979), to follow a
    Marxist analysis of class.

    This "chameleon" concept blends into virtually every
    sociological tradition; it can distinguish categories
    of people occupying common positions within status
    hierarchies (Parsons), conflict groups determined by
    their position within power structures (Lenski),
    economic groups with common life chances (Weber), or
    groups with common locations within the social
    organisation of production (Marx).

    Whatever the traditions, class is a relative concept:
    it can only be analysed in relational terms, even where
    the terms themselves are defined against judgments
    about power and the use of knowledge.   What is common
    to all such traditions is that, behind differential
    access to power and to knowledge, there will almost
    certainly be a differential access to Literacy.

illiterates, the colonised and the poor are all oppressed.

This description of the oppressed class or classes does not clarify the notion of <u>class</u> itself.   One can only assert that, here, Freire remains confused.   He says of the <u>Pedagogy of the Oppressed</u> that it was

> "rooted in concrete situations and describes the reactions of workers (peasant or urban) and of members of the middle class whom I have observed directly or indirectly during the course of my educative work" (1982:16).

However, it is not clear whether the distinction between the workers and the middle class is meant as an illustration of the oppressed and the oppressors.

In his later writing, there is no greater clarity. He says (1985a:192) that "in the contradiction of the dominant and the dominated, there is a cultural and class conflict".   He does attempt to clarify what he means by culture, but he does not expound on the meaning of class. If he is intending to interpret <u>class</u> as <u>culture</u>, then there are important implications for the processes of Dialogue and Conscientisation.

Using Bourdieu's definition of culture as that common code which

> "enables all those possessing that code to attach the same meaning to the same words, the same type of behaviour and the same works and, conversely, to express the same meaningful intention through the same words, behaviour patterns and works..". (1971:198),

it becomes possible that, in breaking into the Culture of Silence, i.e. the culture of the oppressed, with the

intention of conscientising, the educator actually becomes
engaged in a process of de-culturation through the creation
of radical change.   The process, nominally created through
the objectives of literacy for the individual, actually
calls for changes of behaviour, interaction and language at
a social level.   Conscientisation then becomes a means of
radical change because it is led by those who have power,
i.e. the power to teach.   But what of its objectives ?
In whose interests does the process work?

     Freire clearly wishes it to be in the interests of
the oppressed,[93] but for that to be anything other than
wishful thinking there must be some convincing evidence.
It will not suffice to say that the dangers implicit in
this perception of the power of Conscientisation are, or
ought to be, counterbalanced by the creativity of the
Dialogue which engages not just individuals but the whole
"cultural community".   Before we can accept that cultural
action for freedom is the same as class action for freedom,
we need to know what are the characteristics of this class,
what are its interests and its struggles, what is its class
strategy for survival, and who are its class opponents.

     In my view, there is no substantial answer to these
questions as yet from Freire.   He uses the language of

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93. It is perhaps ironic that the best examination of this
    inherent weakness of Freire's later practice and the
    most eloquent rationale for Literacy Education is to be
    found in his early theoretical work Extension or
    Communication, 1969.

class, class solidarity, even class suicide, but the word class is almost wholly denoted as a cultural phenomenon.

The force of the criticism is that it creates a major dislocation between Freire's writing and his practice: it denies his own emphasis on praxis. From his grapho-texts, there is evidence that he knew and understood the "early Marx": he shares with Marx an epistemology that focusses on the issues of being human, on consciousness and alienation, on culture and nature.[94] It is indeed a selective reading of Marx which does not follow the development of his thinking to encompass the issue of class and its economic base.

Added to that, from Freire's bio-text, from his practice, especially in Guinea Bissau, it is immediately obvious that his development of schools and cooperatives was an educational initiative overtly intended to restructure the means of production. Effectively, each literacy unit became a new, economic unit, creating its own local economy and independence while contributing to the overall structure-plan of national development. Thus we find a Freire who is a long way from the writer of the Pedagogy of the Oppressed:

> "Freire is convinced that literacy work has more relevance when related to the introduction of new

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94. Interesting to note that this was the Marx with whom the Catholic Church has felt comfortable. Freire himself refers to Marx, quoting mostly from the Theses on Feuerbach, The Paris Manuscripts, and On The Holy Family.

production techniques and the need in increase the
community's ability to take charge of its own
development by providing its own basic services"
(Bee,1980:48).

Nothing here distinguishes Freire from an educator in
the Banking System which, equally, is centred on social
development. One cannot disguise the fact that Banking
Education has successfully taught sufficient numbers of
people to read and write in order to maintain a viable base
of both production and services. Is it possible that
Dialogic Education, as much as Banking Education which it
opposes, is itself actually the means within society by
which people learn to oppress and to be oppressed?

If the oppressed are to be seen as a class, and
clearly that is Freire's view, then more thought must be
given to that analysis and to how education is the prime
creator of <u>class consciousness</u>. Freire cannot simply
assert that "every approach to the oppressed by the elites,
as a class" forces the oppressed "to see themselves in
contradiction with the oppressors" (1982:103,122). The
construction and definition of <u>oppression</u> is critical,
because that will in turn define the action which results
from someone becoming critically conscious of their
oppression.

4.9 Conscientisation and Change

The question of what kind of action ensues through

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the processes of Dialogue and Conscientisation is as
critical for the educator as it is for the oppressed. What
is the product which is offered as the goal of the
processes of education/liberation?

Rivera (1972:55) also places the psycho-personal
elements of Freire's method before the socio-political
outcomes: "Freire was one of those educators who
deliberately set out to bring about self-perpetuated
changes prior to behavioral changes". He suggests a
useful distinction between changers, who occupy themselves
with issues of perception, beliefs and attitudes, and
change-agents, who are concerned primarily with events,
with practical issues. The interesting point of his
argument is that, paradoxically, it is the former who are
more successful in bringing about social change.[95]

It is the stance of non-acceptance that underpins the

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95. The rationale of this argument is as follows. Rivera
    compares Conscientisation as the focusing of experience
    (a process of clarifying what had been perceived
    only vaguely before) with Conscientisation which is a
    "mind shift" (a process not of clarifying but of seeing
    for the first time what was not seen before.) By
    analogy, but one which Freire himself adopted to
    describe his role as educator, it is like getting a
    new prescription for glasses or getting glasses for the
    first time.

    According to Rivera, those who experience adjusted or
    revitalised perceptions tend to seek within the status
    quo for their self-actualisation: i.e. society should
    be x because I see clearly that x is better than y.

    Those who become aware, for example of injustice or
    oppression, as for the first time, tend to strive to
    change the existing structures: i.e. society should be
    z because I now see that it is not z.

notion of mind-shifting or problematising. Herein lies, at
least in theory, the strength of Freire's method in that it
eliminates an individual's "reality gap", enabling them to
name the forces which shape and control their lives (in the
first instance) but motivating them beyond that to
understand experimentally how to act upon the causes and
processes that activate those forces.[96]

In that light, Dialogue and Conscientisation can be
seen as psycho-social processes that contains within them a
potential extension into socio-political processes.

Such a view of Conscientisation is essentially
Utopian, an idea on which Freire relies a great deal. The
concept itself is much misunderstood, and Freire further
compounds this by playing on the very ambiguity of the word
which should rather be read in its strict sense.
According to Furter (1974), the essential meaning of
utopian, (Fr. utopique, and Port. utopico) is "the refusal
to accept the status quo, contestation, re-appraisal, a
demand for the potential and the better rather than the
given and the mediocre".

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96. This transition from the micro to the macro I would
    also infer in Dunn's (1971) description of the process
    as "paradigm shifting", in which an individual
    experiences the redefining of their total boundary
    systems and a recreating of their own self image.
    Inevitably, that must include the validating or
    rejection of the individual's cultural base, which
    includes the common codes of accepted behaviour and
    those "master patterns" which Bourdieu argues have been
    previously assimilated.

By definition, therefore, utopian education implies change which is then realised when,

> "people stop believing in what once may have been true and has now become false, when they withdraw support from institutions which may once have served them but no longer do, when they refuse to submit to terms which may once have been fair but no longer are. Such changes are a product of true education". (Reimer, 1971:96)

Freire falls between two fictions here. Firstly, he enters the fiction or hypothesis that there is something called Truth, and that there is a Reality which those properly conscientised can perceive. He is clearly in danger of creating a form of Social Gnosticism.

Secondly, as it is stated here, utopian education, even with its related educational practices, does not cement the gap between such practice and revolutionary action. However effective a mind-shift it may create at the level of the individual, however wide the impact of its social repercussions, it is not, as an idea, sufficiently self-explanatory as a causal element of revolutionary action.

Literacy education, of which Conscientisation is the process and Dialogue the means, does not have of itself sufficient effect to control or define the kind of change implicit in any understanding of revolutionary action. This is because, from its conception, it does not have the potential to fuse theory and practice into that ruptural unity of contexts, currents and circumstances which give

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revolutionary action its force and potential. (Althusser, 1969).

Freire would probably concur with this point: "in that it constitutes a superstructure, education functions as an instrument to maintain the infrastructure in which it is generated" (1972b:175).

The difficulty lies in judging the nature of that "maintenance" and the processes by which it is expressed. Conscientisation, given that it is based on Dialogue, has to be a process that is at best consensus, and at least convergence seeking. It is fulfilled in the reflective action necessary between people who create together. It is therefore at the obverse of those strategies which are based on a conflict mode of change through confrontation. The disparity between the two modes is revealed in the expectation that one can enter into an authentic, human dialogue with one's oppressors and, at the same time, engage in revolutionary action against them.

4.10 Conclusion

The resolution of this dilemma, without which the concepts of Dialogue and Conscientisation cannot be realised in praxis, requires the constructing of some theoretical framework against which to plot the position of education (which must be anti-Antidialogic and at least convergent) and that of revolutionary action (which, for it

to remain authentic, must be divergent but also anti-Antidialogic). Such a framework suggests a continuum of attitudes from revolution to reform, maintenance to conservation, where the first value or mode is conflict oriented and where the second, alternative value or mode is consensus oriented.

We need to find a route through the maze which Freire has created by his descriptions of the product of literacy education in the first mode, while claiming that the processes by which that is achieved should be in the second mode. In order to do this, but without distorting the problem, we can revert to the Freirean technique of exposing elements of contradiction.

We find that there are two inter-related but distinct continua:

a: that which represents the forces in society which
       define the content and the scope of education, the
       contrast between the learning agenda as set by the
       educational institution (that system of education
       which, for Freire, is the Banking System) and the
       agenda required by the learner in a non-banking
       system (that process and product of learning which
       arises from Dialogue;

 thus:

 institutional [IA] _____ learner's [LA]
    agenda   agenda

b: that which represents the tension or conflicting
       positions inherent between an educator who is a
       banker/teacher and an educator who is committed to
       dialogic learning;

thus, using Freire's language:

the teacher / [TB] _____ the teacher [TL]
   banker   learner

The potential of any form of education to be capable
of revolutionary action at the macro level or even of
conscientising at the micro level has to be seen within the
context, not just of attitudinal or philosophical
variables, but of the contradictions implicit within the
interplay of these two continua.

What these continua expose is a previously covert
dynamic of those causal elements which both describe and
define the locus of possible change and revolutionary
action.   In each quadrant of the intersecting continua
lies very differing understanding of <u>change</u>, and thereby
differing processes and outcomes of Dialogue and
Conscientisation, viz.

```
                         T B
                          |
     CONSERVATION         |         MAINTENANCE
I A ----------------------|---------------------- L A
                          |
       REFORM             |          RADICALISM
                          |
                         T L
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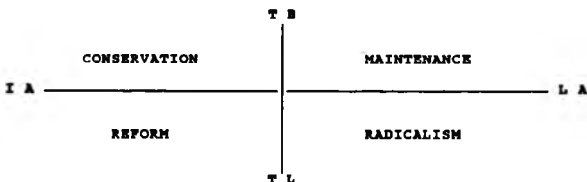
This simply restates the fundamental contradiction
implicit in his work.   The <u>language</u> of his philosophy,
hinged around a Dialogue that creates liberation for the
learner, clearly reflects a radical pedagogy.   It focuses
on the engagement of the learner and prioritises his or her

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agenda, dialogically animated by an educator who is both teacher/learner and learner/teacher.

However, the *practice* of his method, while it would aspire to praxis, i.e. reflection and action, is so severely constrained by the social realities within which education takes place that it almost wholly occurs near to the IA pole of that contextual continuum. But that is also the *terminus ad quem* of Conscientisation, the target which an anti-oppression (liberating) pedagogy has to confront, not least because the IA pole, the system of education, also enfolds the source of domination. The degree to which action can follow upon reflection will depend on the kind of educator is involved in the process. Given either a dialogic TL or an anti-dialogic TB teacher, the outcomes will veer either towards either conservatism or reformism.

Prior to that, however, the outcomes of Dialogue are also directed by the educator. The *terminus a quo* of Dialogue is firmly at LA, (in the jargon, one "starts where the learners are at"), but the consequences of the goals of Dialogue being fulfilled or denied by the educator will be very different. In the end, the learner will either be liberated and able to "name their world", or he or she will be domesticated, sentenced (even by the sentence of Banking Literacy) to remain in silence.

As such, neither Dialogue nor Conscientisation create

revolution or radical change in themselves. At best, they
can be seen as prerequisites for radical change. They are
the Derridean _supplément_ of change, the first movers or
arche-change. They are also, like Literacy of which they
are the _trace_, a double-headed _pharmakon_, the cancer and
cure of Power-Knowledge.

In summary, it appears that Freirean Dialogue is not,
and could never be, revolutionary, although there is a
sense in which it could be "revolutionable", in the sense
of "actionable", i.e. it may provide the grounds for
revolutionary action, should the need and the circumstances
arise.

Conscientisation is then, in its turn, the process
which creates the possibility that such need and
circumstances _could_ arise and _could_ be met, i.e. it is a
process which achieves its goal (its product) to the degree
that it creates that level of awareness and respondability
which can authentically sustain a revolutionable
conscience.

Perhaps the great genius of Freire was to conceal the
enormous complexity of such a pedagogy within the
apparently simple technique of an alphabetic learning
method. It is that which we must now consider in detail.

5.1   Introduction

Cynthia Brown's explanation of the processes of "Literacy in 30 Hours"[97] was clearly written with the acknowledgement and support of Freire himself.   Although the article was based "primarily on Paulo Freire's Education for Critical Consciousness (Seabury, 1973)", the pictures which she uses are mostly not those printed in that edition.   Education for Critical Consciousness offers a later version of the series of the pictures drawn by Vincente de Abreu.   The original pictures, commissioned from Freire's friend, the well known Brazilian artist, Francisco Brennand, had been confiscated by the Authorities in 1964.   Brown had copied and printed for the first time, with Freire's permission, eight of the first series of pictures from slides still in his possession and had added two [pictures 5 and 8] from the published series.

Given that degree of cooperation and involvement on the part of Freire, it can therefore safely be assumed that Brown's presentation of the literacy process reflects Freire's own thinking and is an accurate record of his manner and approach as well as a summary of the content of the actual teaching sessions.

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97. To avoid constant repetition of references to the same text, all references in this section, unless otherwise indicated,   will be taken to be from either Freire (1976b:62-84) or Brown (1974:25-32).

In anticipation of one of the conclusions of my analysis here, I would want to draw attention to the unselfconscious and unapologetically directive style of both Brown and Freire which seems, at first glance, to be so much at odds with Freire's stated position about non-directive learning. The apparent contradiction arises from the fact that, although the pictures were created to provoke a discussion that would lead to the "generating" of key words, there is no illusion here on the part of either writer that the facilitator or educator should allow a free ranging or open-ended debate. Both Freire and Brown have an agenda to work from:

> "This sequence of 10 pictures is tightly analysed and structured. The first picture [Figure 1] is carefully designed to elicit an initial distinction between culture and nature, while succeeding pictures are sequenced to draw out various subtleties of the distinction, namely: the difference between man and other animals being man's culture-making and communicating capacities [Figures 2-5]; nature transformed into culture by man's work [Figures 3,6,7]; communication as culture [Figures 2,8]; and patterns of behaviour and traditions as culture [Figure 9]. The final picture [Figure 10] challenges the group to analyse its own behaviour -the most distinctive capacity of people".

Within the structure of the pictures,[98] therefore, Figure 10 is intended as a summary of the overall debate, a

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98. In the following analysis, I have used both sets of pictures, comparing them when appropriate but endeavouring to make a composite of the various elements of which they are illustrations. Pages 168 and 169 are the scenes from Brown's article and mostly depict Freire's original pictures: further reference to these will be as Version 1 or V1. The single, enlarged pictures are from Vincente de Abreu's version in Education for Critical Consciousness: further reference to these will be as Version 2 or V2.

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recapitulation, while Figure 1 serves the purpose of agenda
setting.   It is this process of initiation into, and
mastery of, literacy which we must now consider in
detail.[99]

The Sequence of 10 Situations

1.   Man in the World and with The World, Nature
        and Culture

2.   Dialogue Mediated by Nature

3.   Unlettered Hunter

4.   Lettered Hunter (Lettered Culture)

5.   The Hunter and the Cat

6.   Man Transforms the Material of Nature by His
        Work

7.   A Vase, the Product of Man's Work Upon the
        Material of Nature

8.   Poetry

9.   Patterns of Behaviour

10.   A Culture Circle in Action -
        Synthesis of the Previous Discussions

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99. I have, as in the above quotation, suspended for the
     moment my practice of modifying texts which indicate an
     overt level of sexism.   The use of language here,
     textually and visually, which relates to the processes
     of literacy is itself informative: both Freire and
     Brown exhibit a use of language (e.g. *man's* culture-
     making, *his* house, *his* clothes, *his* tools) which has a
     significance beyond the obvious explanation that, in
     its time and culture, such language was considered not
     only acceptable but normative.

Figure 1

Figure 2

Figure 3

Figure 4

Figure 5

Figure 6

—Figure 7

Figure 8

A BOMBA

A TERRIVEL BOMBA ATÔNICA
E A RADIO-ATIVIDADE
SIGNIFICAM TERROR
RUINA E CALAMIDADE

SE ACABASSEM COM A GUERRA
E TUDO FICASSE UNIDO
O NOSSO MUNDO DE HOJE
NÃO SERIA DESTRUIDO
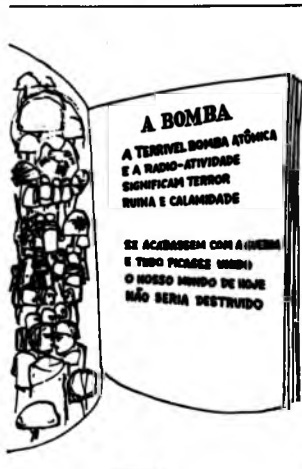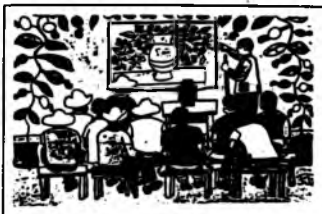
Figure 9

Figure 10

5.2 First Situation: Man in the World and with The World, Nature and Culture

1. The Situation (Page 168, figure 1)

Brown describes this as "a familiar image from which a non-literate from North-eastern Brazil can use his knowledge to distinguish between nature and culture."

All the Version 1 situations are painted without perspective, but with considerably more embellishment than those in Version 2. In V1, in the foreground, there is a picture of an obviously healthy farmer/peasant. At one side, there is a basket in which he has perhaps been collecting the fruit of his labours: on the other side, a plump pig is truffelling. The farmer/peasant, bare-chested and bare-footed, poses with a mattock in one hand and an open book in the other. In the wider frame, there is a very stylised tree and four birds on the wing. In the background, there is a small house and a structured, cemented well from which water can be drawn by means of the handle and spindle.

Version 2 (page 179) has some important variations, most critically in the background. There is a picture of a woman leading a child by the hand back to the house. She is walking perhaps from the well towards the house which now has a more solid construction and e.g. a tiled roof. The well itself is evidently both wider and deeper than that in V1, with a bricked header and a longer rope.

This abundance of water may account for the overall, more prosperous feel of V2: while the farmer/peasant is still barefoot, he is no longer bare-chested. Although the pig has disappeared, the mattock remains, perhaps to suggest that the property is still too small, or the people too poor, to have a plough.

2.   Application

Freire argues that, through the discussion of this situation, the participants arrive at the distinction between two worlds: that of nature and that of culture. They are meant to perceive "the normal situation of man as a being in the world and with the world, as a creative and re-creative being who, through work, constantly alters reality".

The coordinator leads the discussion by asking "Who made the well?"   "Why did he do it?"   "With what materials?"   The intention is to contrast the answers to those questions with the response to the apparently less ambiguous enquiry: "Who made the tree?"   This leads to an extended discussion, with an almost Thomist simplicity, re. "Who made the pig, the birds, the hoe, the book?"

Brown suggests that the discussion moves to the conclusion that people use natural materials to change their situation, to create culture.   Freire explains that this insight emerges through the clarifying of two basic

concepts: that of necessity and that of work.   Clearly
these are not new concepts to the group of non-literates:
Brown says the discussion gives them the words to name and
clarify what they already know.   Even if what they
describe is a subsistence way of living, "at the end of the
discussion, participants are conscious of being cultured".

There is, however, an additional overlay which is
suggested by Freire but not mentioned by Brown.   Freire
initially describes this first situation as "man as a being
of relationships", and he returns to this point at the end
of his brief summary.

> "From this point, one discusses with the group, in
> obviously simple but critically objective terms, the
> relations among men, which unlike those discussed
> previously cannot be either for domination or
> transformation, because they are relation among
> Subjects."

3.   Commentary

One the surface, this is indeed an image familiar to
a non-literate person in North-east Brazil.   The singular
and intended novelty in the picture is the presence of the
book.   The picture has to be viewed in the context of the
fact that, in 1960, in the capital of the northeast region,
Recifé, there were some 80,000 children aged seven to
fourteen who did not attend school: adult illiteracy was
estimated at 60-70%.   It was, therefore, "abnormal" to be
literate.

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The stark impact of the picture, and why Freire could use it to such good effect, is that it not only describes the daily reality of the peasant/farmer in Recifé, but it also prescribes the importance of the book, giving it an almost totemic significance. It symbolises something that is different, and not just that a non-literate peasant can now read. It is clearly intended to suggest that the book is as central and as useful to the life of the peasant and his family as is the mattock, or the well or the house. **The individual who is Subject cannot live without the book. This is the agenda that is set for the literacy programme. Freire obviously intended that the book should be a symbol of a new relationship between men and men and between men and the world, a relationship which, he says, is not marked by domination or transformation.**

We shall have to consider that formal agenda later. What is interesting here, however, is the hidden agenda of this picture, i.e. the means by which Freire achieves the discussion he requires.

He says that the participants "arrive" at the distinction, e.g. between nature and culture. More honestly, Brown says "..the coordinator leads the discussion into the distinction between nature and culture." Whatever the professed distinctions between the learner/teacher and the teacher/learner, the reality of the situation here requires a deft use of manipulation to achieve the objectives of the session.

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In the first place, some key questions have to be
avoided. The answers to the simple questions re. who made
the well, the pig, the hoe, the house, the book, etc., are
flavoured with the piety of two illusions.

The first illusion, or act of faith, is that there is
some deity, some God who is Lord and Father of all mankind
who "made" the natural world, all things bright and
beautiful, all creatures great and small. So, in the
pictures, the birds and the trees, the pig and the earth,
the water in the well are all part of Nature.

When Nature is altered by Work, i.e. through the use
of natural materials to change their situation, men create
Culture. This leads to the second illusion: that men, or
rather, that this particular man has created his own
culture.

There is, of course, an alternative sequence of
responses to Freire's questions:

Who made the well ?	The Landlord paid men to brick and cement the header;
Who made the length of rope ?	I traded a pig for it;
Who made the hoe ?	I bought it in the market;
Who made the clothes ?	A cotton manufacturer in the South;
Who made the book ?	The Missionary.

Those fairly obvious responses are in fact removed
from the discussion by means of the second illusion, viz.

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the illusion of the enlightened peasant (enlightened except
that he cannot read) who has the skills and resources to
make everything for himself.[100]   He bears the imprint of
thrift, practicality and ingenuity.   His culture, even at
this primary level of subsistence, is self-made.   It is
the culture of a man who is Subject, who "relating to the
world, made the latter the object of his knowledge.   By
work, he submitted the world to a process of
transformation".

     This is a very positive, Freire might say hopeful,
picture of the peasant/farmer.   However, this second
illusion precludes an equally important discussion of work
itself, whether the peasant/farmer is working for himself
or for someone else, whether he and his family actually eat
what they grow or whether he has to sell it in the market
place.   It also avoids the need to reflect on how he is
controlled or even dominated by the market place where he
might have to buy all his tools, the grain he needs and the
clothes he wears, and where he will not always get a just
price for his pig.

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100. The enlightened peasant is the model of the ideal
      student for, by definition, their enlightenment means
      that they already know what it is that they are
      supposed to know.   This is what Hoskin calls
      "pedagogic bad faith" -a delightfully acerbic insight
      that exposes the peasant, the "one who already knows"
      as the image of the teacher, i.e. the one who really
      already knows.   The assessment of who is enlightened
      can only be made by the teacher, just as, in this
      sequence of pictures, the assessment of who is
      sufficiently literate is made by the already literate
      coordinators.

Freire will want to get to a discussion of domination and oppression in due course, but it is clearly his intention not to do so through this route.   It is not that he cannot or will not challenge the illusion of the self-sufficient, autonomous farmer/peasant.   It is rather that, in the context in which he was working, and even for him personally, there was a taboo surrounding any discussion of the first illusion, viz. the presence of a caring God.

To achieve their stated aims, educators using this first picture have to direct the discussion: in this they are strongly aided by the degree of "mind-guarding" that is created by the first illusion.   Even in the pursuit of objective, critical consciousness, the existence of the deity cannot be questioned.   This is not on the grounds of some theological a priori. but rather because a tactful silence on this matter is needed to preclude the even more revolutionable questions: why did God make some people poor and some people rich?   If God is looking after the birds of the air and the flowers of the field, why is he not looking after me?   One might even reflect on whether or not it is part of that natural order of things that there are rich and poor, hunters and hunted, oppressors and oppressed?

However valuable or enlightening, such a discussion would misdirect the potential learning of the group members.   The picture was not intended for that and the coordinators/educators would have to ensure that the

discussion did not end in that impasse.

It was clearly Freire's intention that this picture should rather set the agenda for a discussion on social relationships. Nonetheless, he begins to explore that theme not by stressing the social nature of relationships but by stressing the "Subject" nature of the relator. Men are Subjects: that assertion cries out so clearly in Freire's use of this picture that his particular interpretation of that needs some further exploration here.

In whatever way they might have articulated their own understanding of being in the world, it is unlikely that oppressed, illiterate peasants in the Culture Circles would describe themselves as Subjects who transform their world by their work. Their lived experience within what Freire describes as the "Culture of Silence" denies that kind of self-expression. Brown might wish to suggest that, by the end of the discussion, participants are conscious of being cultured, but she seems to have missed the whole raison d'être of the exercise, viz. that the people who participate in the Culture Circles have had their culture imposed on them. They are, almost by definition, not Subjects: they could even be surprised or shocked at Freire's insistence to the contrary.

How can this dilemma be resolved ? How did Freire intend that this dilemma or contradiction should be resolved ?

The answer for him, and therefore for all other parties, teacher and student or coordinator and peasant, lies in the totemic status of the book. It is the book and all that it symbolises that makes the difference. A comparison between the two pictures on pages 179 and 180 loudly proclaims Freire's real intent.

The picture actually has no value unless it leads directly to a discussion that is centred not on the presence of God but on the presence of the book. The discussion has got to explain the the book: not just "Who made it?", but "What is it for?" and "What does it say?"

The argument, directed by Freire or his coordinator, is that the person who can answer those questions is someone who can *read the book*. That in itself is significant, but not significant enough. The discussion will have failed unless it moves beyond even that notable discovery and raises the possibility that that same person could also *write the book* and, maybe, could even *make the book*. Freire will want to reject the notion that reading is a passive activity. He will insist that being literate goes beyond being a quiescent reader: it requires the person to become an active writer, and thereby to become a maker of their own world, their own history.

In this way, the Book reveals its totemic significance: it stands as an analogy for the reading and the writing and the making of history, that self-determined

engagement of the person in and with their world. It
represents a person's relationship with the world as a
Subject, a "being-in-the world" in the fullest Heideggerian
sense of in-der-welt-sein.

This is the agenda set for the analysis of the
subsequent pictures, creating a process which engenders
certain words which can be not only spoken but now also
read. If such words can be read, then they can be written.
Such is the simple logic of the literacy campaign: what we
have to see is the degree to which these learning/teaching
objectives can be sustained and achieved through the use of
the other pictures.

5.3 Second Situation: Dialogue Mediated by Nature

1. The Situation (Page 168, figure 2)

In V1, figure two shows a man and a woman in the
centre of the picture, and around them are a number of
animals. The man seems to be planting a tree, while the
woman is gesturing to something which she may have found in
the book which she is holding.

The pictures of the animals, drawn in a very stylised
form, show a horse, an ox and a turkey on one side, while
on the other side there is a leopard, a lamb and a goat.
Underneath the people and the animals, there is a line
indicating water in which there are fish and a turtle.

Version 2 (page 183) is more direct. This time the
couple are standing under the tree: the man has nothing in
his hands and he is gesturing, as if in discussion. The
woman is holding the book and either pointing to a
particular passage or reading from the book. They are
still poor: although they are both dressed, neither are
wearing shoes. Beside the woman is an empty household
basket, and behind the man there are no other animals
except one cow.

2. Application

Freire's use of this picture is best presented
through the short paragraph which he himself wrote:

> "In the first situation, we reached the analysis of
> relationships among men, which, because they are
> relationships among Subjects, cannot be those of
> domination. Now, confronted by this second
> situation, the group is motivated to analyse
> dialogue, interpersonal communication, the encounter
> of the consciousnesses; motivated to analyse the
> mediation of the world - as transformed and humanised
> by men - in this communication; motivated to analyse
> the loving, humble, hopeful, critical, and creative
> foundations of dialogue."

Brown takes the overall sense of Freire's objectives,
but clarifies two particular points. First, that the
picture can be used to show that culture is something
created by people: animals cannot create their own culture.
Human beings can do that because they can communicate with
each other, both orally and graphically.

Secondly, and especially using V2, the proper
relationship among people is that of subjects communicating

with each other, not as Objects, but as Equals.
Communication takes place as a dialogue between equals,
with the perception of each person having equal validity.
Where this is distorted or denied, the communication is not
a true dialogue: rather it is an exchange by communiqué.

3. Commentary

The Christian values of dialogue are clearly evident
even on the surface of Freire's comment: love, hope,
humility.   Of more significance, however, is the
subliminal faith which is portrayed in the pictures.

V1 presents an "Adam and Eve" scene of man and woman
in the garden, surrounded by the animals.   It is the scene
on which Freire's use of the expression "naming the world"
makes most immediate sense and clearly can be used to
create a very powerful reinforcement of the view that the
literate person can somehow control their world, can name
their world, and can live in a world of their own making.

There is a strong undertow of biblical imagery.   The
tree is the Tree of Life: the book is the Book of Life.
The Adam and Eve figures are faced with a choice.
However, in contrast to Eve, who came bearing the apple,
the temptation which resulted in sin, labour, and misery,
the new woman comes bearing the book, the invitation to
literacy, a new life and a new history.

The idea of the "new woman" is not unimportant. Yes, she is a new woman in that she is different from Eve. But she is also the new woman, the _mujer nueva_, who with _el hombre nuevo_, formed the cadre of the revolutionary movements throughout South America (See: Gerassi, 1972:Chpt 13,14). She is the life-force of change, even of change as fundamental as that occasioned by revolution.

It is all the more interesting, therefore, that Freire should have chosen this picture to raise the theme of dialogue. Given the gender stereotyping of Latin American culture, and indeed the role given to men throughout the other pictures, it is significant that the conversation between a man and a woman should be seen as the strongest example of a dialogue between equals. The dialogue therefore which Freire is seeking receives its validation from two divergent sources of authority: on the one hand, it receives its strength from the transferred strength of the traditional view of the family, of marriage and of gender roles. On the other hand, in contrast to the macho values of society, (of which the family, marriage and gender roles are a part) the values of the new, _authentic_ dialogue are reinforced by the Book, in the hands of the woman.

This is, by definition, a new dialogue. It differs from that which preceded it, communication by communiqué, in that it is an "encounter of consciousnesses". But what kind of encounter is that? What kind of dialogue does it

engender? Once the rhetoric and the mysticism has been removed from Freire's speech, what is the actual content of this dialogue?

Wilkinson (1985) has made an analysis of dialogic communication, but from a very different disciplinary base from Freire, but he offers a number of insights which are very relevant here. His basic theme has been "I communicate, therefore I am". I want to extend that to the wider context of dialogue and restate it as "I communicate, therefore We are".

Wilkinson posits three basic models of communication, Transmission, Reciprocity and Internal Dialogue. He has constructed the following diagrams to illustrate the differing processes:

Transmission	A ——> B
Reciprocity	A ——> then B ——> A
Internal Dialogue	A ——> A

The fact that I communicate at all is because "I am as I am", viz. I exist as a personality, as a social being with a self image and with an identity in the social world. But I communicate with that social world in different ways at different times.

Transmissive communication is, at its most simple and banal, a transmission to somebody or something else which is outside of me. It is usually exhibited in a declaratory mode, the classic mode of the giver of

information. It is essentially within this mode that we can recognise the teacher/taught relationship which Freire calls banking education. It is not a communication that accepts the equality of the person to whom one is communicating. Sometimes it does not even require that anyone else is there at all. It has no need of hope, humility or love. It needs only a means by which it can know that the transmission has been effected: a noise has been made, a statement issued, a communiqué published.

The communication model of reciprocity is quite different. It is based on a theory and practice of social exchange (the elements of which are on the balancing of reward, cost, outcomes and comparison[161]) and on a real perception that the communication from A in some way "creates" or "validates" B, who in turn is able to create and validate A through his or her response. In essence, such communication, both in its content and in its form, is about intersubjectivity, what Freire refers to as the "encounter of consciousnesses". It creates not transmission, but conferment, in that it confers on the communicator and on the receiver the status of active and mutual creators of the communication.

In the event, however, where one of the partners in this potentially reciprocal communication is "disabled"

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161. For a detailed explanation of social exchange theory, see Secord, P. Social Psychology. London, McGraw-Hill, 1974.

(Freire would say oppressed, encultured into silence), then the conferment, to the degree that it is real at all -if that is not a contradiction in terms - reinforces a low, non-adult status, or even a non-person status. This is the anti-dialogic mode of communiqué and banking education.

The processes of reciprocal communication, authentic dialogue, are the principal means of conferring or creating both the identity of the people engaged in the communication **and** their understanding of the reality within which that communication is taking place and which cannot be separated from the communication.

That reality cannot just exist in the mind. Things do not become real simply because I choose to think that they are. Like the communication through which reality is unmasked, reality itself is my engaging with the actual world, which is the world external to me. In a very real sense, we construct social and natural realities through our human communication.

That is why the internal dialogic mode, auto-dialogue is not authentic as a means of identifying reality. By definition the very selfhood which is engaged in the monologue lacks external validation. Like the nominalist, Freirean wordlists, the nominative of the monologue is not in relationship. There is only the I, for in the monologue there is no need of the You.

This is a very complex perspective on the use and nature of language. Is it realistic that Freire could expect such insights to be generated within the Culture Circles that were discussing Figure 2 ?

Freire has often argued that people are not "orally illiterate", i.e. that while they might not be able to read or to write, they can nevertheless communicate their ideas and feeling verbally. It is because they can articulate their responses and reaction that the individuals in the Culture Circles are able to create the generative words which form the first stage of the writing process.

This has been a view shared by many within the Freirean tradition. For example, in commenting on an Adult Education Project in Canada, Berezowecki (1974) attributed its success to the fact that people are able to generate the material for their own learning because "the coordinators assume that the people in the region have a ready access to experience, language and ideas when it comes to their own vital interests."

This optimistic view of the adult learner may be demonstrably true in those projects where the Freirean method of learning and literacy have engaged those who might see themselves as "upwardly mobile", e.g. in the Culture Circles in Guinea Bissau. But one would have to question if it is always true when, as Farmer queries, the educational effort is directed to those who are the

"hardcore disadvantaged" ? Is it likely that the longer
people have been immersed in the culture of silence, then
the more difficult or even impossible it becomes for them
to create even the preliminary stages of generative
learning ?

The use of Figure 2 requires not just an ability to
enter into dialogue, into reciprocal communication.   It
also requires, as a prerequisite, a   certain level of
meta-linguistic skill on the part of the participants and
of the coordinator.[102]

In his exciting study, Applied Communication in
Developing Countries, Fuglesang (1973) suggests that the
basis for such meta-linguistic skills cannot be presumed.
He does so by arguing against the assumption that pictures
are some kind of "intercultural language".   Contrary to
Freire who accepts without question that people can always
interpret pictures accurately, he says that "it is probably
right to say that pictorial illiteracy is almost as wide

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102. The elements of this picture illustrate perfectly the
     kind of "communicative competence" analysed by
     Habermas.   The fact that the (re)construction of a
     competence is a necessary preliminary to the study of
     its acquisition is as important here as is the
     distinction between the communicative performance,
     i.e. "the actual use of language in concrete
     situations" and communicative competence, i.e. "the
     ideal speaker-hearer's knowledge of the language".
     (see: McCarthy, 1978: Chapter 4.)

     In this context, it would be important to assess
     whether Freire was aiming to achieve literacy
     performance or literacy competence, the former being
     constructed by the person-becoming-literate, while the
     latter is taught or constructed by the teacher.

spread as illiteracy itself. People have to learn to read pictures" (ibid:62). We are faced with a sudden, unanticipated question that learning to "read a picture" might be just as difficult as learning to read a text. Nor does it follow that someone who can read a text, for example the literate teacher/coordinator, is any more capable of reading the picture than the non-literate peasants.

This in part underlies Brown's note of caution: the coordinator begins the discussion with the question "What do you see in the picture?" because "this naming of objects is important because people not accustomed to graphic representations may not easily identify what is meant to be shown". There is even a hint of subliminal Banking Education in the implicit judgment about people's pre-literate awareness of themselves, e.g. that the non-literates, the oppressed, are ready, willing and able to become literate. Non-literates are seen almost as a ready market, potential consumers (the words themselves are redolent of Banking Education) for our dialogic skills. It is taken as given that they have the prerequisite attitude and skills that will enable them to participate (invest) in (our) liberating education just as effectively as they might in some other, so-called, domesticating education.

That may seem a harsh condemnation, but there is certainly a hint either of contradiction or of

condescension in the assumption that non-literate people can correctly "read" a picture, and thereby express their understanding of oppression, of relationships, of independence, etc., when, unconscientised as they are, they are obviously not able to view critically and accurately the world in which they are living.

The level of pictorial literacy required by Freire's use of Figure 2 is certainly high, if he wishes to draw from it the kind of discussion which he has indicated. We shall have to return later to the debate that, while attention seems to have been given more and more to the relationship between literacy and post-literacy, less attention has been paid to the requirements of pre-literacy, and in particular to the assumptions about language and communication which are implicit in these early stages of Freire's literacy programme.

For the moment, there is a further important distinction to be made here, if the coordinator/educator is truly to attempt a genuine dialogue through the use of this picture. It is a distinction based on Fuglesang's usefully provocative insight into that communication which he calls exclamation and that which he calls articulation. He gives numerous examples, pointedly to argue that exclamations are always genuine, while articulations may be both humanly inadequate and concealing. In my view, which moves beyond Fuglesang's own work, the former creates a foundation on which genuine dialogue can be built, while

the latter has a strong, in-built tendency to be anti-dialogic. Yet it is this latter form of communication which Freire is attempting to elicit through the use of Figure 2.

What Fuglesang instances as articulation - thoughts, ideas, conceptions, intentions, facts - is primarily the substance of a systematised thinking, a schooled assessment. It is often the mode of expression which we use to discuss an idea or a theory without committing ourselves personally. Sometimes it is unashamedly calculated, for example where educators talk of being unbiased, of having a "professional approach" that does not allow personal feelings or views to intrude into the exchange of ideas. It is almost as if the more critical, i.e. insightful, reasoned or well argued any communication might be, the more objective and impersonal it must become. "The facts speak for themselves".

On the other hand, Fuglesang argues, exclamation is about sensations, feelings, experiences, hopes as much as fears: it is the communication of authenticity, not least because it is immediate, honest, incautious. An exclamation is an expression that has not been filtered through the control mechanisms of "second thoughts".

It seems to me that the lettered educator (because of their experience of systematised education) and the unlettered learner (because of their culture of silence)

have both developed defence mechanisms which preclude communication through exclamation. They have been encultured, either through schooling or through fear of reprisal, into articulating (or not-articulating) their thoughts and ideas in a particular way. They have learnt that their responses ought to be considered , i.e. thought through [expressed in an appropriate manner]; balanced [cautious]; and well articulated [with carefully chosen words]. In short, the sanctions which govern the way in which we express ourselves lead us to resist *exclamation* and to devalue it as uncontrolled outburst. By contrast, *articulation* is seen as a product of mature and considered thought: the more such expression bears the hall-marks of political and social acceptability the more it is valued and appreciated.

Faced with this picture, the educator or coordinator has a difficult choice. He or she has already made an analysis of the picture/situation and is able to communicate that at the level of an articulated statement. They must provoke a response from the learner/peasant. If this response is itself an articulated response, then it has already been manufactured, tuned to the needs and interests of the learner and their view of what the educator most needs to hear.

Even if, therefore, the educator can provoke a response at the level of exclamation, a genuine response conveying feeling and immediate reaction, there is still a

danger that, no matter how valuable that exclamation on the part of the learner may be, the ultimate outcome is still only a reproduction of Banking Education under the guise of a false dialogue. Critical consciousness or critical awareness is, after all, the outcome of a measured and objectified analysis of the world -the roots of which lie in an articulated expression which reflects my true position in society, in the world. Exclamation has the immediacy of the language of the Culture of Silence but, as Wilkinson might indicate, this is primarily the language of transmission which creates not Dialogue but Anti-dialogue.

Freire himself would argue strongly that the measure of equality required of authentic dialogue cannot be achieved in the situation which has the hall-mark of patronage. Yet this is what the use of Picture 2 can provoke: the educator/coordinator on the one hand encourages the learner to entrust to them their "exclamations", their genuine, immediate views and feeling, yet they (the educators) are only able to reciprocate at the level of their own articulations, their carefully contrived and balanced opinions. Is it unavoidable, even required, that the educator becomes "objective", depersonalised, as de-authored as the texts shown in the slides? Is the process of literacy acquisition itself a process not of humanisation but of depersonalisation?

This is a critical question for the dialogic educator who is trying to avoid the constant danger of Banking

Education. Despite, or in spite of, the directiveness
needed to achieve the objectives of Picture 2, is it
actually possible to respond in a way which is
authentically dialogic?   On a wider front but with a
related question, is it possible to subscribe to the use of
this picture, with its hidden agenda, in a way which is not
fundamentally dishonest?

One view would be to admit simply that the objectives
set by Freire, as outlined in the quotation p.166, require
a high level of manipulation on the part of the
coordinator/educator but that, nonetheless, the ends
justify the means.

Notwithstanding the rhetoric, we may have to accept
that the role of the educator *is* pivotal in this process,
precisely because the oppressed or the non-literates do not
have the awareness to channel their understandings or
perceptions relating to the picture into what Freire would
call "cultural action".   The educator is necessarily an
activator who is engaged in a form of cultural invasion,
notwithstanding that it is an invasion for liberation and
therefore acceptable to those who find themselves in the
"occupied territories".   Lloyd's (1972) suggestion that
educators, by their broader perspectives, have the primary
function of "posing problems" does not conceal the fact
that it is the educator who is setting the agenda.

Freire was not unaware of the problem of motivation.

"..the leader/educator bears the responsibility for
coordination and, at times, direction, but leaders who deny
praxis to the oppressed thereby invalidate their own
praxis" (1982:77)   The educator, whilst being a partner of
the students, nonetheless has to be interventionist, albeit
that they must always "strive for an even greater clarity
as to what, at times without their conscious knowledge,
illumines the path of their actions" (1970h:212).

        This creates in practice the dilemma which disables
so many educators and which, classically, is articulated by
Rousseau: how is it possible to educate for freedom, given
the need to direct the learner along a path which otherwise
he or she would not know? How does one liberate the mind
of someone indoctrinated by the values of that very society
which one wants to change, yet avoid merely re-
indoctrinating that person with a new set of values ?

        The dilemma hinges on this issue: if education, that
is dialogic education, is always about annunciation and
denunciation, how can the educator/coordinator lead the
learner to announce or denounce what evidently they do not
yet know?   There is a fundamental tension between the
theoretical position that conscientisation is about being
able to see one's own reality sufficiently clearly to be
able to denounce that which dehumanises and announce that
which humanises, and the practical demands that the
educator works only from spontaneous themes generated by
the participants/learners themselves, without being

coercive and directive.

This is the very idealistic model of the
teacher/learner which Freire has so emphasised. Yet it is
clear that the use of the content and the set agenda for
figure 2 poses some severe questions for such an educator.
We therefore need to examine whether the use of the other
pictures makes it easier to achieve a truly dialogic
communication which can provide a pedagogically sound base
for furthering the development of literacy learning ?

5.4 Third-Fifth Situations: Unlettered Hunter
Lettered Hunter (Lettered Culture)
The Hunter and the Cat

The third, fourth and fifth situations within the
Literacy Process need to be taken together: they project
the development of one major theme, viz. the difference
between Nature and Culture.

Nature and Culture are presented each as the converse
of the other, the two sides of the same coin which should
be distinguished rather than separated. The vividness of
the pictures and the argument of the accompanying script
reinforce the apparent logic of the situations and the
learning objectives which they support.

Despite that, however, these three situations also
reveal Freire at his most vague or inconsistent. The
strength of his argument may lie, not in the evident

authenticity of the analysis which he makes of these day-to-day scenes, but rather in the selectivity of his perception. It is almost as though Freire has come to these events, wittingly or not, with a kind of tunnel vision for, in order to direct the learners to the required themes, again a high degree of mind-guarding is required. The end result is an argument that amounts almost to special pleading. If this is the case, then these three situations may indeed represent the Achilles heel for Freire of both his method and his philosophy.

1. The Situations (Page 168, figures 3, 4 and 5)

The three situations reflect different hunting scenes. In the first, V1, there is a very stylised, even stereotypical drawing of an Indian, complete in feathered headdress, perhaps naked except for a decorated loincloth. He is hunting in a forest or in a clearing at the edge of a forest and he obviously has had some success: a bird lies dead at his feet and other birds look in imminent danger of falling to his skilful shooting.

In V2, (p.266) the Indian is less stereotyped: he is clothed, but bare-footed and he has a single feather in his hair. Again, he is successful in his hunting, despite the open terrain: two birds have been shot.

In the second, hunting situation, (figure 4) again this statement of success is clear. In both V1 and V2,

the hunter, this time with a gun, has made a kill.
However, it is not just the gun which distinguishes this
scene from the previous one.   The man is well dressed for
the hunt, wearing boots and a hat (p.201).   Because of
this, he can hunt in difficult terrain where there is more
cover.   Not only can he kill from a longer distance
because of the gun, but the birds that have been shot, even
if they have fallen to ground out of sight, can now be
found and retrieved by his gun-dog -an animal which has
been reared and trained specifically for this purpose.

In the third hunting situation, (figure 5: the first
picture for which there is not a copy of the Brennand
version), a cat is toying with two mice (p.202).   It is a
powerful and menacing picture revealing the dominance of
the cat and the powerlessness of the mice.

2.   Application

According to Brown, "the next three discussions
refine the concept of culture and raise the question of how
culture is transmitted to younger generations."   Freire
indicates that the debate is initiated by distinguishing in
the situation what belongs to nature and what belongs to
culture.

The anticipated response is that the bow, the arrows
and the feathered headdress are all part of culture.   The
feathers were part of nature, whilst they were on a living

bird, but they have been used now to make clothing and are hence a part of culture.

And how did the Indian learn such skill, hunting, tracking, making bows and arrows, making clothing?   The discussion considers the transmission of learning through a non-literate culture, i.e. through the direct learning processes of father to son, mother to daughter.

The discussion moves on to suggest that the Indian, viewed from within his own culture, strictly should not be described as illiterate.   "Illiteracy" only derives it meaning within a literate culture.   Freire, however, requires this comparison: he leads the members of the group to contrast their situation with that of the Indian. "By distinguishing the historical-cultural period of the hunter from their own, the participants arrive at the perception of what constitutes an *unlettered culture*."

For some, he admits, this perception might be dramatic. They perceive "immediately that to be illiterate is to belong to an unlettered culture and to fail to dominate the techniques of reading and writing."

It is exactly this domination that the hunter of the fifth situation has achieved.   Brown puts it starkly: the second hunter is using a tool so complex in its construction that directions for making it must be recorded, and only those who can read can learn to make it.

That is not all.   In the culture to which the man with
the gun belongs "only those who can read can earn enough
money to buy guns, so access to their use is controlled by
the literate members of this culture".

Clearly there are many differences between the Indian
and the man with the gun.   There is the difference in the
technologies represented by the bow and arrow and by the
gun.   The latter is seen as an advance in technology
because it gives the hunter "growing possibilities for
transforming the world".

This is the point where the group again returns to
the theme of education for technological development and to
that of transforming the world.   The first theme centres on
the result of man's increasing opportunity, his work and
his creative spirit.   The second has meaning only to the
extent that it contributes to the humanisation of people
and is employed towards their liberation.

This idea is refined through the use of the fifth
picture.   The participants discuss the fundamental
differences between human beings and animals.   In the
sequence of pictures, all three are hunters, but not all
"create" culture.   The cat is not a hunter (caçador) but a
pursuer (persequidor):   the cat does not make tools with
which to hunt, but acts only through instinct.

The development of this debate produces, according to

Freire, a wealth of observations about "men and animals, about creative power, freedom, intelligence, instinct, education and training".

3. Commentary

The three situations, all ostensibly around the theme of hunting, develop a very Cartesian epistemology. Human beings are distinguished from the animal world by the way in which, not only do they *know*, i.e. they are self directed by knowledge rather than by instinct, but they also *know that they know*. A human being is a conscious being (corpo consciente): it is not simply "I think, therefore I am", but "I know what I think, therefore I am". It is in the knowing about, the awareness of what is thought, that each person becomes authentic.

It is towards this awareness that the three situations are directed, but the achievement of such objectives can realised through the neglect of other questions and interpretations.

Freire offers a wholly pacifist and utopian analysis. Leaving aside the obvious fact that the man with the gun is, at least pictorially, no more successful than the man with the bow and arrow, and neither are more successful than the cat, there is the question of the 'culture of weapons', viz. how do human beings use either guns or arrows.

There is a naive view that such weapons are for
hunting. Evidently this is not untrue, but it does avoid
the equally obvious use of weapons - for invasion, control,
and domination. The arrow, like the gun, is an artifact of
war. Both are means for transforming the world but there
is no categorical imperative that such transformation
should "contribute to the humanisation of man". On the
contrary, there is perhaps more evidence that the gun and
the arrow have been one of the main expressions of man's
inhumanity.

There is, indeed the expression of *playing or toying*
with someone "like a cat with a mouse". This describes a
relationship of oppression, the control of an Object by
someone who has power. It is the very opposite of a
dialogic relationship.

What is interesting is why Freire should have chosen
the image of the cat. Perhaps more than any other
household animal, the cat has been "domesticated". Even
the great cats, the lions, cheetahs and leopards have
become, like their smaller more common relation, simply
pets. Such a life of control and possession has become
their means, albeit not self-chosen, of survival. To
refuse the role of family or zoo pet is to run the risk of
extinction. The life as household pet may be
unauthentic, but it a way of staying alive.

Perhaps the illiterate peasant, oppressed and

domesticated (the very image of Freire's concept of banking education) has more in common with the cat than with either of the hunters. However, Freire would not have tolerated a self identification with the cat: he would not even have accepted an identification with the Indian, although perhaps culturally, economically and socially, many peasants could see themselves represented in that picture.

Perhaps Freire was wanting to note the fundamental necessity of hunting: people need to hunt in order to live. By analogy, therefore, it can be appreciated that people need to be able to read in order to live.

It is, of course, unwarranted to go so far as to suggest that the three pictures support the analogy that the hunter searching in the wild is like a literate person in a non-literate society. However, it is not unreasonable to argue that they do support the analogy, or that they are intended to support the analogy, that the man with the gun is different from the Indian and the cat precisely because he is a symbol of the power of literacy.

Freire wanted the Culture-Circles to identify with the man with the gun. It is this latter instrument, like the book in the earlier pictures, which has the value of symbolising what it means to be literate. At its most simple, it is argued that the use of guns (and therefore of the power that accompanies them) is controlled by those who are literate.

There is a limited sense in which this might be true,
but there are sufficient examples of non-literate people
having guns and ammunition to suggest that, here, Freire is
special pleading. The peasant farmers knew that even the
Indians had guns. Ah, but of course, the Indians were not
literate.

This is the subterfuge which the coordinators used to
exit from this dilemma. The Indian lives in a unlettered
culture, in which strictly speaking, one cannot talk of
being illiterate. The whole concept of illiteracy or non-
literacy (there is a subtle difference of emphasis and of
values in the two terms) only has meaning in the context of
a literate or lettered culture. The group appreciate this
through distinguishing the historical-cultural period of
the Indian from their own.[103]

This is were the force of the discovery about
literacy arises. It comes not from the obvious comparing
of the world of the animal from the world of men, and not
from comparing the world of the Indian with that of the
peasant, but from the discovery that, if one lives in what

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103. A debate to be avoided here is whether the Indian who
can send and receive (write and read) smoke signals is
to be considered "literate". Such practice would
amount to a semiotic communication, but it would not
constitute literacy for Freire. He would want to
stress his Cartesian analysis of pure-knowledge which
is ultimately power-knowledge. The gun represents a
particular competency which is attributed to those who
are literate, through which they have power and
control. In a sense, literacy is intended to give to
the non-literates the ammunition with which to enforce
a redistribution of this power.

is a lettered culture and yet one cannot "dominate the techniques of reading and writing", then one is truly illiterate. The group is forced to give a currency value to a new coin, the heads and tails of which are that, on the one side, they are aware that they cannot read or write, and on the other side (and inextricably related) they are aware that they are dominated and oppressed by those who can read and write.

This is a rewriting of Graff's (1987) literacy myth that gains its value not through re-affirming the myth of the savage Indian but through insinuating the myth of the sophisticated literate who can wield the power and control which is a product of being literate. This retexturing of the myth is achieved through the assertion that such power and control, such application of the values of literacy, "only has meaning in that it contributes to the humanisation of man". The evidence is against Freire on this point, and his constant insistence on some other reality amounts indeed either to special pleading or to some unexpressed view that there is an almost "magical" content which adheres to the concept of the Book and the man's ability to read it or write it.

There is much that is hidden in this sequence of pictures. The initial scenes that were so redolent of the Garden of Eden are now replaced by the realities of life on earth - survival, the need for food, the natural cycle of the hunter and the hunted. Following the analogy, reading

is as basic and as important as eating.   The assumption
is, of course, that man hunts out of necessity.   It is
perhaps not part of the culture of Brazil, and certainly
not part of Freire's world view, that hunting can simply be
for pleasure and entertainment.   He would not accept that
hunting should be considered a pastime.

This is not necessarily a moral judgment on the role
of hunting in an affluent society.   The point is rather
that the coordinators of the Culture Circles cannot afford
a discussion on the rights or wrongs of hunting as a
pastime.   That would be to dilute and weaken the analogy:
hunting for pleasure rather than necessity would be like
reading for pleasure, and it is not within the objectives
of the literacy programme to attribute such a marginal
importance to the need to read and write.

Freire suggests that the three pictures are primarily
about the distinction between nature and culture.   However,
although presented in this guise, the underlying debate is
actually about literacy and power.   The major themes of
the Pedagogy of the Oppressed viz. a) the identification of
those who are oppressed with those who are not literate and
b) the centrality of literacy as a means of liberating the
oppressed, are reasserted here both overtly and covertly.

Pictorially, the three scenes are very powerful
images that gain in force because of, or in spite of, the
basic stereotypes which they represent.   All three, the

Indian with the bow and arrow, the man with the gun, and
the cat are <u>predators.</u>   They are each an image of, and a
role model for, the members of the Culture Circles.

Linguistically, also, there is a further level of
power dormant in the scenes which can be revealed even
without an intensely Freudian analysis, but it is an
analysis that is only possible in some languages, viz.
Spanish/French, but not English.   A schematic view of the
three   pictures   reveals   the   following:

fig. 3	the Indian	the bow	the dove
	le Indien	le arc	la colombe
	el Indio	el arco	la colomba
fig. 4	the man	the gun	the dove
	le homme	le fusil	la colombe
	el hombre	el fusil	la colomba
fig. 5	the cat	the mouse	
	le chat	la souris	
	el gato	la rata	

The dominant "male" motif within the language,
revealed within the pictures by the active Subject of the
le and the el which dominates the Objects of the la, is
easier to state than to interpret.   It is at least an echo
of the often made criticism that, throughout Freire's work,
there is more than a hint of sexism, a bias educationally
and culturally engendered.   Here that bias is emphasised
both through the strong, masculine images of the hunter,
the gun and the prowling cat and through the submissive,
controlled and powerless images of the birds, the dog and
the mice.   The images of power and domination which are so
visually striking are reinforced by a bias that is also

evident in the structure and semiotic of the language itself.

There is a sense in which all language is a semiotic within which the selection of masculine/feminine categories is arbitrary. However, language is also a means of identifying the personal constructs which we use more or less consciously to convey meaning. In Saussurian terms, the signifier represents *what is signified*. Here we find an example of how the signifier, viz. the three hunting situations, reveal the covert meaning of what was to be signified. It strengthens the view that the real discussion is not one of nature/culture, but one of power, dominance and oppression.

One can always attempt to rebut such a argument by saying that the language was never intended to convey such meaning and that this is an unwarranted over-interpretation of the text, i.e. a gloss that is, in the strict sense, a "reading into" rather than a "reading out of" the text. The charge is that the reader is infusing his/her own value judgments into the given statement. In other words, (and here we can consciously change the medium) the reader hears in the words more than the speaker intended to say.

This is an interesting attempt at rebuttal, not least because it may be that the reader/listener has seen/heard something not only which the speaker did not intend to say but which even contradicts what he wanted to say. In this

case, it may be possible that what we have seen and read actually does contradict Freire's intentions. Ostensibly, the sequence of pictures is presented as a debate about culture and nature, in the context of a free-ranging, student-directed discussion: literacy is offered as the hall mark of development, culture and humanisation. In fact what we have found is a debate about force and dominance, in the context of a very controlled, tutor-directed discussion where literacy, symbolised in the replacement of the book for the gun. The central theme is not just about power but, ultimately, about power which has a very male/macho connotation.

Echoes of this, or, in the Derridean sense, _traces_ of this particular use of language have been seen before. Using the above male/female image of oppression, we can also note the gender attributes of other key Freirean words which are often presented in a binary relationship:

power	oppression
le pouvoir	la oppression
el poder	la opresión
state	population
le état	la population
el estado	la población
book	reading
le livre	la lecture
el libro	la lectura
silence	communication
le silence	la communication
el silencio	la communicación

Freire asserts frequently that literacy is not simply the mechanical process of reading and writing letters. It

is more fundamentally the process of conscientisation and a necessary means of liberating people from the culture of silence in which they have been oppressed.

Through these three pictures, with the dominant image of the gun playing the same totemic role as that of the book in the first scenes, the debate is led to the discussion of literacy and power. Literacy seems to be offered as the key to regaining power and one can easily imagine and explain the reactions of the dominant classes in Brazil in 1964, if this was all that they knew of the discussion of the Culture Circles.

What is not offered in these three hunting situations is any clear correlation either between literacy and humanisation, or between the language of development and the language of power. What we then have to ask is: what other images have the coordinators got, what other convincing argument does Freire want to offer the Culture Circles, so that they will be motivated to continue with their quest for literacy? If it is evident by the end of the fifth situation that illiteracy is about powerlessness, what is the counter argument to show that, while literacy is about empowerment, it is also about an empowerment, personally and collectively, which is more than the replacement of one oppression by another? The remaining five situations should provide an answer.

5.5   Sixth-Seventh Situations:

Man transforms the Material of Nature by his Work: A Vase, the Product of Man's Work Upon the Material of Nature

1. **The Situations**   (page 169, figures 6 and 7).

V1 of Situation 6 offers a direct and simple picture of two men working at a potter's wheel. One man is engraving or decorating a pot while the other, who is sitting at the wheel and moving it with his feet, is making a pot. The scene is "framed" by two large, potted trees with splendid fruit, possibly lemons or pomegranates. One of these pots is signed with the initials of Francisco Brennand.

V2 (p.217) shows the more obvious context of a workshop where the two men are again working, one modelling, the other decorating. Behind and to the side, there is a range of pots and earthenware jars, from the small and ornamental to the large and practical.   In the foreground, near two substantial jars, is the written signature of Vincente de Abreu.

Both artists picture a vase of flowers for the seventh Situation.   The vase in V2 (p.218) is well decorated in symmetrical patterns that offset the shapes of the flowers. V1 has a cascade of flowers that droop down each side (p.219).

V1, however, shows one important visual difference. The vase is actually decorated in the centre and at the top rim with drawings of flowers. There is therefore a double representation: a picture of a vase of flowers on which there are graphic symbols of two different kinds of flowers.

2.   Application

These two situations serve, for Brown, to move the discussion on from a general discussion of culture referring to other places (countryside) and time (Indian pre-literate culture) to the discovery for members of the group that they themselves are makers of culture.   They recognise "their brothers from the people making clay pots" and they realise that clay pots are as much culture as the work of a great sculptor.

Both Freire and Brown quote from comments made in the Culture Circles:

> "They are working with clay," all the participants answer.   "They are changing the materials of nature with work," many answer.

> "I make shoes," said one participant, "and I now discover that I have as much value as a professor who makes books."

Freire intended here that there should be a discussion and analysis of work.   The coordinator is able to ask whether the work represented in this situation will result in an object of culture.   The expected answer is "Yes.   A vase. A pot.   A jug.   etc."

In this sense, the main axis for an interpretation of culture is that of aesthetics. The clay, which is nature, is transformed into culture by work, just as the flower, which is nature, is used for decoration -which is culture.

The inherent values of culture are reinforced by the use of the flower/vase of V1. Effectively, the coordinators, who may only have had copies of V2, would have to make the point verbally here that the original version was significantly different. V1 illustrates, through the use of a graphic symbol, how ideas can be drawn, can be written. The flowers in the vase are represented by a drawing of them on the clay of the vase. Brown's comment is more that indicative: "Nature, transformed into culture, has been transformed once again into a written symbol".

The foundation is thereby laid for the use of Situation 8 -the written poem. That, at least, is the more obvious progression. Less obviously, Freire intended to make the transition through the use of the "aesthetic dimension". These two situations, he suggests, have awakened the ideas of aesthetics: these can now be discussed fully in the next situation when *culture is analysed on the level of spiritual necessity"*.

3. **Commentary**

The severity of the previous discussion about power

and domination seems to have been tempered in these two situations through the leading of the debate into questions of aesthetics and culture.   This may have resulted as a instinctive reaction that sought to control the revolutionable ideas about change and the use of literacy to challenge or to supplement the power of the gun.   One could envisage the kind of Culture Circle where such argument would arise naturally in the course of discussion about Situations 3-5.   But that is not part of Freire's agenda.   He wants to make the connection between literacy and culture rather than between literacy and revolution.

He is able to do this through a sleight of hand, a refinement of the argument about <u>culture</u>.   He has in effect created a confused middle term, CULTURE, but then the Culture Circles were not meant to revel in the finer points of logic.

That is a very patronising comment, but I make it in order to expose the patronage and directiveness that seeks to lead by misleading which is what, in a sense, Freire is attempting to do.

In the earlier discussion, culture was contrasted with nature; what was given (some would say "God given") was nature; what was man-made was culture.   Now, in these two scenes from the potters' workshop, culture is not simply what was man-made. It is rather those things which are man-made and which have an aesthetic value.   The

examples that will be selected here are: pottery, flower-
arranging, drawing/painting, poetry and, by extension,
literacy.   The unspoken conclusion from the premises
expressed is that to be literate is to be cultured.   There
is a perceptible move away from the distinction between
nature and culture towards the distinction between being,
on the one hand, illiterate and, on the other hand,
Cultured (with all the social and aesthetic values which
lie hidden in the use of the majuscule).

*"Illiterate-Cultured (with all the social and
aesthetic values which lie hidden in the use of the
majuscule)."*   This comment is itself a product of the
processes of literacy, but it exemplifies the degree of
reorientation which Freire is seeking in the use of these
two pictures.

Although the comment has the quotation marks of
direct speech, it is a form of expression that is
essentially literate rather than oral. There is an implied
change in the tone of voice, an emphasis, which is
indicated by the change of script. It is not uncommon for
a writer to use such a device and to note "emphasis added
by the author" or some similar expression.   In this
apparent quotation, which is simply the restatement of a
line from the previous paragraph, the reader is intended to
identify a new emphasis, a rephrasing of interpretation.
The other accoutrements of literacy are also important:
the use of the parenthesis, and the signifier of the

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This is not simply a semantic or linguistic
diversion. It is an attempt grapple with what is
essentially a written rather than an oral use of language
and to illustrate the degree of "literese" which Freire has
imported into the discussion.[185]   His objective of
discussing Culture, (that is with the values of the capital
C) is actually infused with values realised through his own
literacy.   They are, by definition, not the values of
those who are illiterate.

What the ensuing discussion of these two situations
demands, therefore, is the very thing which Freire was at
pains to deny for himself and to criticise in Banking

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184. The majuscule is not a meaningful oral expression:
its purpose and use is essentially as part of a
script, a written semiotic that transposes the meaning
of a word, e.g. the and The, summer and Summer, god
and God.   Nonetheless, the use of the "oral
majuscule" and other literate sign systems has passed
into some, perhaps affected, oral speech.   I might
say in "literese" (the formula by which one chooses to
speak in the way that one writes, rather than write
in the way that one speaks) : _Although the
Introduction said, in parenthesis one is not always
sure why they are always so dense, quote, This is a
fascinating book: unquote, this is yet a further
instance among many, e.g. the editors' other
generalisations, which prove conclusively their lack
of judgment i.e their Incompetence -with a capital I._

185. The point is made in detail by Ong (1988) who develops
Havelock's important analysis of the transition from
orality to literacy.   This is critical for the use of
Situation 8, re. oral poetry, but here it illustrates
that Freire is unconsciously assuming that such a
transition is unproblematic and developmental.   In
fact one cannot simply transpose the accoutrements or
outils of oral language into their literate
equivalents.

Education, viz. cultural invasion.   For these discussions
to be successful, in the short term in providing the
generative words for the final three situations, and in the
long term in providing a base of achievement and motivation
for the rest of the literacy programme.   Freire and his
coordinators must impose their values of literacy.   To do
this, he offers the participants in the Culture Circle not
the possibility of power and an ensuing liberation but the
possibility of Culture and an ensuing assimilation into the
ranks of those who have "dominated the techniques of
reading and writing".

The very concept of assimilation, like that of
cultural invasion, was so much the butt of Freire's
criticism (see: Extension or Communication:Chpt.2) that it
is all the more extraordinary to sense here the same
processes, yet such is outcome of his directing of the
discussion towards his particular view of Culture.   One
may even pause to consider why he was at such pains to
insist that the "learning circles" should in fact be called
Culture Circles.   The naming of the groups in this way
creates almost a predisposition for accepting the imposed
debate about Culture.   It serves as the unspoken rule of
the group as much as it activates the hidden curriculum of
the learning process.

Yet how is Freire able to do that, to achieve the
manipulation of the discussion verbally from culture to
Culture, in a way analogous to the written transition which

I have described above "with all the values of the
majuscule"?   Such a transition from c to C in a written
form would be immediately obvious to the reader: how can
the verbal transition therefore go undetected?

The key lies again not so much in what is said as in
what is not said.   Freire own guideline suggests "after a
series of analyses of work (some participants even speak of
the pleasure of making beautiful things), the coordinator
asks whether the work represented in the situation will
result in an object of culture.   They answer Yes."

Within the debate as constructed by the coordinators,
the answer has to be Yes.   Freire himself records that,
while everyone could look at the pictures and see that the
men were working with clay, not all could answer
immediately that the men were "changing the materials of
nature with work".   That is a learnt response, arising
from the discussion, just as their final, affirmative
response is learnt within the group, "after a series of
analyses of work".

We are not told what this series of analyses
contains, but it is clear what they do not contain: they
are not centred on a economic analysis or on the nature of
unproductive work.

As with the debate about the role and function both
of the gun in the hunting situations, and of the book in

the initial, farming situations, the discussion and
analysis of work removes the reality of employment, market
forces and exploitation from its known context.

The Culture Circles could look at the two pictures
and say: the picture of the flowers (fig.7) is irrelevant
to our lives. We are more concerned with surviving, with
finding food to eat. The realities of our poverty are not
concealed beneath the cosmetics of flower arranging. The
picture of the two men working is our reality: they have
to work many hours a day, and while pots and jars are a
necessity, they are a necessity for only part of the
population. The rich do not buy clay pots for their dinner
tables. The potters, having paid for their clay, their
glazes and the wood for the kiln, can only charge for their
wares what the poor can afford to pay.

Freire was either unaware of the real dimensions of
social poverty (as opposed to cultural poverty) or he chose
to exclude this debate from the analysis. Not all work
results in an object of culture: not everyone who works
has the "pleasure of making beautiful things". In the day
to day necessity for production, few artisans can pause to
lavish attention on their vase, at the risk of prejudicing
the economic viability of the product.

There is within these two pictures the double bind of
value systems that have their origin in Christian work
values and/or in non-working class social values. The

experience of the poor and the oppressed is that they are
most exploited through their work, and that manual labour
does not bring job satisfaction or pleasure.

Additionally, there is the echo of the illusion of
the enlightened savage of the hunting scenes, but this time
offered as the illusion of the contented craftsman. Poor,
illiterate he may be, but he can still "make culture", can
still contribute to society something that is beautiful.
There is no discussion of the possibility of work as
employment, of the oppression of the employers (where is
the senghor del engheno, the mill owner who was such a
model of oppression in Pedagogy of the Oppressed), or of
the difficulties of being self-employed, without sickness
insurance, pensions or other social security benefits.

On the contrary, the myth is reinforced by Brown: the
assertion that the person who makes shoes has as much value
as the professor who makes books is left unchallenged.
Yet in what society is this true? How do the coordinators
relate this kind of statement to the realities of the lives
of the participants who are shoemakers, potters and
farmers? In a utopian sense, there is an acceptable truth
to the statement, but it reflects more a world of what
should be than the world as it is.

Or does it?   What happens if the illusion is
reversed, if the values and hierarchies of the crypto-
literate are rejected?   It clearly suits Freire and his

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coordinators that the participants of the Culture Circles
should themselves assert the literacy hierarchy within
which all are inferior to the academic professor, the
writer of books par excellence. This is an illusion, but
an important illusion. The group cannot be encouraged to
accept or even to admit the possibility of another reality,
viz. that it is easier to live without books than it is to
live without shoes, that the shoemaker actually has more
social value than the professor. One has only to look at
the pictures of bare-footed peasants, let alone know of the
status which someone in a Third World society can gain
through owning a pair of shoes, to be convinced that it
could be wholly reasonable and possible for any critically
active Culture Circle to challenge and ultimately to reject
this illusion.

The fact that they do not do so, or that there is no
evidence that they have ever done so, speaks more of the
degree of "mind-guarding" in the groups which has been a
feature also of the earlier discussions.

However, the maintenance of this "culture of silence"
(and one is immediately aware of accusing Freire of that
which he himself has defined as the most potent symptom of
educational oppression) is also achieved through the
channelling of the discussion away from the sketch of the
workshop (fig.6) towards the graphic representations of
fig.7.

In Brown's use of the picture, the group initially discuss the difference between the flowers in the field, which are Nature, and the flowers in the vase, which is Culture. The distinction between the two may be made more obvious both by this simple example and by the dislocating of the two nouns. That is the objective of the picture and, while the use of the majuscule N and C facilitate that process visually, it is clear that this is the outcome which must to be achieved by the coordinators orally.[106]

That, however, is the preliminary part of the discussion: the importance for Brown is that "a graphic signal is introduced for the first time in this picture. The flowers in the vase are represented by a drawing of them on the clay of the vase." (see: pp. 218/219).

I have already noted that the coordinators who only had V2 would have some difficulty in making this point. If it was a significant as Brown suggests, then it is hard to imagine why de Abreu was not advised to include an equivalent graphic form in his version.

Nonetheless, the importance of the graphic signal is not whether it appears either in version 1 or in version 2.

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106. There is an additional, but more complex, discussion about the validity of this distinction which becomes particularly clear when one asks "What is natural and what is cultural?" rather than "What is the difference between Nature and Culture?". However, one must prescind that discussion here rather than loose the main point behind an ontological or phenomenological excursion.

The significance of Brown's comment is that it is not true.

Brown is referring to the written symbol for the flower, and this she takes as the starting point for discussing graphic, i.e. written representations as a means of widening the approach to literacy so that it includes writing as well as reading. This is not invalid in itself, but it does illustrate the selectivity of the literacy tutor and the ways in which the whole discussion of these situations has been orchestrated. Within the learning schedule, graphic symbols are introduced in fig.7.

What then are we to make of the two major graphic symbols in fig.6? In both versions of the pictures, the artists have writ large their signatures or initials. What do they represent and for what were they intended?

In all the Brennand pictures (see pp. 168/169) his initials are towards the bottom or to the side of the drawing and represent the normal marks of authorship and possession. In figures 1-4 and 9-10, (figures 5 and 8 are from de Abreu) the signing can be ignored: it is wholly incidental. However, in figure 7, but particularly in figure 6, the signature is in sharper focus and is clearly intended to be seen. It is a signal from the artist to the viewer. A picture it may be, one among a series, but the viewer (that person in the Culture Circle who will shortly be the reader and the writer) should be aware that Francisco Brennand has written his name.

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Of all the visual images which the group could recognise in all the pictures, and which they could be expected to "name", it could have been anticipated that any genuine but non-directive application of the Freirean method would have produced the question "what is that in the box or the plant pot under the tree?" The constant question which underlies the methodology is "What do you see?" Yet it appears here that nobody has seen what is there clamouring to be expressed, and the only explanation can be that the coordinators were in fact working to their own agenda and discussion profile and not to the freely generated discussion which would have reflected the more immediate searchings of the group.

Despite his rejection of a literacy _Primer_, Freire has actually created a paradigm for the group discussions which serves exactly the same purpose, viz. the establishing of certain common norms and ideas. Brown argues that Freire and his coordinators avoided the use of primers "on the grounds that they were mechanical and did not lend themselves to much flexibility in the discussion. Furthermore, primers discourage people from expressing and writing their own ideas and words." However, it is one thing to suggest in principle that the choice of words, questions ideas, etc., should be jointly undertaken by the non-literate adults and by the coordinators, when the realities even of time and resources (the Culture Circles often comprised some 25-30 non-literate participants, and the ten picture situations were intended to be discussed in

as little as two hours) demand a highly structured and directed agenda.

This agenda setting role of the coordinators is in fact reinforced through a comparison, at this point, of the two versions of the pictures. In the use of version 1, I have illustrated how Brown suggest that the first graphic symbol appears in fig.7, when in my view a far more significant graphic symbol appears in fig.6. One may want to offset that analysis with the comment that it applies only to the Brennand version and that most coordinators did not use that set of pictures. However, paradoxically, this major criticism of Brown can be applied with even more force to the de Abreu version.

If the graphic symbolism noted by Brown was such an important feature of fig.7, then that detail should have been reproduced in the de Abreu version. Evidently it is not, even though de Abreu may well have had copies of the original slides. What is significant it that, in this second version, de Abreu has not copied the "graphic signal" in fig.7, but he has signed his own version of fig.6, with exactly the same clarity and force as Brennand's fig.6.

This has to be more than coincidence. Of all the de Abreu pictures, only figures 2, 6 and 10 are signed, whereas all ten of Brennand are initialled. It is as though he alone has actually read Brennand's graphic signal

on the plant pot, and reproduced the picture (two men
working in the pottery workshop) and the graphic fuse which
Brennand had left waiting to be lit.

In assuming that the written word is the only form of
literacy, and in implicitly ascribing to literacy a value
system created around their own cultural norms, the
coordinators had misread, or not read at all, one of the
most important cues in the whole sequence of pictures.
Brennand and de Abreu, consciously or not, had *written
their name.* They had given the lie to the claims of the
literacy campaigners that writing one's name, naming one's
world was always going to be part of the process of
collective liberation and personal recognition achieved
through becoming literate. They were not critically
aware, conscientised, to the very process taking place
before them. Sadly, in my view, what seems to have
desensitised them was their unquestioning acceptance of the
importance of their own culture, i.e. the presumed culture
of literacy.

In denial of the philosophy and the principles of his
method, there is an elitism inherent in Freire's use of
these pictures. One may have looked at the pictures of
potter at work and of the use, socially and culturally, to
which that work can be put, and one could then have begun
to identify some of the very practical reasons why someone
who cannot read or write should become literate. After
these two situations, this could have been the point for

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grounding the discussion in the realities of the daily lives of the participants of the Culture Circles. What, at the end of the day, has literacy got to offer them?

Surprisingly, Freire does not take that line. On the contrary, he continues with his analysis of Culture and his argument based on aesthetics. He wants to move the discussion, following these two situations, to an analysis of Culture as a spiritual necessity.

The reasons for this approach, and its effect, we shall now have to examine.

5.6 Eighth Situation: Poetry

1. The Situation (Page 169)

The picture shows a large, open book. On one page, there is a short, two verse poem A Bomba, and on the other, a representation of people and trees. The script of the poem is hand-written, rather than printed, but all the writing is in capital letters. Despite that simplicity, the text does not forego the need to include accents and a hyphen, but it does take a modern, poetic license to exclude commas and full stops.

The actual text of the poem is :

A BOMBA

A TERRIVEL BOMBA ATÓMICA   The awful, atomic bomb,

E A RADIO-ATIVIDADE	With its radioactivity,
SIGNIFICAM TERROR	Presages terror,
RUINA E CALAMIDADE	Ruin and disaster.
SE ACABASSEM COM A GUERRA	If all war were ended,
E TUDO FICASSE UNIDO	And all things united,
O NOSSO MUNDO DE HOJE	Then our world today
NÃO SERIA DESTRUIDO	Would not be destroyed.
(trans. PVT)	

2.   Application

From Freire's own notes, it is not immediately clear
where the emphasis of this situation lies. His directions
are that the coordinator first reads the projected text
slowly. This is accepted as a "poem of the people", and
there is then an ensuing discussion about whether such a
poem is culture. In comparing the production of the vase,
from the previous situations, and the production of a poem,
the participants are intended to "perceive, in critical
terms, that poetic expression, whose material is not the
same, responds to a different necessity". There follows
a discussion on the difference between popular and erudite
artistic expression in various fields, and then a rereading
by the coordinator of the poem.

Brown has more practical objectives. Building on
her identification of the graphic signal of the flowers in
the previous situation, she wants to use the picture of the
poem as the next step in "graphic representation". Her

theme is that "words known by and put together by non-literate people can be written down and are as much poetry as poems by educated people". When the coordinator reads the words of the text, the participants are able to recognise that they are the words of a song which they all know. The seed is sown for a later understanding that all and everything that can be sung or said can be written. Brown suggests that this discovery is highly exciting to non-literates because it shows them "that they can learn to read the words and songs they already know".

This latter point is significant because it underlies the whole framework of the Freirean method. The idea of "generating words" and then decoding them syllabically, is based on the principle that the adult learners will be recognising the written forms of words which they already know and use without any problem. It is in that sense that it has been suggested that no-one is verbally illiterate: a non-literate person is simply someone who is as yet unable to master the techniques of reading or writing the words which they already know.

3. **Commentary**

It does appear that Freire and Brown are using this situation in very different ways, or at least with very different emphases. Given the high level of correspondence between the two over the presentation and interpretation of the previous situations, this divergence

here needs to be explained. We need to question whether
the differences lie simply in the prioritising of ideas or
whether there is a more fundamental, methodological
difference. For one, the situation has been selected in
order to give rise to a discussion on poetry and Culture;
for the other, it is a means of establishing a practical
confidence in the processes of word recognition.

It is possible to see Brown's approach as being
product centred, focussing on certain selected outcomes,
while that of Freire is more process centred, seeing the
scene as part of the complex unveiling of critical
consciousness. Pedagogically, one is skills based, the
other is more theoretical. One is concerned with the
content of literacy, the mechanics of word recognition, the
other with the wider, cultural context.

Schematically, the differences can be summarised as follows:

Freire	Brown
process centred	product centred
theoretical	practical
the context of literacy	the content of literacy
literate Culture	literate culture

Presented in this almost traditional, binary system,
the difference between the two educators is profound,
representing a divergence both of method and orientation.
It might therefore be logical to explore how effective
either approach might be and to try to explain each in the
light of their related personal philosophies and

professional experience.

This, however, while it may be interesting, would distract from a more important question. It focuses, as do most discussions on the philosophy or practice of education, on the philosophers and the practitioners themselves.   What it ignores is the effect that such differences of method or emphasis might have on the learners, on the consumers of the method.   It would be worth pausing here to try to understand the role and position of the adult learner faced with this particular situation and Freire's and Brown's interpretation of it.

There is little to be gained from a simplistic, "cause and effect" analysis, as if this learning model was some kind of refined operant conditioning.[107]   What we need to look at is what actually occurs within the brain, or within the person, that impedes or facilitates a learning moment, that point in time when one appreciates that one now knows something which one did not know

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107. Such a traditional approach, which Hill calls "connectionist theories" or Lovell "stimulus-response-associationist", is too much part of the operant conditioning which is so prevalent in Banking Education to offer a fair framework within which to attempt to place Freire.   The underlying principles of reward and punishment, of a "learning economy" within which we learn to maximise benefits and minimise costs, (classically expressed in Thorndike, Hull and Skinner) reflect more the "culture of silence" where people have learnt (have been taught) to be oppressed.   Freire was seeking more a method of operant de-conditioning, a pedagogy of liberation.

For further reading on traditional, behaviourist and cognitive theories of education, see Hill, (1980).

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previously.   It may be called revelation, or awareness or
perception, or learning: it is always an acceptance of
having changed.

     This is the final objective of all education and one
overtly pursued by Freire.   Learning becomes a multi-
threaded concept, the product of perception, memory,
analysis and transference.   For him, a learner needs to be
able to perceive a learning need, to relate that need to
other learning or knowledge, analyse what is the issue or
problem to be solved, and to then transfer that accumulated
learning to the new situation or event.

     Through the "problematisation" of fig.8, how can this
theory be put into practice?   Is such learning the most
likely outcome for the participants of the Culture Circles?

     The guiding criteria which would be relevant to such
a judgment can be found in a key text of educational
psychology, of which there was a Spanish edition and which
Freire knew: Koffka's (1935) Principles of Gestalt
Psychology.   It is suggested that there are two, inter-
dependent laws of learning -the law of proximity and the
law of closure.   In essence, learning is facilitated
where we can see the relationship, the correlation or
unitary nature of several "perceptions", in such a way that
we are able to construct a new, composite piece of
information.   In the strict sense of the words, we make
sense of possibly disparate or divergent information, we

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look for underline. When we say something or somebody is "coherent", we understand that to mean that they are intelligible. Hence the value of Koffka's laws: the nearer we are to an event or learning situation, or, more accurately, the nearer a learning situation is to us and our accumulated learning, memory and perceptions, either in actual physical, spatial or temporal proximity [*the law of proximity*], or the more intrinsically coherent the event or stimulus is [*the law of closure*], then the more are we likely to construct a meaningful understanding of it.

We can then ask whether the use of fig.8 by either Freire or Brown does proximate to the experiences of the people in the Culture Circle, whether is enters their "zone of proximate development" (to borrow Vygotsky's useful term), and to what degree is their exposition of this situation coherent both in itself and in relation to the other, preceding pictures?   The degree to which the answer to either of these questions is found to be negative would create a measure against which we could assess the level of "cultural invasion" required to implement this programme.

That would be a value judgment over and above the more neutral assessment that, even within Koffka's laws, the teacher / instructor has an instrumental role vis-a-vis the learner, i.e. the bridging of the gap between the learner's experience of perception and the relevance of the new learning stimulus, even to achieve learning objectives

created by, or agreed with, the learning group. The illusion is that this, of itself, creates a learner-centred agenda: the reality is that, despite the rhetoric, each leap of understanding, each newly acquired learning, has to be facilitated. The learner is, by definition, the person who says "how can I, unless someone helps me?"

Most learning theory, (which perhaps, more accurately, we should call teaching theory), concentrates on this latter apodosis, on the way in which the teacher/educator can assist the learner or the learning process. This is what Freire had attempted to criticise in his analysis of Banking Education, yet he has a counter argument, a more important question that relates to his enquiry and emphasis on the prodosis: how can I? He demands that we ask "Who is the learner, who is the me who will say "I have learnt" ?"

To concentrate on the individual, the person who is the learner, requires a movement away from the traditional behaviourist and cognitive theories of learning which are the hall-mark of Banking Education, and the espousal of a theory and method which is truly "learner-centred", that concentrates on creating learning which (in Koffka's terms) is so proximate that it is experienced as being directly and personally relevant.

Leaving for the moment the debate about how instrumental a teacher can be/ought to be, we can look at

the criteria for assessing <u>proximate learning</u>. viz.

i.   it is the teacher who formulates the units or packages
     of learning,

ii   ideally in some "developmental sequence"

iii that accommodates the cultural and social background
     of the learner.

The first, two criteria need not detain us. Clearly
the literacy programme has been created *by* experts *for the
use* of coordinators and culture circles. By definition,
non-literate groups do not have the capacity to become
"self-taught". Reading and writing is not an innate skill,
and it is not surprising that the learning sequence should
be prepared by the educators.

The question of a learning sequence which is also
developmental we shall leave until the end of the programme
and then review the ten pictures/situations. That leaves
the question of the relevance of this picture, fig. 8, to
the cultural and social background of the learners.

According to Brown, the poem is meant to be sung.
There is, in Northeast Brazil, as in many part of non-
literate Africa, a strong tradition of spreading news,
telling stories and giving information in song. Like the
"griots", their counterparts in Africa, individuals or
groups travel from town to town, singing the news, and
entertaining the people.   Clearly the structure of the
poem, like the structure of the twelve bar blues in other
cultures, would have been known to the Culture Circles.

Freire notes that, after the poem had been read by the coordinator, the group would say "This is a poem" and would describe it as popular, and would describe its author as "a simple man of the people".

Criticism from afar is always dangerous, if not always difficult, and at this point one may have to admit to a degree of cultural distance or alienation. Nonetheless, it is still important to ask whether such "simple men of the people" actually did go around singing songs against the atomic bomb. The simple poem actually carries a very complex, political message, the origins of which are uncertain. Brown suggest that the non-literates would be highly excited because this picture would show them that they can learn to read the words and songs that they already know. One possible source of the song/poem may have been as a reaction or popular comment to the Bay of Pigs incident, the narrowly avoided, total conflict between Cuba and the United States during the Kennedy presidency.

However, neither Brown nor Freire are concerned with the actual content of the poem, interesting as it might be. For Brown, it is a means of facilitating word recognition: the group "sees" the visual image, i.e. the written words, of the song which they all know. That is the sole purpose of using the song in this fig.8, and it gains its strength from the pertinence and relevance that it has to the daily lives of the learners. For Brown, this is the value of

the picture, but for Freire it is almost seen as a weakness. For him, the debate is about whether or not this poem is or is not culture. Yes, it must be culture because, like the vase, it is produced by people in response to a certain necessity, -in this case, spreading the news. But no, it is not erudite, it is not artistic. Freire himself sets the agenda for the coordinators by making the distinction between popular and erudite artistic expression. It is his way of re-asserting the difference between culture and Culture.

The point is subtly but powerfully made, for it is not a casual distinction. It is part of Freire's hidden agenda that the transmogrification of culture to Culture is achieved through literacy. He makes this point, not through what is said by the coordinators or within the general discussion, but through the subliminal message of the visual image of the poem in the book.

In explaining their use of this situation, neither Freire nor Brown seem to be aware of the profound significance that the picture of the poem is actually a picture of a book in which is written the poem under discussion (p.246). Yet their reactions implicitly make that observation. Brown says "the words of non-literate people can be written down and are as much poetry as poems by educated people." This superimposes on the concept of poetry, which normally is taken to be an oral medium, the primacy of the written word. It is that which makes it
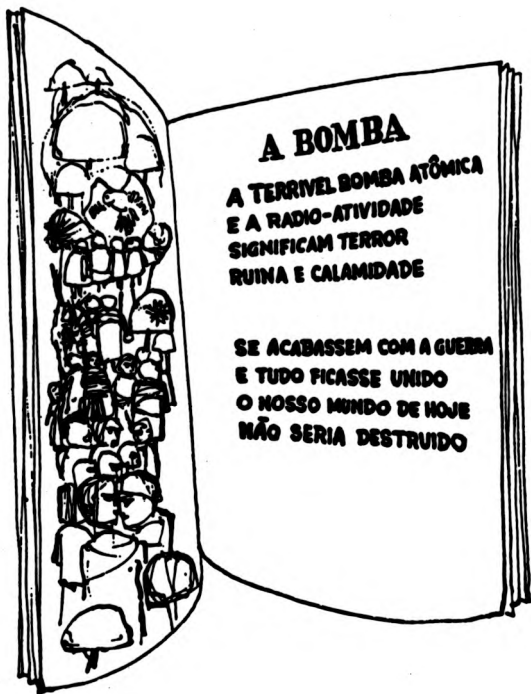
A BOMBA

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

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

cultural, in the value laden term which Freire uses. For
him, the poem is culture - but it becomes Culture through
being written in the book. The book enfolds the poem,
just as it enfolds the whole world, "nosso mundo de hoje",
the pictorial image of which is on the page opposite the
poem. The simple picture of the poem, which Freire could
have used (page 248) is severely enhanced by the setting of
the poem in the book.[108] The power of the book, and
thereby the power of literacy, is such that it can
encompass the whole world, even the atomic bomb. It has
the power to create, just as the bomb has the power to
destroy.

So the debate can be seen to be less about the
bookish nature of poetry and more about the bookish nature
of literacy. Brown confronts the Culture Circle with the
text of words which they already know. Freire confronts
them with Culture. Both are foreign to the group, both
represent a high level of cultural invasion. The degree of
proximate learning, in Koffka's terms, is simply an
illusion. The members of the Culture Circles are no more
textually competent than they are culturally competent.

Freire does not explain how the poem, which is
essentially about oral communication, is any different for
being written down. However, there is an implied

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108. The picture is no longer a representation of a poem or
song, but rather a poem-in-a-book picture, a page from
a poetry book. That this bibliocentrism is
subliminal only renders it the more powerful.

A BOMBA

A TERRIVEL BOMBA ATÔMICA
E A RADIO-ATIVIDADE
SIGNIFICAM TERROR
RUINA E CALAMIDADE

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

hierarchy of culture, rising from the oral (the original song) to the visual (the representation projected on to the wall of the classroom) to the written (the book).   Fig.8 serves to emphasise covertly the primacy of the written form.   Unlike the book in figs 1 and 2, this book is decontextualised: it is not held by anyone, nor associated with anything.   It is simply The Book.

A text without a context is normally taken as a contradiction in terms, yet here it serves to emphasise the sublime nature of the book, of literacy itself.   That is what Freire meant when he said, at the end of fig. 7, that the aesthetic values which had been raised re. the vase, would be "discussed fully in the following situation, *when culture is analysed on the level of spiritual necessity*". Nowhere in fig.8 does he actually discuss spiritual necessity: Brown even attempts to make it a very functional discussion.   Nonetheless, the unspoken words are not about the poem, but about the poem in the Book.

What has been projected on the wall, writ large, is not the poem but the unspoken value of literacy which is of such importance to the life of humankind that one can legitimately call it a "spiritual necessity".

Where does that leave the non-literate who is confronted by this picture, by these values which appertain to a literate world?   Does it not represent a damming criticism of those who are non-literate?   They cannot read

nor write, and apparently have no need of this spiritual
necessity which is engendered by literacy.   They are a
sub-class, cultured in a populist and simple way, but not
artistic, erudite, or creative.

So again, the impact of cultural invasion becomes
evident.   The non-literates are presented with a set of
values which are not their own and which must replace their
own, if they are to become literate.   Fig. 8 is an
invitation for them to begin the process of assimilation
into the world of literate culture, the world represented
in the picture of the book.

Freire sounds like an missionary of old, seeking
conversion on the basis of spiritual necessity.   What in
fact he has created through this invasion of nonliterate
culture is not a pedagogy of liberation but a pedagogy of
assimilation.   As a model of change, both for individuals
and for society, that is the complete antithesis of
Pedagogy of the Oppressed.   How interesting then that his
latest book, Reading the Word, Reading the World
encapsulates, in its title, the two processes required in
this picture: on the one page, there is the Word, the
Text, while, on the other page, there is the World.   Both
symbolically represent that world from which non-literates
are excluded and by which they are oppressed.

In this picture, the book which is the world of
literacy is open for them to see.   It is an invitation, an

opportunity.   What then must they do to ensure that this
book will not again become closed to them ?   Unnervingly,
Freire, who has allowed the real text of this picture to be
read in silence, has already prepared a response to that
question.   In anticipation that the Culture Circle may
have correctly interpreted the unconscious meaning of
fig.8, he has prepared fig.9 and a discussion of resistance
to change.

5.7   Ninth Situation: Patterns of Behaviour

1.   The Situation   (Page 169, figures 9)

Fig. 9 shows two men: one is a gaucho from the South
of Brazil, and the other is a cowboy from the Northeast.
They are dressed in clothes which are typical of the two
areas.   V1 (p.169) shows the differences more clearly than
V2: there is a marked contrast between the boots, trousers,
jackets and hats of the two men.

The first man is warmly dressed in wool -he comes
from a largely sheep rearing area in the colder South.   The
second man, from the cattle country of the Northeast, wears
clothes made from the leather which is both readily
available and a useful protection against the cacti which
are found throughout the scrubland.

In both versions, behind the men, there is one horse,

perhaps symbolically representing the fact that both are cowboys. V1 might indicate a simple situation where the two men have met and, standing a little apart, are having a conversation.

V2, however, is different from V1 in two ways. (see p.253) Firstly, it is much more difficult to recognise the difference in clothing and styles. At least to the unlearned eye, they seem to be dressed in a very similar fashion. The background of spiky plants suggest the scrubland of the Northeast.

Secondly, and in a sense despite the similarity, the men are intended to be different, not so much in clothing but because one of the men is holding a book and seems to be reading it to his companion. Structurally, the picture is an exact echo of that used in Fig.2 where the relationship between two people is mediated again by the presence of the book.

2. Application

Neither Freire nor Brown allude to this significant feature in the picture. Rather, Freire intended the picture to be used to "analyse patterns of behaviour as a cultural manifestation, in order subsequently to discuss resistance to change." By analysing the two traditions, North and South, shown here as differences of clothing, the discussion can move on to consider differences in other

forms of behaviour.189   A comment, first noted in a
Culture Circle in the South, is used to guide the other
groups: "traditions are formed as a response to need.
Sometimes the need passes, but the tradition goes on."

Brown has a slightly wider use for the picture, but
is clearly influenced by the Freirean model.   For her, the
pictures is intended to "expand the notion of culture by
showing that clothes and ways of behaving are also part of
culture".   She notes that sometimes (but, evidently, not
always,) the picture leads to a discussion of people's
resistance to change.

3.   **Commentary**

This is the weakest of the sequence of pictures, not
only because there is no great clarity about the focus or
use of the picture, but also because it is presenting no
information that has not already featured in the programme.
The picture could be removed from the set, without loss to
the overall theme or to the required development of ideas.

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189.   Another context in which to view this picture is
       Freire's remarks about the enforced isolation of the
       regions in Brazil under colonial rule.   "Such
       relations, if permitted, would have provided an
       indispensable exchange of experiences by which human
       groups, through mutual observation, correct and
       improve themselves" (1976b:25).

       It is interesting that the potential of this scene to
       create political discussion is not mentioned by Freire
       in his commentary, preferring as he does to emphasise
       the nature of culture and behaviour.

Indeed, what is required here is an extreme degree of
orchestration of the discussion.   It is not immediately
obvious from the pictures, V1 or V2, that the different
fashions in clothing are meant, almost metonomically, to
represent the differing modes of behaviour/traditions in
different parts of the country.   It may, at best, support
a discussion that looks at the broader definitions of
"culture", but there is a leap of logic required to channel
that debate towards the notion of resistance to change.
The intended syllogism must run as follows: In the
case

that a) Culture [e.g. clothing and behaviour] is created
        out of Necessity,

and b) Tradition [= continuous Culture] implies a
         continuation of the original Necessity,

but c) Tradition may also continue beyond the original
         Necessity [= unnecessary Culture], and

     d) Unnecessary Culture implies a resistance to Change,

then it is also the case that

     e) Culture is created either out of necessity or as a
         reaction against change.

     Brown concentrates on premises b) and c), Freire on
a) and d).   Neither have a evident logic, nor do the
discussions which they suggest sound like the authentic
voice of people from within the Culture Circles.   The
objectives for this picture require that the coordinators
manipulate the discussion around the confused middle term
of tradition. shown above in premises b) and c).

     However, neither Freire nor Brown pause to recognise

that culture is also a confused middle term, and they fail
to draw the more obvious conclusion which I have added to
their intended premises, i.e. e) that Culture is a reaction
to change, either to create it or to deny it.   Not only
would this have provided Freire with a base on which to
explain the Culture of Silence (i.e. that reactionary
culture which exists beyond the need) but he could also
have begun to explain or explore what were the contemporary
needs of the group that would have led them to redefine
their culture, what in other contexts Freire would have
called "naming their world".

     Yet this is what he singularly fails to do, almost as
if he had in mind some other picture or some other debate.
It does seem to be the case that the discussion which he
was seeking here is only marginally supported by the
picture, while, on the other hand, what is actually in the
picture he does not use.

     What is missing is any comment or reference on his
part to the presence of the book.   This is the more
remarkable, given the incongruity of a picture of two
cowboys reading a book, a scene which could not have been
part of the everyday life of the members of the Culture
Circles.   How can this be explained?

     A simplistic response would be that Freire was again
seeking, through a kind of subliminal advertising, to
emphasise the totemic value of the book, that prime symbol

of literacy. He seems to know instinctively that the whole impact of such advertising is enhanced by silence, that it ceases to be subliminally effective once the targeted individuals or group become consciously aware of it. As such, it represents a very powerful form of cultural invasion.

However, it is more than that. The very totemic value of the book reveals, in an encoded way, the personal value system which Freire has for identifying or asserting the importance of literacy.

Although he has elsewhere spoken of the centrality, within the process of conscientisation, of that very active process which he called "naming the world", the evidence from these pictures suggests that, in practice, he offered a pedagogy that required a more passive response on the part of the learners. Literacy would enable them to read the word, that is, to read the world. They would be assimilated into the world of the coordinators. That was the rôle-model which was presented when the coordinators read the poem in Fig.6, although it was stated that this was a popular song already known to the group. There would then have been an opportunity, if so required, for the group themselves to "read" the poem.

However, this was not required: the constant image of the sequence of pictures is that of the *literate person who is a reader*, and this is the rôle-model which is affirmed

and re-affirmed in Fig.1, Fig.2, Fig. 7, Fig.8, and Fig.10. Nowhere in any of the ten pictures is anyone seen to be _writing_, yet it is writing, rather than reading, which is more symptomatic of dialogic learning.   It is in writing that we come closest to actually "naming our world".

This is not simply to assert the primacy of writing, of the written over the oral, in some Derridean fashion. It is to draw attention to the important fact, which Freire has here neglected, that, unless it is clearly and symbiotically related to writing, Reading, like the voice of the educator, can so easily be another mode of Banking Education: it is the author who writes, but the student who reads.   It is the sound, says the old Zen master, of one hand clapping.   That is an incongruous image, the epitome of non-dialogue, yet it is an apt way of describing both the sight of the book in Fig.9, (V2), and the sound of the silence occasioned by Freire's lack of commentary on this point.

The paradox of this figure is that, while ostensibly it portrays two men who have stopped to have a conversation (a dialogue), it actually reveals the presence of a book which may be anti-dialogic.   In V1, Brennand drew a scene which was out of the ordinary, viz. the meeting of men from the North and from the South, but at least the men were ordinary, recognisable to their peers in the Culture Circle.

By contrast, in V2, de Abreu has drawn an apparently ordinary scene of two men meeting, but the men are quite different from the participants of the Culture Circle. They are extra-ordinary, for they are (or at least one of them is) el hombre nuevo, revolutionised, conscientised, literate.

The men in the two pictures (V1 and V2) inhabit two different worlds, within which their cultural differences from the North or from the South are insignificant. Both the men in Version 1 live in the world of non-literacy, while both the men in Version 2 live in the world of the Book. De Abreu has named this latter world visually: his picture does not just speak the book, but does, in the full sense of the common expression "speak volumes".

Even when they have been using de Abreu's version, both Freire and Brown retreat behind the simplicity of Brennand's visually more simple picture. They could project the former (V2) onto the wall of the Culture Circle, but it is around the latter (V1) that they both direct the discussion. For them to achieve their objectives in the session, it is essential that the group are led, encouraged, or directed to discuss what is not in the picture in front of them (i.e. the clarity of the cultural difference, which is only in V1) while disregarding what is actually there, viz. the presence of the book (which is only in V2).

What is it then about the book in this picture which forces Freire into such a blatantly false pedagogy, into contradicting the very principles of his own method of "decoding" critically what people can actually see?

It may be that there is no convincing answer to that question, that we have to leave Freire, as he so often demands "at peace with his contradictions". However, in the context of these pictures, there may be the germ of an answer or explanation.

It may be that Freire has never fully come to terms with the powerful dualism or Manicheism of which he often spoke and which is inherent in the Catholicism that has so clearly influenced his personal and professional life. This we have already noted in the constant, binary nature of much of his thought, where there is always a polarity between good and bad, rich and poor, oppressed and oppressors, teachers and taught. Nothing can be simply good or bad: virtue and hope and loving are always contaminated with the possibility of sin, despair and non-loving, even while the most bigoted oppressor or the most enculturally silenced of the oppressed retain a spark of being "something other", of being humanised, where there is always the possibility of humble, positive, creative change.

We have noted earlier re. the Second Situation the implied context of a Garden of Eden, and the representative

figures of the man and the woman as the Adam and Eve of humanising literacy. There it was the woman bringing the Book of Life, here it is the cowboy, but the implied choice is the same. The parallels between the two pictures, even pictorially, are clear (p.262), but whereas Freire's use of fig.2 was positive and generative, his use of fig.9 is guarded and selective, almost as if, like the Adam figure, he first wanted to refuse what was offered. This is because the tree of life is also the tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. Its benefits are not unalloyed.

Without sharing his disquiet with the Culture Circles, Freire has had to confront his ambivalence towards issues of literacy and power, and towards the real content of what is contained in the book. One the one hand, he is wanting to assert the positive aspects of literacy, of naming the world, of creating one's own history and of being liberated. On the other hand, he is not wanting to explain why it is that those who are literate are more likely to be the oppressors, that the book, like the gun, is not necessarily dialogic, that being able to read the word does not automatically enable you to read the world. The book may reveal the possibility of change, but it equally shows up resistance to change. The book both gives and demands a bifocal, even Manichean, perspective of the world. Freire perhaps unconsciously knew that, and tried to say so, not just in overlooking the presence of the book in V2, but in insisting that the discussion of V1, against the evidence, was not so much about cultural habits

and fashions but about *resistance to change.*

Situation 9 is not truly a part of the sequence of learning for the Culture Circles because primarily its content is not directed towards the learner participants. It provides rather the focus for a discussion among the educators and coordinators about their approach to literacy, about their reluctance to forego the methods and styles of Banking Education and about a fear of that very change which they are in the process of facilitating. The question is not whether they understand or respect the various cultures of the people in the North or the South, although it is hard to assert such respect and still go ahead with the cultural invasion which this picture demands. The fundamental question is even more demanding: given the culture of the people, are they really prepared to accept that the people should be in possession of the book in the way that is proclaimed in V2 ?

From their refusal to see the book, and from their orientation of the discussion, the evidence suggests that, despite the rhetoric, Freire and the coordinators were inhibited by their own resistance to change from acknowledging that the people had the right to unrestrained access to the book. They had refused to see the book, to countenance this possibility, and, as a result, the members of Culture Circles had been disabled from reading the picture correctly. The coordinators, like the God in Paradise, had said: if truly you could eat of the tree of

Life, (if truly you were literate, without need of us),
then you would be like us.

Is fig.9 therefore really about resistance to change
on the part of the coordinators, or is it more about the
obverse, their fear of being the same as the people of the
Culture Circles?   Or is its hidden agenda more positively
altruistic and more about tuning the speed or the quality
of change which is occasioned by literacy to the life style
and capacities of the group so that, in the longer term,
the full, liberating effects of literacy can be realised?
Is fig.9 about Banking Education, benign paternalism, or
the offer of radical, dialogic learning?

The intended summary of fig.10 may clarify an answer.

5.8 Tenth Situation: A Culture Circle in Action -
                       Synthesis of the Previous Discussions

1. The Situation   (page 169, figure 16).

     There is a high level of consistency between the V1
and the V2 of this situation.   Both show a group which is
recognisable as a Culture Circle discussing one of the
projected pictures of these introductory lessons, viz. the
pot of flowers, (p.266).   The Brennand picture, V1, is
obviously a copy of his own earlier picture.   Abreu has
not copied his own, but has done a drawing which closely
resembles Brennand's, perhaps indicating that he had a
print to hand from which to make the new slides.   (see
p.267)

     Both versions show the small projector on which the
presentation depends.   In V1, the group is quite small,
some ten people amongst whom there appears to be only one
woman.   In V2, there is a larger group, 25 or more, of whom
three or four are women.

     In neither version is the group sitting in a circle.
On the contrary, the pictures reveal a very traditional,
classroom situation, with the "pupils" all turned to face
the board /projected picture.   In V2, the male co-
ordinator is pointing to the picture with a stick, perhaps
eliciting a question or clarifying a point.   In V1, the
co-ordinator, again male, is not using his stick but is
pointing to the picture with his hand.
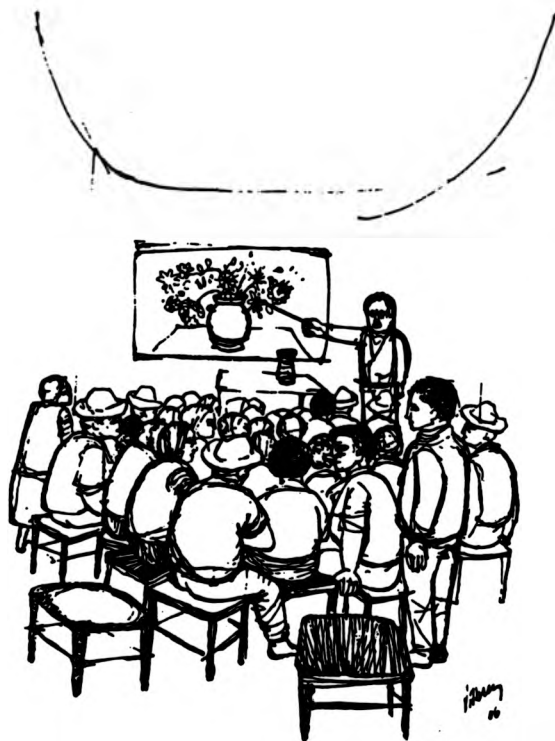
Both are very directive gestures and, even within the freeze-frame of the pictures, it seems clear that it is the co-ordinator, standing at the side of the picture and in front of the class, who is speaking at the time and leading the discussion.

At the bottom, right side of the picture, each artist has signed or initialled his name.

2.   Application

Situation 10 is intended as a structured reflection where, according to Brown, the "group can look at itself and reflect on its own activity..... The function of the circle of culture is examined by everyone, what the experience has meant, what dialogue is, and what it means to raise one's consciousness."   Freire says the same, but with a different intensity: "the participants analyse the functioning of the Culture Circle, its dynamic significance, the creative power of dialogue and the clarification of consciousness."

This is, however, not a simply discursive review of the previous situations. Brown's stage direction sets the tone: "The   co-ordinator   introduces   the   phrase "democratisation of culture" to be discussed in the light of what has been happening in the circle of culture."   It is intended that the discussion of democracy and culture be set within the more general context of fundamental

democratisation.   The end product of this evidently
complex discussion is that "the participants have regained
enormous confidence in themselves, pride in their culture
and a desire to learn to read".   So the base is laid for
the next stage of the literacy process.

3.   Commentary

This tenth drawing is not intended as an idealisation
of the principle of Culture Circles, nor as a portrait of a
successful group that would serve as publicity material in
the programme prospectus.   It is essentially a photo-
drawing of a situation which the participants of the groups
would easily recognise.   It makes no pretence to be more
than is claimed in its title: A Culture Circle in Action,
yet it derives its strength only from the fact that it is
correct in detail.   The participants can recognise the
projected picture as that which they have already
discussed, they can see the little projector, perhaps
recognise the co-ordinator who may have taught them and,
most importantly, begin to recognise themselves as the
participants in the picture.

Consequently, whilst there are no detailed, written,
process recording available of what actually happened in
the groups, this pictorial record has particular
significance.   The details of the picture can be confirmed
to such a degree that there is no doubt that this is a

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"Culture Circle".

When, in 1963, Freire was appointed as Director of
the National Literacy programme, he spearheaded the design
and organisation of a National Development Plan: he
planned that this would involved some 2,000,000 people, who
would then be enrolled in the Culture Circles.   Clearly he
was influenced both by the success of such groups within
the Trades Union Movement in Brazil in the 1920's, and
particularly encouraged by the experience of the Cuban
Literacy experiment which had been completed the year
before.

On 26th. September, 1960, Castro had addressed the
General Assembly of the United Nations for the first
time,[110] an event that was recorded and noted throughout
South America.

> "In the coming year, our people intend to fight the
> great battle of illiteracy, with the ambitious goal
> of teaching every single inhabitant of the country to
> read and write in one year, and with that in mind,
> organisations of teachers, students and workers, that
> is, the entire people, are now preparing themselves
> for a intensive campaign...Cuba will be the first
> country in America which, after a few months, will be
> able to say that it does not have one person who
> remains illiterate."

The relative size of the illiteracy problem in Cuba
may well have been greater than that in Brazil.   Kozol
records that, in 1953, the year of last official census

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110. For the full text of Castro's speech to the General
     Assembly of the United Nations, see Kenner (1969).

prior to Castro's speech, some 1,032,849 adults were illiterate, approximately one in four of the adult population. Nonetheless, Cuban educators were convinced that conventional, educational methods (by which they meant a teacher working with a class of pupils) would not confront this problem. Instead, they were looking for a normative teacher/pupil ratio of 1:2, but were accepting of a higher ratio of 1:4 in exceptional circumstances.

Freire followed much of the structure of the Cuban programme, but clearly differs from it on this point. Nowhere has he explained this major divergence of method, but it may be possible that it was simply an acceptance of the reality, financially and politically, that he was only able to enrol a small and limited number of educators/co-ordinators in his programme and that the enormous resource of the Cuban *brigadistas*, (which Castro had obtained by closing all the schools and enrolling teachers and secondary school pupils), was not available to him.

Instead he opted for large group teaching, justifying this choice in part on unit costings. Although there is a divergence in the actual figures which he has quoted, there is no doubt that the overall expenditure for the programme was cost efficient. He notes (1976b:53) that "in a period of six to eight weeks, we could leave a group of 25 persons reading newspapers, writing notes and simple letters, and discussing problems of local and national interest". The Polish made projector, of which the Education Ministry

imported 35,000 cost $13.00 and, because they did not have
their own laboratory, a film-strip cost $7-$8.   Three
years later, in Education for Awareness, he recalls that
the Polish projectors cost $2.50 and the film/slides cost
$1, and that, on the basis of a group of 25, each initial
cycle of the programme would cost $5-$7 per group/Culture
Circle (1976n:14).

This is the evidence, the size of the group, the
projector and the projected picture, which clearly supports
the conclusion that fig.10 represents a Freirean Culture
Circle.   It is, as Brown notes, a picture which "shows a
circle of culture functioning: participants can easily
recognise it as representing themselves."

What the observer sees, however, is not just the
participants but also the pedagogy, the functioning of the
group.   Yet it is here that some major contradictions are
exposed.

The most obvious is the overtly directive manner of
the teaching.   There is no hint here of a learning
partnership, of a dialogue between equals.   Rather, what
is evident is the clear distinction between the teacher and
the taught.   Fig.10 actually presents an image of that
Banking Education which Freire had so rejected in Pedagogy
of the Oppressed:

> "A careful analysis of the teacher-student
> relationship, inside or outside school, reveals its
> fundamentally *narrative* character.   This
> relationship involves a narrating Subject (the

teacher) and patient, listening objects (the
students).

The teacher talks about reality.   Or else, he
expounds on a topic completely alien to the
existential experiences of the students.

Narrative Education turns students into "containers",
into receptacles to be filled by the teacher.   The
more completely he fills the receptacles, the better
a teacher he is."

There is nothing to suggest, in Fig.16, that the
teacher/student contradiction has been resolved, although
Freire insists that Education must begin with the
reconciling of these two poles so that both teacher and
students are "simultaneously teachers and students".   On
the contrary, the picture reveals the central, controlling
role of the co-ordinator who must, for this picture as for
the earlier pictures, direct the discussion to pre-set
learning objectives.   It is the co-ordinator who
introduces the phrase "the democratisation of culture"
which is a theme which the group in unlikely to come to
unaided.

The democratisation of culture, however, is not the
democratisation of learning, i.e. the possibility that
learning outcomes could be controlled by the learners.
Brown and Freire are already assured of the outcome of the
discussions: for the former, it is that the participants
would have regained enormous self-confidence, pride in
their culture and a desire to learn to read.   For the
latter, it is that there is a foundation for the literacy
programme.

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This foundation, a prerequisite for the continuation of the programme, has been created in just two sessions, possibly in two hours, so that, on the third night, the literacy programme can begin. The actual statement by Freire here needs careful analysis:

> "The preceding situations are discussed in two sessions, strongly motivating the group to begin on the third night their literacy programme, which they now see as a key to written communication".

It is evident that, with only two sessions, the co-ordinators would have to control the content of the discussions. To actually consider all the pictures, the agenda setting picture of Fig.1. through to the summary, recapitulation of Fig.10., a high degree of manipulation and direction is required on the part of the co-ordinator. Certain themes which lie outside the experience of the group have to be introduced: other questions or issues, which would be thrown up in the light of the experience of the group, have to be avoided.

Taking just three of symptoms by which Freire's identifies, in Pedagogy of the Oppressed. the attitudes and practices of Banking Education, we see in this Fig.10, and indeed throughout the programme, that it is:

- the teacher who chooses and enforces his choice, and the students who comply;

- the teacher who acts and the students who have the illusion of acting through the action of the teacher;

- the teacher who chooses the programme content, and students (who were not consulted) who adapt to it.

There is a subtle, but important, nuance in the

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difference between students being self-motivated to begin their literacy programme, and the fact that it is "the preceding situations (i.e. the discussion of the ten pictures) which strongly motivates the group". The participants of the group are led to a position where they can express a need for literacy rather than to a position where there is an awareness in the group of their own felt needs. This is because the essential content of Fig. 10 is educator-centred rather than student-centred. There is an evident iatrogenesis underlying both the malady and the remedy. The educator has been enabled or required by Freire to act as pharmacist and to present the group with the pharmakon of literacy [in two, differing senses of the word: pharmakon], through a heuristic device which uses the remedy for the symptoms to identify, even to create, the prognosis.

The real need, therefore, for literacy, which responds to those needs of someone in the process of conscientisation, viz. those needs exposed and sustained within the ideas of Culture presented in the ten pictures, is required to give place to the more superficial, reactive need which is voiced, in other contexts, by the consumer to the supplier. The illusion is that the need, the demand for literacy, is created by the consumer and that it is the supplier who must respond by continuing the learning programme. In reality, it is the supplier/educator who has created the need and the level of demand has been controlled so that the consumer will only ask for that

which is currently available.   The demand, therefore, for
such a literacy programme may arise more in a group or
society that is still unconscientised rather than in one
which has become critically aware and liberated through the
processes of dialogic learning.

This dichotomy or inversion of the outcomes of
critical consciousness is encouraged in this Fig.10 through
the unconcealed implication that there is a difference
between the processes of literacy and the processes of
conscientisation.   The discussions of the ten pictures may
have contributed to the latter, but they serve only as an
introduction to the former.   It is stated that it is only
on the third night, that is, after the discussion of the
pictures, that the participants *begin* their literacy
programme.   The discussions, however valuable or
essential, are clearly intended to be distinct from the
actual literacy programme.

That distinction is not shared with the participants
of the Culture Circles any more than what has now become
apparent, that is that their literacy programme is in two
stages: there is a first stage of learning to read the
word, but that in itself is only a key, an introduction to
writing the word.

This element of literacy Freire has avoided.   We
have noted that, throughout the pictures, there has been
very little emphasis on writing.   On the contrary, the

main themes have been about reading, reading the word and reading the world. There has been no analysis of the processes by which words are written, no reflection on the technologies of writing, no consideration of script as culture. At best there has been the refrain, there-enforcement of the view that literacy is about "dominating the techniques of reading and writing".(Fig.3.)

Here, however, a further difference within the literacy process is identified: that learning to read is a key to, a prerequisite for, learning to write. Literacy is not simply a composite of both skills, a reading-and-writing skill. It is instead a hierarchy of skills concealed within a single definition, viz:

    Literacy = mastery of the skill of reading
               mastery of the book;

    or

    Literacy = mastery of the skills of reading *AND* writing
               mastery of the pen.

The content of the each skills base in left vague: Freire simply asserts a correlation between the two, although for many of the participants of the Culture Circles this may not be obvious. They would almost certainly know of people who could read but who could not write, just as they would know of people who could read but who were still oppressed.

The importance of this confusion is that, having said that literacy is a key to written communication, Freire then asserts that

> "Literacy only makes sense in these terms....literacy
> which is not external to people but becomes a part of
> them, comes as a creation from within them.   I see
> validity only in a literacy programme in which people
> understand words in their true significance: as a
> force to transform the world" (my emphasis).

What is thereby left unsaid is that Literacy, without
the ability to write, cannot transform the world because
literacy, if that means only the ability to read, is not
dialogic.

At this late stage of the discussion, Freire is
asserting the critical role of Writing and the primacy of
the written. As an image, it is as if he were saying that
it is not the man with the book who can change the world,
but the man with the pen.   But the rhetoric fails the
reality.   Throughout the sequence of pictures, no mention
has been made of the pen, no hint has been given as to this
hierarchy of influence.   On the contrary, the participants
have been encouraged, motivated to start their literacy
programme because it will enable them to read.

This is a severe accusation of the Freirean
methodology and philosophy for such literacy has, as its
objective, to enable people to conform to their world
rather than to transform it.   It succours the oppressed
with the balm of assimilation.   It is not a pedagogy of
the oppressed: it is a pedagogy for the oppressed.

Freire ends by saying: "Learning to read and write
has meaning in that, by requiring men to reflect about

themselves and about the world they are in and with, it makes them discover that the world is also theirs, that their work is not the price for being men but rather a way of loving -and of helping the world to be a better place".

This is the Utopianism, the claim that Literacy only makes sense in these terms, which so many critics have noted in Freire. Yet reality will not support the rhetoric. The lived experience of the members of the Culture Circles will not support it. The sequence of ten pictures, offered as evidence for the defence, not only will not support it but actually contradicts it.

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In reviewing the evidence to hand, it would be easy to dismiss Freire with the pedagogy of a Canute who confronts, with his literacy programme, the waves of oppression. We could mock him for holding up The Book of revolution in defiant gestures against the guns of the status quo. We can accuse him of being a crypto-Banking Educator who has made considerable profit from the discovery of new markets. All that might be true. Yet it is also true that the process works, that many thousands of people have learnt to read and write through involvement in such Culture Circles in South America, Africa and other parts of the Third World. Despite its inherent contradictions, Freire's literacy programme has created new levels of social literacy.

What remains to be done now is to use the clarifications which this analysis has provided, to move into that third stage of the Freirean method where reflection returns self-consciously to action. We can pose the question simply: is it possible, with this Freirean perspective, to construct an overview of literacy that directly addresses the underlying issues of power-knowledge, culture-conformity, writing and social change?

PART 3: TOWARDS REFLECTIVE ACTION

CHAPTER 6. A PRACTICE AND THEORY OF LITERACY

CONCLUSION

6.1 Redefining the Obvious

The final picture used in Freire's literacy programme clearly highlights the essential interaction between the teacher and the learner, the literate and the non-literate, bringing into question the viability of a truly dialogic process of education. Beneath that, however, there is a further interaction of Power-Knowledge that is even more critical to the particular debate about literacy and which the preceding analysis of Freire's work can help us to reconstruct.

In Fig.10, (p.267) the most obvious, indeed even superficial, relationship is that between the teacher and the taught. Yet that relationship is only symptomatic of the underlying, more critical relationship between the teacher and the text/screen. For the non-literate, they combine as the guiding hand and the guiding text which lead the learner to literacy. For the teacher, the text/board is the essential supplément: without the board and the generative text, the teacher cannot teach.

The authenticity of the teacher is therefore dependent on this "bank" of literate information and gadgetry, in exactly the same way as is the learner who is being guided, not primarily by the teacher, but by the arche-text which appears on the board.

In that relationship, the teacher is sacramental:
he or she is the minister, the pupils the congregation, the
text/board the altar.   Through the enactment of certain
rituals (the animation of the classroom), both teacher and
taught have access, albeit differential access, to a
superior power, viz. the power of Literacy.[111]

That power of literacy cannot be denied, but it does
need to be explained and understood.   In this chapter,
therefore, we shall apply the framework of contradictions
which Freire has exposed to formulate a definition of
literacy, to consider again the inherent problem of
literacy as patriarchy and symbolic power, and to attempt
to construct the principal elements of literate language
such that it becomes clear that dialogic Literacy (if that
is not to be a contradiction in terms) is primarily a
process of Writing rather than the Freirean process of
Reading.

The first stage of defining terms, far from providing
some standard, formalised preface through which the
writer/reader must struggle before getting to the real
content of the argument, is actually an essential,
heuristic device which may help us to reduce the argument

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111. There is an intense inversion of values hidden here in
the language.   The teacher, the _Magister_ (lat. _magis_,
more, better) becomes the minister, the _Minister_ (lat.
servant or helper, _minus_, less, below.   The educator
in search of Freirean dialogue may, therefore, be
seeking the irreconcilable -the function of the
ministerium of teaching and the role of the
magisterium of the teacher.

to its essentials, to identify the key elements which lie
hidden in any phenomenon which is patently not self-
explanatory.

Yet this is exactly what is lacking in many studies
of literacy, not least in Freire.   Graff (1987:18) notes
that "it is depressing but instructive to note how rarely
debates and discussions about literacy levels pause to
consider what is meant by reference to literacy", but he
excuses that in part by saying that the question of
definition is at once an insolubly complex problem and a
deceptively simply issue.   Graff's own response, which
is not untypical, is to err on the side of the deceptively
simple.

He sets himself three tasks which are easily met: to
provide a consistent definition that serves comparatively
over time and across space; to stress that literacy is a
technology for communications and for decoding and
reproducing written and printed materials; to step into
precise, historically specific material and cultural
contexts.   My criticism here is that Graff is mainly
descriptive and that he does not confront the underlying
value judgments with which he constructs his approach to
literacy.   His selective, operational definition and his
insistence that literacy is primarily a communicative
technology lead him to grace literacy with a quasi-
instrumental role in individual and social change which
does not yield to sustained and detailed analysis.

His is an approach, influential as it has been in many studies, that justifies Giroux's (1989:150) wider comment that literacy has been "gravely undertheorised". As a consequence of ideology or of pragmatism, literacy has been accepted either as desirable for certain social or cultural settings, compulsory for education, advisable for employment or obligatory for economic development. Yet all these approaches conceal diverse, even mutually exclusive, theories of literacy.

A definition that confronted these inherent contradictions would enhance the immediate study of literacy, but it would also serve to clarify other key concepts which are necessarily included in any literacy discussion, e.g. orality and illiteracy. Illiteracy is not the converse of literacy, nor is orality its obverse. There is no simpliste continuum,

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    ORALITY
              >----------------->  LITERACY
    ILLITERACY
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nor is there any automatic correlation between orality and illiteracy.

The point is worth making from the outset because many projects which claim to be "Literacy Campaigns" are couched in terms of combating or eradicating illiteracy.[112]

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112. The now classic campaigns in Cuba and Nicaragua, (Kozol, 1978; Cardenal, 1981) which became models of similar campaigns in Africa and Asia, are good examples of this literacy inversion.

Here one is not simply playing with words:
frequently the motivation for literacy teaching, the
adequate resourcing and effective support for such
activities politically, financially, practically, and the
evaluation of identifiable outcomes depends how and why one
has drawn the distinction between illiteracy and non-
illiteracy.[113]

The distinction is thrown further into relief when
one asks: If Literacy is to be a priority, for whom should
it be a priority? For whom is it a problem? Without a
definition of terms, and without a detailed analysis of the
elements within that definition, we are unlikely to be able
to answer those questions.

We are not helped, however, by the kind of overview
and apparent directness of the response offered e.g. by
Nickerson. He states (1985:313) that "Adult illiteracy is
a serious national problem." and then clarifies that by
saying "illiteracy is everybody's problem."

> "It is the problem of the person who lacks literacy,
> because it limits one's ability to compete in the
> workplace, it narrows one's options for communication
> and information acquisition, and it impoverishes

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113. Reflecting this disparity of approach, Nickerson (1885)
notes that the lack of significant progress towards
literacy has not been the result of lack of attention.
Quoting Weber (1975), he points out that, in the
U.S.A., some ten major federal agencies were
authorised by nearly 30 laws to teach reading to
adults, while more than 600 non-governmental agencies
were engaged in adult basic education. In a national
guide to literacy facilities, Kadavy et. al. list 39
national literacy programmes and several thousand
state-level resources.

one's intellectual life in numerous ways.

"It is the problem of local, state and national governments, because it represents a cost to taxpayers and necessitates the maintenance of various programmes to provide for people whose job opportunities are severely limited.

"It is a problem of institutionalised education, because a high incidence of adult illiteracy is stark evidence of the failure of the education system as a whole.

"It is the problem of society in general, because it promotes the kind of inequalities that fuel conflict, disorder, and discontent.

"Illiteracy is a fundamental and profound problem to the nation, because only to the degree that its citizens are sufficiently well informed to participate meaningfully in the political process....can a democratic society expect to survive and prosper."

One has only to count the number of value judgments in this generalised problematising of the issue to see that it is not an approach that can be sustained by rigorous analysis.   Like Freire, is Nickerson presenting here a diagnosis of Literacy or a pathology of Society ?

To study specifically the issues of power and literacy, the clear focusing of the definitional lens requires that a number of distinctions be made.

First, we need to distinguish literacy as the CONTENT of teaching/learning to read and write and literacy as a MEDIUM.   In the first case, we could consider what actually happens when someone learns to read and write, what linguistic or epistemological theory explains the process, what pedagogical exchange takes place, what books

are used, what script is produced, what changes individually or socially are directly attributable to this "literacy event", etc.

This would put into sharp contrast literacy as MEDIUM. On the one hand, it would reveal what Heath calls the difference between "being literate and behaving as literate"[114], literacy objectives which are actually more about "literateness", and what Debray is referring to when he suggests that "the instrumental value of writing is less than its symbolic value."[115]

"Being literate" clearly represents a certain range of social and personal values, and in certain settings and relationships it is important to be "seen to be literate." It is frequently said to be the case that people who are not literate can conceal their illiteracy: by appropriate imitation of acceptable, literate behaviour, they can "hide their deficiency". Equally, being able to write in a community where that is a rare skill ensures, as we have seen, because of the totemic value of the Book, a certain social status and recognition.

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114. Heath, 1986a:282: "Their major complaint sounded familiar: "high school graduates are not literate.' But discussion revealed that they did not mean that high school students could not read and write, but that they could not talk as though they read and wrote."

115. Debray, 1980:24 "Si la réalité instrumentale de l'écriture compte moins que sa symbolique, c'est que cette dernière prend effet au sein des relations politiques entre les hommes et les groupes."

Even a casual reading of the aims and objectives of
certain local literacy projects or some national literacy
policies reveals that a priority is placed on the teaching
of literacy precisely because it serves as a medium for
group and social control, correct thinking, correct
behaviour, citizenship, or cultural integration . This is
more than the application to literacy of Bourdieu's theory
of education and cultural reproduction. It is the
enactment through literacy training of the value in Olson's
statement (1977:257) that "Speech makes us human and
literacy makes us civilised."

This distinction between the processes of literacy
learning and the outcomes or consequences of such learning,
which arises from the question "What do we mean by
literacy?", also raises a secondary question : "What do we
mean by literate and illiterate?"

The prime meaning of literate describes a person who
"has some acquaintance with literature"[116]. To be
literate is to be well educated, cultured, able to think
and speak in a particular way, able to appreciate the finer
things of life. It is all that goes with being "well-
read": to be learned as well as wise. "Non minima pars
eruditionis est bonos nosse libros."

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116. Throughout this section I have used the The Concise
     Oxford Dictionary , the Britannica World Language
     Edition of the Oxford Dictionary , Clarendon Press,
     1962, and Le Petit Robert , Dictionnaire alphabétique
     et analogique de la langue francaise. Le Robert,
     Paris, 1989.

Paradoxically, in the more modern times of mass literacy, this maximal view of literacy has received little attention. Heath (1985:2) makes the same point:

> "It is unfashionable, except in certain narrow circles, to discuss what being literate means or to take up topics that ring with elitism. The term "literate" smacks of exclusivity and values traditionally tied to the leisured upper classes; it is often used synonymously with being intellectual."

The focus of contemporary literacy debates is less directed to looking up to cultural literacy, to the "upper" classes and to the great heights of knowledge and learning, than to looking down (and the social and political connotations of the expression are not to be missed) to functional literacy, the basic, minimal skills of "being able to read and write". Modern pedagogues may add the ability to count, numeracy, to these two skills, unmindful of the fact that "reading numbers" is only analogously a literacy skill and not an essential part of the concept of literacy.[117]

The possible confusion then in describing someone as literate is evident, but that is not the end of the difficulties. Even when "literate" is reduced to what

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117. Numeracy, which is not treated at all within Freire's pedagogy, is now considered to be part of our standard alphanumeric sign system and included in "being literate". Because the functionality of such literacies has been the dominant factor, this important difference between numeracy and strictly alphabetic literacy has been overlooked. In my view, the metalinguistics and intellectual perception required for competence in numeracy differ from those required for the analogous competence in literacy.

many would call the mechanical skills of being able to read
and write, a further reduction is possible.   "Literate"
can mean simply "the ability to read".   Many literacy
projects, schooling curricula and educational policies
concentrate on reading, and very little attention is given
to writing.   In common parlance, a person who cannot write
but who can read will be counted as literate.

Who then is illiterate?   Given the usage of
"literate", a person may be illiterate who

     a) cannot read or write,

     b) cannot write but can read or,

     c) can read and write but not "properly", i.e. not
reflecting the level of cultural literacy as defined by the
dominant classes.[118]

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118. There is a fourth category of illiterate which derives
     from an "anti-critique" of literacy.   If literacy is
     viewed primarily as a semiotics of communication, the
     ability equally to receive information through reading
     and to transfer information through writing, then
     there is an argument that some of those who are
     considered highly literate are in fact illiterate.

     I have developed this conclusion from Levine's
     (1982) analysis of 36 leaflets produced by the
     department of Health and Social Security in Britain
     and an evaluation of selected news items in British
     national daily newspapers.

     Material from both sources required a reading age of
     between 13.5 and 16.5, and clearly the content of the
     material was dysfunctional when viewed against the
     estimated reading ages of clients and consumers.   In
     that sense, the writers of the material could be
     judged to be illiterate.   The myth of "hyper-
     literacy" would merit a detailed analysis in itself.
     The point can be noted here without deflecting
     from the argument of the present study.

The danger of such an apparently exhaustive definition of illiteracy is that it ceases to be meaningful. This is particularly true in the debate about the transition from orality to literacy and the comparing and contrasting of literate culture with oral culture. "Illiterate" then again becomes a confused middle term: firstly, it may mean someone who lives in an oral culture, i.e. in a society that is not literate, and who has never had the need or the opportunity to read or to write, and for whom such skills would be exculturating, i.e. might place that person outside the norms and values of the society. Secondly, "illiterate" may mean someone who lives in a literate society, i.e. in a society where oral communication and the semiotics of orality do not suffice, who may or may not be aware of their need to read and write, but who nonetheless is exculturated, marginalised by the society because of their lack of such skills. Finally, "illiterate" may mean someone who lives in a literate society, who has learnt to read and even to write, most frequently through the years of compulsory schooling, but for whom their level of competence in these skills or their need to use these skills post-schooling, was not sufficient to sustain usage, and hence the person has lapsed into illiteracy, i.e. a life style which does not require them to read or to write beyond an absolutely minimum level.

This latter category of person may perhaps better be classed as Semi-literate rather than as illiterate, and

this will be the term adopted in this study.   But what of
the other two categories of "illiterates"?   A useful
distinction can be made in French, in part in Spanish, but
not in English, that confronts this difficultly and may
help in finding appropriate English terms.

     In French/Spanish, one can speak of those non-
literates who have had no direct exposure to literacy,
whose discourse and patterns of communication are founded
in modes of orality: these are les analphabètes, los
analfabetos, those who have never been "alphabetised."   In
relation to the First or the Third World, one can speak of
a literacy programme as a campana de alfabetizacion, and of
e.g. areas of illiteracy as poches d'analphabétisme.[119]

     On the other hand, illettrisme,[120] a concept which
exists in French but not in Spanish, specifically denotes
those who inhabit a literate culture, who have been through
formal schooling but who either, despite that experience,

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119. For an example of French and Spanish usage of these
     terms, see: Roman, 1990; Jerez and Pico, 1971.

120. The word seems to have first been used by the ATD-
     Quart monde in the 1960's, and passed into widespread
     usage in the 1980's.   See: Fondet, 1990.

     Le Robert Dictionary quotes a 1983 usage of
     illettrisme: "état de ceux qui sont illettrés", and
     defines illettré as "qui est partiellement incapable
     de lire et d'écrire.

     It is worth noting, en passant, that in current French
     usage lettré retains the high cultural values of
     "literate" in English: "qui a des lettres, de la
     culture, du savoir", for which the synonyms given are
     cultivé and érudit.

have never learnt to read and write, or who achieved such a
low level of competency in reading and writing that they
have regressed to a state of illiteracy.

"Illettré" in this sense approximates to what I have
called "semi-literacy", but it serves to highlight the need
to distinguish those, other than the semi-literates, who
are not literate.   Here cultural factors are wholly
significant.   Given that the construct of illiteracy only
pertains to a literate society, the use of the term to
describe people in an oral culture may indeed be a form of
intellectual colonisation.[121]

In the strict sense of the term, people within an
oral society are non-literate: literacy is simply not a
construct that is meaningful or relevant to them in the
context of their individual lives and collective culture.
However, people who are members of an otherwise literate
society but who cannot read and write are more precisely
il-literate.   They may be aware that they are outwith the
cultural norms of the society and may be seeking to remedy
that situation through learning to read and write;   they
may unaware of any particular problems arising from their
illiteracy; or they may be aware of particular problems,
but nonetheless have chosen to remain illiterate.   The
costs of acquiring literacy skills outweigh the possible,

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121. See the discussion of Situation Three, "The Unlettered
     Hunter", p.198.   Freire, 1976b:67 "The participants
     discuss how education occurs in an unlettered culture,
     where one cannot properly speak of illiterates."

future advantages or may even result in the loss of certain present benefits.

This large group of people, which exists in both developed and underdeveloped countries throughout the world, I have referred to previously as non-literates.[122] Here I shall retain the use of semi-literate to describe those who have only a minimally literate functioning within the literate culture.[123]

With these clarifications in mind, we can now focus our definitional lens of the actual terrain of literacy teaching.

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122. The problem is highlighted in the translation into French of A B C. The Alphabetisation of the Popular Mind, by Ivan Illich and Barry Sanders. 1988. (A B C: l'alphabétisation de l'esprit populaire, La Découverte, Paris, 1990. trans. Maud Sissung.)

The translator notes that French does not have a word equivalent to the English literacy, that is "the ability to read and to write". She explains her choice of the word alphabétisme. It is clear, however, that the nuance of the word actually alters the sense of certain passages in the book.

Interestingly, she does comment (p.9) "le francais a possédé un mot pour désigner la capacité de lire et d'écrire; la lettrure, terme que l'on rencontre dans les textes du XII et du XIII siècle...mais il est tombé en désuétude."

123. Semi-oral might be just as logical a term to use, and one that would certainly be provocative of a useful discussion. However, firstly, I shall want to argue later that patterns of orality are not lost through literacy, or at least not through functional literacy. Secondly, what we might call the hegemony of literateness is best reflected in the term semi-literate: in a literate society, it is against criteria of literacy and not of orality that each individual and each class is judged.

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In the conclusion to their study, Chartier and Hébrard (1989) draw attention to literacy in the modern world as a universal social paradigm. Reading, they argue, is omnipresent, at one and the same time a functional necessity, a legitimate pastime, and a never ending task. "One never finishes learning to read".

The importance of their argument is not that it provides a Cassandra-like pessimism that serves to check the pursuit of what I have criticised as "hyper-literacy", although it is perhaps prudent even for the highly literate to be reminded that there is no such thing as 100% literacy. Their most significant point is to site universal literacy as if it were in tandem with universal suffrage.

There are those indeed who consider literacy as a fundamental human right, an implied term, for example, in the United Nations Charter on Human Rights. Article 26 states:

> "Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality."

The first obvious problem arises in deciding whether the terrain of literacy teaching is located within this general right to education. If literacy is a right, might it not also be an obligation? If schooling is itself compulsory, i.e. obligatory at least at elementary level, does one have the right not to be literate? Can one claim the right to

be literate by the end of elementary schooling?   Must all
education be literate education ? [124]

These are very important and much discussed questions
clearly influence the way in which we construct the role of
education as the purveyor of orality and/or literacy.
There is, however, a prior question of fundamental
importance which is very rarely discussed but which throws
into relief the whole issue of literacy as a right.   That
question is one we have already confronted in Freire and
concerns literacy for women, or "patriarchy and literate
power".

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124. In his review of UNESCO and of the proceedings of the
     International Symposium for Literacy which was held at
     Persepolis, Iran, Bataille (1976) confirms that
     agency's strong commitment to literacy as a universal,
     human right.

     It is in this light that we should view UNESCO's
     initiative Education for All. (1984).   It was
     modelled on a similarly argued programme within the
     World Health Organisation. Health for All.   The
     W.H.O. had proposed, following its conference on
     primary health care in Alma Ata, (USSR) in 1978, a
     programme of basic health care to achieve "a more
     equitable distribution of health resources throughout
     the word" and to "enable all people to lead a life
     which was socially and economically productive".

     UNESCO proposed a programme of basic education, again
     "to achieve a more equitable distribution of
     educational resources" and "to enable all people to
     lead a life which was socially and economically
     productive."

     See: Organisation Mondiale de la Santé.   Evaluation
     de la stratégie de la santé pour tous d'ici à 2000
     (Septième rapport sur les situation sanitaire dans le
     monde). Vol.1. O.M.S., Genève, 1987.
     UNESCO.   Projet de plan à moyen terme, 1984-1989
     Programme II.1 Généralisation de l'.   Intensifi-
     cation de la lutte contra l'analphabétisme.   UNESCO,
     Paris, 1984.

6.2 Patriarchy and Literate Power

The issue of sexism in Freire's work is not primarily
a question of Brazilian culture, albeit that is of great
significance.   Rather, the evidence of linguistic and
social discrimination which we have already noted suggests
perhaps that this particular expression of power-knowledge
is inherent in the dominant construction of the
relationship between language, literacy and power itself.

In their very honest study of this relationship
in the context of power and silence, (that Culture of
Silence which Freire would recognise), Lewis and Simon
(1986) were confronted by, but in turn were enabled to
confront, the dominant role of patriarchy in the
construction and control of a graduate seminar, mutatis
mutandis -a Culture Circle.   This setting of learning-
teaching, which one experienced as a female student and the
other as a male tutor, revealed what Lewis describes as:

> "..the power relations within which men's lives and
> interests circumscribe those of women.   I equivocate
> deliberately on the word "interest" for I do indeed
> intend both meanings of the word -what interests men
> as well as what is in their interest." (1986:459)

In showing how patriarchy provides an auto-
reproductive immune system which protects men's interests,
the study also shows "how women are politically
disempowered, economically disadvantaged, and socially
delegitimated, not as individuals but as a group" and how
"the overwhelming experience of women in a society

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dominated by men is that of being silenced."(1986:463,459)

Lewis is not a unique case. Although she is a
graduate student, and although she represents many other
women who may find themselves in what we may call "the
higher echelons of literacy", she also represents many more
women who are less literate than she but who, nonetheless,
experience literacy, illiteracy and alphabetisation as an
expression of patriarchy and domination.

This is a profound repositioning of the terrain of
literacy, a perspective which is as essential to the
discussion as it is absent. Rockhill (1987) notes:

> "With rare exception, discourses about literacy,
> whether about power, skills or social relations, are
> strangely silent on the questions of gender or of
> women —especially strange since women are the primary
> participants of literacy programmes."[125]

The effect of this is not simply to remove the
discussion of women and literacy from the agenda. It is
to allow those patriarchal perspectives, which underpin so
much of current literacy practice, to raise the banner of
universal literacy in order to catalogue all the benefits
of "liberating pedagogy" and "critical literacy", for the

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125. Rockhill (1988:7) makes the point even more firmly
      functional literacy. "Literacy is important to women;
      in the gendered construction of work in our society,
      literacy is more important for women than for men."

      Monaghan (1987) presents the historical construction
      of male literacy through her detailed study of
      penmanship in the Writing Schools of 18th. Century
      Boston.

individual, society and the economy, yet, at the same time maintain women in a state of oppression. Women's literacy exists, it is said "to allow women to eat bread so that men can eat cake." Literacy may be more and more a necessary part of a woman's work, but it is not yet a fundamental, human right.

What evidence is there to support these last two judgments? Is it possible to refute the implications of the advice of Restif de la Bretonne quoted by Furet and Ozouf (1982:340) ?

> "All women should be prohibited from learning to write and even read. This would preserve them from loose thoughts, confining them to useful task about the house, instilling in them respect for the first sex."[126]

Some figures prevent the discussion from becoming merely theoretical. It is evident that the highest rates of illiteracy are to be found in the least developed countries and, most often, among the poor. In 1985, India and China accounted respectively for 30 and 26% of the illiterate population in the world. In the 25 "least developed countries" (those with an annual per capita income of less than $100 U.S.) the level of illiteracy was some 80% in 1970, (Bataile, 1976) and 68% in 1985 (Unesco, 1985).

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126. The quotation was from Restif de la Bretonne, a schoolmaster in Burgundy in the 1740's, but it retains a decidedly modern ring.

Nearly 70% of women are illiterate. According to
recent estimates (Ramdas, 1989) the total number of
illiterates worldwide rose from 760 millions in 1970 to 889
millions in 1985, but the proportion of women as a
percentage of the total illiterate population rose from 58%
to more than 60% over the same period.

The Table (p.301) shows the percentage difference
between male and female illiterates throughout the world.
If one then notes the correlation between non-literacy and
under-development, and the fact that women in under-
developed countries are also likely to experience a lower
life expectancy, higher infant mortality, minimal access to
education, lower levels of nutrition, poor health
facilities, longer working hours yet low productivity, then
it is not difficult to draw the conclusion that women who
are also illiterate suffer a double jeopardy.

Whilst this situation may be more immediately obvious
in the Third World, evidence of similar oppression is not
lacking in the developed world. A recent report in
Canadian Women's Studies (Lampert, 1988) showed a clear
gender-related correlation between women, poverty and
illiteracy.

Notwithstanding this evidence, it is only in
very recent years that UNESCO, among other agencies, has
seriously considered the way in which illiteracy effects
women.

	Table 1. Rates of Illiteracy in 1985 amongst adults aged 15 years or more		

	% Illiteracy aged 15+		
	Men & Women	Men	Women
Developing Countries	38.2	27.9	48.9
Least Developed Countries	67.6	56.9	78.4
Developed Countries	2.1	1.7	2.6
Africa	54.0	43.3	64.5
Latin America	17.3	15.3	19.2
Asia	36.3	25.6	47.4
Oceania	8.9	7.6	10.2
Europe (including USSR)	2.3	1.6	3.0

Source: Office of Statistics, UNESCO.
          The Current Literacy Situation in the World.
          Paris, Unesco, July, 1985.

We are clearly here discussing literacy as more than the mechanical skills of reading and writing, but thereby illustrating how literacy cannot be assessed outwith the particular social contexts within which it is realised. This is not simply the retort that there is no text without a context: it is a means by which one of the most fundamental dilemmas in the literacy terrain is revealed.

Let us take the Experimental World Literacy Programme as an example. The UNESCO evaluation of the EWLP states that the programme reached one million illiterate people at a total cost of some $32 million. The cost-benefit analysis may in itself be a male construct that would not have considered the question "Within this million, how many were women?" The question was not raised by UNESCO: for diverse cultural, political or religious reasons neither was it raised by any of the participating countries.[127]

It was no accident, therefore, that the EWLP's criteria for assessing the value of functional literacy per

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127. UNESCO has recorded for some time the worldwide percentage of women illiterates, but it was only at the Jomtien Conference (Thailand, 1990) that this information was translated into active policies.

For example, it was known in 1965 that the proportion of female illiterates significantly exceeded that of males. In at least three countries, Saudi Arabia, Somalia and the Yemen, it was claimed that the total female population was illiterate, while in many other countries the figure was over 90%. Nonetheless, women's literacy was not seen as a priority. See:UNESCO, Literacy Statistics,. Unesco, Paris, 1965, pp. 45, 118, 129.

as excluded women: functional literacy, according to the assessors of the programme, brings about a "change for the better, on condition that it is associated with a process of genuine innovation, (of a political, social, or technical nature) in which participants are themselves involved" (Unesco, 1976:160).

What UNESCO was unable to contemplate was that, for many women, its campaign of functional literacy was dysfunctional. The way in which women live literacy or illiteracy, as the way in which they live patriarchy, politics, society and technology, means that they cannot profit from literacy policies or programmes which are predominantly designed by men for men.

Within patriarchy, literacy is modelled around reading and writing skills, but it is also constructed as a way of achieving an equality of opportunity, a means of confronting oppression, a vehicle for liberation. These are the goals of which literacy is a prerequisite. But as something which is required, literacy is also a "something" (a thing, an object, an article, a commodity) that has to be acquired. Literacy is objectified: the processes of learning to read and write are separated from the product; the content of the learning is separated from the context in which the effects of that learning will be felt.

Removed from the lived experience, literacy then becomes, in Foucault's term (1982), an element of

governaunce, part of the structures which direct and control human relations and individual action. I would argue that it is impossible to identify an element of such governaunce that does not have a gender bias, and that this is evidenced in the case of literacy.

Rockhill's (1987) specific study of Hispanic women in Los Angeles is indicative.

> "The study we conducted in Los Angeles points to gender differences in everyday literacy practices, as well as the integral relationship between the sexual oppression of women and literacy."

One has only to look at the ordinary lives of literate and illiterate women. Obviously, no one paradigm can represent all women in all social and cultural settings, but one can note factors which tend to recur. For example, because of the silencing of women, their confinement to the domestic sphere, the content and structure of female employment, women tend to use and depend more on the written word than do men. They rarely go out alone, even to go to school or adult evening classes. Most of their literacy work is also household work and involves purchasing goods for the family, often from catalogues or through a third party, managing insurances and family allowances, arranging or paying for public services (water, gas, electricity, garbage collection), being responsible for primary health care and for the schooling of children (helping with homework and maintaining contact with the school).

That is why the objectives of functional literacy
programmes are a non-sense to many women.   What they are
directed towards is not in their interests and does not
reflect their needs.   Rather, traditional objectives
reflect a male role model, e.g. a man who will get a job
and work outside the home, who will drive a car or a lorry,
who will complete tax returns for himself and for his wife;
he may well read the public notices, but it will be his
voice that is heard in local politics.

This is a social paradigm which one could replicate
almost anywhere in the world.   It may differ in its choice
of examples or in the carefulness of its language, but it
does not differ in kind from the paradigm reflected in
Restif de la Bretonne (p.299 supra).   It is a paradigm
that asserts categorically that it is not possible to
review the terrain of literacy without clarifying a gender
perspective.   Literacy is not simply located at the
interface between male/female patterns of communication or
role-typing.   It is embedded in the experience of
patriarchy, culturally, socially and politically, and
therefore in the constructions of power which "govern"
male/female relations.

It is one of the paradoxes of literacy , that many
"illiterate" women are more literate than their male
"illiterate" counterparts.   Yet it is the male definition
of literacy which is validated, forged as it is in the
public economy of the workplace and tempered as it is with

cultural and social patriarchy. Women's literacy is
devalued because it belongs to the home, to care of
children and to the maintenance of private life. Women's
literacy is forced to belong only to what Freire calls "the
culture of silence".

Perhaps, however, the ultimate paradox of
contemporary literacy discussions is simply that women who
have the greatest need of literacy, who enrol more often
than men in such programmes, and who can apply and
capitalise on new learning more significantly than men, are
excluded from positions where they could plan and implement
their own literacy programmes.

The terrain of teaching and learning literacy is
peopled primarily by women. Therefore, to the degree that
either the concept or the practice of literacy lack a
predominantly female construct, to that degree will they
fail in their objectives to promote creativity, equality,
and liberation.

6.3 Ordinary Language and Literate Language

This construct of female literacy, or literacy for
women, is missing entirely from Freire. Like UNESCO,
where he himself was an acclaimed consultant, he never
followed the logic of his own pedagogy to ask (given that
it was clear that the panacea of education could treat the

symptoms of not being able to read and write), what effect
would a universal Literacy have on the underlying causes of
patriarchy, oppression and exploitation ?

Instead, his emphasis has been primarily on the
structure of language and on how, parsed alphabetically,
someone might learn to "name their world".

This would lead us to search for a further point of
clarification: does one so name the world in one's own
language, or does that have to be done in a new, "literate
language" ?. The question is more complex than it seems.

Any study of literacy is based on notions, more or
less explicit, about language, language that is spoken,
language that is read and language that is written.
Embedded in these notions is the requirement that one can
make sense of what, in Heath's words (1986b:213) is "the
segmenting, isolation, labelling, and describing of bits of
language apart from their communicative context."   The
discussion about literacy can only occur where there is an
ability to take language apart, to analyse the very
construction of language in terms of sentences, sub-
clauses, verbs, nouns, words, etc.   Without this
linguistic framework, what is there to be literate about?
Literacy, one might argue, is only a way of expressing a
critical awareness of the written and the read word.

The development of literacy, therefore, according to

Heath, requires not just the development of immediate
language skills, but the capacity to engage in a meta-
linguistic debate about the very notion of language itself.
For example, to be able to discuss the statement that
"there is no comma or quotation marks in oral speech", or
Freire's provocative comment "no-one is orally illiterate",
or "silence is communicative", one needs to have acquired
that meta-linguistic skill.

Such skill is more than a merely personal attribute.
Heath's second requirement for the development of literacy
is that the society itself should engender institutional
settings in which knowledge gained from written material
can be talked about, interpreted and extended. In this
way, she creates a bridge between linguistic theory and
language practice. While she asks, "Does the retention of
literacy depend upon the decontextualising and
depersonalising of the content of written material?", i.e.
an ability to conduct a metalinguistic discourse, she
avoids an answer by suggesting instead that there will be
institutions or structures which will support "extended
oral discussion about written knowledge" (1986b:216).
Because such discussion will become an integral part of the
newly literate society, then literacy will be retained.

Heath is not clear which of these two prerequisites
is initially the more important. Is it the case that,
without the required institutions, it is not possible to
develop the refined meta-language of the literate person ?

Or is it that, without the meta-language relating to words and ideas, the need for, and the development of, the literacy-supporting institutions is irrelevant ?

The question is not fruitlessly circular: it at least draws attention to the fact that it does not seem possible to talk of the literate individual without also talking of the literate society within which that person expresses themselves in a literate way, and vice-versa. However, it does again avoid the question: what is the nature of literate language? Is literate language the same as written language?

In posing the question in that form we do, however, fall again into the trap of the confused middle term: literate individual = literate society = in a literate way.

In order, therefore, to look specifically at language, and the structures of language, I shall consider here only graphic literacy, that is, the particular skills of writing and reading which result in text.

This is a useful definition in that it provokes a more complex question that Olson's "Do we write as we speak or do we speak as we write?". We need to explore whether writing and speaking both carry "meaning" in the same way, and therefore whether reading and listening are comparable, human activities.

Olson makes a special case for Meaning that is subtended by writing: this is not the same Meaning that is possible in oral discourse. His argument (1986:365) is that

> "Literacy created hermeneutics. The development of a distinction between statements and text on the one hand and their interpretation on the other was a consequence of literacy."

This is too narrow a conception of the outcome of literacy language. In essence, it privileges the role of the interpreter who, as listener, reader, or exegete, imposes his or her choice of interpretation onto the text. The critical distinction, which is essential to the creator of the communication, the author, between what I have written and what I meant is not relevant to the interpreter. Text becomes de-authored, impersonalised. Writing is excluded from dialogue, not in the way in which Plato complained that text could never answer a question, but in the sense that the exegete has no further need of the author. Dialogue survives in the domain of oral discourse, but within literacy it has to give way to the monologue created by reading.

In prioritising the importance of hermeneutics, Olson reduces literacy to a unidirectional mode of communication. However, we cannot resolve the problem of communication, which is always a problem of mis-understanding, with what amounts to a partial, mechanical or mathematical construct of language.

The influential model created by Shannon and Weaver helps to illustrate this point.[128]


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┌────────┐     ┌──────┐     ┌────────┐     ┌──────────┐     ┌─────────────┐
│ Source │ ──→ │ code │ ──→ │ medium │ ──→ │ decoding │ ──→ │ Destination │
└────────┘     └──────┘     └────────┘     └──────────┘     └─────────────┘
                                 ↑
                            ┌────────┐
                            │ sound/ │
                            │ script │
                            └────────┘
```
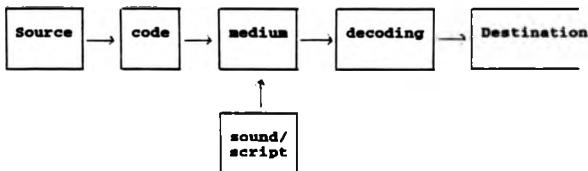
When he talks of statements and texts on the one hand and their interpretation on the other, Olson is essentially viewing this model with a certain myopia: he wishes only to consider the relationship between sound/script and decoding. e.g.

```
                          ┌──────────┐     ┌─────────────┐
                          │ DECODING │ ──→ │ Destination │
                          └──────────┘     └─────────────┘
                               ↗
            ┌────────┐
            │ SOUND/ │                      = Hermeneutics
            │ SCRIPT │
            └────────┘
```

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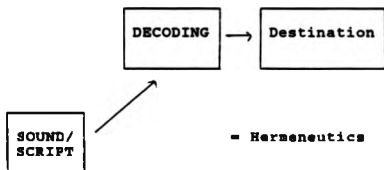
128. Shannon, C. and Weaver, W. The Mathematical Theory of Communication. University of Illinois, 1949.

The use of "mathematical" in its Greek sense of mathematikos and mathema is interesting, based as it is on "that which is learnt, learning, knowledge, science." (Liddell and Scott's Greek-English lexicon). If one correctly has learnt the mode of communication, then logically (through using the word which is logos, and the logos which is reason) the communication should be unimpaired: what you heard/read was what I said/wrote.

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Because, in that Platonic sense, the author cannot speak, then there is no insight to be gained from an analysis of the MEDIUM or, possibly several, MEDIA.   Text is de-authored.   That is the barrier to communication imposed by literacy.   Therefore, Olson can exclude the Sender, the Sender's codifying of their meaning, and their selection of an appropriate medium.   Such is the logic of his very Lutheran view that all meaning resides in the text: the text is the text, and what is written, there in front of me, is sufficient unto itself.   The text speaks for itself (and by extension, the text no longer speaks for its author.)

This objectivising of the text, and subsequent de-personalising of authorship, appears in many studies, including Olson, which follow Goody and Watt (1968) in suggesting that writing made language an object of reflection.

It is, of course, by no casual association that we talk of "reviewing" a book or an article.   Like an Ozymandias in paper-back, the words of written text remain long after the spoken words have taken flight.   The spoken word, it is said, is ephemeral, existing only in the Now which, although it allows a word to be recalled or repeated, does not allow it to retain the authenticity of the moment in which it was uttered.   Not so the word in text for, once written, it passes beyond the Now: it becomes historical and historising.   It retains its past,

and it constantly recreates its present. It has an
authenticity at each and every reading. The written word
is marked by that Derridean trace which, not like the
spoken word whose trace exists only in memory that searches
from the Present back into the umbra of the Past,[129]
actually heralds the arrival of the Past into the Present.

With the first written word, Etymology was born, not to
sire opinion and interpretation, (doxa) but to celebrate
meaning and reason (authentic logos).

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129. This represents perhaps the one aspects of Plato's
     view of literacy with which Freire might have agreed.
     The inversion of language is important. Unlike the
     written word, once written ( ) which then
     is but the shadow or image of the spoken ( ),
     now we find the spoken word, once spoken, exists only
     in the penumbra of recollection. The one becomes
     historical, the other ahistorical. The oral dies
     without trace, the written is recreated at each
     reading. Orality is different from Literacy,
     precisely because the oral must differ to the
     written.

     For a detailed study of trace within the writings of
     Derrida, see:
     Derrida, J. Of Grammatology. John Hopkins University
     Press, Baltimore,, 1976. translation by Spivak, G.C.
     who also supplies an extended Introduction. See
     especially, "The Outside is the Inside", pp.44-65.

     Tavor-Bannet, E. Structuralism and the Logic of Dissent.
     Macmillan Press, 1989. Chapter 4: "Derrida and the
     Wholly Other." pp. 184-227.

     Culler, J. On Deconstruction: Theory and Criticism
     after Structuralism. Routledge & Kegan Paul, London,
     1985. esp. Chapter 2.1 "Writing and Logocentrism."
     pp89-110.

     re. differ and difference, see: Derrida, J. Writing
     and Difference, trans. A. Bass, Routledge & Kegan
     Paul, 1978.

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Etymology, however, is not hermeneutics.130   For
Olson, meaning does not reside in the word as written, at
least not wholly.   Meaning can only be identified in the
word that is read, i.e. interpreted, repossessed by the
reader.   With an author's dexterity, (sic) he passes from
talking about writing to talking about literacy, by which
he means _reading_ (Olson, 1986:305).

> "Here, I believe, we have our link between literacy
> and modernity -the systematic distinction between
> something which is taken as given, fixed, autonomous,
> and objective, and something which may be construed
> as interpretive, inferential, and subjective."

> "A written text preserves only part of language.
> What is preserved is the form, and the meaning has to
> be regenerated from that form by the reader."

The assertion is that the preserved parts, text, are
given, fixed, objective, but no explanation is offered as
to the nature of this preservation other than that it is
the **form** from which meaning is absent until it is
"reconstructed" by the reader.   This reconstruction is
the activity of literacy, because the relation between a
text and an interpretation is problematic only in literacy.

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130. Etymology relates to the formation and meaning of
words, and is often treated as a sub-science of
Grammar.   Here it is used in its prime sense -that
which gives meaning or literal sense to a word.

etumos (ετ..) means "What is real, what is true,
actual".   In its poetic form, etétumos (; - _)
signifies what is real, genuine, authentic.   Homer
used it in an adverbial sense to mean "in truth and in
deed", corresponding in modern English to the dual
sense of "in fact" or "actually".

Etymology is then the study of the actual meaning of
words, a tautological definition because words can
only have their actual meaning.   A word without
etymology is but a noise.

Olson seems unaware of the inherent circularity of his argument here, (that without literacy, there is no text, and hence no problem) but chooses to argue that oral language may implicitly recognise the distinction, but because it focuses on the person doing the communicating and not on the utterance,[131] the form and the meaning are perceived to be an indissoluble pairing.

The evidence for this last claim is that when, in oral communication we don't understand a sentence or utterance, we say "What do you mean?" and not "What does it mean?", i.e. we do not distinguish what was said (form) from what was meant (meaning).

This seems to me to be based on a very slender discourse analysis that is both culturally specific and grammatocentric.   Firstly, the conversational discourse

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131. It will remain to be seen how much of this now "classical" literacy theory will have to be re-written in the light of modern technology, answerphones, video-recorders, cassettes and compact disks, etc. The oral word can now be stored, reviewed, even re-transmitted and the "What was said" can be studied, almost textually, independently of "Who said it."   Few seem able to contemplate a post-literacy era, a return to a dominant orality, although the debate does serve to protect the current study from complacency and from an automatic acceptance of the cultural superiority of literacy.

On this subject, see: the grammatocentric approach of Steiner, G.   "After the Book" in Visible Language, Vol.VI, No.3, Summer, 1972, pp.197-210 (which is interesting not least for the date of the article), and the techno-centric approach of Nickerson, R. "Adult Literacy and   Technology" in Visible Language,   Vol.XIX, No.3, Summer,   1985, pp311-355.

to which Olson is accustomed may well explore
misunderstanding or non-understanding by a direct, personal
question: what do you mean? There are, however, other
cultures where such a question is so direct as to be
offensive: in effect, it would be taken to mean "Are you
talking nonsense, because I cannot understand you?"[132]

Secondly, the "You" of "what do you mean?" is part of
that myth of orality by which Plato attacks literacy. The
You is present, able to answer the questions, able to
clarify and explain. The You is real and not simply an
image, an ikon of the author: the You is a partner in a
dialogue that creates true knowledge.   So, the You,
presented in this way, supports the myth that orality
excludes non-authentic discourse, that the You can always
explain what was meant. "There is Knowledge and
Understanding and true Belief: these must not be classed
together, because they reside not in sounds or in physical

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132. In Hausa culture, (Central-West Africa), one could say
"I am sorry, does this mean nothing?", (ban ji ba,
Wannan ba ta da ma'anna Ko ?) indicating a respect
that the speaker was saying something meaningful, but
admitting that the listener had not understood. A
normal reply that one could anticipate would be "No
(i.e. no, it does not mean nothing = it means
something). It means ..."

This personal experience of living in Niger and
Nigeria has, somewhat surprisingly, been reinforced
during a year as an immigrant in France. I have been
struck by the number of times both adults and children
use the construction "What does that word mean?" or
"What is that in English/French?" as a means of
expressing misunderstanding.   Contra Olson, I
would assert that form and meaning are NOT
indissolubly linked, and that children and non-
literates can distinguish between them.

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shapes but in souls" (Plato, Letter 7:342).   This is the
discourse, which is the legitimate "brother of writing",
which guarantees true knowledge but which exists between
the speaker and the listener <u>without the intermediary of
the book</u>, in dialogue between the I and the You.[133]

Olson does not feel himself to be part of this oral
culture, yet psychologically he seeks the assumed security
of oral communication: "What does it mean to understand
me," he asks (1982:151), "as opposed to understanding my
sentences ?"   Yet where, in the pursuit of the "me", is
the "me" to be found, if not in those informal oral-
language statements which he calls "utterances" or in the
explicit, written prose statements which he calls

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133. This is an emotive appeal to the power of Dialogue,
and one use equally by Freire.   He also was greatly
influenced by Martin Buber and his exploration of
I/You and I/It relationships.   See: Buber, M. <u>Ich und
Du.</u> translated as <u>I and Thou.</u> by Smith, R.G., T. and
T. Clarke, 1937.

It is one of the paradoxes of modern communication
that the significance given to so-called "face to
face" contact, person to person, eyeball to eyeball,
with all the values of idealised oral culture which it
entails, does not necessarily result in greater
honesty or greater understanding.

A parallel Hebrew expression, which lies at the heart
of Buber and the talmud tradition, is panim-el-panim:
face to face (פ נ י ם א ל פ נ י ם) and can mean that
person who is <u>present</u> to the other and who is <u>a
present</u> to the other, i.e. the gift of disclosure, the
discovery of the I and the You.

However, the expression can also be read consonantly
as pnim-el-pnim: the within to the within (פ נ י ם א ל
פ נ י ם) and represents that which is interior, which
is hidden,which cannot be communicated.

Communication in this mode is marked by ambiguity and
by non-disclosure.

"texts" (1987:253).   Presumably, because form and meaning,
in his view, are inseparable in oral discourse, then the
question of meaning, i.e. the problem of misunderstanding,
does not arise.

There is a sense, of course, in which Olson's use of
"informal" and "explicit" in these definitions already begs
the question about meaning.   There is nothing per se
which requires utterance to be informal or text to be
explicit.   The defining of the polarities are, at best,
unconsciously bibliocentric: text is assured of meaning
because it is explicit, written prose.   This carousel of
meaning is wholly defined and controlled by the
reader/interpreter.

It is this egocentric attitude that leads Olson to a
bibliocentric search for meaning which is provided by the
reader, by the interpreter.   The reader relates the given
sentences (S)to his or her own experience or "possible
world" (PW), and through that is able to discover the
meaning(M) of the text (1982:153).

> "The expression to mean, to understand, are members
> of a class of verbs which are sometimes called
> "intentional predicates" (Dennet, 1981; Fodor, 1975)
> along with such verbs as know, believe, remember,
> forget, notice, think, perceive.   They are verbs
> which express "propositional attitudes" or
> psychological states or mental states. Together they
> make up what may be called a commonsensical theory of
> mind."

This theory of mind is also a theory of literacy for
it defines literacy exclusively in terms of the reader/text

relationship.   It is not grammatocentric as much as
bibliocentric: it claims that the book, the text, is
sufficient unto itself, that it is *sui ipsius interpres.*
Whether it is supported by Hermeneutics (e.g. Luther's
scriptural reductionism or by Linguistics (e.g. Chomsky's
theory of generative grammar),[134] it identifies the
necessary elements of literacy as a) a text which is
potentially communicative, *capax docendi,* and b) a common-
sense reader who is *capax discendi*.

        Literacy, therefore, becomes possible for anyone who
has acquired the mechanics of reading.   Firstly, that
requires the ability to appreciate that there are different
sounds in speech and that these sounds can be represented
visually or graphically.   Secondly, it requires a mastery,
or at least an initial competence in recognising the
graphic signs, in decoding the graphemes from which the
spoken word is reconstituted.   Word recognition will
follow from the recognition of individual letters (Le men,
1985), and the construing of sense from those words will
require a basic knowledge of essential punctuation.[135]

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134. Chomsky, N. *Aspects of a Theory of Syntax,* Cambridge,
     Mass. M.I.T. Press, 1965.

     "Hence the meaning of a sentence relies on no private
     referential or contextual knowledge; nothing is added
     by the listener.   One is justified, therefore, in
     concluding that, for Chomsky, the meaning is in the
     sentence per se." (Olson, 1977:259).

135. For a review of the history and use of punctuation and
     its relevance for visual and oral reading, see:
     Timbral-Duclaux, L. "La Pontuation: outil de
     lisibilité" in *Communication et Langage,*   Vol.69,
     pp26-38.

The literate person who is now the Reader, has to move beyond a simple, mechanical vocalising of the text to a reading which expresses not just sound or the meaning of a word but the meaning of the text. This is what many teachers call the development of bifocal comprehension skills: on the one hand readers learn to engage critically with a text, to find its meaning, ("What did Shakespeare mean when he wrote "The quality of mercy is not strained"?) and, on the other hand, they learn to identify their own experience and personal reactions to the text: the Reader becomes the Interpreter: ("In what ways are we all like Joe Orton? Do you find him a moral person?").

Literacy teaching, based on this model of psycho-pedagogy, is evident both in school and in much of what is deemed to be "Functional Literacy". Here, in a method that parallels Freire, the non-literate or illiterate person is taught how to read, (recognise words) and how to extract the meaning of the words from the written text (make relevant). Learning objectives may target reading labels in a supermarket, reading a simple story to the children, following instruction on an assembly line, understanding directions on a medical prescription, or reading a daily paper. Reading, therefore, becomes a source of knowledge and information, and at the same time gives the reader access to economic activity (work) and to "public opinion" (newspapers/propaganda). Consequently, it is Literacy at this level and with this individualistic mind-set which is most central to formal

education.

The problem, however, with such a view is that it is egocentric and bibliocentric: it identifies the meaning of a text with that meaning given to the text by the reader. "I understand what it means". "What it is actually saying is.. ". So the meaning of the text is "found" by the reader, although the meaning intended by the author clearly has prior existence. Just as the previous existence of the islands is neglected, devalued, in order to valorise the new discoverer, so the previous existence of the author is ignored in order to acclaim the presence of the reader. The text is de-authored and decontextualised. Text simply becomes "reading material".

That could almost suffice as a critique of both literacy and Freirean "codifications" or textualisings. However, it is only one of a number of points. First, such a view of literacy implicitly accepts a monochrome view of textuality, in that the meaning enclosed in the text is taken to be The Meaning, a single voice rather than a polyphony. The possibility of several meanings cannot be considered, nor, least of all, a cacophony of contradictory meaning.

Secondly, literacy that occupies itself only with reading fails to understand the nature of text. Of course, it may be that the surface pattern is so dense or so diverting that one does not notice the warp and weft of

its construction. But text is also <u>texture</u>: it is arranged, positioned, constructed and it has a quality which is multi-dimensional, more than the single attribute of surfaceness. Text is the vellum, the sheet of paper, the sail (the <u>velum</u>) which propels the bark of meaning (which is at once the bark-boat that holds the meaning and the bark-outer sheath which protects what is in the hold, in the interior) to its destination.

Literacy which is Reading only, therefore, is redolent with mind-guarding and Banking Education precisely because it denies the existence of the Writer. This has immense significance, culturally and politically, for those Literacy campaigns which prevent, or fail to encourage, the reader from becoming a writer. The point here, however, is that this is not simply an abuse of literacy but a fundamental misconception of literacy.

Reading matter, text, does not exist in a sterile form, vacu-packed for consumption by the reader as if it were, so to speak "untouched by human hands". No process of education, presentation or marketing can decontaminate the text of the traces of authorship which are embedded in it.

This is because, following Derrida, far from reading being separate from authorship, authorship actually creates reading. Authorship, writing, is reading in embryo: the traces of reading are found in the act of writing.

Those traces, which are often misinterpreted as signifiers of those events which follow them, actually take precedence over what they are deemed to indicate. Trace is not the track which is left by something, but the essential guarantor that leads to something. Trace authenticates the passage of what was to what is: to be without trace is not to be. The trace therefore exists before the entity of which it is a sign, but it exists as an all-embracing trace, that is, "where the relationship with the other is marked, it articulates its possibility in the entire field of the entity (étant)" (Derrida, 1976:47).

This field envelopes both past and future, but it is not the temporal relationship between reading and its trace back to writing that is important. That would simply indicate a causal relationship, a relationship of convenience (convenientia.) Of greater significance than that which the trace and its object, or rather its subject, have in common, is the difference between them. Reading is not Writing but must defer to Writing.

This is the central dialectic of Literacy: the _difference_ between Writing and Reading. Differance is "the systematic play of traces of differences, of the spacing (espacement) by which elements refer to one another, without which the terms could not signify, could not function" (Sturrock, 1979:47).

In this sense, reading is but a supplementary symbol

of Writing. "Although the fact of Writing follows the
fact of Speech, nonetheless the idea of Speech depends upon
the idea of Writing" (Harland, 1987:129). This inversion
of priorities is created by the fact that Writing
supplements Speech, and thereby supplements Reading (for
reading is only the symbolic listening to graphic speech).
Those attributes which pretend to make Writing marginal to
Reading are actually those same qualities which make it
central to the very existence of Reading.[136]

If we return then to the model of communication,
what do we need to consider to create a literacy that is
writer and writing oriented?


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┌─────────┐     ┌──────┐     ┌─────────┐
│ Source  │ ──▶ │ code │ ──▶ │ medium  │
└─────────┘     └──────┘     └─────────┘
                                   │
                             ┌─────────┐
                             │ sound/  │
                             │ script  │
                             └─────────┘
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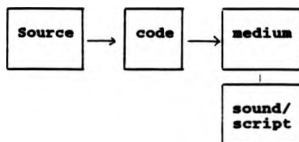
136. The concept of the Supplement refers to a positive,
measurable element which defines or identifies an
amount by which a given entity is lacking something.
This is not a deficit, but an ullage, an absence which
justifies the presence of what remains.

For example, consider "the exception which proves the
rule." Without the possibility of an exception, the
rule would not be needed: it would be reduced to an
unnecessary tautology.The rule therefore needs the
exception to prove (to show evidence) why the rule
exists, and to prove (to put to the test, probare,)
the application of the rule.

The rule, consequently, can only authenticate its
existence by deferring to the exception. The
exception has priority precisely because it is an
arche-rule, it is a condition without which the rule
can have no meaning.

6.4 Literacy as Pharmakon

Central to the logic here, in the reversal of the literacy magnet from reading to writing, is a concept of literacy that somehow provides the fil conducteur between notions of power and knowledge, between the content of education and the context of employment, between the incapacity to read and write and the experience of oppression and marginalisation.

We shall have to examine this filigree of relationship, but in doing so, we have arrived at another inversion of the literacy myth. We started by asserting that literacy is social because primarily it is about the means of communication: the literate person requires a societal context in which to express, communicate his or her literacy. However, this might be only a bibliocentric judgment. Might it not be more true to say that Society requires literacy, (which is Literacy rather than a literate person), because in the power-knowledge relationship of the modern world, Literacy defines who controls the means of production, viz. the means to produce wealth (industry) and the means to reproduce knowledge (education).

If this is true, then the very nature of Literacy has changed. Its essential attributes are less instrumental than teleological. When we consider the interface, the "between", which is created either when two people try to

communicate or when an individual reflects on his or her
role in the larger society, what is the role of Literacy?
The communicative view of literacy would say that it is the
thread that spins the web of human relationships in what
Arendt calls the "space of appearance", the context in
which we encounter one another, are seen and are heard
(Arendt, 1958:188).

Within this space, within relationships, power-
knowledge is instrumental, creating a praxis which exists
wherever individuals speak and act together. No thing, no
person, possesses power: it inhabits only the interface,
"springing up between people whenever they act together and
vanishing the moment they disperse."[137] Arendt's analysis
of this power-knowledge relationship is founded on a model
of active communication, of interactive subjectivity.
Each person, as Subject, is free to communicate orally or
in writing with another Subject. They recognise, with
Freire (1976h:212), that the human word is not just
vocabulary, it is word-and-action.

> "As such it is a primordial human right and not a
> privilege of the 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 recreating, of deciding
> and choosing and ultimately participating in
> society's historical process."

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137. Arendt, 1958:200.

"Power is never the property of an individual; it
belongs to a group and remains in existence only so
long as the group keep together."   Arendt, H.   On
Violence. New York, Harcourt-Brace, 1970, p.44.

Within this instrumental communication, as Subjects, human beings are not "beings outside of"; they are "being for another" (ibid.).

At this point, Freire and Arendt converge, yet both remain within the idealism of bibliocentric communication. Both assert the value of Literacy as the capacity to communicate (Habermas's communicative competence) which is the antidote to speechlessness, to the culture of silence, to oppression. However, neither confronts the possibility that Literacy is teleological, that is, because it primarily serves not power-knowledge which is collective but force-knowledge which is divisive, then it is Literacy itself which is at the root of oppression, silence and marginalisation.

What is a stake here is not just a play on words but a defining and redefining of a word and its usage (although both are clearly very literate exercises). Arendt[138]

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138. For Arendt's extended treatment of power, force and violence, see her <u>On Violence,</u> New York, Harcourt-Brace, 1970, and especially her <u>The Origins of Totalitarianism,</u> London, André Deutsch, 1973, pp.137-147 and pp. 326-340.

Arendt's explanation of communicative power and of "public space", which is the interface between those who are in communication, can be seen as a social anthropology of the statement which she quotes from Bakunin: "I do not want to be I, I want to be WE." ibid:330.

For a constructive critique of Arendt on this point, see: Habermas, J. "Hannah Arendt's Communications Concept of Power", in <u>Social Research,</u> Vol. 44, No. 1, 1977, pp.3-24.

herself makes the distinction between power and force
(Macht und Gewalt): the former is grounded in a
relationship between free and equal partners; the latter is
the potential, because one has the disposition and the
means, to influence the will and the behaviour of another,
so ensuring their conformity.

Can Literacy then be seen as force rather than as
power? Educationalists talk easily of that "symbolic
violence" which is the prerequisite for cultural
reproduction (Bourdieu, 1970), assuming that something can
only be a symbol if it lacks efficacy. They scarcely
pause to consider the contradictions of "Compulsory
Education". On the one hand, what is the content of
compulsion? No-one can be compelled to learn: they can
only be compelled to attend schooling. On the other hand,
what is the content of education? What the system of
education compels people towards is not learning and
erudition, but rather to "finding their place in society",
particularly through finding a place in the labour market.
So Bowles and Gintis (1976:94) speak of education firstly
as the acquiring of cognitive capacities and concrete
technical and operational skills, but secondly as the
development of certain personality traits (for example,
motivation, perseverance and docility), plus certain
behavioural traits (self presentation, dress, good manners,
style of speech, encultured "social distance").

Sociologists will talk of social stratification and

even of structural inequality,139 yet there is no
stratification of caste or slave, rich or poor, male or
female, young or old, which does not contribute something
to the archaeology of literacy.   In return, what Literacy
contributes to all of these is Voice.   The oppressed and
many educators know that Speech is helpless when confronted
by Violence: hence Freire's "culture of silence".   But
what is mostly ignored is that "Violence itself is
incapable of speech" (Arendt, 1985:12).   Literacy, which
is both the ability to write and to think as a writer, and
the ability to read and to think as an interpreter, is the
co-author, along with economics, of oppression and
violence.   Literacy gives expression to that Imposed
Force-knowledge which is the violation of communicative
Power-knowledge and as such, in so far as it is oppressive,
it is the contra-diction, (the opposing in speech, the
opposite word) of emancipatory literacy.

One might well argue that, as a consequence, Literacy
cannot be, at one and the same time, the means of giving
voice to domination and the means of liberating those who

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139. For a clear overview of this point see:-
     Giddens, A.   Sociology.   Oxford, Polity Press, 1989,
     especially pp.205-240.

     Bourdieu, P.   Questions de sociologie.   Paris, Editions
     de Minuit, 1984.   "Nous passons notre temps à
     objectiver les autres.   Le materialisme a une
     propension particulière à tomber dans l'économisme qui
     est conformé à la tendance spontanée de la lutte
     quotidienne des classements, qui consiste à réduire
     l'autre à sa vérité objective.   Or, la réduction la
     plus élémentaire est la réduction à l'intérêt
     économique."

are dominated.   However, this would be a mistake, not
because we might be using "Literacy" as a confused middle
term; not because we might be saved by a subtle distinction
between   liberation   and   freedom   which   redefines
oppression,[140] but because, in accepting this argument, we
are denying the essential nature of literacy.

It is of the essence of Literacy to be contradictory:
Literacy is the <u>genus</u> communication, (and also the genius
of communication, its <u>daimon</u> δαίμων and its power <u>daimonia</u>
δαιμόνια), the <u>species</u> of which are writing, speech,
sign, number, and silence.   It is, in Derrida's phrase
(1981:63), "the web that envelopes a web."   It is the
thread that spins the web of human relations (p.93), and
the symbolic net that casts cultural reproduction (p.95).
In short, Literacy is truly the Pharmakon: we have found
the aberrant toxin, the pharmakon that leads astray (Plato:
Phaedrus:230, D), but equally we have found its antidote,
the pharmakon of "liberating remembrance".

I have used Giroux's expression "liberating
remembrance" as a less than literal but more than exact
translation of Plato's actual phrase "memory and wisdom"
(ibid:274,E), because it provides a link between the theory
and the practice of literacy, and particularly of Freirean
literacy.

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140. For a stimulating argument that liberty is not
      freedom, see: Arendt, H. <u>On Revolution.</u> Penguin
      Books, 1985, pp. 29-35.

We have seen that History and a sense of the
historical is a product of literacy, and that it is script
which creates the possibility of that personal "retro-
writing" which facilitates the discovery of the "me-of-me".
What Giroux is doing is advancing Metz's (1980:66) notion
that personal identity is engendered by memory, and
applying that not just to the objective fact of literacy
but to the subjective teaching of literacy.

Teachers of literacy, he argues, (at least those who
are transformative educators) are "bearers of dangerous
memory" who keep alive the memory of human suffering along
with the forms of knowledge and struggles in which such
suffering was shaped and contested (Giroux, 1989:99).

> "Dangerous memory has two dimensions: that of hope
> and that of suffering...it recounts the history of
> the marginal, the vanquished, and the oppressed. In
> doing so, it posits the need for a new kind of
> subjectivity and community in which the conditions
> that create such suffering can be eliminated."

Two corollaries follow for the literacy educator from
this pharmakon of memory which is the pharmakon of
literacy. Firstly, the two elements of the pharmakon,
curse and cure, can be distinguished but not separated.

This refusal to seek the illusion of clarity which
exists at the extreme of any continuum does not arise from
a natural, essential Manicheism, any more than it seeks to
reject the concreteness of the polarities in favour of some
Aristotelian mean. It asserts rather that any response to
the pharmakon of literacy must not de-nature what literacy

is: because literacy is pharmakon, it is its own cure.
Therefore the only valid response to Literacy is one that
is homoeopathic: _similia similibus curantur_.   Literacy
cannot be treated by politics, by economics, by education
or by culture: it can only be "cured" by literacy
itself.[141]   Only literacy can provide that scouring which
reveals, that curing which protects, and that caring which
validates; the body which is uncured, powerless, _akuros,_
takes on a new vigour, a new power by becoming _kurios_.
Paradoxically, Literacy is at its most literate, its most
curable and its most curiological, _kuriologikos_,literally
speaking, when its values, its methods and its achievements
are reflected back upon itself care-fully to be the subject
of its own pharmaceutical regard.

        The second corollary of the fact that literacy is its
own pharmakon is that, rather than allowing educators the
grace of self-absolution, it actually requires a total
engagement on their part, even unto that class suicide
which creates Freire's "Easter experience".   Literacy is
not an independent, moral personage: it has no existence
outwith the atmosphere of human communication.   Of its
essence it is social, founded in History, and it cannot be
idealised, like Justice, Truth, or its sister Beauty, to
inhabit a world of Forms.   Yet sometimes this is implied,
when we speak of "the effects of literacy", "the myth of

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141. For an archaeological uncovering of the word "Cure"
     and a fluent example of literate deconstruction, see:
     Hillis-Miller, J.   "Steven's Rock and Criticism as
     Cure" in _The Georgia Review_. Vol. 30, 1976, pp.5-31.

literacy", or "the right to literacy".

There is no such thing as "critical literacy", or "emancipatory literacy": there are only people who are critically literate, people who can engage in a literate way in their own emancipation, just as there are people who are illiterate. Literacy is an attribute firstly of a society and, only by extension, is it taken to be an attribute of an individual.

This is a critical demythologising of literacy. Because it is its own pharmakon, it directs our attention not towards the powerful institutions of politics or economics or culture, but at the people in any given society who are engaged in being or becoming literate. And what is central to all their interests is the knowledge-power which is proclaimed and validated by literacy, or more accurately, by those who are literate.

Consequently, any truly person-centred literacy programme must start with the dialectic that exists between those people who are literate and those who are illiterate, thus revealing both the common sense knowledge and the gnostic knowledge (that which is known by the initiated, by the elites) which must be acquired by, and is required of, those who are literate.

Imperatively, this demands the prioritising both of knowledge over power, and of power over force. It is the

exploration of what Foucault (1970:359) calls the

> "analysis of discontinuities that seek to draw out
> the internal coherence of signifying systems, the
> specificity of bodies of rules and the decisive
> character they assume in relation to what must be
> regulated."

Literacy for liberation has to achieve the reinstatement of

knowledge-power and communicative competence over force-

knowledge and debilitating silence.

Such reinstatement is not simply re-statement.   It

is, as Freire would say, that recreation, reinvention and

enquiry which is directed towards humanisation -humankind's

historical vocation.

> "The pursuit of full humanity, however, cannot be
> carried out in isolation or individualism, but only
> in fellowship and solidarity; therefore it cannot
> unfold in the antagonistic relations between the
> oppressors and the oppressed" (Freire, 1982:58).

Here we have the effective criteria for judging

literacy as its own pharmakon: humanity, solidarity and

reconciliation. Let us, therefore, consider the policy and

rationalisation of literacy and its use of knowledge, power

or force. We can then assess, against these criteria,

whether there is any basis for Freire's attempt to create a

counter-hegemony of literacy, or whether a "literacy of

liberation" is simply a contradiction in terms.

6.5   Literacy and Policy: an Overview

The potential terrain of literacy lies somewhere

between force and power, between accredited knowledge and

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subjugated knowledge, between poverty and wealth, between the society and the individual, and between the Culture of Voices (orality) and the Culture of Letters (literacy).

The cardinal points on this terrain reveal four very different perspectives: from literacy, from orality, from non-literacy and from non-orality. (Diagram p.336)

The terrain at Point A valorises literacy.   The right to read is considered as a universal right, and literacy is seen as a key, civilising factor, essential to culture and to aesthetics.   It provides the context for the development of bureaucracy, centralising government, and international business.   It encompasses, on the one hand, the Religions of the Book and a mass media, while, on the other hand, it reflects a preference for written contracts and for individual case law.   It encourages an articulate consumerism and esteems individuality.[142]

Point B represents the position at the opposite end of an imaginary literacy continuum: Orality.   It is primarily a fictive position, because it is necessarily the perspective of a literate person who vicariously assesses what it means to live in an oral society.   A person who lives in an oral society could never have the construct of orality with which to assess their society: the concept

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142. Although this is a caricature, it would serve as a headline summary of the main themes in Goody, J.   The Logic of Writing. London, Cambridge University Press, 1986.

A	**B**
LITERACY	**ORALITY**

Valorisation of Literacy   Valorisation of Orality
Universal Right to read   Pre-eminence of tradition
Cultural literacy and   Folkloric culture
 Aesthetics   Face to face Communication
 Information centred   Performance centred
 History as fact   History as Myth

   A   **B**

the zone of literacy exploitation
and thereby
the axis of superiority
. . . .

. . . .
the axis of marginalisation
and therefore
the zone of literacy programmes

C	**D**
ILLITERACY	**NON-LITERACY**

Devalorisation of Non-literacy Devalorisation of orality
 Powerlessness   Powerlessness
 Marginalisation   Marginalisation
Minimally literate behaviour Minimally oral behaviour
First World Illiterates   Third World Non-literates
Basic Functional Literacy   Basic Functional Literacy

   C   **D**

that their society was non-literate would be meaningless,
for the construing of society in relation to the understood
factors against which orality and literacy is defined is,in
fact, a construct only of literacy.

The actual terminology "oral society", if it is meant
to delineate the perspective at Point B, is therefore
problematic. Firstly, it is hard to recreate the meaning
of _oral_: even prior to the discovery of the alphabet,
there were communities which had some form of written
communications, hieroglyphs or ideograms. In modern
times, however, very few communities or societies can be
described as oral: "Wholly oral cultures have all but
disappeared. One finds instead sub-cultures where oral
modes of communication continue to play a central role and
where the literacy-rate is less than 5%" (Gerhardt,
1989:537). One finds, therefore, that our understanding
of orality is largely based on inference and extrapolation.
At one extreme, that includes the detailed scholarship of
Havelock and Parry, but, at the other, it includes the
conjecture which Ong wittily refers to as "defining a horse
as a car without wheels".

The second problem in defining the perspective of an
oral society is that "society", as we now use the word, is
itself a superordinate construct of literacy. The friend
and neighbour, the _socius_, in an oral society was not the
political animal, _politikon zoon_, of the Greek _polis_, nor

the civic worthy, the _civis,_ of the Roman _civitas,_ and certainly not the passport-carrying national of the Modern State.

One might reject this point because it appears to confuse the experiences of a Society with the development of the idea of a Nation State. However, this brief, archaeological review is intended to illustrate that our current perceptions of the individual, the individual in community, community and the wider society, and the individual, society and the State, no matter what period nor what culture we might be considering, are so impregnated by literacy and the effects of literacy that they cannot now be effaced. As literates, we cannot begin to think of a society which is decontaminated of all traces of literacy. To think "society" at all is to think, consciously or not, "literate society". We are condemned to never being able to get behind literacy to reinvent orality or an oral society.

Nonetheless, there are certain things that we can state about an archetypal oral society, (given that "archetype" is a known construct of orality[143]). Oral

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143. The role of the archetype, the nominal person who represents a whole society, even the whole of society, is an element common both to the great myths of India and Greece, and to the biblical stories of Israel. Without the aid of the historical perspective provided by literacy, oral societies (for example, the pre-literate Greek and the Hebrew) made frequent use both of the epic and of fables/parables (_mashalim_) to pass on their culture through the mouths of eponymous heroes and teachers.

culture is performance rather than information centred, and
knowledge is conveyed, through the drama of epic, narrative
and folklore from one generation to the next.   Children
learn by experience and by practice, not by theory and
abstraction.   Teaching is task oriented, for only useful
knowledge is properly knowledge.   Communication is
authentic because all discourse has the immediacy of
presence, and because there is no dichotomy between word
and action.   People in an oral culture have a pictorial
view of their world, yet within that they can encompass,
and even explain, contradictions, uncertainties and not-
knowing.   Often there is a directive fatalism that softens
or accounts for what otherwise would be the sadness of
things.   Given that, and because culturally people can
only live in the present, (there being no Past, only
Narrative), those who live in an oral society may live
hopefully (full of hope) but they cannot live
optimistically.   The present world is the best of all
possible worlds because it is the only possible world.[144]

     I have already noted that Points A and B are not
logical opposites that meld to form a genuine continuum.
Nonetheless, each does have a unique valence towards the
other: Orality contains within it the _trace_, the

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144. Again, a summary of the main traits of Orality that
      has echoes of Lévi-Strauss and Malinowski.   Obviously
      the main source is Ong: it is to be hoped that the
      summary is not a total injustice to his influential
      book: Ong, W.   _Orality and Literacy: The_
      technologising of the Word. London, Methuen, 1988.
      (first published 1982)

potential, of literacy, just as Literacy highlights rather than eradicates orality. Ong (1988:179) equally rejects the idea of such a continuum, and confirms that there is no simple transition from orality to literacy: there is rather the transition from orality to literacy and orality. "Orality-literacy dynamics enter integrally into the modern evolution of consciousness". It is this dynamic, this osmotic interaction across the membrane of communication, that effectively makes the literate world bi-cultural. It would perhaps be usefully provocative to create by fusion a new word, for example, oralit, so that we could then speak of an oralit culture. Or we might have litoralness to describe the transition from orality to literacy and orality.

The conjunctive and, however, is more significant than word-fusion. To create Literacy, elements of the two cultures, orality and literacy, become miscible, but that does not mean that they become indistinguishable. Separately, they offer two, very distinct perspectives on the world: together, they create a dynamic integrity which forms the double helix that spins itself into the web of Literate Culture.

That is why, although orality and literacy do not form a continuum, they do form an axis that, potentially, cuts synchronically and diachronically across all cultures. I have called this the "axis of superiority" (p.336).

Across this axis lies the zone where literacy is exploited: it is the domain of power-knowledge and of force-knowledge, and of the control of wealth and investment. It is to this area that two of Scribner's "metaphors" apply: <u>Literacy as Force</u> and <u>Literacy as a State of Grace</u>.[145]

> "Historically, literacy has been a potent tool in maintaining the hegemony of elites and dominant classes in certain societies, while laying the basis for increased social and political participation in others." (Scribner, 1984:11).

Certainly, hegemony and oppression existed before Literacy: oral cultures have never been thought of, even by the most romantic, as ideal societies somehow marked by the principles of advanced democracy, equality, and social or economic parity. Elitism and segregation, dominance and subservience are factors of both Orality and Literacy. The difference between Point B and Point A is that literacy highlights and augments any distinguishing factor, economically, spiritually, culturally or socially, in such a way that that factor then serves to separate the powerless from the powerful.

This is because Literacy can structure the

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145. Scribner, S. 1984.

> I have put "metaphor" in inverted commas in the text because I am not convinced that this is a genuine metaphorical use of language, viz. "applying a descriptive term to an object to which it is not strictly applicable." (Concise O.E.D. p.748.)

> In my view, the concepts of force and salvation can be applied to Literacy, without apology. The use of such metaphor, like the use of inverted commas, (as above) is perhaps a refuge of liberal pedagogy.

inequalities which Orality could only organise.   In a
textualised world, power over land, money, life, marriage,
over faith, freedom, over government and administration,
over individuality and even over memory, all gained an
objectivity and security because each could be justified:
Look, here is the written evidence as proof.[146]

In an oral society, force, even where it existed,
could only be imposed: it could never be legitimised, or
justified (justice-fied).   Force was always violence, a
violation of the society and/or of the individual.   In a
literate society, force does not need to be justified: it
is written into the very fabric of society by the
structures which Literacy creates for its own support and
protection.   The whole panoply of Literacy (the panoplia:
a full suit of armour) fits comfortably on the body
politic, to the degree that there is now no social,
economic, political or religious institution that could
exist without it.

The interweaving of force and literacy is now so
complete that any violence that accrues from either is
deemed to be "symbolic".   In reality, it is the reverse
that is true: all protestation that Literacy ought not to
be aligned with Force should be treated as token ignorance.

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146. A detailed exposé of all these elements can be found
     in Goody, 1986, although the analysis of Literacy as
     Power/Force is largely absent in Goody, who considers
     Literacy primarily from a technological rather than a
     teleological perspective.

However, the power of literacy is such that it is the token
that is rejected and not the symbol.[147]

The explanation for this contrary reaction lies in
the second of Scribner's metaphors: Salvation.   The
literate person finds that he or she is actually in a
"state of grace".

There is no escaping the aroma of incense here,
although the association between literacy and the so-called
Religions of the Book is widely noted. (Resnick, 1977;
Goody, 1986).   However, Salvation is more than bible-
centred: it is bibliocentric.   Literacy enfolds a certain
piety, in the religious and classical sense of the word:
one has a duty, a responsibility to be cultured, to be

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147. The play between the two words is also a way of
revealing the inherent contradiction of Literacy.
Symbol is indeed a sign and a mark, but it also has
three other usages.   Ecclesially, it is a credo, a
profession of faith; commercially, it is the tessera,
the tokens that were used for money or as a guarantee
of money; juridically, it is a covenant (also a
religious word) for the protection of commercial
interests.   To speak, therefore, of the symbolic
power of literacy is to invoke the many-tongued hydra
which is the full force of symbolism.

Token, on the other hand, is not just the arrabon
which we have already noted.   Its etymology lies in
an Old English/Teutonic root, taiknon, which means "to
teach, to demonstrate the truth, to define the
characteristics of."   Token ignorance, therefore, is
not evidence of a minimal ignorance, but a token of
ignorance, the proof of a total lack of understanding.

Literacy has the capacity to be tokenistic, that is,
to be truly educative.   Emancipatory literacy is
indeed the attempt to construct a "token of
ignorance", a learning process that explores
pedagogically, in Freire's term, the content of false
or naive consciousness.

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educated. Steiner (1972) reflects that dominant theme of traditional pedagogy in the view that a book is culturally sacred, and that, consequently, the burning of books for political ends, for example, is equivalent to a crime against humanity.[148]

There is also a view, that certainly enhances the feeling of superiority, which posits a cognitive deficiency on the part of those who are illiterate. This is still frequently stated (Penichaut, 1990; Olson, 1982), despite the increasing evidence to the contrary. Scribner notes (1984:14) that:

> "the notion that literacy per se creates a great divide in intellectual abilities between those who have and those who have not mastered written language is deeply entrenched in the educational circles of industrialised countries."

Like all grace (which is always *gratis* as well as *gratia*), the grounds for being superior are unfounded, but the force of literacy is such that it overrides compunction. Although Scribner's second metaphor is only a corollary of the first, the implied apododis, it is established in literate cultures as the First Premise of Literacy and, as such, it is stated implicitly or explicitly as a rule of first principle, something that is not to be questioned.

Across this axis of superiority lies the contrary world of illiteracy and non-literacy (those who live in a

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148. The total, bibliocentric presumption here is that people would or should want to read books rather than menus, tax returns, pay slips or the TV Times.

literate culture and who have a less than minimal literate competencies, and those who, in non-literate cultures, have never been introduced to literacy.) That is not a simple divide, however. Perspectives A and B do not form a continuum with perspectives C and D, any more than there is a continuum between A/B or A/C. (p.336)

In the view of those on the top side of the axis of superiority, those who are illiterate or non-literate inhabit a deficit culture which I have denoted, phenomenologically and less judgementally, as "the zone of literacy programmes". However, the perspective from point C and D is not the reverse image of the axis of superiority. Their view is further refracted by the double jeopardy created by the "axis of marginalisation".

Beneath this axis, the world at Points C and D differs only in the degree to which people can not read or write. Some have no literacy skills at all, other have a little, but not enough. If this is true of literacy, it is also true of wealth, access to resources, autonomy, health and education. We have already seen the direct correlation between illiteracy and deprivation. None have chosen to be marginalised, los marginados: but they have been marginalised, as Freire was sure to point out (1970h:210).

We have yet to see whether literacy can be the means of demarginalising, liberating, those who are illiterate or

non-literate, and obviously that raises the question of whether that liberation is only a liberating from ignorance, or whether it is also a structural liberation that confronts the other, associated oppressions.

Clearly, the marginalised cannot liberate themselves: one becomes neither free nor literate for the wanting to be. That is why the axis of marginalisation also creates the zone of literacy programme. The world of non-literacy/illiteracy is not a time-warp that can recreate the pre-Platonic world as it was when it was on the cusp of the discovery of the alphabet. Nor is it the world of the savage in the depths of the Amazon jungle. Even if we could pretend that this is our image the world of orality, non-literacy and illiteracy still cannot be defined as mutations of orality: they can only be defined in terms of Literacy.

That is why any movement from illiteracy/non-literacy to Literacy (even if that is literacy and orality) requires the creating of two, new axes that links the Culture of Voice, Literacy, to the Cultures of Silence, Illiteracy and Non-Literacy. In the schema of p.336, this means ligating Point A to C, and A to D.

Freire would call this an invasion of culture, but this has to be the case. Unlike Literacy, illiteracy is not its own pharmakon. Illiteracy cannot be treated homoeopathically: it requires the kind of radical

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transformation, cognitively, culturally, socially and politically, that cannot be created by some form of spontaneous combustion.[149]

This assessment is not intended to reinforce the superiority of Literacy (Point A): it is a judgment on how far the Literate perspective has created a cultural and social disequilibrium. The fulcrum of power is so far from those who are illiterate that any real attempt to create a literacy programme has to be initiated outwith the axis of marginalisation. This, ultimately, is what justifies the creation, by those at Point A, of policies and initiatives "targeted" at those at Points C and D.

The UNESCO Expert Team on Evaluation (1976:191) provide a good example, not least because they echo Freire's comments about his approach to literacy in Guinea Bissae (Freire, 1978). They had proposed that Literacy was a necessity both as a national priority to raise the cultural level of the population, to break with the past of ignorance linked to domination and exploitation and to build a democratic society, and as a duty of international solidarity in the perspective of a new world order adawning.

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149. I am therefore not considering here Scribner's third metaphor: Literacy as Adaptation. In the light of my argument, this is again not an example of metaphor but of oxymoron.

Scribner, to my mind, still posits a bibliocentric view of literacy, although what she says re. adaptation is still relevant to my analysis of functional literacy. (see: Section 6.6)

> "For these reasons the concept of functionality must
> be extended to include all its dimensions: political,
> social, economic and cultural. Just as development
> is not only economic growth, so literacy -and
> education more generally- must aim above all to rouse
> in the individual a critical awareness of social
> reality, and to enable him or her to understand,
> master and transform his or her destiny."

The Expert Team then go on to talk about integrating
national necessities with the needs of different social
groups, about literacy as but one element of a process of
lifelong learning, and about the need to speed up
international aid procedures so as not to delay literacy
activities.

Three major themes are evident even in this summary.
Firstly, literacy is deemed to be an attribute of an
individual rather than of a society.   Secondly, there is
the transition from Functional Literacy which enables a
citizen to contribute to society, to Functional Citizenship
which is achieved only in part by Literacy.   Thirdly, and
as it were the provider of the tempo for the other themes,
there is the alignment of literacy and economics.

From these themes, the main premises of the argument
are constructed:

i)   there can be no effective community development
      without economic development;

ii)   for the community to create economic development, it
      must be able to master and transform its own destiny;

iii) to be able to master and to transform its own
      destiny, the community must be literate;

Therefore:

iv)   Literacy, which is Reading and Writing (the key to
      Knowledge Capital) is the key to economic development.

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So Bhola (1989a:524):

> "Considering knowledge as capital which is to be
> redistributed helps us better to understand these
> processes (of policy making) at both local and world
> levels. Development, which means both modernisation
> and democratisation, is as much a material process as
> an ongoing intellectual process."

It is sometimes hard to know whether such a statement
exhibits the shocking simplicity of a self evident truth or
the scandalousness of wishful thinking. One is drawn to
the logical opinion that Literacy as Knowledge Capital has
to be (re)distributed throughout the world in order to
facilitate the (re)distribution of economic resources.
Yet there is an aroma of fallacy around.

In looking for the fault, one might be tempted to
suggest that the error lies in positing that what is
observed as effect and alleged cause (the fact of material
wealth in the Developed World and the fact of widespread
literacy) can be inverted and actualised as cause and
effect (literacy will bring about material wealth): that
is, the weakness lies somewhere in the confusion of the
methodological and ontological planes.

While this is true in part, it is not the whole
answer: we need to look further, for neither Literacy nor
Economics can be hypostatised, as if they each were
enduring, fixed, historicised entities. The problem is
not primarily one of repositioning the objective
coordinates of these two functional Structures, or
structural Functions.

This would produce a policy analysis that was static
rather than dynamic, factual but not historical. It would
deny Titmuss's (1974:23) advice that "the concept of policy
is only meaningful if we believe we can effect change."
We need to ask: what kind of change is being envisaged when
we talk of Literacy and Modernisation or Development, be
that for individuals or for societies ?

Apter (1987), in a study of modernisation and
development, speaks of those who are poor, ill, oppressed,
those who, to all intent and purpose, are superfluous for
the functioning of the society. Clearly they have neither
capital nor power, which is explicable because nor do they
have any knowledge-capital (which is founded on literacy)
which is the means by which they could become non-poor and
non-powerless (which is not necessarily the same as
becoming rich and powerful). Knowledge-capital can,
therefore, be seen symbolically as the effective means of
creating the possibility of liberation and as the
prerequisite for triggering the processes of development.

Apter actually names this power Symbolic Capital.
The immediate concept is apparent: Capital suggests the
world of finance, of resources, of influence. Capital is
also collateral, the alongside power which is the guarantor
of investment, the token of confidence and security.
Capital is finally the central power, the source of
government and control. If knowledge is power, and the key
to knowledge in the textualised world is literacy, then

Literacy as Capital is indeed a capital image.150

What then of _symbolic_ ?   What reality of Literacy
remains to be expressed symbolically?   Or is it that, to
return to Jacobson's classifications, symbolic here
actually means "symbolic".   As a sign-word within the
inverted commas, symbolic is not referential, that is, it
does not define the relationship between the message and
the object to which it refers, but it is metalinguistic.
Its purpose, therefore, is to "refer one back to the CODE
from which the sign takes its MEANING" (Guiraud, 1975:8).

That code can only be understood from the upper side
of the axis of superiority where it was first used.   The
second thing to note that it is a code.   It is not intended
as a language which is self revelatory: its purpose is to
be cryptic, hidden, not heuristic or obvious.   Thirdly, as
a symbol it is an intensified metaphor, minus its reference
point.

Lemaitre speaks of a symbol as "overall, an extended
comparison of which we have only the second term."   To
fully understand "symbolic capital", we shall have to find
the code and the missing term, and therefore we must go
back to the zone of literacy exploitation.

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150. The tautology is added deliberately for emphasis.   In
    the modern world there is, in fact, no other world.
    No contemporary society can now disinvent its own
    literateness.

My hypothesis is that the code is that which we have already uncovered in order to speak about symbolic violence, and symbolic power. The missing term is FUNCTIONALITY. Together, they create a new, uncoded term: SYMBOLIC LITERACY.

In order to explore this final point of contradiction, we must now consider the concept and practice of Functional Literacy.

6.6   The Functionality of Functional Literacy

The root idea of functional literacy has developed with that of Adult Basic Education around the simple logic that a) all adults have a right to a basic education, and that b) literacy is functional.   Universal suffrage and pragmatism meld in mutual convenience.

Yet that is the difficulty: what is basic is deemed to be of value, to be essential, while what is functional is deemed to work or to be effective.   The very language around functional literacy discourages a critical analysis, and this is shown by the largely unquestioned acceptance of the term.

It was first used by the American Army in World War II to categorise those recruits who were "less than fully literate", i.e. illiterates as defined as "persons who are incapable of understanding the kinds of written

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instructions that are needed for carrying out basic
military functions or tasks" (Harman, 1970:227).

The obvious implication is that literacy denoted,
quite simply, at least for this period during and after the
war, the ability to read and write. It reflects a time
when the perspective on literacy was completely and
unashamedly bibliocentric. One is tempted to remark that
that was idealistic, even naive, but then neither Harman
(1970) nor Levine (1982), who analyse literacy against
schooling ages and levels, draw attention to the fact that
three to eight years schooling also comprises certain
behavioural and attitudinal development which might also be
essential for the Army. It would indeed be worth a
detailed study to assess in what ways "the kind of written
instructions needed for carrying out basic military
functions or tasks" differed from those which might be
needed for carrying out educational functions and tasks in
school.[151]

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151. The nearest, comparable study that I know of is that
by Sticht, (1972). This is a study of functional
literacy levels for selected military jobs which have
civilian counterparts: cooks, repairmen, supply
clerks, and armor-crewmen.

One of their conclusions is that "reading grade levels
have a "psychological meaning" in that most people
"feel" that they understand the difference between a
person who reads at the 3rd grade level as opposed to
one who reads at the 8th or 12th grade level." (p.463)

This general, common sense appreciation may or may not
be true, but again the authors do not go on to suggest
that the difference between grade 3 and grade 8
reading could also be correlated against a Likert
scale of behaviour and attitude.

What is important is that, contrary to Harman, schooling and literacy have never been solely about reading and writing. No-one has ever learnt to read or write simply so that they could read or write: such skills have always served specific functions. In that sense, Literacy has only ever been functional. What the expression functional literacy draws attention to is not its literateness but its _functionality_. The obvious question which then arises is "Of what is Literacy a function?"

One response is contained in the very definitions which Harman and Levine use without comment. While illiteracy is defined as "the ability to read, write and compute at or above the minimum level of competence ", literacy is defined as "the ability to hold a decent job to support self and family, to lead a life of dignity and pride" (Harman, 1970).

To the degree that decency, dignity and pride are social values, they illustrate how the map of literacy is drawn by tracing it over the cartography of any given society. Postman effectively demonstrates this by his allegations that, if you cannot read, you cannot be a "good citizen". Firstly, if you cannot read forms, regulations, notices, signs etc., you cannot be governed, you cannot be an obedient citizen. Secondly, you cannot be a good consumer, because you are immune to so much advertising and product information. Thirdly, you cannot be a loyal citizen, perhaps the most disturbing allegation, because

you will not be sufficiently well-read to have imbibed the myths and superstitions of your society. Reading serves the important function of making political and historical myths accessible to students (Postman, 1970:246).

That Literacy should be twinned with Citizenship is, of course, not a modern phenomenon, and it underlies the problem which confronted Plato in the Republic, viz. the association between universal or selective literacy and universal or selective franchise, especially where the former is used to define or control the latter. Citizenship requires that the person is a consumer, politically and economically: citizens consume the products of the market place (for which they need to be literate), plus they consume, accept what governments produce, viz. laws, and regulations (for which equally they need to be literate).

That association between schooling, economics and politics provided the motivation for Adam Smith's teaching of English literature as a means of expounding his economic and political system of laissez-faire. His study of English "was to be a pedagogical social prescription, supportive of a socially acceptable ideology." (Court, 1985:328). Smith's "good man" is Postman's "good citizen." The whole thrust of his Theory of Moral Sentiments is the development through literate education of a mentality that could "recognise the synaptic correspondence between acceptable and unacceptable literary

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styles and acceptable and unacceptable social and moral behaviour." (ibid:337).

The synapse, to borrow the analogy from neurology, is the interface, the between, that describes zeugmatically the relationship between literacy and society and literacy and knowledge-capital. The syllepsis is constructed from the way in which we talk of "literacy skills and socialisation", assuming that there is a process of literate socialisation which has a centripetal force that necessarily makes literacy skills applicable to the creating or sustaining of a culture or society.

This is the very principle defined in Gray's influential report for UNESCO (1956:24): a person is functionally literate who "has acquired the knowledge and skills in reading and writing which enables him or her to engage in all those activities in which literacy is normally assumed in his/her culture or group."

The "normally assumed", however, is again sylleptic. It is taken as applying to the individual but it actually applies, in the first instance, to the culture or society. It is the society that requires a certain level of literate functioning, that "assumes" or "presumes" a given level of literacy. Therefore, in order to find their place in that society, its members need to function in a way that is commensurate with those literate expectations which reflect the societal norms.

These norms are reaffirmed in other ways, as the later development of the idea of functional literacy shows. While the principle of adequate functioning was argued initially during World War II in the U.S. Army, it had an immediate application, after the war, as the primary criteria of employability. It became associated with the idea of Human capital which replaced knowledge capital as the shibboleth of education and training. It provided the justification for investment both in adult education and in primary/secondary schooling, because the product of such outlay, in terms of skills, attitudes and behaviour, would result in greater economic profits.[152]   It represented a centrifugal force, pushing literacy out from the centre to the margins of society, and was explained in terms of initiatives aimed at integration, reinsertion and rehabilitation.

The effect of this redefining of functional literacy from the centre is not just a reaffirmation of literacy in terms of holding down a job and living with dignity and pride.   It acts as a device to create an important demarcation within the zone of literacy exploitation.   On the one hand, it defines only the minimum competencies required of an individual (that is, the individual as worker and citizen) in a print society.   In Kozol's words,

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152. For a detailed, economic development of this point, see: Becker, G.S. Human Capital. New York, Columbia University Press, 1975;   Blaug, M. "Literacy and Economic Development" in The School Review, Vol.74, 1966, pp.393-418.

(1985:185), it is "mean minded" because it concentrates on coping, on survival. It prefers an antihumane, subsistence literacy to that creative literacy which would enable people to discover, express and develop their humanness.

On the other hand, the aesthetic or more than minimum literacy that Kozol seeks has never been part of mass literacy. Despite the fact that functional literacy is seen as a target standard for both educational and economic development in the Developed World but particularly in the Third World, experience has shown that the more it moves beyond defining the criteria for employment towards defining the criteria for the quality of human life, then the more it is used to assess social and life skills, health education, the family, the community environment, health and nutrition, etc.[153] The result justifies Kozol's criticism because such functional literacy does not produce greater democratisation, freedom of expression, or a more genuine realisation of the power of citizenship. On the contrary, it encourages a move towards the readjusting of the hierarchies of literacy, a realigning of the positional economy which hinges upon literacy.

The positional economy (Hirsch, 1977) is based upon the maintenance of differentials, the process of contrived inflation that occurs in a situation where a once scare

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153. "Framework for Action", Appendix 2 of the Final Report, Education for All. Jomtien, New York, UNICEF, 1990, p.54

resource becomes common and hence devalued. Thus, in the situation where mass literacy or functional literacy becomes the norm, those with more than the basic competencies seek to revalue their own skills, diplomas and qualifications.[154]

Functional Literacy provides the base line on which is built the pyramid of literacy that ultimately defines the various echelons of power in a society. That is one of the major themes of Graff's The Legacies of Literacy -a view with which Gee (1988:264) concurs:

> "It has stressed behaviours and attitudes appropriate to good citizenship and moral behaviour, largely as these are perceived by the elites of the society.
>
> "Literacy has been used, in age after age, to solidify the social hierarchy, empower elites, and ensure that people lower in the hierarchy accept the values,norms and beliefs of the elites, even when it is not in their self interest (or class interest) to do so."

This is more than a Labovian conditioning of what is acceptable language. It is the functioning of Literacy as an expression of hegemony. Like subsistence poverty, with which it has much in common, functional literacy is a relative concept, but relative not primarily to the experience of total poverty or destitution, but to the experience of the difference between being "really wealthy"

154. An interesting study of "qualification inflation" can be found in Dore, R. The Diploma Disease, London, Unwin Educational Books, 1976. He shows how the social justifications for schooling changed through the process which related quantitatively measurable educational achievement to both social mobility and employability.

and being "comfortable".155   As there are those who are
rich, "less well off", and poor, so there are those who are
highly literate, functionally literate and illiterate.
But, as shown by that relativity, functional literacy is a
category of literacy (and hence is located above the axis
of superiority:156 p.336) and not of illiteracy.

(fig.a)

```
              axis
               |
   the poor    |    those able to cope        the rich
               |
 illiterates   |    those able to cope     those highly
               |                           literate
               |
               |of
         superiority
```
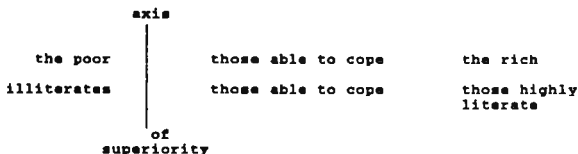
        This, at least, is the conclusion that is to be drawn
from the rhetoric which surrounds functional literacy and
the objectives which are directed to the integrated
functioning of an individual in his or her society.

        However, if we move beyond the discourse analysis
proposed, for example, by Heath to an analysis of the
functions incorporated in functional literacy, then we
uncover the reversal of its significance and find what I

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155. The correlation between poverty and illiteracy is made
     explicitly in the report of ATD Quart Monde, <u>Données
     sur l'illetrisme: le cas francais.</u> Paris, Pierrelaye,
     1986.

156. What I have described as the superior axis of
     literacy, Esperandieu (1984:102) describes as the
     social cleavage of illiteracy. The very word
     "illiteracy" connotes the existence of extreme social
     inequality. "Dire illettrisme c'est nommer l'un des
     clivages qui traverse notre société, c'est designer
     une forme extrême de l'inégalité entre les citoyens."

have called <u>symbolic literacy.</u>   This results not from a
simple, verbal hypallage but from a real relocation of
the axis of power which can be represented schematically as:

(fig.b)

		axis	
the poor	those able to cope		the rich
illiterates	those able to cope		those highly literate
		of superiority	
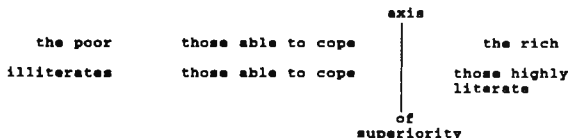
<u>Symbolic literacy</u> then becomes an uncoded term which
signifies that functional literacy is actually
dysfunctional for illiterates or non-literates but
functional for those who are more highly literate and who,
in the positional economy, are able to define the
cartographic principles, socially, morally, economically,
which those wanting to function in a literate society must
accept.

The evidence for this claim is not just the general
fact that functional literacy has rarely lived up to the
claims made for it, e.g. in terms of employability, social
relations or national, economic development. There is the
further, specific argument that, within functional
literacy, WRITING has only a minor and very limited role.
The project REALISTIC is not untypical in its prioritising
of REading, LIStening and arithmeTIC (Sticht, 1972) and the
influential programme <u>Right to Read</u> in the United States

(Allen, 1976) which spawned many other functional literacy
initiatives in the 1970's and 1980's, clearly made the
diagnosis that the dysfunctioning of the society was
related to the large numbers of people who could not read.
It was not considered necessary for them to be able to
write:[157]

"A person is functionally literate when he has command
of reading skills that permit him to go about his daily
activities successfully on the job, or to move about
society normally with comprehension of the usual printed
expressions and messages he encounters."

Reading creates the possibility of consensus or
convergence: only Writing can create the possibility of
dissent.   This is more than mere disagreement, which
obviously can result from reading: it is it is the creating
of a response which is counter hegemonic.   The paradox of
Writing, which is one of the most refined symbolic systems
created by humankind, is that it has the potential to be
anti-symbolic: it is fundamentally iconoclastic.

For the elites, iconoclasm creates the challenge
which is experienced by all orthodoxies in that it
encourages heresy, even deviance.   For them, a literacy
which produces writing of, or a rewriting of, knowledge-
power relations is dysfunctional for it does not educate
the citizen into orthodoxy, into that governability, even
that vulnerability to governaunce, to media and myth, which

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157. British Association of Settlements, A Right to Read,
     London, Association of Settlements, 1974, quoted in
     Levine, (1982:256).   The inherent sexism also betrays
     the importance of making literacy accessible to "the
     working man" or the unemployed -the nonworking man.

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are the signs of an "educated person".

It is in that sense that such Symbolic Literacy is also symbolically violent, for it is forced to kill at birth the possibility of that Writing which is creative, actionable and revolutionable.   In Freire's terms, Reading is the currency of Banking Education, Writing is the currency of Dialogue. The former creates imitation, the latter innovation.

For him, functional literacy is a contradiction in terms. It creates the silence of the passive reader, the silent receiver who has found their place in society, who has been given entry into the elite's library of knowledge and who therefore may be seen there, but who cannot, or must not, be heard. Such literacy creates the oppressive Culture of Silence but not the liberating Silence of Culture.

This is not a malapropism, a further figure of speech from the Rhetoric of Literacy. Literacy is its own figure of speech, its own symbol, within which the expression "the silence of culture" is meant to draw attention to <u>Literacy and the Writer</u> as opposed to that (functional) literacy which concerns only the reader.   It explains that "writing the word" and "reading the world" remains the ultimate contradiction of Freire's pedagogy.

When we pose the dialectic between powerful literacy and literate power, and then make that single plane three dimensional by adding the element of knowledge, it is easy to overlook the fact that this trinity of force/violence (Literacy-Power-Knowledge) is itself a superordinate construct of Literacy.   The discovery of this Derridean trace has been one of the underlying themes of this study:

> "Whether in written or in spoken discourse, no element can function without itself relating to another element which itself is not simply present. This linkage means that each "element" -phoneme or grapheme- is constituted with reference to the trace within it of other elements of the sequence of the system. Nothing in either the elements or the system is anywhere entirely present or absent." (Sturrock, 1979:164).

Thus the difference between literacy and power-knowledge is that the latter must differ to the former.   The difference between them is that, while a sociology of power or a psychology of learning may describe a system of education or a pedagogy, neither of these elements can prescribe the Pharmakon which is Literacy.   Literacy is both the prescription which constructs the sense of power and knowledge in a textualised society (in the Now, there can be no other Society), and the prescription which administers to the excesses of such power and knowledge as they are expressed in control, oppression and domination.

Where Literacy is not present, but not absent, is where it is not Literacy but a meta-Literacy, a pre-requirement of being literate.   So it is that we have to

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be able to speak, think in a literate way before we can become "literate": "Although the fact of writing historically follows the fact of speech, nonetheless the idea of speech depends upon the idea of writing" (Harland, 1987:129).

At the level of Literacy, Freire is an object of contradiction. We have seen how the very idea of writing the word, reading the word are not two sides of the same literate coin. They represent quite antithetical skills and competencies, and we have seen how the attempt to forge a synthesis results in the blatant contradictions of, for example, functional literacy. In this latter case, we found that Literacy was dysfunctional for the non-literates and for those people becoming literate precisely because Literacy has both constructed the status quo, i.e. the dominant classes, and it is the means by which those classes express their status.

We have to ask: did Freire enable the peasants with whom he worked to achieve a sufficient level of literacy so that they could be assimilated into the/their Society ? While they stood to gain through claiming the right to vote, the means for so doing that have meant, in the absence of any proof to the contrary, that their self-preparation for citizenship through their involvement in the literacy campaign has already circumscribed, culturally and politically, any potential room for fundamental change. No radical change has ever been ushered in through the

ballot box.

We have seen that the Freire had codified the culture of the learners, but he seems never to have codified the culture of the literate educators. As the analysis of his literacy programme showed, the rhetoric that sought the development of dialogue, engagement, equality, did not match the subliminal messages and modes of a Banking method. Albeit benign, Freire's approach differs only in degree, but not in kind, from the system which he so eloquently criticises.

Maybe this is because Freire is at heart a very traditional pedagogue. We have seen how he repossessed Aristotle and Hegel in order to find a language in which he could re-state his own pedagogy, yet behind that, there remains the classic teacher. The learner is not just someone who needs to learn: he or she is also someone who needs to be taught. Freire's faith in humankind, perhaps like all faith, blinded him to that reality.

The tendency to think of Freire as an abstruse, Latin American educator who was propelled by events to the world stage of education but who there found himself out of his depth, unable to communicate with anyone other than his own North-eastern compatriots, is wholly contradicted by the events. Freire has occupied a pivotal place in the formulation of education campaigns throughout the Third World, and his influence on other European and North

American educators has been considerable.

Yet he was, and still is, fiercely Brazilian.
Having now returned to Brazil, he has begun perhaps to come
to terms with his own history and his own achievements. On
the face of it, he does not have the profile of a radical,
revolutionary educator.   Born into a middle-class family,
he took the career route through Law, but with little
direction until influenced by his wife, perhaps more than
he has yet admitted, to follow his evident aptitude for
teaching.

So emerged the "metodo Paulo Freire" and a
problematising of the obvious, and therein lies the genius
of simplicity.   Too many people have considered Freire as
a tutor of literacy, whereas in fact he is a politician of
pre-literacy.   What he may not have admitted to himself is
that, while he offered "Literacy in Thirty Hours" to meet
certain felt needs on the part of the peasants, what he was
actually doing was confronting the underlying real needs of
those individuals and of the society.

In that sense, his pedagogy is radical, a learning
iceberg where what is most important is invisible to the
eye.   The final contradiction, which is the first
contradiction, is that his pedagogy is not at all about
literacy, but rather about pre-literacy.   It is about
meta-linguistics, a meta-writing or arche-writing, which is
the pre-requisite of literacy.

Freire is himself Literacy's Pharmakon. He can be dismissed for idealism, utopianism, mysticism and irrelevance. Yet beneath that, beneath the cooperative banking system which he has made his own, there is a pedagogy of contradiction, which is contradictory because it engenders contradiction. To be able to want to write the word (pre-literacy) and so learn to read the word (first literacy) and then to write it (second Literacy) is the goal of his teaching. That does not appear to be the case at first glance, and that this might only appear through intense analysis of this kind of study, is Freire's way of gainsaying, contradicting his critics. In the end, the fact that all contradiction is now clear is Freire's ultimate success. At least now the right questions can be asked.

Part A: This bibliography is a selection of Freire's main texts, books and published papers, noted by year of publication.

Where the text is a republication or retranslation of an earlier document, the original is noted in a parenthesis.

Part B: This is the General Bibliography comprising the references made in the substantive text.

I have followed, in principle, the Harvard System of Referencing, viz. identifying Author, Title, Place of Publication, Publisher, Date of Publication.

Articles have been referenced as Author, Title of Article, Journal, Volume, Part, Year and Page.

Two further Conventions need to be noted. First, in quoting French texts, I have maintained the French system whereby the majuscule is not normally used for all nouns or adjectives.

Secondly, in classifying the Bibliography in alphabetical order, I have adopted the proposed International Convention whereby authors with composite names or prefixes (e.g. de, del, las, los, van, von,) are ordered by <u>national usage</u>.

See: <u>Répertoire de quelques usages nationaux</u>, L'Association françaises de normalisation (AFNOR), July, 1963.

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Page 13: Les homogénéités.
"The enunciative homogeneities / heterogeneities interweave with linguistic constants and variables and with logical similarities and differences without all of them falling into line or necessarily all linking up.

Dans le débat...
"The analysis is not limited to the discussion about structure with a beginning, a middle and an end.   It must progress into that domain where questions concerning the person, conscience, antecedents and individuality become revealed, interleave even interfuse, and are clarified."

Page 19: Note 12. Las aparencias...
"The appearances and trappings which are associated with a position of financial security."

Page 22: Ses aspects vénitiens...
"Recifé, not unlike Venice, with its magnificent colonnades of palm trees beside an incredibly green sea – on which in times past was witnessed the procession of so many ships heavily and pregnantly laden with plunder from the East that the Sugar Barons came to blows over them – Recifé and Olinda which rises about it, nestled among the churches."

Page 25: Er steht...
"In that way he found himself within the Brazilian, intellectual tradition where Law laid claim to be the key discipline."

Page 33: Cuando su filosofía...
"When his philosophy and his educational programmes had made him famous in most parts of Brazil, the University of Recifé conferred on him the Degree of Doctor Honoris Causa in Education. Since then he has taught Philosophy of Education at that University."

Page 39: Les premières campagnes...
"The first literacy campaigns based on the Freirean "system" were conducted in the North-east of Brazil (1961-1964).   They show how far the educators had espoused the political objectives of the organisers, viz. of the reformist provincial government.   It is quite clear that the goals of these campaigns were political."

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Page 42: Setenta días más...
   "Seventy days later they set him free and they
   "invited" him to leave the country."

Page 65: Note 45. Voir les lettres...
   "Seeing the letters impedes reading. The
   alphabet was not made to be read but to be heard
   and spoken."

Page 72: Possum ergo...
   "I can therefore I am"

Page 77: Ces problèmes...
   "These problems can be summarised in a word: the
   questioning of the text. The text is no longer
   inert matter which History uses to try to
   reconstruct what people have done or said,
   something which is of the past and of which only
   a trace remains. History seeks to describe in
   this tissue of texts elements and compositions,
   links and relationships. History is the study
   and the bringing into play of these documented
   materials (books, texts, accounts, registers,
   acts, buildings, institutions, rules, techniques,
   objects, customs, etc.)."

Page 78: Note 52. La transformation...
   "The transformation of reality takes effect
   automatically."

Page 79: C'est justement...
   "It is precisely because it prepares for life
   that Education should be a way of life. If
   Education proposes to be a preparation for life,
   but is itself not a way of living, then it cannot
   achieve its end."

Page 80: Note 55. Au fur et à mesure...
   "To the degree that an act becomes automatic, it
   becomes an unconscious act."

   "The rupture of equilibrium is the motor of all
   activity."

Page 81: L'Education est...
   "Education is a function of existence as original
   and powerful as life itself. As such, it makes
   possible the spiritualisation and the
   emancipation of humankind."

Page 82: Una pédagogie...
   "A pedagogy of teaching."

   Die Stammgruppe ist...
   "The core group is a social entity which, under
   the leadership of an adult teacher, develops
   purposefully."

Page 82: Le cercle permettait...
"The Circle allows for the raising of general questions or topical issues proposed by the children, or of facts relating to their experience or observations.

The fact of being in a Circle should be beneficial: each communicates with the other as an individual."

Page 104: Verum et...
"What is true and what has been made are interchangeable."

Page 106: Note 72. Si la Phénoménologie...
"If the **Phenomenology of Mind** is the voyage of a natural consciousness which attains to authentic, scientific knowledge....so that, being fully conscious of itself, it can achieve an understanding of what it is to be itself."

Page 131: Note 84. Qu'aujourd'hui encore...
"Even today, the term **subject** does not exist in arabic terminology."

Page 287: Note 115. Si la réalité...
"If the instrumental fact of writing counts for less than that which it symbolises, it is because the latter has an effect within the political relations between people and between groups."

Page 288: Non minima pars...
"Not the least important element of learning is the knowledge of good books."

Page 292: Illettrisme...
"**Illiteracy** is the state of those who are illiterate.
Illiterate is someone who is partially unable to read or write."

Page 294: Le francais...
"The French language did have a term to denote the ability to read and to write: **lettrure**. The word can be found in twelfth and thirteenth century texts, but it fell into disuse."

Page 329: Note 139: Nous passons...
"We spend our time objectifying other people. Materialism has a particular propensity to fall into an economism which, reflecting the automatic inclination in the daily struggle for differentials, consists in reducing the other person to some objective truth. The most elementary reduction is in reducing them to their economic value."

Page 332: Similia similibus...
"Like is treated with like."

Page 360: Note 156. Dire illettrisme...
"To speak of illiteracy is to identify one of
the divisions which cuts across our society. It
points to an extreme form of social inequality."

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