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A study of marginalization, mental illness, illiteracy, and poverty: The problematics of intervention

Elissondo, Guillermina, Ph.D.

The University of North Carolina at Greensboro, 1994

U·M·I
300 N. Zeeb Rd.
Ann Arbor, MI 48106

A STUDY OF MARGINALIZATION, MENTAL ILLNESS, ILLITERACY, AND POVERTY: THE PROBLEMATICS OF INTERVENTION

by

Guillermina Elissondo

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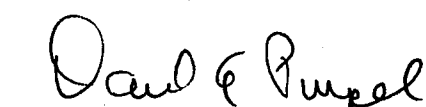

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This dissertation explores some of the causes of the marginalization of mental patients, illiterates, and poor students by the institutions designed to help them. It focuses on the organization of educational and medical institutions in Europe, the United States, and latin America. Michel Foucault's persuasive analysis of European institutions in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries is used to look at institutions in the Western Hemisphere.

Often institutions have tended to produce discourses of social and individual control. This dissertation proposes two alternatives to counteract those narratives that are part of the Latin America of the sixties and early seventies. The contributions of Paulo Freire in education and Enrique Pichon-Riviere in psychoanalysis are examined as major proposals addressing the needs of peasants and mental patients during that time. Both viewed the analysis of culture as an important component of their pedagogies. As a result, they incorporated the analysis of daily life into their practices.

As notions of culture and intervention require constant redefinition, this study examines not only the achievements but also the shortcomings of Freire's and Pichón-Rivière's binary readings of the sixties. At present, concepts such as oppressor/oppressed, developed/underdeveloped, sane/insane, etc. need to be resemanticized in a paradigm that includes a multiplicity of voices reflecting the entire cultural and social spectrum.

In the American context this work briefly examines the discourses--both conservative and liberal--of the sixties that focus on the marginalization of disadvantaged students in public schools. Though the two narratives are vastly different, the proponents all viewed the culture of minority students as an obstacle to their intellectual development and social integration. The multiculturalists were the first group who argued the culture of the under-privileged students must be used in the classroom, not simply overcome or erased. This dissertation concludes by asserting that a critical analysis of popular culture (with all its positive and negative features) is one pedagogical strategy that may be used to address the interests of the majority of students.

APPROVAL PAGE

This dissertation has been approved by the following committee of the Faculty of The Graduate School at The University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

Dissertation Advisor ______________________

Committee Members ______________________

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Before addressing the contents of my dissertation, I would like to point out some of the concerns that have led me to decide to explore the topic of intervention to marginalized groups. Discourses are products of history, ideological elaborations of meaning that at particular historical and geographical points are modified, changed, and later dispersed. I believe that by analyzing certain discourses and the experiences produced by them we can begin to decipher the intertwined features of power relations. For that reason I want to write a project that reflects how sometimes coherent, sometimes incoherent, some central but also many marginal experiences can become power spaces for the production and reproduction of pedagogical practices. I am interested in addressing the possibilities of intervention when they are applied to some specific marginalized groups and the particular responses that have been part of different geographical contexts during various historical moments.

When I speak of marginality I am referring to extreme cases where the paths to recovery tend to be generally blocked by those in power or by a social

structure that produces an environment of entrapment. One of the marginal groups I will be referring to are mental patients institutionalized in asylums. Their experiences in those sites create a framework where to reflect also on illiterate peasants in Brazil and/or disadvantaged minority students in the United States. Mental institutions serve the purposes of the dominant ideology and construct on the already marginalized patients an environment of greater alienation and marginalization of their culture. Some educational institutions are not so far from mental institutions in the discursive ways they deal with illiterate and disadvantaged students. In many occasions they proceed by excluding or undervaluing the cultural expressions of the groups they are prepared to help, and as a result of that, they marginalize them even further.

Why then putting these three groups together? How should we reason them in order to reach new forms of understanding relevant to pedagogical practices? While the specificity of their problems seems to differ, and the environments where these people experience their lives do not lend themselves to comparison at first sight, all three groups have, in one way or another, been exposed to some kind of (external) intervention. In the case of mental patients the official responses have been

articulated by the authorities of the asylums. These institutions have engaged in the role of repositories of knowledge generating discourses that point out their own versions of "sanity" and "mental illness." To address this point I have selected some of the arguments pointed out by Michel Foucault that speak to the emergence of the social construction of madness and to the birth of the asylum and its medicalization. Foucault has dedicated great part of his production to historicize the continuities and discontinuities that led in the nineteenth century to the birth of not only the asylum but also the prison. His writings have challenged the historical notions of the venerable Association of French historians by arguing for an understanding of history that gave the same value to the oral accounts of lunatics, hobos, prisoners and academicians. His interest in asylums and prisons is not so much placed on these institutions as centers of social control but as sites for the production of repressive discourses. For Foucault the fascinating feature of the asylum lies in its production of psychiatric discourses. At the same time, Foucault observes that the prison also became the birthplace for the sociopsychological discourse associated with criminology.

I will include in this project some arguments articulated by Thomas Szasz because, in many ways, his concerns are similar to those of Foucault. Szasz agrees with Foucault in placing the notion of mental illness as a central discursive feature of the nineteenth century and, at the same time, Szasz insists that this construction can be compared in many ways to the narratives on witchcraft that appeared in the Middle Ages. In both cases "different" and "deviant" behaviors were segregated and punished by norms generated from prevailing views. Szasz and Foucault are concerned with the role of history in the production and reproduction of spaces of domination, their proposals usually address questions that speak of inclusions and exclusions of people which are part of political games. In addressing their views I do not intend to generate a polemic on the specific issues pointed out by the authors but rather to illustrate on the functions of power relations in specific scenarios.

Historically, public schools in North and South America have responded to illiterates and minority students in ways that sometimes do not differ so much from the responses produced by asylums and prisons. Their answers are articulated in a paradigm that, as a general rule, excludes the needs and interests of their subjects of knowledge and, as I said before, it undervalues their

cultural expressions by emphasizing the tastes and preferences of those in power. Dominant discourses have turned some schools into institutions of social control where disciplinarian strategies not so distant from those observed by Foucault in his study of prisons, often appear as features in their operation. While this last comment may sound overstated, the ideas articulated by Albert Shanker, President of the American Federation of Teachers, speak to the same concern. Shanker writes in the New York Times "teachers in many schools discover that when they have a couple of (impossible to manage kids) in the class, generous doses of seat work are the best way to keep the lid on. This of course is a technique for maintaining control, not a technique for teaching, it is the school equivalent of a prison lockdown" (Sept. 5, 1993). Educational institutions have, in some cases, become repositories of knowledge articulating proposals that treat their subjects of knowledge as "others" to be domesticated and shaped according to a norm.

What can be done to provide help to marginalized groups? Is intervention a feasible option? How can it be articulated without exercising power over dominated subjects? This is a very difficult issue. The exercise of power is the inevitable result of any social

negotiation. Because of that, it is also one of the major drawbacks that comes with any type of intervention. In spite of that, I believe that in the case of the marginalized that will be part of this work, external intervention, that is to say, intervention that comes from some person or persons outside their group, may not only be necessary but also beneficial. I am inclined to think that without external intervention these groups will not be able to emerge and control their lives. What has led me to conclude to this opinion? Though in many occasions external aid has proven to be oppressive, in the case of the groups I will be referring to, the need of intervention has, in some of the cases, been acknowledged as a positive option by the oppressed themselves. While running the risk of being anecdotal in my information, peasants who were part of a literacy campaign in Chile in 1973 spoke to this concern. As a result of the Agrarian Reform proposed by the Allende government they were forced to acquire literacy skills to be able to produce and control their lands. Learning to read and write had been completely irrelevant up to that time because their lives had been controlled by the landlords. The historical moment of 1973 challenged Chilean peasants to produce a change in their lives that required new skills.

Not long ago a PBS program corroborated in many ways, the comments of Chilean peasants. The program spoke to the possibilities that public educational institutions may bring to minority students in the United States. The scenario was a middle school in East Harlem with a population of Puertoricans and Africo-American students. It was an emotional experience to observe the impact that a math teacher had made in these students' lives. Students spoke with vitality about their lives, their neighborhood, and the possibilities that staying in school and developing intellectual discipline many bring to their lives. With a language that affiliated and brought them together they began to decipher the complexity of their academic and social experiences. In that case, the intervention of a teacher had given these students a chance to begin to recover their language, culture, and hopes.

Because I believe that in 1994 the possibilities for change may well be found in dispersed sites such as that school in Harlem, I want to bring in this project a few of the interventions produced in different locations at different historical times which provide however illuminating parallels. As I said before I will include not only central but also marginal experiences. While I will address the central Northern European responses that

led to the creation of the asylum in the nineteenth century, I will also pay special attention to two marginal interventions represented by the Latin Americans Paulo Freire and Enrique Pichon-Riviere during the sixties and early seventies. Paulo Freire, who was also part of the Chilean literacy campaign, had initiated his literacy project a decade before in Brazil by elaborating proposals of liberation together with peasants of the rural Northeast. As part of a populist resurgence in his native country Freire challenged prevailing reactionary views of education that excluded illiterates and generated in these people an attitude of passivity and conformity. Freire's pedagogical practices, articulated outside traditional institutions, not only included but also gave a central place to the culture of illiterate peasants. Until the 1960s the peasants' culture had been ignored from all educational experiences, peasants saw themselves as making no contributions to Brazilian culture. For that reason, they became convinced of their own "ignorance" and the impossibility for change. During the movement of national integration initiated in the early sixties, cultural centers all around the country began to pay attention to cultural contributions of marginalized groups. As a result of that, illiterates began to see their roles as

makers of culture and the possibility of beginning to control their own lives.

I pointed out above that some psychiatric institutions have historically marginalized their patients even further. In spite of that I am inclined to believe that when issues, such as respect for the integrity of patients, are taken seriously institutions may contribute profound benefits for some of their patients. When I speak of the possibilities of institutions I am appealing to those that are open to criticism and to evaluate their own practices for the benefit of their patients at large. Having said this, I will include in this project a Latin American intervention that did not succeed inside an institution, not because of the failure of the proposal itself, but because of the resistance that it created among practitioners when dominant views were challenged. The initially marginal proposal argued by the Argentine psychoanalyst Enrique Pichón-Rivière, while still clinging to classical notions of symptoms and diagnosis, challenged conservative notions of asylums in that country in the 50s and 60s. I will compare Pichón-Rivière's work with that of R.D. Laing, produced in London approximately during the same decade. By including Laing's work I want to show how different geographical locations can provide different answers to mental patients. R. D. Laing condemned the

need of intervention in the traditional sense, by challenging notions of diagnosis and symptoms and produced from Kingston Hall an existential response for those patients that came on voluntary terms.

As I said before a great part of this dissertation will address the interventions produced by Paulo Freire and Enrique Pichón-Rivière. I have a great variety of reasons for wanting to include their contributions in this project. Both interventions, Freire's in education and Pichón-Rivière's in psychology, are intertwined in a historical project that was part of the social reality of Brazil and Argentina, that I experienced, in the sixties and early seventies. In the two practitioners there was an ideological commitment to the individual and social liberation of their subjects and a search for national identity. Dominant discourses produce histories of education and psychiatry that, with very rare exceptions, tend to illuminate the hegemonical notions and the cultural practices of the groups in power. By challenging dominant views of their time and by bringing into their practices the oral accounts and experiences of their subjects, Pichón-Rivière and Freire produced major fractures in the official discourses.

Their pedagogies were articulated in a space where teachers/therapists engaged with their students/patients

in projects for the deconstruction of reality. What was there in their practices to make the experience worthwhile? In Pichón-Rivière and Freire the incorporation of popular culture became a central feature to their project. The question at this point would be to ask why this incorporation merits so much consideration. Does the exploration of the culture of marginalized groups offer liberating possibilities for the process of intervention? How do we know that their own culture cannot become another detrimental component that submerges the oppressed into a path of conformity and further oppression? Although I will address these concerns later in the dissertation at this point my interest in the incorporation of their culture has different implications. By bringing popular culture to the classroom I see the possibility of bringing "pleasure" (jouissance) as well. When I speak of pleasure I am not referring to a sophisticated aesthetic experience, I am speaking of pleasure more in a psychoanalytic sense, something that is corporeal, it comes from the body and cannot be easily expressed in words. It is an unconscious feeling that may well be revealed in tastes and desires. By excluding the culture of their subjects, many institutions have repressed and excluded pleasure from their sites. Both Pichón-Rivière and Freire were deeply aware of that

drawback, and included the element in their projects. Popular culture may have its liberating possibilities but sometimes it leads to conformity and oppression. Only by including popular desires and resistances, subjects and practitioners can begin to decode the myths involved in their own tastes and preferences. I believe that popular culture can also become an important source for understanding the needs and desires of poor minority students in the United States. Unless the features which are part of the disadvantaged students' backgrounds are addressed by educational institutions, schools will continue to fail.

I have also more personal reasons for paying attention to the notion of "pleasure" in relation to the work of both Latin American thinkers. What draws me more to their production is not only their capacity to work with the pleasure of their subjects but also their ability to retain the element in their own lives. Growing up in some sense privileged in the Latin America of the sixties and early seventies was a conflicting experience. The social movements of the time required a total submission to the political struggles and sacrifices that would lead to the liberation of the oppressed. The notion of pleasure that I had, that I had developed during my childhood, was considered petit-bourgeois and

contradictory to the project of liberation. Latin America was engaged in solving problems of need and there was no room for middle-class notions of pleasure. Those like myself who wanted to produce some changes from the position afforded by economic privilege, found themselves in a space of contradictions that led to a repression of pleasure to avoid a feeling of guilt. This may well be the reason why I like Freire and Pichón Rivière so much. Because of their background they are able to offer somebody like myself a possibility of social commitment without repressing "contradictory" spaces in my own identity. I enjoy reading interviews and narratives where they retell stories of their lives. It is more than a cultural identification, it is a way of experiencing details of life that are familiar to my social class. In other words, it is a petit-bourgeois association that had no room for my generation. I experience an unconscious pleasure when I read Freire's conversations with his friends in São Paulo, or walks in the beach with his first wife. Pichón-Rivière's narrative grows dramatically when he recalls his dinner with Lacan in Paris, remembers the days when he taught manners to prostitutes in a brothel or describes the demonstration organized by the mentally ill in his support when he was forced to resign from the asylum. As Roland Barthes so powerfully argued, there is

a near-ending pleasure in the text, and reading those narratives brings back an enjoyment for details that I find very difficult to describe.

But besides the pleasure of reading details of their lives there is something else that attracts me to the two thinkers. It refers to the connection that exists in both practitioners between their private and public spaces. I am usually attracted to people who are able to stand for their beliefs who, whether they write or work or choose any other activity, are able to fight for their own integrity in their private and public space. I have many times become disappointed by what Freire calls "verbalism," the rhetorical discourse that prevails in many educational institutions, and that speaks of the contradictions between speakers of liberating discourses and their personal practices. Even though I never met Freire or Pichón-Rivière personally, my life has been surrounded by people associated with them in one form or another. Stories that surround them speak of few impostures and a total commitment to live their lives with conviction and intensity. Their experiences and the contributions they have made to marginalized groups have, in many ways, given me a chance to justify that external forms of intervention are possible and that they may be

done without risking the loss of individual identity in both the marginalized and the practitioners.

With this dissertation I want to contribute to a broad social dialogue emphasizing, and at the same time very much in need of, alternatives to verticalism, the rule of reactionary forms of "pragmatism" or certain proposals from the left informed by good intentions but critically short of a sense of "here and now."

PART I

PROBLEMS, ISSUES AND DIFFICULTIES

CHAPTER II

SOCIAL AND INSTITUTIONAL MARGINALIZATION

Marginalization/Identity: Their Definitions

As I said in the introduction I have decided to write a dissertation that addresses the possibilities of intervention to marginalized groups. Because the term "marginalization" is very broad and may be interpreted in different ways, I will dedicate this chapter to clarifying its space and boundaries within this dissertation. What do I mean by marginalization? What is the relation between alienation and marginalization? Though it is possible that alienation may be the cause of marginalization, I see marginalization as the social condition some people endure as a result of their own alienation and of the actions of dominant groups. To some extent we are all alienated in our modern societies, but some of us have more possibilities for change than others. Although alienation has its psychological side, its causes are also embedded in the constitution of class societies. As Marx has pointed out alienation is a historical phenomenon that arises from specific forms of social and economic organization. It is not an eternal notion of

human existence but a historical notion with possibilities of change under specific historical conjunctures. While it would not be possible to foresee a disappearance of alienation and, for that matter, an end to marginalization, I can only hope for its displacement and, as a result of that, for some possibilities of empowerment in marginalized groups.

People are marginalized when certain ideas are privileged over others at a given time. But when one uses the word marginalized one question comes to my mind. Marginalized in relation to what? A center? If there is a center, there is also the implication that those outside the center have deviated into a margin. Can the margin be defined as an entity, with its own specificity, or is it defined in relation to something else? While the power of the center may depend on a relatively unchallenged authority, if that authority breaks down, then no point relative to which others can be defined as marginal remains. In other words, margin and center can draw their meanings only from each other.

What do I mean by marginalized groups? When I speak of marginal groups I am not implying that these groups need to be treated as homogeneous entities that have been excluded from a dominant homogeneous center.

While their exclusion is the reason for their lower status and their denomination, not all members experience their position with the same degree of intensity. Power is part of any social negotiation, and because of this there are many degrees of marginalization even within the so-called "marginalized." At the same time the problem cannot be viewed in terms of binary and static notions of center/margin, oppressor/oppressed, dominant/subordinate any longer. However, the argument is much more complicated than that. There are many margins in the center, center in the margins and oppressors inside the oppressed. As Audre Lorde (1990) has pointed out: "By and large with the women's movement today, white women focus upon oppression as women and ignore differences of race, sexual preference, class and age. There is a pretense to a homogeneity of experience covered by the word "sisterhood" that does not in fact exist" (p. 282). What Lorde seems to be suggesting is that there is a need to include many variables to the analysis. Her comments remind me of a reaction I had when I arrived in this country. What immediately called my attention was that when people referred to important social issues they did not emphasize the notion of class differences. People in general did not talk about the way in which class shapes our perspective of reality. For that reason, ethnic,

gender and sexual preference seem to have taken an important position displacing class factors. Some time ago, Richard Rodríguez, read an essay on the McNeil/Lehrer News Hour that spoke to the need of including class in the analysis. Rodríguez was referring to the plight of unskilled working class heterosexual males and their inabilities to find jobs nowadays. Though I differ with Rodríguez in some observations that do not relate to this discussion, I believe that in this case his point is very important. In the nineteen nineties the class component is needed to be able to have a deeper understanding of the broad social context.

I believe that historically, marginalized groups have insisted on finding some kind of definition of identity despite the fact that a definition has to be provided always in relation to something else. What is identity? Is there a "one and only" way of viewing a particular group? Members of a group may disagree on finding a definition. What is the relationship between identity and marginalization? Is marginality the reason why some groups come together at a historical time to position themselves in relation to something different? I am inclined to believe that historical circumstances sometimes coerce groups into a search of something that speaks of a collective experience.

Can I think of identity as an entity in itself or as multiple possibilities that cannot exist without a referent? Stuart Hall (1989) in his essay "Cultural Identity and Cinematic Representation" outlines two different ways of thinking about cultural identity. The first definition, he explains, defines cultural identity in terms of the idea of one shared culture, a sort of collective, "one true self," hiding inside the many other more superficial or artificially imposed "selves" which people with a shared culture and ancestry hold in common. Within the terms of this definition, our cultural identities reflect the common historical experiences and shared cultural codes which provide us, as "one people with stable, unchanging and continuous frames of reference and meaning, beneath the shifting divisions and vicissitudes of our actual history." I am not interested in this particular type of identification, since it constructs an idea of the collective with a strong load of essentialism that does not speak to my experience.

Hall's (1989) second definition, on the other hand, addresses the conflicting issues that will be part of this work. Stuart Hall points out: "Cultural identity is not something which already exists, transcending place, time, history and culture . . . Far from being externally fixed in some essentialized past, [cultural identities] are

subjected to the continual play of history, culture and power. Far from being grounded in a mere "recovery" of the past, which is waiting to be found, and which, when found, will secure our sense of ourselves into eternity, identities are the name we give to different ways we are positioned by, and position ourselves within the narratives of the past" (pp. 69-70). As I said in the introduction I am the product of a Latin American middle-class upbringing. That experience while it spared me from economic deprivation operated as a negative force when it came to understanding the sociopolitical events that were occurring in my country at the time. It was not until I reached the age of eighteen that I became aware of the injustices and inequalities which my social class had tried to condone. My undergraduate years spent during one of the most terrifying times in the history of Argentina alienated me from the values and ideas that were part of my background. This marginalization, while negative in the sense that it produced many fractures in my life, also operated as a positive force in my day-to-day existence.

Sometimes there are advantages to living on the margins. When one's scenario is restricted to some kind of predetermined and financially secure life, the possibilities of assuming a shallow and meaningless

existence many times come with the territory. At the same time I am aware that this comment on financial security may be arguable these days since that kind of certainty is also disappearing even for the American middle class. Still the marginalization produced in the middle class while it displaces the power of the center, tends to be less abrupt if one compares it to the situation of more deprived groups living in our society. But what I want to point out here is that living on the margins can have its positive side. In my case it enhanced my life and afforded me an awareness of the social and of political manipulations that position and privilege tried to mask in Argentine society. But this experience did not come without its own wrenching contradictions. In the first half of the 1970s, participation and solidarity with the working classes, while it gave a much desired meaning to my life, unsuccessfully tried to hide the social distance that separated me from working class experiences. That conflict is still part of my life today.

How do I position myself in relation to other Latinos in America? As an educated Latina living in the United States in this historical time I am urged to express my solidarity with the plight of many Latinos living in the inner cities. At the same time, their experiences in those spaces produce a social distance that

is impossible to deny. How can I understand what it is to live in a ghetto surrounded by drugs, violence, and prostitution? I have never lived like that, and even when my experiences have sometimes been very conflictual in other aspects, I had the opportunity to fight back, and find a way out of; in many cases individuals living in those barrios can not even afford fantasizing a way out. Despite all the differences I am urged to find some kind of identity within the many layers of the Latino community.

For Latino students the search for an identity also becomes problematic, in particular when they attend public schools in America. Many times they find themselves in the dilemma of trying to preserve their cultural and family heritage (in its many forms and variations) at the risk of failing in school. Several of the students interviewed by Sonia Nieto (1992) in Affirming Diversity argue that frequently they find themselves in this situation. The message from the educational sites is clear. Success in schools can only be achieved at the cost of losing their cultural and family heritage. Young people tend to juggle with these issues to find their place in their family, community and schools. Conflicts and antagonisms seem to be part of their lives, but so are adjustments and negotiations.

But Latinos are only one group of the many excluded from the dominant discourse. In the case of students of mixed race, marginalization is even greater. One of the students in Nieto's (1992) book identified herself as having black and white parents. She claimed that while she insisted on affirming that mixed background, schools automatically placed her in the "black" category. Some time ago as part of a project for a Qualitative Research class, I interviewed a student who spoke to the same concerns. People of two different backgrounds are not only condemned to living in two societies, but in the case of black and white mixture, the two cultures are antagonistic. Individuals of mixed background often become the target of the racism and prejudice of both backgrounds. The conflict is increased when they are often excluded from the dominant background and are granted a lower status in society.

The stories articulated by black students many times express similar pains and contradictions. Those who struggle to succeed sometimes begin to internalize the negative categorizations that the dominant center makes of their black identity. What is black identity? Cornel West (1990) has pointed out that notions such as "the real black community," "positive images" are "value-laden, socially-loaded and ideologically-charged" (pp.30-31).

What West is suggesting is that black cultural workers need to sustain discursive and institutional networks that build on the deconstruction of earlier black strategies for identity formation. In "The New Cultural Politics of Difference" West argues that a similar scenario can be experienced in Third World countries where "authoritarian bureaucratic elites deploy essential rhetorics about 'homogeneous national community' and 'positive images' in order to repress and regiment their diverse and heterogeneous populations" (pp. 30-31). This scenario is very familiar to me, and in many ways speaks to the ideological philosophy that has prevailed in Argentina since the beginning of the century and that was strongly articulated by the Armed Forces in the seventies. Those authoritarian regimes sponsored a political discourse of supposedly economic development at the price of social and individual despair. While promising the reconstruction of society the armed forces brutally exterminated the opposition. Life became strange, the coexistence of horror with daily life generated what could be called "social schizophrenia" in most of the population. Violence in Argentina destroyed projects of life, and it produced a rupture to personal and national identities. By hiding what they thought people believed they could survive, multiple identities pretended to be just the

opposite of who they were. Others, perhaps, did not pretend. The sensation of uncertainty that emerged by the contrast between violence and daily life produced situations where victimizers tortured their victims while they discussed soccer games.

What West (1990) is suggesting in his article is that we cannot view a search for black identity, unless issues such as power, class, patriarchal and homophobic biases are incorporated in the discussion. I may add that this may be the case with any other identity. It is evident from this proposal that West is also pursuing a notion of identity that is very active and complex. The patriarchal structures of Latin societies have often developed in part of their communities homophobic attitudes. Homophobia seems to be dominant in some spaces of the black community as well. From the small sample of successful college students I interviewed as part of that project for a Qualitative Research course, the issue of homosexuality became very conflicting. The young women I talked to, seemed to be distressed by having to accept gays, and one of the men (who introduced himself as gay) tried at all times to avoid defining himself as black. While at the time of this interview the interviewee was still a "closet-gay," he dismissed notions of black identification and accused many of the black students

attending that predominant white upper-middle class institution, of exercising more racism than whites. Although his comments contradicted the views of the other three interviewees, his marginalization within his own devalued culture must be difficult to overcome.

From my interpretation of these few cases I could argue that all individuals viewed education as the pathway to future advancement. Though the two women complained about certain information not being made available to them by schools, they never questioned the validity of standardized testing as the measure of their intelligence. These four students had few traces of black dialect in their speech and struggled to achieve in the dominant white American society. Though they did not seem to be caught up in their individual achievement, they tried to emulate dominant white values in their professional life. With the exception of the homosexual, the other three did not include those dominant values in their personal space. These few examples do not make up to any notion of identity. They are just dispersed cases produced at a particular time and place. Like in any other group there are many ideological variations within the black community. The value of the sample rests in giving a voice to the experiences of four black college students attending a predominant white upper-middle class

institution in the south of the United States in 1993. black identity, like any other, needs to defy easy categorization and challenge its members for a multileveled search that goes beyond simple stereotypes into a more subtle and transitional multiplicity of variables. The complexity of these issues shows that notions of cultural identity, ethnicity, or the desperate need to find essentialist definitions for a certain group can become very complicated when defined in terms of the power acquired by social class, or access to some structures of dominant groups. Racial mixture, sexual preference and age can complicate the picture even further.

Three Marginalized Groups

For this dissertation I have chosen to concentrate on three marginalized groups: mental patients contained in asylums, illiterate peasants living in the Brazilian Northeast, and low-income minority students attending public schools in the United States. Why did I choose these particular groups? As I said before I am interested in possibilities of intervention to marginalized groups. In the case of mental patients and illiterate peasants the Latin America of the nineteen sixties produced some answers for these groups that attempted to

confront their alienation. I was living in Argentina at the time and both interventions, though microscopic in scope, made a vast impact in people like myself, who at the time firmly believed in the possibilities of social justice. Both projects were tightly linked to a search for personal and national identity. I want to write about that experience because I still think that those contributions can, in some way, inspire present interventions in the United States that aim at empowering minority students.

Sometimes in this work I will be mentioning experiences of Latino and Africo-American students. By doing this I am not trying to imply that these are the only two groups that are discriminated by public schools. On the contrary I believe that Native Americans, Asians, Arabs, Jews, and many low-income whites are daily marginalized by public schools. If there are more examples about the two groups mentioned before it is only because their experiences are closer to mine. In the case of Latino students I feel the need for a closer identification with their lives. I am not trying to search for a static commonality in our experiences, but at the same time it is fair to point out that when I read their stories in Nieto's (1992) Affirming Diversity, there are frequently many details embedded in their cultural

practices that are also associated with my life. My affiliation with Africo-Americans has more historical connotations. It would be impossible to overlook the plight of slavery and their participation in the Civil Rights Movement. I believe that their struggle deserves special consideration. Also as a teacher and student I have had frequent opportunities for a closer look at their present subjugation. By allocating minorities in a group I am not suggesting any homogeneity or essentialism in their experiences. As I said before, all groups are different from each other, and not all individuals within a group experience pain and marginalization in the same manner.

What is the purpose of using concepts such as "mentally ill," "illiterate," and "minority?" By using these denominations I am showing once again how language can become an artifact of exclusion. These characterizations speak of a labeling articulated by powerful interests. The experiences of these groups have been devalued and, as a result of that, they have been assigned a lower status in society. These people are usually cast out from participation in the dominant center which, in spite of its own margins, has further extended their marginalization by providing different types of institutional intervention. In a society where good is

defined in terms of profit rather than human need, institutions tend to reject difference. When the behavior of some breaks the norm established by dominant groups, law breakers are sometimes labeled "mentally ill." When other groups insist on transmitting their histories and narratives through oral traditions, they are called "illiterate" and, when poor Native Americans, Africo-Americans, Asians, Arabs, Jews, or Latino children attend public schools, they are called "minorities." Students of Dutch, Norwegian, or Finnish origin, while small in number, are never identified under that denomination. All three terms: "mentally ill," "illiterate," and "minority" are linguistic forms that share a connotation of inferiority. This rejection of difference is not coincidental, it is an absolute necessity in a society. Outsiders are needed as surplus people in a profit economy.

Asylums as Institutions of Marginalization

I will begin by exploring the life of the so called "mental patients" contained in institutions. In many cases, their labeling serves the purposes of a dominant ideology that devalues the culture of these people. Many distinguished thinkers have addressed this point insistently. To give some examples, the Argentine

psychoanalyst Enrique Pichon-Riviere (1975), points out that the institutional notion of "mental health" legitimizes a noncritical adaptation to society. Along the same lines, Michel Foucault argues that mental hospitals are repressive structures of control through which societies punish the "different." In Asylums, Erving Goffman (1969) refers to the mental patient as the lumpen-proletarian inmate "striped" of his mean of livelihood and self" (p. 207). I am inclined to believe that the term "mental patients" is a social construction through which society justifies the systematic prejudice and neglect to which it subjects some of its marginalized groups. The mentally ill have been ignored, dehumanized, and rediscovered through history. The difference between the ancient practice of expelling madmen from the community and the modern practice of committing them in asylums are similar in the sense that they cast them out of the community so they become ostracized from their society.

As I said before marginalization occurs when some ideas are privileged over others at particular historical times. Ideas about the causes and treatments of mental illness have the force of change when they are associated with interest groups that support a dominant discourse. The appearance of the asylum as the site of containment

for the mad is no exception to the rule. When referring to its operation Thomas Szasz (1970) explores the social characteristics of institutional psychiatry extensively. He insists that the institution depends largely upon the use of force and fraud. The typical American mental patient, Szasz argues, is a poor person in trouble or accused of being in trouble, who is declared "mentally ill" against his/her will. Such a person may accept the definition or may try to repudiate it, in any case, the psychiatric authorities are in full control of the relation.

In The Manufacture of Madness Szasz (1970) cites several newspaper reports of patients having been abused, and he emphasizes the permissive psychiatric pattern of harassment, intimidation and degradation to which individuals, in particular those of the lower-economic classes, are subjected to. Szasz is convinced that institutional psychiatry is an abuse of both the human personality and the healing relationship. According to Szasz, the institution is designed to protect and uplift the group (the family, the state), by imposing on the individual the degrading label of "insane" or "ill." While his comments may be problematic at this point, when Szasz makes these descriptions, he is referring to those types of sites that internalize the poor without their

consent. The other aspect of this problem is what to do when certain behavior can become a danger to the community at large. How much can the center absorb from the margins? Also, how can families cope with situations of this type?

I do not believe there are ultimate answers to these problems, but it is fair to say that Szasz's concerns with these institutions, are many times, accurate. Institutions have become repositories of knowledge that exercise on their patients their own versions of what it means by "sane" or "mentally ill." In these cases patients are treated as "deviant" they do not conform to the norm. From this perspective, Szasz's (1970) arguments though problematic in the sense that they do not provide viable solutions to society need to be taken seriously, especially by those like myself, who believe in the possibilities of providing a more humane type of intervention. What concerns me in particular, is the status of mental patients in society. They are victims of their vulnerable position which makes them less able to defend themselves against, in some cases, powerful family members or experts whose job is to pass judgment on the "mental health" of others. In many cases "mental patients" are also victims of the label which has been

produced by a collective dominant discourse, a label that, in many cases, is internalized by the subordinate group.

Is madness a communal or an individual affair? Mental patients can be victims of situational contingencies such that in one case an act of rule breaking will be transformed into a psychiatric symptom. Whether we believe that mental illness is socially constructed or that it exists as a disease in individuals, the fact is that poor people who are labeled as having the symptoms, were contained in institutions until the 1970s. Nowadays, however, as some psychiatric hospitals are closed, many of the poor insane spend their lives in the streets. Why were these people contained in mental hospitals? The explanations will differ according to the positions we take when we look at the "mentally ill." In Circle of Madness, Robert Perrucci (1974) points out that medical experts insist on hospitalization as a way to remove the person from the stresses of "normal living." Obligations as a parent, wife, husband, worker, or citizen are suspended, thereby either eliminating a source of the illness or eliminating demands that might simply interfere with the therapeutic process" (p. 18). It is evident from his comment that for the "mentally ill" this type of hospitalization is a step further in the definition of "deviant" and an exclusion from boundaries of the family

and society. According to Perrucci the hospital represents "an effort to stabilize the deviant role and reinforce the deviant identity of the victim" (p. 18). Thus, if one agrees with this argument, the mental hospital provides continuity for the deviant role and the authorities of the site are now in charge of defining the individual. While in the seventies government rarely saw group homes as an alternative for the chronically mentally ill, at present interventions in group homes offer a more humane assistance. Nowadays the group home seems to be replacing the state hospital as the backbone of the nation's mental health system. Michael Winerip reports in the New York Times that by the late 1980s there were 700 in New York alone, thousands more across the country. According to Winerip today more adult New Yorkers are living in state-financed group homes and apartments (12,536) than in state hospital (9,726).

Marginalization from society does not seem to be restricted to the mentally ill exclusively. When one reads Perrucci's (1974) book it becomes evident that the scenario is more complicated than that. There are more groups that also join some parts of the margin, reaffirming once again, the existence of fractures and heterogeneity in the center. Perrucci's study of a particular asylum in the Midwest of the 1970s gives a

clear indication that those who were supposed to be in charge of normalizing the "different" had also become marginalized by their community. What Perrucci suggests is that doctors, nurses, and attendants in asylums, shared a stigma with their patients that complicated even further the social order of the mental hospital. Earlier in his investigation Perrucci had the opportunity to talk to people in the community near the mental hospital and oddly enough, he found that instead of giving stereotypes of the "mentally ill," people suspected that doctors were "nuttier than the patients" and that nurses and attendants were ex-patients themselves. In addition, these members of the community offered concrete examples of physicians who were drinkers or could not keep their private practices. Clearly, the stigma attached by the community to the staff was an indication of their marginality.

Educational Institutions as Sites of Marginalization

The way educational institutions operate frequently does not seem to differ from those of mental health. As Paulo Freire (1989) has pointed out, there is no neutrality in education, it will be used either for domestication or for liberation. It is evident from his comment that in order to guarantee their own continuity

and development, systems of relations need to generate the kind of individual who can be reproduced according to the system's values and norms. Freire compared illiteracy to dominated consciousness where people become convinced of their own "ignorance" and the impossibility of changing their lives. It is feasible to argue, then, that social reality penetrates their inner world, generating a model of conformity and passivity that adjusts to the projects of dominant views. Freire reminds us that it is in the interest of the oppressor to change the consciousness of the oppressed, not the situation that oppresses them, for the more the oppressed can be led to adapt to a new situation, the more they can be dominated.

Before addressing the role of educational institutions, it is necessary to point out the social conditions peasants in that region have had to endure for centuries. Illiterate peasants living in the Brazilian Northeast remain, in most of the cases, excluded from all social and educational experience. Latin Americans traditionally have farmed their land inefficiently. The large estates included much land their owners either did not cultivate or undercultivated. In Brazil, approximately 80% of the farmland was unused or unproductively used for cattle raising at the end of the

1950s. The landowners continued to hold their property, not for farming but for purposes of prestige, investment and speculation. Rural society with its hereditary social positions resisted change. The few landlords lived in comfort, while their rural masses barely existed in poverty. Peasants earned very low wages (when they did earn any) and lived their lives in debt with their employers. Debt peonage was as common as it had been in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The Brazilian Graciliano Ramos (1969) captured the hopelessness of the rural Northeast in his novel Barren Lives set in the drought-tortured Northeast. The herdsman Fabiano realizes that everything conspires to prevent his escape from poverty: "In the division of stock at the year's end, Fabiano received a fourth of the calves and a third of the kids, but as he grew no feed, but merely sowed a few handfuls of beans and corn on the river flat, living on what he bought at the market, he disposed of the animals, never seeing his brand on a calf or his mark on the ear of a kid . . . Little by little the boss's brand was put on Fabiano's stock, and when he had nothing left to sell, the backlander went into debt. When time came for the division, he was in the hole, and when accounts were settled he received a mere nothing . . . Fabiano lost his temper. Was he to take a beating like that his whole life

long, giving up what belonged to him for nothing? Was that right? To work like a slave and never gain his freedom?

The boss became angry. He refused to hear such insolence. He thought it would be a good thing if the herdsman looked for another job.

At this point Fabiano got cold feet and began to back down . . . If he had said something wrong, he was sorry. He was ignorant; he had never had any learning. He knew his place . . . He was just a half-breed. He wasn't going to get into arguments with rich people. He wasn't bright, but he knew how to show people proper respect . . . The boss calmed down and Fabiano backed out of the room" (Ramos, 1969, pp. 93-95).

The plight of Fabiano is typical of the peasants living in the Northeast. This is another example of the state of dominated consciousness that surrounds the lives of these people. Gradually, hunger and misery increase in intensity. In that region, scarcely four per cent of the population own most of the land. Families live in one-room mud huts, with earthen floors, without sanitary provisions, or running water. Malnutrition predominates. Josue De Castro (1969) argues, in his study Death in the North East, that life expectancy barely reaches 30 years; a child dies every 42 seconds, 85 per hour, 2040 per day.

As it becomes evident life for these peasants is restricted to an existence of an inadequate diet, terrible health conditions, and no education at all. In the cases where there is some education available, it is substandard or inappropriate. What do I mean by inappropriate? The history of Brazilian education has been marked by injustice and discrimination. Poor parents struggle to send one child to school for one year. In the 1960s repeat rates were high in elementary school. If a child was forced to repeat, or had to miss school to work in the harvest, the chances of completion were very low.

European influences played an important role in the development of education from the time when the Jesuits started schools for the children of the rich in the sixteenth century. The post independence development of liberal industrialism brought an ideology of individual self-improvement with schools as agencies of socialization. Children had "to fit" in a society that was hierarchical and oppressive. The economically "better-off" had a high school experience that was rigorous and formal, dominated by rote-learning. Those from the poor classes who were fortunate to complete elementary school were destined to vocational education with few possibilities to climb the social ladder.

What really counts in Brazil, like in many other Latin American countries, is not the content of education but the type of school attended, the degree issued by that institution and, even more than that, the social position of the student. The fact is that formal academic curriculum becomes the most desirable type of education because it is the only that can guarantee any success. Whether literacy is relevant to the lives of the marginalized is a question that I will address later in the dissertation. What matters at this point is that in the cases when institutions decided to include peasants, the school curriculum with its false pretensions of social integration, operated as a force that alienated and devalued the life experiences of the peasants. Instead of profiting from schooling the experience became a negative force in their lives. Robert Arnove (1973) argued that "the rural school curriculum continues to be dominated by the value orientations and self-perpetrating interests of the urban middle strata and elites who emphasize the noninstrumental and status-conferring functions of formal education" (p. 200).

Is it relevant to have a curriculum that addresses the needs and interests of students? If we do that, are

we not excluding people to the margin in larger numbers? Some may argue that a curriculum of this type may also be considered a source of discrimination because it varies its purposes according to the groups it aims. I am convinced that this argument loses its power when it comes to dealing with the rural areas of Latin America. It is evident from the excerpt of Barren Lives (Ramos, 1969) that peasants in Brazil live in a state of deprivation. Their conflicting culture is a combination of what may be called "traditional" and a few modern practices. The elements of the "traditional" make for most of their daily experiences and have been, in many cases, one of the reasons for their economic and social alienation from the larger society. Their painful existence, I would argue, could be better characterized as an extreme case of marginalization. Their silence and acceptance of oppression are a clear sign of an existence in despair. Even when their children struggle to stay in school and resist to silence, the competitive model of the official curriculum only serves to alienate them even more from their daily life. How can they think in competitive terms when they have never been given a chance to reflect upon their own lives? This question may also become in some way irrelevant when one looks at Brazil in the 1990s. Josue de Souza still believes that "the problem is that

the Brazilian elite don't see the poor." It is the negation of the Other that during the 1980s expanded hunger from 25 million to 35 million people. According to de Souza the problem of Brazil has cultural connotations. The sociologists points out that Brazilian society has moved from "feudalism into savage capitalism" (Brook, 1993). De Souza argues that there is still the plantation house and the slave shanty mentality that divide rich and poor. For that reason the core of malnutrition does not lie in food supply but in the purchasing power.

The marginalization suffered by peasants in the Brazilian Northeast does not seem to be restricted to poor countries exclusively. The Children's Defense Fund (1990) found that in the United States most students of color are still found in predominately "minority schools." "White flight" and housing patterns, among other factors, have being successful in resegregating schools. As Jean Anyon (1981) has shown the segregation of schools results in school systems that are separate and unequal, providing differential school experiences for children of different social class, race, and ethnicity. Schools that serve black students tend to have curricula that is watered down and teachers with less experience and education than those schools that serve white middle-class students. By arguing about these concerns I do not want to convey the

idea that there is an overt attempt in the institutions to exclude the needs of minorities. What I am saying is that many times people with good intentions unconsciously subscribe to unchallenged dominant discourses and further the alienation of some of their students. Sometimes unconsciously teachers have a tendency to pay more attention to their white students than to their students of color. Jackson and Cosca (1974) found in their research that teachers praise their white students more, direct more questions to them, and have more cognitively expectations about their performance (pp. 219-229). Similar research has been done also to show that boys seem to get more attention than girls.

American schools in contradictory ways are becoming more willing to articulate the needs of minorities and other socially marginalized groups torn between their purported democratic institutions and the pressure of a system of production that needs change for economic reasons. An agenda addressing the needs of the marginalized will be of vital importance to make this system more humane. The rich space of power struggles and conflicting codes at work in the Los Angeles riots rendered, in my view, a unique case to look at the encounter between the needs of (somewhat) powerful large minorities clashing in a society dominated by Northern

European values. The variables constituted by financial, budgeting strategies, race issues, and specific community needs often signal great disparities in spite of politicized official data (dollars per pregnant teenager, Aids patient, youth drinking, children on drugs, teachers' salaries, etc). The future of this society, to a certain extent, will depend on the ability to negotiate in a more dramatic way the needs and legitimate tensions informing these experiences.

CHAPTER III

INSTITUTIONS OF CONTROL: HISTORY AND ANALYSIS

Asylums, Schools, and Prisons

A Brief History of the Insane Until the Nineteenth Century

In Chapter Two I attempted to show in general terms how many times institutions such as asylums and schools marginalize their population. I pointed out that these institutions tend to serve the purposes of a dominant ideology that by purporting a certain "truth" many times devalue the culture of their population. Are there universal truths that tend to prevail in different societies? Do these truths seem to vary at different times in different locations? I believe that discourses are products of history, ideological assumptions that at particular times and places tend to be replaced or sometimes temporarily displaced. By saying this I am not trying to imply that there is usually one discourse that functions at a particular time in a specific location. On the contrary, I believe that there are usually several discourses and cultural practices operating in a social paradigm. These discourses sometimes produce ruptures of prevailing views that vary in their form and intensity.

In spite of that there is frequently a dominant view that stands out, at least for some time.

How do main discourses operate? Do they support certain kind of knowledge? Do they privilege or exclude certain groups at different times and locations? Some responses make themselves available when one starts to historicize the trajectories of specific groups. When I look at the history of marginalized groups such as the insane, criminals, and poor students, the paradigm becomes extremely complicated. Their experiences are abundant in turns and deviations until they are finally contained in institutions. If one observes carefully the trajectory of the discourses on madness, for instance, they present interesting variations at specific times and locations. Robert Perrucci (1974) argues, in Circle of Madness, that in ancient Palestine acts of the so-called "mentally ill" were not considered psychopathological but behaviors produced within the normal boundaries of the community. Also, in ancient Greece and Rome different competing groups gave madness natural and supernatural connotations. Although in the two civilizations prevailing medical opinion was that an imbalance of "humors" would lead to madness, general public belief was that madness came from possession by unseen forces such as demons or spirits, or by transgressions against the gods who had the power to

inflict madness on the sinner. Despite the differences among social constructions these three societies seemed to agree on one point: for them insanity was a private matter. Families were expected to take care of those who were ill and less fortunate; madmen without families were allowed to roam in the streets and roads freely. Though the insane suffered greater public scorn in Greece and Rome than in Palestine, the three civilizations did not pay much attention to the problem, and for that reason community involvement was rare.

The main view toward the mentally ill began to change in Europe during the Middle Ages and the sixteenth century. Perrucci (1974) points out that while the responsibility to take care of the insane still rested in the family, some acute patients in small numbers began to be hospitalized. Though this movement toward containment appears as a relevant feature of the sixteenth century, I believe that the important rupture to the dominant discourse was made by the introduction of expulsion. For the first time societies began to expel the mentally ill who did not belong to the community. This expulsion of outsiders, may well be considered a starting point into the path of social marginalization that is still well grounded in the twentieth century.

In order to keep this historical account in perspective and to be able to show the discontinuities and continuities that occurred at different times, I have decided to include in this chapter the work of Michel Foucault (1973). My interest in Foucault comes from his reading of discourses and their genealogies not as sequential facts but as complicated variables that do not lend themselves to linear interpretations. Instead of viewing history as an account of chronological events Foucault produces a narrative that addresses the fractures that produced new turns in relation to the dominant perspective of the time. According to Foucault expulsion did not appear as a unique feature during that time. Different views began to emerge mainly in the seventeenth century and a new strategy of exclusion made its appearance. As I have said before small numbers of the insane began to be interned in the sixteen century. In spite of that, internment as a regular process did not begin until the seventeenth century. Foucault argues, in Madness and Civilization, that during the 'Classical Age' (17th and the first half of the 18th century) the insane began to be sequestered in houses of internment (p. 39). What fascinates me about Foucault's perspective is his view of institutions in general not only as centers of social control but also as sites for the production of

specific discourses. Clearly, this comment emerges as central in the task of analyzing the discourse that was produced inside these houses of internment.

What is important about the houses of internment of the Classical Age is that those sites produced a nonmedical discourse. For that reason the insane were placed side by side with criminals, libertines, profaners, and the diseased. There was no concern for their mental problems since they were placed in those institutions because they had joined the ranks of the unemployed. According to Foucault (1973) the Hospital General was not a medical establishment, "it is rather a sort of semijudicial structure, and administrative entity, which along with the already constituted powers, and outside the courts, decides, judges, and executes . . . A quasi-absolute sovereignty, jurisdiction without appeal, a writ of execution against which nothing can prevail - the Hospital General is a strange power that the King establishes between the police and the courts, at the limits of the law, a third order of repression" (p. 40). In other words, while people were not divided at the time, these sites operated as a first step into producing a space for the exercise of specific disciplinary tactics.

However, I must hurry to clarify that European societies did not deal with the insane in a uniform

manner. Though this was the dominant view in France, Germany, and England, in the sense that the houses of internment exercised their power by putting together the poor insane with other groups who were considered a social threat, there were also other views. The upper classes, for instance, dealt with their mentally ill in a different way. Their insane were sequestered in sites and exposed to some kind of therapeutic intervention. In the houses of internment, on the other hand, the number of mentally ill was low, and even those who were interned, were never exposed to any type of medical evaluation. According to Foucault, what is important about these sites is that the lumping together of people of all sorts: the confusion of inmates, free-thinkers, libertines, and the insane, forged the link between madness and violation of norms.

This link between madness and violation of norms can sometimes be observed in the operation of modern societies. Often, when crimes are committed, penalties for crime tend to be reduced by claiming temporary insanity. Also, when societies confront themselves with having to take a position toward the mentally ill, it is not an infrequent practice to consider internment a viable solution. The response is seriously considered as a vehicle to counteract the violence that is usually assigned to insanity. Though this argument is

troublesome, and may be posed to the contrary, my point here is not to question its validity but to historicize the genealogy of the linkage between insanity, criminality, and containment, that still prevails today.

According to Foucault (1973), seventeenth century houses of internment produced a discourse where the insane were part of a greater problem of society. The prevailing view made no distinction between disease, sin, and violations. In spite of that I think that an important feature of that century is the idea that madness for the first time was not treated as a family matter but became a social concern. As I have just said the mentally ill became part of a wider population in need of assistance and correction. For that reason, in the case where some therapy was available, it was not medical but intertwined with rites of purification, exorcism, and sin.

The 'Classical Age' is also an important period because it produces a particular version of the mentally ill. This version viewed the insane as people who "wanted" to be mad. At the time one did not happen to be mad but one wanted to be mad. The insane were not considered human and for that reason they suffered great physical punishment. This seems to be a period that offers few distinctions between acts committed by bad intentions or acts committed by the mentally ill.

Dominant views considered madness morally culpable, it was perceived in ethical terms, and for that reason it was viewed as the converse of the choice which enabled man to realize his rational nature.

Though changes to the discourse on madness began to occur by the end of the eighteenth century, Foucault (1973) insists that before being designated as species of mental pathology, the insane had to pass a stage of their condemnation as moral faults. As a result of that the houses of internment operated as sites that cleansed society. Were these centers the embryos of the asylums that appeared early in the nineteenth century? I have an inclination to agree. My response seems to be associated with an unreflective desire to produce a chronological reading of history. Foucault argues for a different analysis that centers on the notion that the discourses which underlay the houses of internment were different from those of the asylum. 'Unreason' is the term used by Foucault to categorize the Classical Age. Though at first it may seem a medical category like mental or physical illness, that is not the case. On the other hand, it cannot be judged as a juridical category like crime, either. Therefore, for the dominant discourse the internment of a person suffering from 'Unreason' was

neither a medical nor a juridical act of sentencing, rather it was the result of the two intertwined concepts.

An important feature that breaks the discourse of the Classical Age is the appearance of insanity as mishap rather than voluntary and the emergent view of corporal punishment as inhumane. What was the reason for that change? My first reaction would be to say that the change was related to a new emerging concern for the insane. Foucault (1973), however, puts my argument aside. He points out that the turn in perspective is related to a change in the relation between madness and ethics. This time the insane began to gain the status of human and start to be separated from the rest. Were they spared from oppression? This does not seem to be the case, at least if one makes a judgment based on the emergence of the asylum.

The Emergence of the European Asylum

The new center of containment initiated a new turn in the process of marginality. The segregation of the insane did not respond to their new human status or to any project of concern or specific cure. It was done to attend to the complaints articulated by prisoners who did not want to live with the insane. Also their internment

was a response to requests of overseers who insisted that they could not organize workers when the mentally ill cried and confused people. What is important about this new approach to the insane is that for the first time the physician became the ultimate authority for their treatment.

It would be erroneous to assume, though, that this initial asylum brought science into play. By the end of the eighteenth century, in Britain, the Quaker reformer William Tuke, founded the Retreat outside York. In France, during the same time, a renowned doctor reformer named Pinel, inaugurated an asylum in Bicetre, part of l'Hospital General de Paris. The authority that emerged in the two sites was not based on science, but on a moral and social order. In those institutions the director exercised his authority not because he had knowledge but because he represented integrity and virtue. According to Foucault (1973), its function had more to do with being a judge and legislator than with being a doctor. These comments bring me back to another argument made by Foucault, and that refers to the need of an initial stage of juridical discipline before the insane could be evaluated under the supervision of a scientific discourse. The insane had to be recognized as legal subjects with rights and obligations before they could be subjected to a

medical intervention. In other words, a moral environment preceded the foundations of psychiatry. This is not surprising, in particular if one looks at the similarities that tend to be embodied in the roles of judge and psychiatrist. By supervising all aspects of individuals' lives the judge and the psychiatrist often tend to evaluate and modify people's behavior under a corpus of knowledge that builds on standardization.

The consolidated asylum of the nineteenth century emerged as the intersection of two different discourses. The asylum became the place of convergence for the discourses of medicine (psychiatry) and internment (jurisprudence). In the new site the mentally ill were spared from other type of internees and were exposed to a specific type of internment. It is important to note that by the end of the eighteenth century only the mentally ill and criminals were contained in institutions, and for that reason asylums, and prisons, replaced the houses of internment. One may argue that the end of physical torture meant the beginning of a more humane period, but Foucault (1973) points out that these sites changed physical torture for moral constraints. A close reading of Tuke's asylum for instance, provides a good example of what Foucault has argued so persuasively. In Tuke's asylum physical punishment disappeared but at the same

time it became evident that a new kind of power began to operate inside the site. Good conduct in inmates started to be rewarded by what Tuke called "self-esteem," which was increased through the recognition by others. In other words, physical punishment, open to the public, was metamorphosed into a new kind of punishment that changed its form and concentrated on the behavior of the individual. Punishment as a disciplinary tactic, was restricted to segregation and solitary confinement.

With the emergence of psychiatry and its claim of objectivity in the nineteenth century the moral authority of the "doctor" in the asylum was pushed below the line of visibility. Madness became associated not only with profanation, but with poverty, inability to work, and failure to become a productive member of society. If my reading is correct, the link between the historical development of psychology and capitalism may be important to explore. The need to design tactics for the apprehension of "reality" seems to be intertwined with the necessity to become an active member of society. For that reason though psychological tendencies do not necessarily pursue an adaptation to norms, they operate in many cases under the assumption that productivity is a necessary component to achieving their goals. A case in point is

the position taken by the Argentine psychoanalyst Enrique Pichón-Rivière (1985) who, despite proposing a deconstructive analysis of the social space, argues for an emphasis on productivity as an essential element for producing a new reading of the world.

For the first time with the emergence of psychiatry the notion of madness as mental illness made its appearance. It is important to argue here that though many historians and psychiatrists have traditionally tended to view mental illness as an objective truth, Foucault (1973) seems to contradict their version. According to Foucault the fracture in the dominant discourse was not produced by the discovery of an objective truth but, as I said before, by the convergence of the discourses of medicine and internment inside the asylum. I find these comments extremely important because they challenge simplistic definitions and categorizations. By referring to the birth of asylums and prisons as places where different variables intersected, Foucault is proposing a much more sophisticated reading that defies easy and seductive essentialisms.

Is Foucault (1973) the only dissenting voice who refuses to see psychiatry as an objective truth? Thomas Szasz (1970) is another thinker who, from the field of

psychology, produces another dissenting argument. Szasz claims that the concept of mental illness has the same logical and empirical status as the concept of witchcraft had in the Middle Ages. According to the psychiatrist both notions are imprecise concepts freely developed as the persecution of witches declined. In spite of arguing that the mentally ill emerged when witches disappeared, Szasz disagrees with notions that people labeled as heretics were mentally ill. The psychiatrist argues that with the introduction of psychiatry "medicine replaced ideology" (Szasz, 1970, p. 51). Though I believe that the labeling of witches was an ideological construction I do not agree with the idea that medicine substituted for ideology. On the contrary, I think that medicine produced a different type of ideology, this time based on scientific assumptions.

The Emergence of the American Asylum

It is evident from Foucault's writings that by the end of the eighteenth century Europe created asylums to categorize the poor and the insane and to marginalize them from the community. With the Enlightenment all social life, including madness, came under the control of Reason. In America the early colonialists assumed that the causes of insanity, like those of other diseases, were

expressions of God's will. Families took take of the insane, and physical punishment was not an infrequent practice. Those who did not have a family were sent to the almshouse. During the eighteenth century the mentally ill remained outside confinement. It was not until the middle of the nineteenth century that the asylum was finally consolidated. David Rothman (1971) argues in The Discovery of the Asylum that these sites flourished because the notion of mental illness became important in medical circles in America and because of a new belief that the asylum atmosphere could have therapeutic advantages.

What I find particularly interesting about the American experience is that the medical superintendents in charge of classifying people embraced the idea that insanity was linked with civilization. For them, unrestrained ambition, the pursuit of success, and the increasing complexity of life, were responsible for mental problems. It was the American pursuit for wealth, power, and knowledge, that was considered the cause for the disease. In their critique of society the superintendents also included the school, the family, and the church. The bureaucrats alleged that these institutions encouraged excessive concern with success. The irony of all this is that despite producing a rigorous reading of social life

the superintendents did not bring any suggestions for change. On the contrary, their role was restricted to containing the insane in institutions that would provide the stability and tranquility that the larger society was lacking.

Though the bureaucrats envisioned the new sites as recreations of the idealized Colonial life, the views of the superintendents were never firmly consolidated. The power and autonomy that this professional staff seemed to exercise in the early establishment of mental hospital began to erode by the second half of the nineteenth century. The superintendents lost control of the determination of who should enter the hospital. In many states, local authorities and nonhospital professionals were allowed to admit indigents and chronic cases with no chances of recovery. It may be possible to conclude then that the American response to madness was, as in the case of Europe, the voice of a society that wanted to cast out the "deviant" and "different" from their communities.

The Link Between the Asylum and the Prison

The appearance of the category of mad was also accompanied by the emergence of the criminal as a distinctive classification. What led authorities to distinguish both criminal and the insane from the rest of

the poor? The response may be found in the growth of the process of industrialization which created a limited demand for the cheapest labor and sought to satisfy it from among the disposed. Foucault (1979) argues, in Discipline and Punish, that the outstanding feature in the new discourse seems to be the emergence of classification as a technology of discipline. Although I will dedicate the second part of this chapter to address this point, I want to argue here that the use of classification was a very effective instrument to divide the population that left the houses of internment. Because internees were not alike, what was needed was a device for dividing them according to their prospective employability. The poor were immediately available, but the mentally ill and the criminal were not fit to be employed. Criminals had to be corrected, and the insane had to be recovered to rationality.

Criminals might be controlled and reformed inside the prison which was formed by the convergence of the discourse of criminology with other sociopsychological discourses. Though criminals had already been publicly punished, Foucault (1979) argues that the eighteenth century saw a decrease in murders. The crime came to be partially displaced by an increase in thefts and swindling. With this displacement crime began to take the

form of a skillful operation and criminals started to work in different ways making their apprehension very difficult. With the increase in economic wealth during that time, society became more sensitive toward crime demanding tougher treatment of criminals. Also, as in the case of the asylum, the prison replaced corporal punishment with incarceration and supervision of inmates. Prisons displaced physical punishment and brought a new substitute. This new kind of power became the disciplinary tactics that still predominate in many prisons of the twentieth century.

The Emergence of Schooling in America

The formation of schools in the United States also entailed the coming together of different discourses. Joel Spring (1990) argues, in The American School 1642-1990, that in spite of the regional differences between the North and the South the dominant view during the Colonial times was to consider education as a family concern where the individual lived close to God and was able to reach a certain status in society. The status would be provided by the classical education of the grammar school and college. As a language teacher I am very interested in the role of language at the time. There was a direct relationship between language and the

thing that it represented. As a result of that existence could not be called into question by individuals, and knowledge was predictable and stable. As the locus of creation was God, education was to inculcate in students a commitment to the religious and social tenets of Christianity.

The pedagogy that originated in that corpus of knowledge was designed to regulate moral unity and human disposition. The system of education would concentrate on developing not only the intellectual capacity of the students but also in controlling their physical and moral lives. I am fascinated by the obsession with the teaching of grammar during that period. Its purpose, as in many cases today, was to instruct the mind to obey rules and laws that dictated the "right" forms of expression. The learning of grammar helped to order life in the greater society, and to produce a view of society organized on the assumptions of hierarchy, classification and privilege.

It is evident that there is more to social reproduction and cultural domination than just the mastering of some set of factual knowledge. An important point to be noticed is what Pierre Bourdieu (1984) calls "habitus" which speaks to the individual dispositions that result from the relationship between socially situated knowledge and language. Though Spring (1990) argues that

Colonialists never used education as a tool to organize and govern society, I believe that their lack of concern did not in any way prevent the consolidation of a society based on differences in tastes, privileges, and dispositions. It was not until the eighteenth century, Spring points out, that education became the tool that would produce useful members of society by exercising individual discipline and self-government. This emergence of schooling at the same time as the formation of asylums and prisons may not be random. The three institutions emerged as producers of new discourses and as centers of social control and discipline.

The new pedagogical forms that appeared with schooling did not seem to differ much from the ones articulated in prisons and asylums of the nineteenth century America. The methods used by the three institutions reformulated the religious concepts of progress and self discipline into a pedagogical discourse that centered on the individual. As I said before the purpose was to make institutions less physically repressive and, the end of physical torture, seemed to provide an appearance of an atmosphere of more freedom. For that reason it may be argued that institutional discourses emphasized the idea that individuals could change themselves, develop, recover to rationality, and

correct their flaws by evaluating their behaviors according to an appropriate discourse of science. While evaluation gave the initial impression of being a private matter, the distinctions and management in the case of personality, for instance, were also part of a public discourse that was to be scientific and "helpful" to the individual.

The work of Thomas Popkewitz (1991) becomes an important source to show the trajectory of the discourse of mass schooling in the United States. Popkewitz argues, in A Political Sociology of Educational Reform, that during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, mass schooling addressed the rupture between production and reproduction of economy, society, and culture. In his work Popkewitz points out that during the nineteenth century definitions of teacher competence and skills changed from previous church related definitions. The occupational work was reformulated hierarchically with groups that maintained authority over institutions such as those in educational sciences and school administration. I believe that Popkewitz's readings of schooling have many points of coincidence with Foucault's analysis of asylums and prisons. Both authors address, in similar ways, the ruptures produced to dominant discourses during different historical times. In the case of Popkewitz he views

schooling also in terms of a network of relations that links the state, teachers' work, pedagogy, teacher education, and educational sciences. The convergence of relations produced a particular kind of knowledge, a knowledge of professionals that gave secular connotations to pastoral care.

I mentioned before that early discussions on schooling focused on moral and political issues. The new discourse based on the sciences of schooling redefined pertinent considerations into issues of instructional procedures and administration. According to Popwekitz nineteenth century psychology emerged as the solid substitute for theology. The "soul" was reformulated as the product of personality, learning, and motivation, three important features that are present in our educational discourse today. In line with the discourses of asylums and prisons mass schooling in the United States emerged also as the convergence of different interests. In this case, the intersection of the discourses of nation building and individualism became apparent. What schooling hoped to achieve in this country was to enable students to manage and innovate in the new social and political environment.

The new policies were to reconcile the new demands and possibilities of modern society with an individualism

that focused on the obligations and responsibilities of the citizen and worker. With a notion of progress that resulted from a logical and sequential movement, change became extremely important. Change was to be evolutionary, incorporating notions of commercial and rational time contained in a manageable space. Progress, it was assumed, resulted from a logical, sequential movement among existing institutions. Evolution, first a social and then a scientific concept, was a radical conception of the human condition as moving toward its own improvement through rational means of control. The notion of progress became fundamental to pedagogical thought. Evolution meant that pedagogy should recognize and nurture differences through greater attention to the individual.

Pedagogical knowledge, was to provide more efficient systems of moral supervision and labor organization. The class system, grades, curriculum and instructional methods were part of the social order. They provided the mechanisms that ordered a sequential, hierarchical and progressive system. Schooling in America has continued to transform educational and political issues into a notion of education that often focuses its attention on the production of teaching strategies, testing procedures, and a search for institutional effectiveness. In this way, I believe, American schools

have successfully tried to blur differences and inequality as important features of educational discourses.

The Emergence of Schooling in Latin America

In the previous section I referred to the major fractures that appeared in the dominant discourse of schooling in America until the nineteenth century. By speaking about dominant discourses I am not implying that there were not other discourses at the time. In various forms other discourses attempted to resist the homogenization proposed by mass schooling. At different times, geographical locations, and with various degrees of intensity conflict emerged not only in dichotomies such as North/South, black/white, urban/rural, male/female, scientific/religious, upper/lower classes but also among many other possible variables such as white rural male/ white rural woman, just to give an example. When I addressed marginalization in Chapter Two, I argued that dominance and marginalization cannot be viewed in terms of homogeneous and static entities because the power of prevailing views does not come without its own conflicts and contradictions.

Similar arguments can be made about the discourses of schooling in Latin America. While dominant interests have historically tried to use education as a tool to

organize and reproduce society, that discourse has suffered enormous ruptures at different times. Anarchists, socialists, and popular democrats, in many cases, became agents in the production of other types of responses that contested dominant views. These people participated in isolated and discontinued experiences that focused on the needs and interests of the working classes, peasants, and indigenous groups. Also as it was the case with the North American experience, their diverse contributions seem to be rarely pointed out by historical documents. Many times Latin American historians insist on providing notions of chronological events, excluding from their narrative the continuities and discontinuities that are part of any account.

The dominant perspective in the nineteenth century Latin America was borrowed from Europe and supported a notion of education that viewed society in terms of progress and civilization. One of the main supporters of this notion was the Argentine educator Domingo F. Sarmiento who became the archetypal representative of public education. Sarmiento claimed that public education had to be used to dominate the "savage" elements that existed in indigenous and mixed races. To reinforce his commitment to the improvement of the Argentine people he opened the doors to Northern European immigration and,

after several trips to the United States, he also imported the ideology and organization of the common schools to the Argentine scenario.

Despite the dominance of the European view, the period also offered another perspective to the Latin American context. The Argentine historian Adriana Puiggróss (1991) argues that the Venezuelan educator Simón Rodríguez produced a substantial fracture to the dominant perspective of the time. What was subversive about his work was his proposal of schools as sites where relevant questions about society could be asked and where students were able to explore their interests. Rodríguez sought to find an original response that spoke to the concerns of orphans, indigenous groups, homeless, and the marginalized of Latin America. Despite his courageous and important contribution to the silent marginalized, by the end of the nineteenth century the "civilizing project" ingrained in public instruction seemed to prevail. Though there were vast differences in the propagation of public instruction due to the diversity of the Latin American scenario, the leading assumption was that dominant groups were to decide the fate of the oppressed. The process of schooling would be used to "civilize" the marginalized. In most of the countries, the hegemonical discourse proposed notions of compulsory, public, and secular schooling. Poor students

became subjects to be shaped, and domesticated under proposals that excluded their culture from the schools. With a claim of inclusion, public instruction placed students in the role of passive subjects to be submitted to the cultural influence of the dominant society.

Technologies of Discipline

Discipline: An Introduction

Before addressing discipline in this section I want to point out here why Foucault's (1979) work is so compelling to me. By informing myself with some aspects of his analysis, I have begun to reexamine some issues I thought I had substantial arguments to support. I am particularly interested on his emphasis in the relation between power and knowledge. His notion of power, as a multiple invisible construction of differences and subjectivities, is also linked to the production of different kinds of knowledge. With an ideological baggage that is remnant of the Latin America of the sixties and early seventies, sometimes I find myself tempted to produce an analysis that reduces reality to binary oppositions or to respond to social phenomena with some kind of mechanistic essentialism. Foucault's writings have allowed me to investigate the complexity and

temporality of many experiences, and to consider important elements that are embedded in less noticeable power practices.

His detailed research, at times obsessive without any doubt, offers the reader a multiple reading of specific historical manifestations. Foucault's text is able to give me the extraordinary sensation of not only visualizing but also participating in a paradigm where vectors of power operate and sometimes intersect. In his analysis everything seems to be subjected to unexpected displacements and examinations. His seductive narrative forces the reader to generate turns and changes in his/her thoughts, and many times the difficulties of the text tend to be diminished by a pleasure participation in a space of constant activity.

It would be fair to say that Foucault's (1979) work has, in some sense, affected the organization of this dissertation. My initial intention was to compare the work of two Latin American thinkers and concentrate on their interventions within the paradigm of the Latin America of the sixties. While the contributions of Enrique Pichón-Rivière and Paulo Freire during that period will be part of Chapter Four, my reading of Foucault has encouraged me to problematize those interventions and the changes in Freire's work from a perspective of the

nineties. While the sixties provided brilliant and provocative responses to social phenomena, many cultural and social changes have occurred since then, and the social space has suffered substantial variations. The American context, for instance, presents today a completely different configuration. For that reason a contemporary analysis of society needs to be argued in terms of ethnicity, class, gender, and sexual issues. Foucault's work allows for that inclusion, and produces and active reading that moves beyond binary oppositions to provide a multilayered study of a variety of topics at different places and historical times.

My admiration for Foucault (1979) does not come without some disagreements which are related to his sometimes lack of interest in ethical implications of some practices or in the small importance that he places on the possibilities of human agency. While Foucault does give some thought to the contributions of microscopic experiences, he is always cautious to reexamine the operation of power within the social space. Though I do not go as far as to believe in the potentialities of all human beings, I would like to argue that there are instances where a range of possibilities can arise from a pedagogical encounter. For that reason in Chapter Six I

will move beyond the Latin America of the sixties and will explore the feasibility of such a project in relation to the American context of the nineties.

From my readings of Foucault it has become clear that institutions such as asylums and prisons not only emerged at the same time but they were also founded upon similarly disciplinary techniques. But before going any further it is important to note what when Foucault refers to "discipline" he is not restricting its use to conduct. While conduct is part of his definition, Foucault does not appear to be too much interested in the effect that discipline can have in the personality of an individual or in the success or failure of his/her subjugation. His analysis of what he calls "disciplinary technologies" is much more concentrated on the organization of people inside institutions than in the consequences produced by the application of those technologies in their personal lives.

According to Foucault (1979) "disciplinary technologies" are techniques which in his view seem to successfully operate in institutions to organize the lives of their population. In places such as asylums, prisons, and sometimes schools, people seem to be divided, ranked, and arranged in particular ways. This organization is not random but responds to the needs to secure the

observation, supervision, and organization of time and activities. Why do institutions organize these techniques of control? Do these tactics succeed in reducing "deviance"? Are these sites able to bring their population into a state of "normalcy"? According to Foucault that objective does not seem intertwined in the operation of some institutions. At least that is the impression that I have when Foucault refers to crime in Discipline and Punishment. The philosopher points out that prisons do not function to reduce crime. On the contrary, Foucault insists that punitive sites live by crime. In other words, what is important from his comment is that prisons serve as a positive function for the police in the sense that by reproducing delinquency police become more effective in the tracking down of criminals. Without trying to simplify highly complicated issues, Foucault's comments on prisons remind me of the operation of some contemporary public health hospitals that deal with the mental conditions of children and adolescents. Despite their good intentions, sometimes coalitions of doctors, social workers, and educators, by providing erroneous evaluations and diagnoses, unwillingly expose their population to situations of further psychological and physical abuse. Perhaps a similar point may be argued about some schools in this country. New trends in

accountability and institutional effectiveness have permeated many educational sites at all levels. By putting an emphasis on the qualification of the human they aim at reducing difference, but they often end up depriving their population of pleasurable and intellectual explorations.

Division and Classification

When one examines the reasons why individuals are interned in asylums or prisons, the response seems to be related to a deviation in their behavior. People are sequestered in mental hospitals and jails because they have moved away from the norms of reason and law. Because of that individuals begin to be classified into sane/mad, or law-abiding/criminals, thus tactics that organize their lives begin to function. Foucault (1979) argues, in Discipline and Punish, that "in a system of discipline, the child is more individualized than the adult, the patient more than the normal and nondelinquent . . . When one wishes to individualize the healthy and normal and law-abiding adult, it is always by asking how much of the child he has in him, what secret lies with him, what fundamental crime he dreamt of committing" (pp. 77-78). Though tactics of division emerged with the nineteenth century, they are still pretty much in place in several

contemporary institutions. In Circle of Madness, Robert Perrucci (1974) argues that the same tactics of division that appeared with the nineteenth century asylum still prevailed in the organization of the mental hospital he investigated in 1974. According to Perrucci the asylum is pretty much a caste-like system where people are organized around spatial and occupational separation, and prescribed and proscribed activities for each stratum and rank. The operation of that site is also marked by rituals of obedience, and shared symbolic representations of rank and status.

Though originally educational sites did not divide students according to age and level, contemporary American schools begin to separate children since kindergarten into higher and lower levels of readings. During that period students' aptitudes begin to be measured and the process continues until high school with a tracking that is designed to taxonomize students into high and low achievers. With the use of tracking students are judged, their intellectual capacity is measured, and those "promising" youngsters are placed in particular groups. The practices embedded in tracking not only divide students but also legitimize different curriculum paths for those going to college and those fated for the work force.

Though Foucault (1979) seems to be more interested in the epistemics of disciplinary technologies, rather than in the implications of his illuminating findings, I believe that their effect is a crucial element for an analysis of the social space. I think that one of the most damaging consequences of tracking is the type of attitudes that emerge in the students themselves and in their relationship to their classmates. Many times students begin to internalize labels, and negative attitudes toward each other also emerge. As a result, young people participate in a process of evaluation of their own performance and the work of others in some cases encouraged by their own parents.

The search of "different" and "deviant" features has become a regular practice in many sites. Though some public schools tend to divide students into gifted and disabled, some educational institutions are beginning to offer more complex systems of separation that range from the classification of highly gifted to the severely disabled. With regard to the latter it is important to note that within a very politicized space conflicting interests are fighting over the issue of mainstreaming the mentally disabled. Relevant points are argued by different sides but the exploration of those issues is not relevant to this discussion. What I am trying to argue

here is that techniques such as division of people, with their moral and social consequences, are practices intertwined in the operation of institutions.

Schools in Argentina and Brazil have also adapted various systems of classification. When referring to the North American experience Peter McLaren (1986) claims, in Schooling as a Ritual Performance, that "school structure is informed by class-specific ideologies and structural determinants of the wider society" (p. 72). In both Latin American countries the overt curriculum is mandated by a national system of education that operates under similar assumptions to those mentioned by McLaren. Despite those similarities the internal organization of the school presents differences to its American counterpart. The major factor of division in the Latin American context is not found in the internal organization of schools. Tracking and different levels of reading are not part of their operation. What becomes a major factor of segregation is the social class of the students and the particular institution they attend. Students of a certain socioeconomic background tend to go to certain public schools, and the degrees issued by those institutions carry more prestige than others. In other words, class barriers and the institutions permeated by dominant

discourses determine the sociocultural possibilities of their population.

Tactics of division can become sophisticated forms that reproduce relations of domination. Dominant groups tend to determine which portion of the population receives or is excluded from social and cultural participation. This seems to have been the project that Domingo F. Sarmiento had in mind, when he started his crusade for civilization in Argentina. A simplistic analysis of the nineteenth century social context might view the Argentina of the time as a space where the forces of civilization confronted the barbaric nativism. But if one makes use of Foucault's proposals that social scenario may be argued from a more sophisticated perspective. While the boundaries civilization/barbarism are still an important component to that context, it may be necessary to move beyond that dichotomy to attend to differences such as native man from the provinces/native man from Buenos Aires, or rural school boy/rural school girl, and so on. When studies include a detailed observation of systems of separation, it becomes evident that such practices are responsible not only for the subtle distinctions among individuals but for the diverse personal dispositions that those individuals generate. As Pierre Bourdieu (1984) has argued, the experiences and tastes inscribed in social

distinctions, generally generate the type of attitudes that people produce toward cultural manifestations and their options in life.

Judgment and Observation

Besides division and classification there are other strategies that organize and normalize the behavior of a population. Judgment as a practice, for example, is so "naturally" institutionalized that, in many occasions it is embodied in practices other than punishment. In places such as asylums and prisons, judgment has turned individuals into objects of knowledge to be recovered and corrected. By supervising all aspects of their lives these sites often tend to blur the differences between care, recovery, and punishment. A close look at the emergence of the asylum, prison, and school in the nineteenth century, provides an interesting view of an organization that facilitates judgment to their interness. The documentation of people, the hierarchical observation, and the perpetual evaluation of themselves and their mates, appears as a distinctive feature in their operation. While psychiatry molded the behavior of the insane, the "professionals" in prisons also molded the behavior of their inmates by assuming the responsibility of all aspects of their lives, their physical training,

and their aptitude for work. At the same time, their everyday living conditions and states of mind were also supervised. This practice of judging behavior, that in some forms mirrors the family, also permeated schools in different ways. An ideology born of ritualistic practices and performance can carry a material force that bears down on the bodies and mind of individuals.

Discipline which relies on meticulous observation begins by laying down norms of conduct and instituting procedures to rectify deviations. The rectification of deviations may appear in different forms and rituals. Peter McLaren has pointed out that ritual is a system of meanings, tastes, and norms, which legitimize the social order. It may be argued then that all symbols embedded in those ritualistic practices are tied to the ideological ethos of the dominant culture. According to McLaren rituals function mainly to sanctify the workplace, to hedge the cultural terrain with taboos, to shore up the status quo, and to create a student body conditioned to accept such state of affairs.

When dealing with Argentine schools Adriana Puiggróss (1994) has pointed out that secular and nationalistic rituals were introduced at the beginning of the century. The nation, its symbols and heroes, were venerated in public and private spaces. According to

Puiggrós the day-to-day running of the school was influenced by secular symbols and practices like the use of the flag, the coat of arms, the national anthem, and other patriotic songs, regulating behavior (lining up, standing in the presence of an adult, not speaking without permission, greeting an adult in chorus, following conventions in covering exercise books).

When I remember my school life in Argentina feelings of dissatisfaction produced by those ritualistic practices begin to emerge. My experience was permeated by a social discourse that with temporary fractures of resistance, mainly responded to reactionary and dictatorial assumptions. In that narrative the norm was to associate docile behavior with hygiene and success. Students were to attend school with a clean appearance, their hair properly brushed, and tied ponytails in the case of females. Males were not allowed to wear jeans, and females were restricted to skirts below their knees. In all cases dark colors and sanitized appearances had to be accompanied by a behavior that silently accepted all regulations without any resistance. Those who deviated from those rules were not only made to feel inadequate but more important than that they were bound to find failure in their lives. In the Argentina that emerged in the seventies failure did not have metaphorical connotations,

but rather deviation from norms had concrete consequences in the lives of individuals. Those rituals were not intertwined in a sophisticated encoding, they were overt expressions of a hierarchical social structure that judged, and punished those who deviated. Foucault's (1979) notion of power, as an invisible force that is embedded in any social negotiation, became in the Argentine scenario a much more explicit and visible tactic. The panoply of social diversity in the Europe of Foucault's analysis began to disappear in the Latin America of the sixties and even more in the early seventies under the ruse of "national emergencies."

Judgment at the time appeared in the form of a distinctive and severe punishment. At least that was the experience of a group of twenty working class high school students who, during the 1970s, tried to resist a normalizing tactic. As schools in Argentina do not provide transportation, the use of public transportation becomes a necessity for those who attend distant educational sites but who lack the resources to use private transportation (a recurrent problem in working class students). In the case of the group of high school students just mentioned, they resisted the norm by demonstrating against an increase in the preferential

prices for students in some public transportation systems. In times of skyrocketing inflation, that sector of the working class population was seriously affected by exorbitant price hikes. The resistance to an authoritative rule issued by the government led the students to integrate the list of the 30,000 who disappeared. One day while on their way home from school this group of youngsters disappeared never to be seen again.

Evaluation and Timetable

Evaluation as a tactic of discipline was introduced in asylums and prisons in the form of self-evaluation, and constant assessment of peers and authorities. Evaluation has also permeated the walls of schools: it is the most visible technology because it operates so powerfully in the greater society. As a disciplinary tactic, it judges, differentiates people, and it is exercised by numerous individuals at the same time. In the form of examination it is administered by the teacher, for example, and knowledge always returns to the instructor. This type of evaluation introduces students into a visible field of documentation, where individual features are established, described, analyzed, under the gaze of a corpus of

knowledge that builds on standardization. A close reading of a kindergarten report in a public school of North Carolina provides a good picture of how students are classified, differentiated, and quantified, in terms of their abilities. They need to "work independently," "neatly," and "complete their tasks." Those tactics seem to be so effective that I recall overhearing a kindergartner reprimanding another for skipping steps of an assignment. Students seem to be punished for being late or absent, their behavior is measured in terms of self-control, their ability to take care of their personal needs, and to express their feelings in what is presented as a "correct" manner. Expectations of academic achievement center on the value of working without distracting others and having a "positive" attitude toward learning. One cannot but wonder at what price teachers homogenize the conduct of five-year-olds in such an effective manner. Through evaluations individuals become a "case" to be judged, and measured. In other words, evaluation trains people into becoming docile bodies.

Though the timetable dominates our lives and is used by all societies, in America it seems to have disproportional importance. As a technique of discipline, it regulates and slices time, it institutes rhythms, and regulates the circles of repetition. Schools seem to use

it so effectively that children tend to incorporate it even in their leisure activities. Those of us working is higher education, experience the effect and stress of the timetable on a daily basis. From the long-range planning of activities to the circles of repetition, academic life has in some cases been transformed into a tedious and dreary space of uniformity and mediocrity.

Uniforms and Architecture as Symbolic Rituals of Control

Another symbolic ritual that deserves special attention in Argentina is the introduction of the white pinafore in public schools at the beginning of the twentieth century. Its initial intention, to erase the class distinction usually encoded in clothes, was a valid one. The practice not only operated as a source of homogeneity in the lives of adolescents in particular but also failed to achieve its early goals of helping the more marginalized groups. As the latter could not afford buying the item, school coops became responsible for providing the pinafore. As a result of that it was a regular practice to call underprivileged students outside the classroom to make arrangements for the acquisition of the pinafore. The exit from the classroom was clearly noticed by the more privileged who enhanced the

marginalization of the poor by following them with their gazes. To make matters worse, the pinafores bought by the coops looked distinctly cheaper than those acquired by the rest of the students. This is a good example of how sometimes measures aimed at narrowing social gaps may produce diverse types of distinctions and reproduce another kind of social stigmatization.

It would be wrong to assume that disciplinary techniques are exclusively used by authorities. Sometimes, as in the case of the pinafore, power tends to be exercised by the more privileged students over the others, by the socially deemed as attractive over the less attractive, by the ones with the privileged dialect and manners over those with the undervalued language and less sophisticated tastes. These tactics may take the form of a particular question, an irony, some coldness, or indifference. In all circumstances they tend to humiliate and confuse "different" people. When the strategy is used among peers such as classmates, it may have more devastating consequences than when exercised from above. In the classroom scenario it is not rare to observe that these tactics can become dangerous weapons that hurt and disempower sensitive students.

Since the boundaries of power are delineated by the field of vision, the emergence of certain institutions was connected with the development of a functional architecture geared to enlarging the possibilities of observation. While Foucault (1979) provides a careful description of the panopticum used as a prison in Philadelphia, the architecture of schools in Argentina, also functioned in a similar fashion. The panopticum gave guards the possibility of supervising inmates without being seen. On the other hand, the strategic location of the principal's office in Argentina, controlled the entrance and exit of people and also provided a panoramic view of the activities of students when they lined up. Distances between students had to be kept to avoid body contact, and this tactic was also embodied in other areas such as in the authoritarian discourse of the school architecture. Walls of bland colors formed the educational space, desks were fixed to the floors, and were individually arranged not only to avoid body contacts but to discourage cheating. The pain of being a student was accompanied by mechanical approaches to instructional rites. School children would sit up straight and tall in those desks, freeze their eyes on the pretentious lecturers while the teacher gazed from an elevated platform.

Substantial changes have occurred since I attended school in Argentina. The same can be said about the transformations that have been part of American schools. Despite those changes educational sites tend to operate under less obvious regulatory techniques. Sometimes the architecture in America seems to offer a more liberating appearance. But appearances can be misleading, in particular if we use architecture as the only feature to produce an analysis of an institution. I experienced a similar situation when my daughter started kindergarten in this country. At first I was attracted by the open classroom narrative and its architecture. At the time, the possibility of having movable walls and children that changed from one group to another generated in me an initial excitement. In those days classification of students and freedom of their movement seemed a contradiction in terms to an unexperienced foreigner.

Once my daughter began school differences started to emerge. By saying this I do not want to give the impression that the open classroom system offers no different alternatives from more traditional education. Judging from the comments of my daughter in the open classroom school she seemed to enjoy an environment of freedom and pleasure that is absent from the more

traditional school that she attends at present. The point I want to make here is that, even in those open classroom schools, classification of children is part of their operation. Perhaps it would be important to note that the tactic that begins in kindergarten with the separation of students in different levels of reading is not a project of the schools but it is the reaction of institutions to the academic and cultural diversity that students bring to school. Frequently, upper-middle class parents send their literate children to school, and those outside that group are placed in lower levels of reading. This initial placement becomes the first obstacle to narrowing academic differences. The beginning of tracking in third grade widens that gap even further.

This system of classification has always concerned me deeply because those who seem to be unaware of the practice are the ones who are usually more affected by it. Judging by my experience, school meetings never address those tactics, and teachers seem to be embarrassed when they are asked those questions. Though I have naively met with district bureaucrats to try to convince them that parents and people should be informed about those tactics, these people in power tend to undermine the importance of information by arguing that it would not make any difference in the academic performance of the

marginalized. My point here is not to prove whether these bureaucrats are right or wrong but to question why some portions of the population are silently excluded from intellectual and cultural participation. What I find ironic is that the educational system of the most powerful democratic nation in the world, by condoning tactics of control, not only widens the differences that children bring from their homes but continues to reproduce a system of social and cultural hierarchies without any apologies for it.

PART II

A LATIN AMERICAN RESPONSE TO SOME PROBLEMS OF THE MARGINALIZED: DISCOURSE OF POSSIBILITY

CHAPTER IV

ISSUES OF INTERVENTION

The Problematics of Intervention

In previous chapters I tried to show how terms such as "sane," "insane," "educated," or "illiterate," can be effectively used by prevailing voices to further their own interests. Treatment for the poor insane, as well as education for the illiterate or low-income students, were once thought as paths into some kind of social acceptance and mobility. Nowadays most of those expectations have become little more than myths to members of marginalized groups. From South to North America, rampant illiteracy, poverty, crime and diseases of all kinds mark the environment of the marginalized. In light of dominant and abusive practices that restrict the possibilities of change for the disempowered, something needs to be done to help the marginalized reclaim, at least, part of their language and experiences. This does not entail, however, that many changes are to be expected from the current structure. Practices of labeling people as "disabled" or "deviant" have not been done away with, and they will

persist in the future since they are not only intertwined with the idea of power but are also the inevitable result of certain social negotiations. For that reason if interventions are provided they need to be articulated within the constraints of the present situation.

What is the purpose of intervention for the mentally ill? Is there anything else besides a stigma to those who do not adjust to norms? I believe that there is more to mental illness than just a mere social construction. Though I feel I am not prepared intellectually to discuss the specificity of this matter, I think I can safely characterize some kind of behavior which can be referred to as mental disease. With my limited understanding of the subject, I tend to incline myself toward a reading of the problem that pays more attention to social factors than to those exclusively biological. When some people behave in a different way for physical and/or social reasons, that action may sometimes result in serious conflicts for the community. By saying this I am not trying to disclaim any of the positions that I took before and that speak to the tactics of control exercised by powerful groups. On the contrary, I believe that the so-called "sane" always provide the definitions, and the "mentally ill" frequently need to

subscribe to the rules and norms produced by the former. However, this comment does not contradict the fact that, there may be cases where individuals affected by some type of psychological problems may find themselves in situations where their lives are at risk, or their actions may inflict serious consequences to those around them. Something needs to be done to address those cases that in one form or another affect individuals, their families, and communities at large.

Unfortunately still in the twentieth century there seems to be an underlying assumption that mental patients are required to actively participate in their own transformation from "sick" to an external notion of "well-being." At least that is the conclusion that one can draw from the organization of the asylum studied by Robert Perrucci (1974) in Circle of Madness. From the reading it is evident that patients are required to be more than simply cooperative to produce a change. Mental patients must be active in their negotiations for meaning with the people around them, but more important than that, they must produce a new definition of reality for and about themselves. According to Perrucci (1974) patients are usually thought to be well enough to leave the hospital when, in a sense, "they speak the language of the superordinate groups. They adopt, so to speak, the staff

values and norms which are transmitted through interpersonal relations" (p. 26). One can conclude from the comment that, at least for the discourse of that particular asylum, change seems to be understood exclusively in terms of domestication and adjustment.

Despite the deplorable labeling and the oppressive conditions that are observed in some public institutions I want to argue that in some cases a more humane intervention not only may be possible, but can be beneficial for a considerable number of people. Though I am frequently fascinated by Foucault's brilliant analysis of power and its operation inside institutions, I feel the need to confront other issues that seem to be absent from his elaborations. For instance, what would I do if a friend or somebody in my family has some kind of behavior that endangers his/her life or disrupts our daily life? What do I expect from my family or friends if something happens to me? I do not think that Foucault intends to deal with those questions. Besides, he accomplishes brilliant results at what he deliberately privileges, that is to say, at analyzing the ruptures to the historical discourse on madness that led to confinement. In that respect his work is ground-breaking. Personally I am urged to move beyond that analysis and ask myself what can

be done to situations that become detrimental to certain individuals in society.

Do I want to help or protect myself? Am I afraid of becoming like the "other" I criticize? Why do some people need to subscribe to my notion of reality? Do I have any right to change somebody's behavior? How far can outsiders go with intervention? The arguments are as problematic as they are ambitious. However, I feel they need to be addressed systematically, in particular when they are thought in terms of providing a less repressive form of assistance. At the same time it is evident that we live in a society shaped by institutions with certain rules to which we daily have to abide. When some individuals consistently disrupt the pace of daily life, confusion and tension immediately begin to emerge. Though some of the actions of the so-called "sane" may sometimes be more detrimental and repressive than those of the so-called "insane", the actions of the latter, as a result of their lower status, tend to be condemned more easily. For that reason, to avoid drastic and severe measures that will damage the lives of the marginalized even further I want to argue for some kind of assistance that is constructed around a notion of respect for the integrity of the people it is designed to help.

What needs to be avoided is a return to another form of authoritarianism that excludes the needs of the participants and condemns them to another type of social stigmatization. In order to produce some moderate results, a discourse of possibility for the mentally ill needs to be articulated within a space open to understanding their culture, their language, and experiences. Given the difficult situations to be encountered, the challenge will be enormous. In any case, if intervention is provided inside institutions the latter will need to engage themselves in a process of reexamination of their operation to evaluate their practices for the benefit of their population at large.

What is the feasibility of intervention in the field of education? Why do people need to become literate or even "educated?" What are the notions of education provided by institutions? As I said in Chapter Three, historically, some educational sites have tended to label and domesticate their population by shaping students according to the views in dominant discourses. Was intervention needed in the case of illiterate peasants in Brazil, for instance? How could literacy change the material conditions of their lives in a hierarchical and elitist Brazilian society? Wasn't literacy another act of elitism that rectified the dominant culture and alienated

the lives of the peasants even further. Though I will try to answer some of these questions when I refer to Freire later in this chapter, at this point I want to argue that in the context of the 1960s and even much more in the 1990s literacy may be a much needed form of intervention. Brazilian peasants, for instance, in most of the cases are not committed to a return to wild life. Nativism, or the resistance to forms of change by a return to an ancestral past, found a place in a binary reaction to colonialism. Its practice did not produce any changes in the material conditions of the Latin American disposed and, in some cases, it pushed them to the margins even further. Brazil has been penetrated by foreign interests for over a century, peasants have been contaminated by their presence, and as a result of that, they live in a polyphasic space that combines simultaneously elements of premodern and modern societies. As multinational corporations unwilling to actively contribute to significant changes are not going to abandon their interests in the area, those from below will have to negotiate and accommodate to new situations in order to have access to forms of honorable participation in society.

Frequently poverty in the countryside forces peasants to emigrate to the city. When work disappears in the fazendas (ranches), and educational sites have not succeeded in retaining their student peasants, groups of unskilled illiterate flock to the city in search for jobs that many times do not exist. When people do not find employment they live by crime and settle down in shanty towns located in peripheral areas of the large urban concentrations. I want to argue that in those cases of urban drifts in particular, literacy may help peasants accommodate to new situations. For a literacy project to succeed, however, it will have to be inserted within the multiple layers of contradictory practices of the people it aims to target. Similarly, concerns of this nature seem to appear in the context of minority students attending public schools in the United States. The idea of a common culture that belongs to all, and is freely available to all, has proved to be another myth. Institutions receive different people who in spite of similar potentials end up in jobs with different levels of qualifications. Despite some efforts at integration education for the poor has much to do with being silenced and forced to engage in activities and modes of being which are alien to the disadvantaged. As Sonia Nieto (1992) argues in Affirming Diversity, many students

experience that success in schools can be achieved at the risk of losing their cultural practices. Cultural experiences are deeply layered, and have a complex texture. They are lived experiences and represent the outcomes of struggles, negotiations and resolutions. I believe that unless those differences are accepted as valid and legitimate, educational interventions will continue to fail. By excluding the culture of their students, I think that institutions are excluding the element of pleasure, a critical component that is frequently revealed in tastes and desires. Inclusion of the pleasure (juoissance) of the Other as material for educational work does not imply that those voices and meanings need to be celebrated, or naively accepted as important to educational projects. On the contrary, I believe that their inclusion in the educational space will turn the latter into a space of interrogation where participants problematize their contradictions, and struggle for alternative and more effective possessions of meaning.

Contributions of Paulo Freire and Enrique Pichón-Rivière to Marginalized Groups: Two Case Studies in Education and Mental Health

The Latin American Scenario: A Brief Historical Background of Brazil and Argentina (1930-1960)

Despite the dangers that the exercise of power can bring to any type of intervention, I feel inclined to believe that modern societies cannot function without certain forms of intervention. Power will inevitably be part of social negotiations, for which reason risks of domination will always be present in any form of association. As I said at the beginning of this chapter something must be done within our own current system. With regard to this point, even Foucault has argued that sometimes, power can be used to produce positive results at the microscopic level. That seems to have been the case with two interventions, one in psychology and the other in education that occurred in the complicated Latin American scenario of the 1960s. Though initially microscopic, both experiences produced a major fracture to prevailing views in education and psychology at the time.

I believe that interventions cannot be treated as universal phenomena. As part of a social context they need to be problematized within their specific spaces of

production. In order to understand those pedagogical encounters, I would like to address here those pedagogical encounters that shaped and produced discourses in the Latin America of the sixties. What ideas did dominant discourses support at the time? Which were the possibilities of contestation? How was resistance articulated in that context? Although conservative interests were heterogenous, they varied their strategies and even their ideological positions in their struggle for hegemonic power. Despite their differences those groups tentatively agreed on defending a prevailing order constructed as hierarchy, injustice, and denial of opportunities for the fulfillment of human potential. In Argentina the psychoanalyst Pichón-Rivière (1985) and, in Brazil, the educator Paulo Freire (1985) resisted the establishment's notion of norm and used their power to contest those prevailing views. Both practitioners resisted the forces that disempowered certain views because they were not productive in terms of what was perceived to be the needs of the nation. The thought in each was shaped by his specific historical context. For the former, the rural Northeast of Brazil of the 1960s; for the latter, the urban Buenos Aires of the late 1950s and 1960s. By locating their major work in a particular time and space, I want to show not only how their work

produced a major rupture to dominant conservative discourses of the time but also how their impact is still part of the scenario of the nineties.

What is the relationship between particular forms of intervention and the social space where they are elaborated? Certain proposals seem to emerge at specific times and places. The contributions of Freire (1985) and Pichon-Riviere (1985) occurred as part of a historical project that involved not only Argentina and Brazil, but also part of a Latin America where class struggles had begun to intensify. The period extending from the late fifties to the early seventies was marked by temporary fractures to conservative interests. Among the most important breaks appeared the consolidation of the Cuban Revolution, the relative advance of working class unions, and the formation of left-wing parties that resisted right-wing domination.

Brazil and Argentina, during the period that went from the thirties to the fifties, had already produced temporary breaks to the social structure. Vargas in Brazil, and Peron in Argentina, by mixing a charismatic nationalistic and anti-imperialist ideology with some elements of Western Christianity, stimulated the organization of unions and national political movements. Though popular movements in Latin American may give the

initial impression of being similar in their formations, they often respond to the specificity of each place. The difference between the populist nationalistic regime in Brazil (1930-1945) and the populist nationalism occurring during approximately the same period in Argentina (1945-1955) can explain the different paths taken by pedagogies in the two countries. The range of contradictions evident in Brazil (a contradiction of regional, racial, ethnic, cultural, and socioeconomic differences) resulted in a smaller politico-cultural concentration than in Argentina. Peronism acted upon a society that had been undergoing a process of cultural, political and linguistic integration for decades. By contrast, in Brazil, colonialist enclaves persisted strongly. In Argentina they had disappeared, and between 1945 and 1955 the masses had gone through a profound process of cultural homogenization. The failure of the political activation of the masses, in both countries, frequently prompted the bourgeois to appeal for military intervention to restore order.

Perón was a savvy politician, and remained in power by constantly changing his ideological affiliations. In spite of that he fell from office in 1955 to the power of the Nationalists. This group, in various forms had dominated the course of Argentine history since the early

thirties. The structure of the Nationalists was very complicated, and differed during certain periods. Initially most of its members were upper class educated men who associated themselves with the ideas of Franco, Mussolini, and McCarthy. Later some of their younger members became firm supporters of Nasser. What the group had in common was an overt feeling of anti-Semitism and a despisal of Communism. For the period that concerns us here, the sixties, it is important to note that Nationalistic ideas had infiltrated some law students at the University of Buenos Aires. This group aimed at resisting the "Bolshevization" of the university by left-wingers. Though overt anti-Semitism had declined in the group after 1945, the early sixties brought back another eruption of hostility toward Jews following the capture and abduction of Adolf Eichmann in Buenos Aires by Israeli agents.

Argentina in the Sixties

The period stretching from the middle of the fifties to the beginning of the eighties was marked in Argentina by weak democracies frequently interrupted by military coups that had the unconditional approval of different versions of Nationalists. In 1966, the democratically-elected president Arturo Illia was forced

out of office by General Onganía. Onganía accused Illia of "betraying the state" and "exposing the country to powerful enemies and Marxist infiltrations." When Onganía took power he promised to recover the "national social identity" and defend Western Christian traditions. In early August of 1966, the regime "intervened" in the administration of universities, and placed their direction under the hands of the military. To implement their measures, police armed with clubs arrived at the University of Buenos Aires, stormed faculty buildings, and inflicted heavy beatings to those inside (Osiris Villegas, 1969). The episode is historically remembered "as the night of the long sticks", and marked the beginning of the most sinister period that dominated the Argentina of the seventies. Human rights, moderately respected until the time, were grossly abused, and the episode produced the first exile of intellectuals from the country.

The Nationalists staunchly defended the government, and loudly applauded the new administration for their actions. They saw the episode as a revolutionary operation that brought the destruction of the Marxist parasite that lived inside Argentine universities. Marxist ideology, Nationalists believed, was embodied in certain disciplines, particularly in psychoanalysis. According to the fascist group, "Marxist psychoanalysis

was based on a conception of man that is exclusively materialist and mechanistic" (Azul y Blanco, 1966). What is important to note about this incident is that even in the cases of faculty who were democrats rather than Marxists, the government decided to purge them all. According to the views sustained by Nationalists the influence of psychoanalysis had destroyed the normal orientation of universities. In their journal Azul y Blanco the Nationalists claimed, "the psychoanalyst wields a pedagogical influence lacking any spiritual and metaphysical content. This conception, which is scientifically and medically false, is dangerous to the social and moral structure." For that reason wiping off the evil influence of Marxism, or any other liberal or atheist wave that might infiltrate the walls of educational sites, became a priority for national security. A particular example dramatizes how dominant right-wing ideology intensified during the seventies and permeated all institutions. Adriana Puiggross, a leading Argentine historian, in conversations with Peter McLaren recalled her own misfortune at the time. She came from a family of leading leftist intellectuals. In 1976 Adriana was the Dean of Arts and Letters at the University of Buenos Aires and her father was the Minister of Education. A bomb exploded in their home and Adriana and her parents

were forced into exile. Her brother, who was active in the armed struggle, refused to leave and was murdered the following year. What is important in this context is that, according to Puiggróss (1994), as soon as the military took power in 1976 they named a new inspector for the School of Arts and Letters: Father Sánchez Abelenda. The very conservative Catholic priest went through all the classrooms in several schools of the University of Buenos Aires carrying an olive branch in his hands and exorcising "the evil spirits of Marx, Freud and Piaget." This repressive dogma prevailed and forcefully cleansed all institutions in the country until 1983.

Despite political upheavals of the fifties and sixties, and perhaps because of the prestige that Pichón-Rivière's European background brought to some intellectual groups of Argentine society, the psychoanalyst was able to direct the oldest public asylum for a period of 25 years, until he was forced to resign during the government of Onganía. It may be argued that the limited freedom Pichón-Rivière experienced to work in such a "questionable Jewish field" may be related to the historical context of Argentina at the time. The social space, though socially-controlled, was not so oppressive at the time. Had Pichón-Rivière operated in the seventies, his work not only would have been censured but his life

would have been at risk. Despite some abuses in human rights, the social spectrum of the fifties and sixties could never be compared to the alienating genocide that occurred during the seventies.

The sixties, in discontinued forms, was also a period of conflicting feelings for Argentine youth. New ideas were emerging in other parts of Latin America, and they began to find an echo in some sectors within the authoritarian Argentina. I recall being in high school at the time, and experiencing many contradictions. On the one hand, those in the middle and upper class sectors felt inclined to European tastes and preferences. On the other, there was a new urgency to affirm a Latin American identity. We had been brought up with the idea that Argentina was "racially and intellectually" superior to the rest of Latin America. Until that time my generation had few inclinations to dealing with poverty, illiteracy, and hunger that frequently characterized "other" Latin American nations in the official discourse. We pretended to be European-like, urban porteños (citizens of Buenos Aires) searching for a European past that associated Argentina less with Spain and more with France and Britain. Buenos Aires, with its beautiful French architecture and its sophisticated lifestyle, came to be popularly called "the Paris of Latin America. "Despite

the regular waves of social control, avant-garde art and literature flourished in the city during that time.

To further complicate this scenario of the sixties in Argentina, the leading participation of the upper-class Argentinean Ernesto 'Che' Guevara in the Cuban Revolution strongly suggested to a new generation that our referents could perhaps be more rooted in a Latin American experience. Though Perón had successfully manipulated the masses with anti-imperialist feelings during the fifties, the sixties brought back those feelings mixed in some circles with anticapitalist tensions. I recall my fascination with 'Che' Guevara. His mythical role as a freedom fighter had not only reached solid leftist groups but was beginning to infiltrate some sectors of the young apolitical middle and upper classes. What today needs to be understood in the States about our fascination at the time with Guevara is that in privileged circles there was a prevailing superficiality attached to the man and his circumstances. What the privileged youth saw in Guevara was not only a handsome fighter but also a member of their group. 'Che' was "one of them" who had rejected his class privileges to participate in the struggle for the marginalized. Many people like myself projected in Guevara all our fantasies and saw them materialized in his actions. His physical attraction, combined with a sound

and refined education spoke directly to the repressed feelings and frustrations experienced by our generation. At the time we did not rely on the impact of television to construct our myths: oral and written narratives operated as sources of meaning and jouissance. Young college females devoured Che's journals, while publishing companies competed madly for the rights to publish his biography.

Brazil in the Sixties

The Brazilian space of the early sixties, a period when Freire produced his most outstanding contributions, was part of a different and more committed social project. That society was engaged in a serious debate about nation and national identity. The constitutional ascendancy of Joao Goulart to the presidency of Brazil in 1961 seemed to signal the triumph of public opinion and the democratization process. The debate of nationhood brought the formation of the Higher Institute of Brazilian Studies. The central goal of that institution was to overcome underdevelopment, which was viewed as the obstacle to the achievement of nationhood. For the new populist hegemonic discourse, the strategy was to fuse an idea of personal identity with a notion of nation that transcended class differences and viewed the "new"

Brazilian society in essentialist terms. Though the response needs to be understood as part of the context of a Latin America permanently threatened by right-wing forces, I think that at the time reformers were forced to produce fast changes without much time for examination. For that reason their firm opposition to foreign interference and their commitment to search for a "truly national culture" produced a narrow reading of society that often overlooked and simplified the diverse interests of a racially and culturally heterogeneous population. In this context, many cultural centers opened around the nation with similar ideas to be propagated. In the case of the Northeast, a somewhat different conception of culture began to emerge. Freire and his colleagues started to question the validity of producing a new dominant version and argued against regarding people as passive recipients of an already-made truth. A distinctive role was attributed to consciousness, subjectivity, and experience in the process of overcoming underdevelopment. As President Goulart promised broad reforms, he loosened Brazil's ties with the United States and dedicated himself to a highly nationalistic economic program. He spoke of an agrarian reform and of the need to educate all the population. For the development of

literacy he appointed Paulo Freire as the Director of the Adult Literacy Project and Secretary of Education. Freire's (1989) proposal for a pedagogy of freedom contrasted sharply with the educational positivism that had prevailed in many educational institutions until that time.

Differences Between Argentina and Brazil During the Sixties

Why did Argentina in the sixties produce a revolutionary psychological discourse instead of an educational response similar to Freire's? One way to answer this question is to recall that at the time Argentina was not ripe for tackling the matters Freire was addressing. The literacy rate was equal to that of developed countries, while it is also true that almost the entire population had been to school longer enough to have absorbed the influence of the normalizing project of the schools. At the same time, newspapers, radio and national cinema reached the remotest corners of the country. But above all, a comprehensive process of articulation had taken place in the great national politico-cultural discourses, an articulation of differences that simultaneously divided and ordered society within the

normalizing project posed by a seductive "European" consciousness. In contrast, Brazil, despite the wide reach of public schooling initiated by the Vargas administration, had not developed all-embracing social discourses. Rather it promoted modernization of Brazil without being able to fracture or rearticulate the many discourses peculiar to the diverse groups that are still active within the country such as ethnic, religious, cultural, ritualistic, social and regional groupings. In Argentina, on the other hand, the modernization brought by Peronism depended on a process of subordination, adjusting and fitting together all the politico-cultural differences. Public education had played a leading role in that process since the turn of the century.

It may be argued that Freire's (1987) ideas on literacy, which comprise an all-embracing politico-cultural strategy, would be specially applicable in a society where modern pedagogical discourses had not developed sufficiently to be able to incorporate the educational and cultural production of all the sectors within a single hegemony as was the case with Argentina. Though that was not the case with the Southern Cone (Argentina and Uruguay) in the sixties, the irony is, that it is the case today. The activities of the military dictatorship (1976-1983) and the neo-conservative

government of Saúl Menem have managed to fracture the school system. For that reason in the nineties important educational experiences among popular sectors based on Freire's methodology have begun to surface proving to be as relevant as problem-solving. In essence: Argentina in the sixties was in many ways closer to English, Italian, and French societies and at a distance from the Brazilian model. Today the opposite is the case.

Some Biographical Information on Freire and Pichón-Rivière

Knowing where one started allows one to understand where one is. The relationship between place and day-to-day human contact is central to the study of life experience. Place provides us with information about the social world, the concrete, the named, and the identified. Pichón-Rivière's and Freire's interventions were grounded on life experiences, and on specific places that produced certain constructions of the world. Because I think that some information about people's experiences may help to understand part of their work I will provide here a few details that may give some light to the interventions of the two Latin American practitioners.

Enrique Pichón-Rivière (1907-1974)

Born in Geneva in 1907 where his French parents were temporarily living, Enrique Pichon-Riviere arrived in Argentina at the age of three when his father bought a cotton plantation in the Northeast of the country. Economic misfortune plagued the life of Pichón-Rivière senior who was forced to sell his land and ended his life selling vegetables door to door. Financial constraints, however, did not seem to sour childhood memories of his son Enrique. In his conversations with Vicente Zito Lema, the psychoanalyst frequently recalled happy anecdotes of a family ripe in caring and culture. His father admired Rimbaud and Baudlaire, and often read their work to his children. Evenings were spent with family gatherings listening to classical music. I find those narratives fascinating, full of anecdotes that emphasize, with benign irony, the exotic practices of a French family transplanted in an indigenous South America. Pichón-Rivière's father hired Guaraní Indians for labor, and the psychoanalyst lived his childhood between the confrontation of two cultures: the French and the Guaraní. This may be one of the reasons, I believe, why he insisted so much on the importance of the social context as an essential element to determine subjectivities.

Though anecdotes of Pichón-Rivière's childhood may at times sound entertaining and amusing, it is also true that there is also a tone of sadness and melancholy that permeates the narrative. In one instance Pichón-Rivière makes reference to a beautiful sunset in the middle of the jungle where his father's old tuxedo hangs from a clothes line. The image allows him to reflect on the adversities his bourgeois parents had to endure since their arrival in Northern Argentina. Though both his parents apparently adjusted to hardships, his father seemed to have lived a melancholic existence. Sadness was also part of Enrique's life, and the exploration of that emotional state often appears in his writings.

How could Pichón-Rivière shine in the cultural life of Argentina when his parents suffered so many constraints? One can safely assure that despite the adversities, his French background may have worked in his favor in a culturally colonized environment, thus giving the psychoanalyst more opportunities for survival than natives would have had in similar situations. Though Pichón-Rivière apparently had a very congenial personality, and associated himself with intellectual circles since his arrival in the capital of Argentina, his European roots may have provided him with the necessary

class markers that money in that society could never buy. While prestige in some circles was associated with land tenure, French bourgeois tastes were highly valued by dominant groups. Pichón-Rivière seemed to have had the necessary social distinctions to stand out in a society willingly dependent on French preferences. As I said in the introduction I never met the psychoanalyst, but I have often been in touch with people who knew him very well. Stories emphasize his refined taste for the arts and for the insightful details that make up daily life. For one like myself, raised under the pressure of alienating social contradictions interfering with a political project bent on including the majority, it was difficult to understand in the seventies how somebody who dedicated his life to helping the poor and insane, would insist in his private space on affirming his bourgeois upbringing.

When I reflect on this issue today from the perspective of the nineties, the exercise of those apparently "contradictory" practices does not appear so contradictory after all. His response should be interpreted as part of a broader and less dogmatic analysis of society. It is evident from Pichón-Rivière's work that he was able to participate in a collective project without the need of erasing his cultural preferences. Today I can see that his exemplary case can

be argued as a better alternative to the binary reading of emancipation proposed by Freire in the sixties. Though Freire has overcome that orthodoxy prevailing at the time, his call to intellectuals to commit "class suicide" as a necessary precondition to engage in a social struggle, not only overlooked but also simplified the complex texture of the cultural space and the multiple and contradictory nature of human subjectivity. Despite his narrow reading of that time, I want to argue that Freire's call to intellectuals needs to be understood in terms of the Latin American space of the sixties. As it was the case with many Latin Americans at the time, Freire's thought was to be much influenced by the heroic participation of Guevara, in the Cuban Revolution and the fighter's personal commitment to "class suicide."

While it is important to point out that Pichón-Rivière lived a humble existence and refused to enrich himself by practicing private psychoanalysis, he retained in his daily life those distinctive details which were part of his upbringing. Those who met him always remember dinners at his modest apartment where table manners were ritually followed, and distinguished flatware and china were part of table arrangements. Stories also emphasize Pichón-Rivière's pleasure in teaching and his lack of interest in writing. Apparently he only wrote

because his colleagues asked him. That lack of interest in the written text is obvious in his sometimes dry and mechanistic narrative. On the other hand, his personal style, sober but distinguished, seems to have created a myth around the man. With the exception of the military and the far right, those who knew him well not only appreciated his sophisticated intellect, his mastery for rhetoric, but also his tireless commitment to the socially marginalized.

Paulo Freire (1921-)

Paulo Freire was part of a younger generation and a different background from that of Pichón-Rivière's. Born in 1921 in Recife, in the Northeast of Brazil, he spent his childhood in that area. As I said in Chapter Two the region is one of the poorest in Brazil, and has been plagued with poverty, hunger, and illiteracy for over a century. Freire's parents were slightly more educated and well-to-do than the poor around them. In a conversation with Myles Horton (1984), Freire recalled that his parents taught him literacy skills under a mango tree. Since early age, Freire argues, he had a physical connection with the text. Knowing presented itself as a mental and bodily experience. He was able to experience the sensuality of the pages and the pleasure in rewriting

narratives. His ability to read, and the pleasure involved in studying, helped Freire to move beyond the text to improve the understanding of its social context.

Paulo's father had a low-level job in the military but, according to Freire though pay was low, prestige was high. When his father lost that job for the first time, Paulo recalled, "I had the possibility to experience hunger." He points out in his conversations that adversity was useful to him. Despite economic constraints his parents were able to send him to school and later to Law School in Recife. At college Freire joined a Catholic Action Group that seemed "more preoccupied with the concept of society and social change, and acutely aware of the conditions of poverty and hunger in the Northeast." As Freire became discontented with the law practice he began to explore crucial problems of education. Most of the Brazilian intellectuals at the time were part of an academic elite that looked outside Brazil for models to follow. Freire, on the other hand, began to search for a collective identity inside his own country. This educator worked with the rural poor, and examined the prospects of literacy projects for adults. He had become convinced that illiteracy was not a personal problem, it was the result of a historical exploitation that affected the poor: black and white alike. The illiterate in Brazil

were not able to vote, and as a result of that, they were excluded from learning how society worked. From his comment it is evident that Freire realized that social and economic marginalization deprived the disposed of the opportunities to take history in their hands and therefore develop, perhaps, other kinds of culture that resisted and contested the dominant pattern. Freire's social concerns began to be welcomed in some progressive sectors eager for an intervention of that kind. The rise of popular-revolutionary movements in the Latin America of the sixties with different expressions and strategies, according to each country's historical experience, prepared the space for the slow acceptance of Freire's proposal of education as a practice of freedom. Also, the close relation between Freire's thinking and the ideological transformation experienced by the Catholic Church after the Second Vatican Council had a profound effect in some sectors, and in many ways helped Freire's project. Though I will refer to the different perspectives that emerged within the Catholic Church in Chapter Five, I want to point out here that Freire aligned himself with the Prophetic Church which rejected "do-goodism" in order to commit itself to the dominated classes and to radical social change.

The Connections Between the Work of Pichón-Rivière and Freire

Diverse Formations on Pichón-Rivière's and Freire's Thought

Pichón-Rivière placed special importance to his personal formation when he developed what he called " a conceptual, referential, and operative scheme" that served as theoretical support to his therapeutic proposal. This scheme consisted of a group of notions and theoretical concepts by which individuals tried to apprehend the outside world. These notions, the psychoanalyst argued, came from historical and dialectic materialism and also from psychoanalysis, French psychiatry, linguistics, surrealism, phenomenology, and American social psychology. What I find important in his theory is his insistence on the social context as an essential element to his scheme. Ana P. de Quiroga (1985) points out, in From Psychoanalysis to Social Psychology, that Pichón-Rivière emphasized the idea that "the referential, conceptual and operative scheme of an author is based on lived experience, his/her relationship with people, binds, and places" (p. 31). This may well be the reason why his childhood, lived between the confrontation of two cultures

(French and Guaraní), not only allowed him to reflect upon the social context but also led him to associate in his work "different and heterogeneous" elements.

The educational theory of Freire also has many roots. It has evolved, developed, and matured against the background of an extensive, continuing personal and intellectual eclecticism. Any search of the sources that make up his work must start with the Northeast experience. At the time Freire embraced and supported moves by Brazilian intellectuals, especially those that formed the Instituto Superior de Estudos Brasilieros and there is a considerable evidence in his work of the influence of European and North American liberalism as structured in Dewey, Popper, and Mannheim. To fully grasp Freire's position on both conscientisacao and radicalism two additional factors are important: the impact of key theologians such as Teilhard of Chardin in his thinking and the Brazilian phenomenon of grassroots Catholic political movements for social change. During his exile Freire put much of his liberal practices behind and radicalized his thought with the writings of Marx, Gramsci, and the activities of Guevara, Castro, Mao Tse-tung, and Amilcar Cabral. Also, the influence of existentialism needs to be highlighted in his work. By taking as his starting point human incompletion, and

focusing his educational endeavors both on the analysis and transformation of concrete existence, Freire puts together elements of Christian existentialism and revolutionary politics.

From Psychoanalysis to Social Psychology

Though Pichón-Rivière (1975) had worked as a psychoanalyst, in the sixties he moved to social psychology. According to the practitioner, the shift was to overcome an epistemological obstacle, a deep crisis that was difficult to live through. Why did he change? As I said before the social space of the sixties was ripe in different struggles, and Pichón-Rivière had begun to identify himself with some of those changes. Though maturity in age is often associated with a need to become financially stable and ideologically conservative, in his older age Pichón-Rivière radicalized his thought and focused his attention even more on the needs of the socially marginalized. The psychoanalyst's career was never marked by financial success: by choosing to direct a public asylum for twenty-five years he missed many economic opportunities. When he was forced to resign, once again, he rejected the advantages of private practice, and concentrated his efforts on training social psychologists and advising diverse social groups.

At this point it becomes necessary to recall that in some circles of Argentine society, psychoanalysis has had a much wider reception than in the United States. When I speak of psychoanalysis I am referring to Freudian and Lacanian practices. Jung's thought, on the other hand, had little appeal in Argentina. To give an indication of the importance of psychoanalysis in some sectors of that society, I would like to mention a criminal case that occurred in Buenos Aires some time ago. An international boxing star killed his wife by pushing her off a balcony. At the request of the Justice Department a Lacanian psychoanalyst, and not an Ego psychologist or a psychiatrist as it would have been the case in this country, was called to evaluate the case. The impact of that field is so vast that, at present, in addition to the schools of psychology that operate in universities, there are over a hundred different psychological institutions that teach psychoanalysis. That is one of the reasons why, when military dictators take power, the first thing they do is to close the careers of psychology and sociology. These fields are seen by demagogues, as sources for revolutionary ideas and action. To this day, despite the wider acceptance of psychoanalysis, prestigious analysts have a tendency to

focus their work on the privileged. Private practices are often located in the most affluent areas of large cities. During the sixties, Buenos Aires in particular, began to offer psychoanalysts great professional opportunities. Middle and upper class clients started seeing therapists in great numbers. During the same period, and in light of the professional experiences of some of his former students, Pichón-Rivière had grown discontented with what he viewed as a greedy attitude in some of his disciples. His comments to Zito Lema may sound naive, especially nowadays when well-known psychoanalysts in Buenos Aires charge for their sessions as much as their counterparts in Park Avenue. At the time Pichón Rivière explained to Zito Lema (1976), "social psychology afforded me with the possibility to reach patients who were unable to afford private treatment." Had Pichón-Rivière been tempted by financial success he could have become very wealthy in those years. His professional success had gone beyond the limits of Argentina, and had collaborated with Melanie Klein in several projects Instead, the psychoanalyst rejected the profits of private practice and chose to become the founder of the First Private School of Social Psychology.

Though the name of the institution may lead readers to believe that it was a profitable school, the reality

was completely different. The school barely survived with small fees paid by psychologists who came to study under Pichón-Rivière. It is necessary to point out that in the sixties social psychology became very popular in Argentina. At the time American pharmaceutical companies flooded the market offering financial support to institutions that were involved in that field of psychology. I find Pichón-Rivière's resistance to accepting any type of financial assistance for his school a source of personal admiration. At the same time, in order to dispel any perception of personal naivete, I should also add that in all likelihood the psychoanalyst was much more interested in intellectual power than in economic success.

What was it that social psychology provided at the time? What Pichón-Rivière (1975) saw in the field were possibilities for group therapy. By introducing a collective proposal he felt that he was opening the doors to the "democratization" of psychoanalysis and the exploration of knowledge as a collective experience. According to Pichón-Rivière mental illness was rooted by a conflict. In his view that conflict was the result of the failure shown in the subject to actively "adjust" to society. When I first read his use of the term "adjust" I was rather disturbed, because I understood it in terms of

normalization. Later in his writings he clarifies the concept by insisting that "adjustment" needs to be read, not as passive subjugation, but as a dialectical relationship where subject and society are constantly modified by the experience.

Despite Pichón-Rivière's (1975) shift to social psychology, I believe that his notions of psychology can be classified along the lines of classical psychology. To clarify what I mean, I will refer to the notions supported by the Scottish psychiatrist R. D. Laing, in order to show the differences between the two practitioners. Laing (1959) was not concerned with a disordered perception of reality. Instead, he appeared more preoccupied with the falsification of the self. As Laing embraced existential psychiatry, he was concerned not with diminished productivity, but with loss of creativity. He viewed anxiety not as a symptom, but as a characteristic of human beings, rooted in their own existence. Anxieties remain central in his work, but his purpose is not to restore patients to usefulness, as was the case with Pichón-Rivière, but to restore them to themselves. This is an approach highly consistent with the options that the Anglo-American world afforded at the time, an emphasis on the individual and the Ego as in need of "reinforcement." By contrast, during the same period, the French and

Continental Europeans provided an analysis around language as a discourse critically undermining any hard division between the "individual" and the "world."

Pichón-Rivière (1975), on the other hand, speaks of modifying attitudes. That comment implies, I believe, the underlying assumption that there is an external reality that needs to be approached in a certain way. Pichón-Rivière treats patients as persons who are hampered by defects in their perceptions of a reality, which is external to them. The seriousness of a patient's illness seems to be judged by the depth and extent of the discrepancy between his/her subjective perception of his/her situation and the objective correct assessment. I do not want to give the impression that Pichón-Rivière rectifies objectivity or rejects other insights such as the poetic. As a matter of fact, Pichón-Rivière includes poetic insight in his work, but he tends to show preference for a kind of detached investigation of the individual's relationship to reality in order to provide an intelligible account of who the patient is. Though his analysis may give the impression that Pichón-Rivière relied on the liberal premise that each person is an individual with the capacity and responsibility to exercise his/her own will, his adoption of social psychology emphasized the importance of a collaborative

project that addressed the interconnection between people in a particular social space as a path to the interpretation of the world.

Why do subjects experience so many difficulties in dealing with social life? When referring to difficulties, Pichón-Rivière (1975) speaks of the use of "bind" relationships. According to the psychoanalyst the "bind" becomes the tool that produces relationships and at the same time it allows people to interpret their own experiences. The notion of bind is seen as a complex structure that involves individuals, an object of knowledge, and their interrelationship in the process of communication and learning. What forces people to use binds? Pichón-Rivière argued that unconscious and conscious needs motivate their use. In every bind relationship subject and object of knowledge interact with each other. The quality of that relationship will be reflected in the way that relationship is internalized by the subject in his/her inner world. If the relationship is positive and dialectical, the person will internalize a positive bind. The relationship will then open into a spiral where individuals and society engage in a process of mutual transformation. Instead, when the individual is disappointed, the bind will be negative. The interaction will become problematic taking the shape of a closed

circuit full of stereotypes. According to Pichón-Rivière the internalized bind structure will determine the characteristics of the learning process which can be facilitated or can become an obstacle depending on the kind of relations elaborated between the inner world of the individual and the society where he/she operates.

Paulo Freire: His Intervention in the Brazilian Northeast

Who was Freire in the sixties? Was his contribution only related to literacy programs for the Third World? As he pointed out repeatedly, the object of his analysis and the language he used was for the oppressed everywhere. His concept of Third World is ideological rather than merely geographical. He would never argue that his work was meant to be adapted in grid-like manner to any site or pedagogical context. Freire initiated his literacy project with notions of linguistics that articulated to what Noam Chomsky was doing at the moment. In light of those ideas Freire provided a metalanguage that generated a set of categories and social practices that had to be critically mediated by those who could use them for the insights they might provide in different historical settings and contexts. Freire's work

is not meant to offer radical recipes for instant forms of pedagogy; rather, it is a series of generative words that need to be decoded and critically appropriated within the specific contexts in which they might be useful.

Freire (1972) fashioned a theory of education that took seriously the relationship between radical critical theory and the imperative of radical commitment and struggle. Underlying his theory is the introduction of history as a constraint to the situation of many men and women but also as the road of possibility to change their oppressive reality. Freire connected the process of struggle to the specificity of people's lives, while at the same time he argued for hope when he believed in the power of the oppressed to become the agents of their own liberation. His underlying interests are shaped around a struggle against all forms of subjective and objective domination as well as a struggle for forms of knowledge, skills and social relations that provide the conditions for social and self-emancipation.

His notion of education surpasses the idea of schooling. Education, Freire (1973) argues, is the struggle for meaning in alternative power relations. Its dynamic is forged in the dialectical relation between individuals and groups who live their lives within specific historical and structural conditions, and those

cultural forms or ideologies that produce the contradictions and struggles that define the lived reality of many societies. For that reason, education is viewed by Freire as the space where power and politics are given fundamental expression, it is where meaning, language, desire, and value engage to name and struggle for a particular future and a way of life. As a way for change, education entails critical reflection and action as a fundamental part of the project. Freire developed a type of critical analysis where he asserted that traditional forms of education functioned to alienate the oppressed and rectify the dominant culture. In the sixties the Brazilian educator explored in great depth the reproductive nature of the hegemonical culture and analyzed how it functioned through specific social practices and texts to produce and maintain what he called "the culture of silence" of the Brazilian peasants. His analysis centered around pedagogical approaches through which groups of learners could decide ideological and material practices, and in the form, content, and selective omissions of these ones uncovered the logic of domination and oppression. In addition, he linked the selection, discussion, and evaluation of knowledge, to the pedagogical processes that provided a context for such

activity. In his view it was impossible to separate one from the other.

Freire's work has been strongly criticized by many. In Pyramid of Sacrifice, Peter Berger (1977) accuses Freire of condescension and elitism in the relation with the oppressed. For Berger "conscientization" is not critical consciousness but consciousness raising, a misunderstanding which results in a serious misreading of Freire. The list of detractors continues from the ones that accuse him of being a Marxist, others label him as a populist and some blame him for being more Christian than anything else. Though some criticism of his work during that period may be valid, such as his questionable reading of oppression as silence, his insistence on leaders "to commit class suicide", or his understanding of emancipation only in terms of class struggle, I personally think, that some of his critics fail to understand the social and historical formations which are part of Freire's scenario.

While accusations of elitism speak to the obvious social differences between Freire and the peasants, I believe that his work deserves the right to be analyzed by contrasting his experience with preceding educational paradigms in Brazil. The pedagogy of liberation offered for the first time in the Latin American block an

opportunity to reject mechanistic notions of education and proposed a search for popular and national elements in the culture. Unfortunately, the project of land reform promised by the Goulart government, never materialized. Labor unrest, strikes and inflation disturbed the middle classes, which felt its security and well-being were threatened. The middle class in Latin America had more commitment to its economic well-being than to democratic theory and practice and is downright fearful of any change. So long as they controlled the democratic machinery and operated it for their own benefit they proved to be staunch democrats. However, once larger numbers of the population began to participate in the democratic process and achieved a significant voice, the middle class did not hesitate to abandon it. Threats of real reform in the Goulart government caused the middle class to urge the military to intervene. Then the military, cheered by the elite and the middle classes, marched against Goulart and unseated him on April 1, 1964. Brazil's experiment with democracy ended with censorship, and a brutal dictatorship filled the jails with political prisoners including Paulo Freire.

At the beginning of Chapter Two, I addressed the importance of literacy to the process of liberation.

Some critics such as C. A. Bowers (1987) do not agree with this position. They argue that literacy may alienate people and produce a form of culture that is completely decontextualized from the environment. C. A. Bowers has criticized Freire because Freire's arguments on literacy "represent a belief that is so strong and unqualified that he fails to recognize that his educational reforms may contribute to structuring consciousness in a manner that supports the very form of society he wants to overthrow" (p. 167). Though Bowers's view of literacy as a source of domination may in some cases be considered relevant, I think that his analysis fails to understand the specificity of the Northeast peasantry. With his strong stand against the current organization of societies into nation states Bowers is unable to produce a reading that attends to the historical space of Freire's production. With a notion of universal ecology, Bowers supports an idea of culture that is in tune with its habitat. Though he does not expand to describe the situation of peasants in the Northeast habitat, with his silences he predisposes the reader to imagine that before literacy was introduced peasants in that region seemed to live in harmony with their environment. As I said before, this was not the case in the Northeast at all. Peasants in that area were not only subjected to colonialism, but also to the

domination of their landowners after the independence and to foreign penetration for over a century. Though the promise of land reform was not fulfilled in Brazil, the dream of its possibility became an important factor in the transformation of peasants' lives. Freire (1985) addressed the need of literacy in his essay, "The Adult Literacy Process as Cultural Action for Freedom," where he explains why, building on another South American scenario, many Chilean peasants had not learned to read and write before the land reform materialized by the Allende government. In this respect, in conversations with Freire a peasant pointed out, "before the agrarian reform, my friend, I didn't even think. Neither did my friends." The man argued that as he lived in a world of orders he felt he had nothing to say. Comments of this type, I may add, could have taken Freire to read oppression exclusively as silence, and not as a form of active resistance to new types of knowledge that challenged the peasants' world views.

In another narrative a different man argued that when all the land was reduced to the latifundia (large landholding) there was no reason to read and write. According to the peasant, land reform changed everything. It is important to point out that in Chile land reform had specific characteristics. Peasants were given plots of

land to be managed collectively, and the state did not participate in the profits. Because of that, the man explained, his responsibilities increased when the cooperative was formed. In addition to farming he became the person in charge of tool repairs. His narrative emphasized that as he could not read, as soon as he realized that he had to go to Santiago to buy parts, he became extremely frightened. The man articulated his fear of being lost in the city, of buying the wrong things, or being cheated. Reading, he argued, unveiled his eyes, letters that before seemed like little puppets, became meaningful, and his own life began to be affirmed. As I said at the beginning of this chapter, intervention may be risky. At the same time, in light of an emerging world economy, the daily advances in technology, and the need of international communication, literacy, I believe, has become one of the most necessary tools of critical understanding. As a reader of Pichón-Rivière and Freire, and in light of this investigation, I see them both as agents in a process of global dimensions where sadly two choices are on the table: illiteracy without voices or literacy with some voices. The Argentinean and the Brazilian made critical contributions to the second alternative.

Similarities Between Pichón-Rivière's and Freire's Contributions

Knowledge/Power/Culture

In this section I will attempt to draw the similarities that appear in the production of both practitioners. What is it that they have in common? At first sight few elements seem to lend themselves to comparison. Though Argentina and Brazil are geographically located in closed proximity, the specificity of each culture is completely different. Both practitioners came from different generations, and worked in different fields: Freire produced what is now called "liberatory education," and Pichón-Rivière during the same period gave up psychoanalysis to embrace social psychology. Pichón-Rivière centered all his professional life in an urban space (Buenos Aires), Freire on the other hand, focused his work in the rural Northeast. However, despite their differences a close reading of their work renders some points of coincidence in their production.

What is it in general terms that stood out from their contributions in the sixties? Both authors aimed at overcoming individualistic experiences and addressed in a systematic manner a strategy for the production of knowledge that built on deconstructive arguments. In

their views the production of knowledge did not evolve from a single but from a collective subject positioned in social practices. Their notion of knowledge was dynamic, socially-constructed, and the result of an activity that involved people, their culture, and nature as active protagonists. As I have said before the social space of Brazil and Argentina, as it is the case with any other society, was composed of heterogeneous interests. It was evident then that, given those circumstances, class struggles were expressed in the social distribution of knowledge and in the forms of consciousness that produced different notions of subjectivity and society. In this sense, both Pichón-Rivière and Freire approached the process of knowledge as a dialectical interplay between individuals and their historical context. In their analyses Pichón-Rivière and Freire paid special attention to the interconnection between personal and social histories. For that reason both practitioners proposed a theory of knowledge inserted in praxis. In other words, what they emphasized is that there cannot be a theoretical context if it is not inserted and constructed by a certain praxis. For that reason, theory does not dictate practice. While it may be anticipatory depending on the approach, it serves to hold practice in order to mediate and critically comprehend practices originated in a

particular historical setting. Thus, Pichón-Rivière and Freire did not appeal to universal laws decontextualized of specific scenarios as their theory emerged from particular contexts and forms of expression. What was consistent in their contributions was the idea that what appears on the surface is only part of an object of knowledge, and in order to understand ourselves and the world we need to move beyond that surface. In this respect, the two offered strategies and tactics to decode those difficult areas that had previously produced simplistic readings.

Both authors were concerned with the role of asylums and schools as repositories of knowledge, with therapists and teachers as possessors and guardians. They questioned the way institutions viewed patients and learners. When the latter are defined as passive objects, a context is created where they become not only dependent but also unable to articulate any further explorations. When Pichón-Rivière referred to a dialectical interplay between subjects and reality he emphasized the importance of specific social contexts. This point was also argued by Freire, as he also understood that subjects were transformed by life situations. The two authors initiated their investigations by exploring daily life, and examined the culture that made up the lives of their subjects.

They elaborated on aspects of popular culture that ranged from oral poetry, soccer, and tango to painting. Pichón-Rivière was convinced that public mental institutions often served the purposes of a dominant ideology that constructed around patients an environment of alienation and destruction of their culture. Freire was also aware of the way educational sites in Brazil had excluded the culture of the peasants. For that reason he initiated his intervention exploring the cultural formations that made up the Brazilian peasantry.

When exploring the notion of domination Pichón-Rivière and Freire rejected the idea that there is a universal way of domination. They were interested in showing how power can work to repress the psyche. Though at the time Freire read the lack of critical response in the peasants as passivity and silence, nowadays domination can be understood in various forms to include some notions of learning where the body tacitly learns, and where habits can be translated into sedimented history, to produce some kind of knowledge that may block the development of certain subjectivities and ways of experiencing the world. Likewise, when Pichón-Rivière refers to the behavior of certain people suffering from depressions with neurotic characteristics, he points out that they tend to show a regressive and repetitive

childish behavior that resists change and alienates their existence. Psychotic patients, on the other hand, construct a view of life on the basis of what Pichón-Rivière calls a "distorted reality." According to the psychoanalyst psychotic patients have a tendency to build their world around a progressive internalization of distorted relationship, what he calls "multiple imago." That attitude, often generates misunderstandings, and segregation as these people cannot deal with their anxieties. I find those descriptions very important because they show how sometimes emancipating forms of knowledge may be rejected by people who could benefit from them. To respond to the marginalization produced by those attitudes, and to empower his patients to act upon their lives, Pichón-Rivière developed a pedagogy that aimed at diminishing those people's anxieties. His practice centered around the organization of groups where patients assumed and interchanged roles to give voice to their personal histories, identities, and culture.

The attitude of some of the peasants may perhaps have articulated not a passive acceptance, but an active resistance to forms of knowledge that challenged their world's views. Rather than passively accepting domination, some peasants may have engaged in an active refusal to listen, learn, or affirm their possibilities.

Whether peasants passively accepted, or actively resisted other kinds of knowledge, sometimes they tended to convince themselves of their inability to change their lives. Though I do not want to simplify the obvious differences between Brazilian peasants and racial minority students in America, by rejecting school knowledge, some of these students may be losing the only opportunity they have to change their lives. In the case of Brazilian peasants, their passivity or resistance marginalized their lives. Freire reacted to that exclusion by developing in the shanty towns of Recife the "culture circles" where peasants gathered to discuss daily life, a concept that closely resembles what Riviere did for mental patients.

Pichón-Rivière/Freire: Their Pedagogies

Though I had initially thought of using the word "approach" when I referred to their interventions, I later decided to change it to pedagogy. I do not want to give the impression that their interventions can be restricted to a methodology or technique to be used in therapies or classrooms. Though strategies and tactics appear in their work, their interventions must not be read as a "teaching method" but as a philosophy or a social theory. In their work it is evident that strategies operate as goals or dreams, and tactics are used to materialize those goals.

I believe that both Pichón-Rivière and Freire tried to offer a system where the central locus of the learning process was not transmitting knowledge to unprepared students/patients but to alter the power relation and shift it to a dialogue between the teacher/therapist and the student/patient. This shift not only altered the relationship inside the classroom or the therapy room but aimed at transforming the broader social space as well.

Pichón-Rivière proposed a dialectical pedagogy that starting with the analysis of daily life revealed the contradictory and opposing tendencies that appear in relationships. Subjects with complex and contradictory experiences were encouraged to engage in an analysis that explored conflicting aspects of society. This pedagogy stimulated contrast, contradictions, and diversity, as the basis for the production and interpretation of knowledge. Pichón-Rivière's interest in diversity took him to broaden his field of work by expanding his notions of group work with mental patients to the organization of groups with athletes, artists, educators, and ordinary citizens. When referring to diversity the psychoanalyst insisted that people with different backgrounds, ages, gender, and interests, could approach the object of knowledge from different angles and perspectives. In his pedagogy after

the object of knowledge was fragmented, there was a second stage for the reconstruction of the fragmented pieces into a new whole. His response, in the sixties, was one of the logical answer to the needs of a society in search for a national identity. Though Pichón-Rivière favored diversity as a way to break with stereotypes that might lead to unchallenged uniformity his reading, I believe, did not include the possibility that during the second stage of reconstruction, the new whole might lead to a new type of homogeneous response where alternative views could not be challenged giving rise to a new oppressor.

As part of the process Pichón-Rivière argued that difference increased learning. With regard to this point Freire contends that to know things is to know them in relations, to know a part is to know how it articulates with the whole. In Freire's pedagogy there is also a similar process of decoding and coding, where different impressions of the object of knowledge are elicited so that the interrelation can be seen. Both Freire and Pichon-Riviere agreed that subjects had to engage themselves in a critical reading of reality that contested dominant values and norms. This notion of learning, as praxis, as a dialectical relationship, implies that learning and teaching constitute a whole that engages participants into a continuous complementary role.

The fragmented consciousness of some of the peasants in the Northeast showed some kind of similarity with the depression in psychotic and neurotic individuals. By trying to compare part of their experiences I am not suggesting that there are no vast differences among the groups. What I am trying to point out is that Pichón-Rivière and Freire argued that individuals' lives appear fragmented when people are denied access to a collaborative project that investigates the total picture of a situation. When fragmentation gives place to dialogue, *concientization begins to emerge*. Freire's reference to "concientization" has to do with a process by which learners do not become passive recipients but rather knowing subjects who achieve a deepening awareness of the sociocultural reality that shapes their lives and their abilities to transform it. "Concientization" has a significant implication: the profound transformation of the social reality.

In the 1990s it may be possible to read in Pichón-Rivière a tendency to simplify the problematics of diversity he so much wanted to address. Though his work needs to be understood as part of that specific social space, his intervention sometimes presents itself as a mechanistic model where participants will spontaneously agree to read the world in a particular way. Though at

the time decoding of an object of knowledge often required a new coding, nowadays the social space proposes displacements and conjunctural alliances. Diversity cannot be understood as pluralism, and notions of inclusion can be challenged by continuous affirmation of differences. Though I have very little knowledge of psychoanalysis, problems also seem to arise with some of Pichón-Rivière's psychological insights. With my limited understanding of Lacan, it is evident that Pichón-Rivière did not make much use of it in his writings. His work does not engage in a systematic analysis of language and does not seem to give the latter a prevailing place as producer of knowledge. There is no particular emphasis on the study of metaphors and tropes in general,for instance, or in the articulation of silences as majors sources of meaning and interpretation.

In the sixties Freire also seemed to have had a tendency to totalize narratives within the limits of a binarism that deemphasized the multiple and mutually contradictory characteristics of dominance and struggle. What could happen if subjects refused to engage in the problematization of the world? What happened if they refused to be considered oppressed or if their answers did not fit the new coding? Freire's early reliance on emancipation as one and the same as class struggle

sometimes erased the specifics of how ethnic groups, women, and people of different ages and sexual preferences were subjected to patriarchal structures. Similarly his reference to the masses as oppressed (silenced) appeared to be at odds with diverse forms in which the oppressed struggle and manifest their resistance. Despite some weaknesses, I want to argue that both Freire and Pichón-Rivière responded to the needs of their historical contexts. Their interventions not only benefited but greatly enriched the Latin American scenario of the sixties.

Some Similarities in Their Pedagogies: Homework/Project in Pichón-Rivière and Reflection/Action in Freire

Not exempted from a simplistic essentialism Pichón-Rivière refers to groups as "spontaneous associations" that can be organized around an objective. For this reason he developed what he called "homework" a concept designed to helping individuals overcome difficulties that block their learning process. According to the psychoanalyst fears and anxieties coexist with each other in their resistance to change. As a result of that stereotypes appear in the behavior of a group. His use of

"homework" refers to a process that centers on the premise of dissolving those fears and anxieties by producing a reading of reality that involves the here and now of a situation with the implied understanding that participants will be able to interchange their roles and develop new binds. What "homework" brings to the group, is an activity that aims at diminishing anxieties. The technique operates in two dimensions: one of the participants becomes the spokesperson for himself/herself and the unconscious fantasies of the group. This is important, I believe, not only because it offers two levels of interpretation but because it emphasizes the relationship between personal and social histories. In my interpretation, by sharing "their conceptual, referential scheme", participants could rebuild their communication networks and strengthen themselves as individuals and a members of a group. During the "homework" there is a search for contradictions, there is also an investigation for the infrastructure of ideologies that interplay in a group. When the "operative technique" is later applied, daily situations are observed, and conditions of production are discussed to explain the underpinnings of observable behavior. According to Pichón-Rivière when groups start working on shared implicit views that are expressed by the different roles of the members, fixed

roles which are initially stereotyped, begin to turn into functional and complementary. With regard to the interplay of roles, in the case of a family group, for example, when one members assumes the anxiety of the group, he/she appears at the beginning as the weakest, and segregated from the rest. After the "homework" and "operative technique" are exercised, roles are changed, and those members who had been the repositories of anxieties and fears, begin to be aware of their own position and identity. Breaking the stereotype, Pichon-Riviere argued, would help modify negative binds and would leave members of the group ready for the "project" of reading reality.

There may also be cases when the spokesperson of a group expressed resistance to change. What can be done in such a situation? According to Pichón-Rivière those situations are marked by mechanisms of splitting that dissociate feelings, thinking and action. For that reason they need to be addressed by using what he called "prehomework." During the "prehomework" the member showing resistance becomes depressed and is in pain. When this occurs a coordinator intervenes to lead the group. The anxiety is fragmented, and each member of the group takes care of part of the anxiety. Though I have searched for a deeper understanding of how this process works,

Pichón-Rivière's writings do not specifically address it. The process appears confusing to me because the psychoanalyst only points out that the group as a whole commits itself to a "cure" by sharing part of the anxieties and diminishing the suffering of their individual member. This painful depression, Pichón-Rivière argues, allows the individual to regain his/her identity by a process of affiliation and belonging to the group. The group as a whole is modified by the experience because members acquire an "insight" of their dynamic structure, and concentrate on the elaboration of strategies and tactics to deal with new "projects." Though it may sound unfair to question something without an inch-by-inch understanding of it, the process mentioned above still poses several questions. What could possibly happen if some members refuse to participate in the process? What if "prehomework" fails? Is it so easy to identify the differences between those who are involved in the process and those who are just pretending? Despite problems like these Pichón-Rivière's work produced a profound impact on the operation of group therapies of several mental hospitals in Argentina and Brazil, and in the organization of other social groups. In the sixties the Southern continent needed a response from the left, exactly when Pichón-Rivière was willing to put together

the personal and the historical in the search for a collective identity.

While Pichón-Rivière produced his "operative groups," Freire in the slums of Recife launched his "culture circles." In both groups traditional teacher/therapists would be replaced by the coordinator who facilitated the exchange of ideas between people. The purpose of the "culture circles" was also to clarify a situation or to seek action to clarification through group discussion. Though both practitioners worked with diverse groups and had to deal with different problems I want to argue that what Pichón-Rivière called "homework" and "project", appears in Freire as "reflection" and "action." Topics in Freire's circles included notions of nationality, illiteracy, development, the political evolution of Brazil, and profit remittances abroad, as traditionally argued by the left, just to give some examples.

The task of motivating peasants was a difficult one. They resisted intervention in general. In that sense, their attitudes could be compared to those of the patients treated by Pichón-Rivière. Their behavior challenged coordinators and also participants to begin to explore those forms of resistance, and the way they were

expressed. As was the case with weak members of a therapy group who were encouraged to fragment their personal and group anxieties in order to break the stereotype and transform their situation, peasants had to understand their own social space and their resistance to historic and cultural participation. With that idea in mind a literacy project was developed on an anthropological concept of culture which dealt with the difference between nature as produced independent of human intervention, and culture as produced by intervention. Freire believed that in discussing this difference illiterates would be able to see that they contributed as much to history and culture as literate people did. They would be able to reflect upon their own situation and act upon the world to transform it. Significant in that discussion became the power of language (oral and written) to enable illiterates to emerge through discussion and critical reflection.

In order to facilitate the discussion and to improve the understanding of the social environment, Francisco Brenand, one of the greatest contemporary Brazilian artists, was asked to draw series of "codified" pictures that would generally introduce the concept of culture to people. Each picture was used to stimulate discussion and awareness of the different aspects of

culture and its role in the lives of people. The pictures were deliberately simple and were drawn in such a way that peasants could organize and identify with them. The sequence of ten was carefully arranged so as to draw out the connection between the culture making capacities of people and their communication abilities. After asking descriptive questions, the coordinator led the discussion to reflect upon the differences between nature and culture. In this way the process emphasized the idea that peasants can also be makers of culture.

While "homework" helped participants of a group to investigate their ideologies, "reflection" in the culture circles provided peasants with the opportunity to understand the difference between culture and nature, and people's role in each. The coordinator also presented situations which focused and expanded on other aspects of culture. Learners discussed that in a lettered culture the acquisition of human experience is not restricted to oral traditions. The last group of pictures presented to the students enabled the group to develop cultural consciousness - to look at itself and reflect upon the activity. This stage, that Pichón-Rivière called "insight" showed the group in process, so participants could identify themselves. The function of culture was critically analyzed, they spoke about their experience,

and focused on dialogue as one way to enrich consciousness. This last stage is what intends to give coherence to the group and prepares participants for the "action" that will transform their lives. Despite the unfortunate end that this project had in Brazil, its impact reached experiences in Chile, Cuba, Guinea-Bissau, Nicaragua and is still at work in other Latin American nations.

I started this chapter with the idea of giving a voice to two distinguished Latin American thinkers whose work entails a political compromise with the historical reality of their time. They come together in their attempt to develop a project that facilitates the modification of their subjects' lives. Both Pichón-Rivière and Freire explained the individual as a creative subject full of contradictions, difficulties, and possibilities. The roles of participants and coordinators in their pedagogies are active, and the two aim at the transformation of the social context on the premise of a more just society.

CHAPTER V

POPULAR CULTURE IN FREIRE AND PICHÓN-RIVIÈRE: ITS RELEVANCE TO THEIR WORK

As I said in Chapter Four Pichón-Rivière (1975) and Freire (1972) gave an enormous importance to the culture of the people with whom they worked. From their experiences in public institutions the authors observed a tendency to detach and sometimes ignore the culture of their population. Both Pichón-Rivière and Freire understood that subjects are transformed by life situations. For that reason, the two began their investigations by exploring daily life, and by systematically examining the experiences of their subjects. Their elaborations on certain aspects of popular culture are varied and comprehensive, ranging from specific life situations to oral poetry, soccer and tango.

Pichón-Rivière's experiences in public asylums brought him memories of his childhood. While living in rural Argentina he witnessed the way Guaraní natives, perceived as rapists, thieves, and assassins were segregated by the community. This exclusion inevitably brings to my mind the Spanish Conquest in Latin America. It is popularly known that as soon as the Conquistadores

arrived in the area inhabited by Guaraní natives, they immediately introduced a colonialist pedagogy by reading to the natives a list of their "duties and rights" in Spanish, a language they could not understand. In light of the segregation inflicted on these people the obvious question is, who were the first ones to steal and kill? When Pichón-Rivière's father hired the Guaraní, the latter still posed some sort of resistance to colonization. In spite of that Pichón-Rivière remembered them with great warmth, he respected their sense of community and their incredible range of imagination. The psychoanalyst learned their language and experienced their culture before he spoke Spanish. Guaraní natives had suffered and struggled to preserve their identity which was constructed around an understanding of the world that kept the individual in complete unity with nature. As they did not repress imagination in their experiences their cultural expressions abound in myth and poetry. Pichón-Rivière's early experience in a community that excluded and rejected natives, became an important source for understanding later in his life the pain and neglect that mental patients had to endure as the result of their lower status in society. Most of his patients were men from the provinces, or European immigrants, all of them had been removed from their habitat and their culture. In his

pedagogy Pichón-Rivière addressed the needs of those who could not speak, who had no concrete referents, who seemed to have lost their identity. For that reason he investigated the psychological formations of his patients, their daily experiences, desires, myths, and preoccupations.

Freire, on the other hand, was also concerned with the importance of culture. He rejected the idea that culture can be divided into high and low, with high culture representing the heritage of a country and the marginalized as forming part of the other. For Freire culture is the representation of lived experiences, material artifacts, and practices forged in unequal and dialectical relations that different groups establish within a given society in a particular historical time. Freire argues that educators have to work with the experiences that students, adults or other groups bring to schools or other educational sites. In other words, what he suggests is that we need to find a way to legitimize their experiences in order to give these people a sense of affirmation, and an opportunity to have their voices heard.

Latin American Popular Culture

What is the culture of the people of Latin America? How is that culture identified in the Latin American context? How important is that culture to a pedagogical encounter? When referring to the culture of the people I am going to use the term popular culture in Latin America. Though interpretations may vary, when I refer to popular culture I am speaking of a gamut of experiences such as eating or drinking habits, carnivals, radio, folk music, magical believes, cinema, oral narratives, rock, television, sports, etc., whose processes are intimately connected with the structuring of social formations, particularly those that are related to gender, age, race and class. In other words, I see Latin American popular culture as the combination of folklore, mass media, mass culture which is received and produced in a space of multiple contradictions and dispersed sites.

Though there may be instances where mass culture in Latin America can be seen as something external which comes to invade certain groups from outside, I think that there are also certain potentialities inside groups to develop mass culture. What do I mean by this? I believe that despite the outside penetration of a mass

transnational culture in Latin America, there is also a potential for growth in particular places and specific situations. I am referring here to the development in some individuals of various forms of jouissance in specific cultural manifestations. Some people may become fascinated by a new object of knowledge that brings unconscious pleasure to their lives. For example, the arrival of American soap operas in Latin America can be read in terms of an imposed penetration. However, its overwhelming popularity in different spaces does not necessarily need to be understood as passive domination, but could be interpreted as a response to an active and unconscious appeal for new cultural expressions.

Because Latin American societies are so heterogeneous, it is very difficult to define what popular culture means in such a broad context. I think that popular culture may go beyond folklore and mass culture, or perhaps both elements may appear intertwined in some areas of Latin America today. The concept of "folklore" in that space may be problematic because it may offer different interpretations in different countries. Though some view it as a bank of authenticity that needs to be stored, others use it to refer to contemporary cultures which articulate alternatives to existing power structures. It is probably in Brazil that the idea of

"folklore" has strongly represented a critical alternative to capitalist mass culture. It was adopted by intellectuals as an utopian alternative to the corrupting aspects of the modernization imposed by authoritarian regimes. In Argentina, on the other hand, "folklore" tended to take on a reactionary stripe, as a part of a paradigm of national culture that stresses the mythical qualities of the land and ignore the social divisions produced by capitalism, early urbanization and large-scale immigration from Europe.

Though mass media has sometimes eradicated premodern traditions in Latin America, its effect on culture becomes established in different ways in different countries. In Brazil, for example, the culture industry created in the 1960s became a means for unifying the nation. Modernity arrived with television rather than with the enlightenment, and television supplied the cultural capital for the middle class in particular. The mass media entered Brazil at a time when the secularization of popular memory was only partial, and the social space was shaped by the mixing of modern Western and traditional and African groups whose magical beliefs and practices continue to be part of everyday life. Magic may not figure in television programs, but it does in the site at which they are received.

When I think of popular culture as one of the elements of a pedagogical encounter I see the possibilities of pleasure in addressing concrete experiences, hopes, and frustrations. By saying this I do not want to imply that popular culture can exclusively be understood as a source of resistance or even transformation. On the contrary, I think that sometimes popular culture can also operate as a source of conformity or even domination. There may also be instances when this type of culture can operate as a tool of resistance and conformity, simultaneously. Later in the chapter I will show how contradictory experiences may have radical potentialities as well as sedimentations of domination. Because of the multiple potentialities involved in popular culture, I believe that those experiences need to be recovered critically in order to reveal their strengths and weaknesses as well as their potentials for the educational establishment. Instead of addressing abstract generalities, a pedagogical encounter that includes popular culture can speak of concrete referents, preferences, restrictions, and opportunities that constitute the spaces where people live those desires and problems on a daily basis.

Culture for Freire: From a Notion of Single Body to Dispersed Sites

During the first part of the sixties Brazil was involved in a debate about the nation that aimed at overcoming underdevelopment. As mentioned before some cultural centers developed around the country, they tended to see popular culture as a force for political transformation, as a political weapon to raise consciousness against what they called "the false culture of the dominant classes." In the Northeast a different notion was proposed by Freire and his colleagues. They argued against regarding people as passive recipients of an already-made truth, while a decisive role was given to consciousness, subjectivity, and experience in the process of overcoming underdevelopment.

In Learning to Question, published in 1989, Freire addresses the notion of "national culture" once again. He points out that one of the important tasks to be performed in the process of changing a society, of transcending any rigid opposition between dominant classes and dominated classes, can be a critical rediscovery of culture and language. What is important to understand about Brazil is that until the sixties, the national culture was the manifestation of the dominant class in a class society.

Members of the dominant class were the ones who determined what national culture was and was not. For that reason, during that period Freire argued for a new kind of culture that furnished not only the elements to change and gain power but also the elements to investigate language, literature, art, as well as culinary and domestic discourses. In short, what Freire was proposing was a study of the way people live their lives. What I find important about the sociocultural context of the sixties is that Freire's goal of a "popular national culture" entailed a historic change in which all elements of society participated, and all combined to create a new conception of language, culture and society. Though Learning to Question still retains many aspects of that concept, in 1989 Freire enhanced the term by providing a much broader notion when he argued for culture as a series of dispersed expressions. I think that by speaking in terms of dispersed manifestations Freire not only opposes the ideas of authoritarian liberalism but also moves beyond the populism of the sixties that viewed the nation as a single body.

Liberation Theology: Its Impact on Freire's Thought

Freire's intervention in the Northeast came at a time when his thought was deeply associated with what is called Liberation Theology. Though these ideas are relevant to understanding Freire's work in the sixties I am also including them for the reason that during the later part of that decade and in the seventies Liberation Theology became the only option inside the Catholic church that was addressing the needs of the marginalized through its call for social justice. Freire's insistence on linking ideology critique with collective action, and a prophetic vision, are central to his politics, and are also heavily indebted to the spirit and ideology that have characterized the Liberation Theologies emerging from Latin America. Freire situates his faith and sense of hope in the God of history and the oppressed, whose teachings make it impossible to reconcile Christian love with the exploitation of human beings.

The utopian character of his analysis is concrete in its nature and appeal, and takes as its starting point collective actors in their historical settings and the particularity of their problems and forms of oppression.

It is utopian in the sense that it refuses to surrender to the risks and dangers that involve contesting the dominant culture. It is prophetic in that it views the kingdom of God as something to be created on earth but only through a faith in both other human beings and the necessity of permanent struggle. The notion of faith is informed by the memory of the oppressed, and the determination that the suffering must not be allowed to continue. The prophetic vision is an ongoing process, and in this way Freire combines history and theology in order to provide a theoretical basis for a radical pedagogy that combines hope, critical reflection, and collective struggle.

While pointing to the spaces, contradictions and forms of resistance that raise the possibility for social struggle in his essay Education, Liberation and the Church, Freire (1985) aligns himself with the new theologians, those who are "becoming more historically involved with the oppressed [who] rightly speak of a political theology of liberation rather than one of modernizing development" (p. 120). Freire believes that only the oppressed, those who have been forbidden to speak, can become the utopians, the messengers of hope, provided that their future is not simply repetition of the present. By transforming the order in which they are

living they can announce a new world, one that is constantly being created and renewed.

Freire (1985) positioned himself against the traditionalist church. According to him, that church is still intensely colonialist, "a nechrophiliac winner of souls, hence its taste of masochistic emphasis on sin, hellfire, and eternal damnation" (p. 131). Freire thought that the traditional church had dichotomized the mundane from the transcendental, assigning humans the locus of suffering as the gate to eternal rest. Work, for that church, is not the action of women and men on the world, but rather the price that must be paid for being human. In Freire's opinion, this view of the world satisfied the fatalistic and frightened consciousness of the oppressed at a certain moment of their historical experience, and that was one of the reasons why they became more and more drowned in their culture of silence. Freire argued that, when peasants were submerged in this culture, the only voice they could hear was that of the ruling classes, so the church became the refuge from aggressive society. In despising the world of sin and impurity they thought they were taking their revenge on their oppressors. Their anger, Freire argued, alienated them even more because, instead of directing their frustration to the system of oppression, they detached themselves from the world. In

other words, what Freire pointed out was that peasants were unable to see that their salvation was a liberation project that they had to create for themselves.

Freire (1985) argues that there are times when, because of changes in society, the traditionalist church begins to abandon its traditional perspective and new positions emerge when modernizing elements appear. The process of transition implies the contradictory presence of both a proletariat that is being modernized and a traditional proletariat, a technico-professional petit bourgeoisie and a traditional middle class, a traditional church and a modernizing church. During the phase of modernization populism as a political style sometimes appears. Populism is more frequently found in urban areas than in latifundia where peasants are still too submerged. Populism tends to do-goodism, hence its possibilities for manipulation. The emerging masses of common people are intensely conditioned by their experience as submerged. For that reason they have no class consciousness: on the one hand they make demands, on the other they accept the formulas of do-goodism and manipulation. Freire believes that this behavior is the one that allows traditionalist churches to survive during the transition, even in areas such as modernized urban centers.

What the new church does during this period of modernization is to improve its bureaucracy so it can be more efficient in its social and pastoral activities (Freire, 1985, pp. 135-137). This church is still committed to the elite, they prefer structural reforms over the radical transformation of structures, they speak of humanization of orthodox capitalism but never of its suppression. While the traditionalist church alienates the oppressed by encouraging them to view the world as evil and sinful, the modernizing church alienates them by defending the status quo. They see the alienation of the ruling classes and the dominated at the same level. For that reason they refuse to analyze the antagonism and the system that it produced. While they sometimes speak of liberation they are conditioned by their vision of liberation as an individual activity that should take place through a change of consciousness and not through the historical and social praxis of human beings.

In contrast with the traditionalist and modernizing churches the prophetic church (Freire, 1985, pp. 137-140) rejects "do-goodism" and static forms of thought. It accepts becoming in order to be, and it does not separate worldliness from transcendence. They see that reality is full of contradictions and that social conflicts are not metaphysical categories but rather historical expressions

of the confrontations of these contradictions. Freire stresses that any attempt to solve conflicts without touching the contradictions that have generated them only stifles these conflicts while at the same time strengthens the control of the ruling class. The prophetic position demands a critical analysis of the social structures in which a conflict takes place. This means that it demands of its followers a knowledge of sociopolitical construction of that reality: in other words, it conditions an ideological choice.

To denounce the present reality and announce its transformation into another reality capable of changing the conditions of men and women implies gaining through praxis a new knowledge of reality. Though Freire argues that the prophetic church does not need to be the result of a religious position, I believe that this vision is an important element to any revolutionary society. This church must accept an existence of tension between past and present, staying and going, speaking the word and keeping silence. The educational role of this church must be totally different from that of other churches. In the modernizing church education was reduced to liberating students from the blackboards and static classes by providing them audiovisual accessories and more dynamic classes, (a concept not very distant from American

schooling). In the prophetic church, on the other hand, education must be an instrument of transforming action, a political praxis at the service of permanent human liberation. This does not happen only in the consciousness of the people, but presupposes a radical change in the social structures, in which process consciousness will itself be transformed.

What was the fate of Liberation Theology in Brazil? Calling for social justice, distribution of wealth, and land reform, Liberation Theology became very popular in the twilight of the military rule. But after almost a decade of corruption, inflation and economic hard times under civilian rule, many Brazilians are disillusioned with political causes. Practitioners of Liberation Theology advocated a change of consciousness by reorienting the Catholic church toward the impoverished masses. Their work, though, did not succeed as the social structures did not produce concrete changes. Two decades later Evangelical Protestant churches are reaching the rural population of Brazil. Some argue that the Catholic church has become too intellectual, and that it has lost the ability to connect with the people. The Evangelicals, on the other hand, have the ability to express human warmth, and talk about spiritual experiences.

Most popular among Brazil's poor are the small Protestant congregations which offer rural migrants psychological shelter in large cities. In contrast to the baroque language of the Catholic church, the language of the Protestant churches comes from plain-speaking pastors who often work in blue-collar jobs during the week. Offering faith cures and sometimes exorcism, storefront churches often open next door to hospitals run by the inefficient state health system. According to John Burdick (1994), a Syracuse University professor of Anthropology who was interviewed by the New York Times, many people are attracted to these churches because they find support in prayer groups for personal problems. He also points out that, for example, convinced that they are backed by the Holy Spirit some women feel empowered to confront abusive husbands. Another important factor for the appeal that rural workers have for Evangelism is the fact that the Protestant church appears more racially democratic in a nation where nonwhites constitute at least half of the population. While Protestant churches have a large number of black deacons and pastors, there is only a handful of black Catholic priests.

The Culture of the Northeast Peasantry

What did Freire encounter when he started working in the Northeast? In that region the Indian influence is less marked, and popular traditions have essentially arisen in the context of the interaction between the large estate (fazenda) which produces primary goods for export, and a parallel peasant subsistence economy. The marked presence in this area of an oral culture, of religious beliefs and practices going back to sixteenth century Portugal, also needs to be related to the unequal development of different regions. These social processes have affected the formation of not only rural but also urban areas in Brazil. As I said before, due to inequalities between city and country rural-urban migration becomes an important response to these disparities. Urbanization in Brazil was not the result of industrialization, but rather the expression of the expansion of commerce, finance, and the liberal professions. When industrialization arrived, it was insufficient to absorb the mass of the poor and illiterate peasants, and rural workers. The growth of cities meant the coexistence of a wealthy minority, frequently working in the modern foreign sectors, and a large mass of under

or unemployed rural migrants, living in the shantytowns in the peripheries of the city. That is the reason why when we address the culture of the peasants we need to keep in mind not only their experiences in the countryside but also their urban drift. In other words, their cultural manifestations need to be problematized not as something static or pure, but as a process that is constantly being refunctioned in new sites.

Despite the versions of official and nonofficial churches, the culture of the Northeast peasantry presented its own specific form of popular Catholicism. William Rowe (1991) argues that though most of the families in the countryside have a semi-nomadic existence, and live in considerable isolation, this condition is compensated by the institution of the 'compadrio' (p. 73). 'Compadrio' entails close ties between godparents and godchildren. Wealthy or influential people may be sought as godparents with the hope to somehow secure the future of the offspring in an insecure world. Also, in popular Catholicism religious devotion manifests itself primarily in rituals, festivities that mark the seasons of the year, a person's life events and yearly celebrations of patron saints. In contrast to official Catholicism, popular Catholicism is characterized by a sense of immediate

presence of the numinous of the world. Mysterious beings, souls, and saints inhabit everyday life. What I find interesting in the peasants' culture is their ability to replace religious authorities with their own people. Priests, indispensable mediators of God in official Catholicism, are of no great relevance to their culture since a festivity celebrating a patron saint and the procession carrying her/his image can be carried out without their aid. Instead, the figure of greatest importance for the peasants is the 'capetao,' a lay preacher, who is familiar with prayers and the rules for the procession. I think that in the context of a semiliterate culture, in which oral transmission is essential to guarantee the continuity of cultural tradition, lay preachers are of enormous importance since they represent the collective memory of the group.

Popular Catholicism is seen by the Northeast peasants as mythical and instrumental. Like a mirror-image of the patronage system, the relations between the saints and the faithful consist in an exchange, in this case, promises for divine intervention. This is, however, understood in terms of a mythical framework which explains reality in terms of extraordinary and mysterious events not reducible to empirical reality. I think that this concept of reality, while it may have

posed problems to official churches, was also a constraint for the prophetic church. How could educators engage their students in a critical analysis of the social structure when peasants sustained their social order as part of a broader cosmic purpose rather than as the product of human experience open to historical transformation?

An essential component of the religious celebrations devoted to the patron saint are the cultural practices which take place simultaneously. These, if they involve any of the forms of popular theatre, are performed in the public square, in front of the church, or in a open space belonging to a farm or estate. Such performances are constructed around a single plot of secular or religious nature which is developed through a song and dance. Originally these performances developed from medieval Portuguese mystery plays or "autos," but the original form was transformed and subverted by the introduction of pagan and African elements as well as by the devotional rituals of Catholicism.

Though there is a wide variety of dance-dramas expressed by the Northeast peasants, I will limit my account to one dance-drama, the 'Bumba-meu-Boi' (Reisado) (Rowe, 1991, p. 79). It has been the custom in Brazil to connect two or more Reisados, linking fragments of other

dramas, disparate songs and poems, choreographic elements popular characters, and animal and supernatural creatures. Sketches drawn from everyday life are also added in such a way that the main skeleton of a play--the death and the resurrection of a dancing boi (ox)--forms only one of the nucleus to which other elements are attached is a semiarbitrary fashion. The presence of the ox is also related to the essential role of the animal in the rural economy of Brazil.

The worship of animals and plants, an important element of the Reisado, reveals a belief and a reliance on a supernatural force. Its continued presence in contemporary rural culture, though it may be regarded as an expression of the survival of African and Indian symbols, it also operates I believe as an act of defense by peasants who constantly fear deprivation. The Bumba-meu-Boi could also be regarded as a form of popular culture not only because it is produced and performed by the peasants, but also in a broader critical and emancipating meaning because it has operated as a form of revelry in the past. With the advance of capitalist development the Reisado has suffered several changes. Its meaning has shifted to a form of amusement in which the aesthetic element predominates over its critical function and mythico-religious meaning. The tourist industry has

incorporated the Reisado into an attraction offered to an urban audience who seek to recover something of the aura of the sacred and marvelous often absent from the standardized and mass-produced products of the culture industry. For that reason the Reisado has been gradually transformed from a religious festivity to a predictable show, and the critical element of the drama has been suppressed, since the show is frequently financed by local politicians.

The relationship between rural popular culture and the transnational culture varies depending on the specific context in which the encounter takes place. Sometimes forms from rural popular culture are destroyed by modern mass culture. In other occasions rural culture can draw on modern mass culture in ways which allow rural culture to survive and develop without being entirely transformed in a standardized commodity. Of all the rich traditions of Brazilian rural popular culture, one of the most important is the poetry written by the peasantry, somewhat paradoxically defined as 'oral literature.' Related to it, yet constituting a genre of its own, is the poetry of the cantadores (traveling singers) (Rowe, 1991, pp. 85-86). Both forms stem from a common medieval European root and, to a lesser extent, from Indian and African oral traditions. This poetry contains epic, satirical,

burlesque, and fantastic elements, moral counseling, religious teachings, and abundant critical commentary on everyday life, and on historical and current events. Originally transmitted orally by the cantadores, this kind of poetry was later written and sold in outdoor markets in small pamphlets (string literature). Their dissemination created a market in the Northeast for this type of literature. What is more, social upheaval, impoverishment, and insecurity gave rise to messianic movements which became the central themes in the imaginative universe of this poetry.

One of the most remarkable features of these pamphlets is their covers. Initially, they were illustrated with simple vignettes, but these were gradually replaced by woodcuts representing in simple forms the contents of the poems. The covers recently produced by a publishing company in Sao Paulo resemble the covers of comic books. Some time ago a group of Brazilian social workers interviewed rural workers who purchased the pamphlets. When rural workers were asked to give an opinion on the covers of the books they argued that they did not like woodcuts because they conveyed a sense of poverty. On the other hand, they expressed their preference for the new covers that imitate comic books because, according to rural workers, those sophisticated

covers have the potential of providing them a sense of affirmation, and a feeling of participation in Brazilian urban modernity.

In the 1960s, when campaigns to eradicate illiteracy were initiated by the populist regime, more than 50% of the population could not read. Of these the majority were concentrated in rural areas of the Northeast. How is one to explain the widespread popularity of pamphlets in a largely oral culture? What needs to be understood is that the pamphlet is a cultural product which is used collectively. It is bought at one of the outdoor markets and read aloud by a literate member to a group of families in a rural district. The reciter needs to master the art of narrator. In the absence of literacy skills, the memorization of pamphlets read aloud acts as a means to preserving and expressing a shared and largely oral culture. Since reading is communal, becoming a poet is inseparable from the family and community life of the peasant. Some peasants have argued that the fascination with these pamphlets was a major reason for their interest in beginning to read.

During the last ten years there have been significant changes in the production, layout, and content of the pamphlets as a result of rural migration to the

cities and the expansion of the culture industry. First, as I said before, a large publishing company in Sao Paulo has taken over a big share of the market for string literature, using more efficient, industrialized methods of production, and distribution. Secondly, many rural workers and the peasants have joined the ranks of the unemployed living in the shantytowns. This change in the situation of the audience has given rise to pamphlets that address new social themes such as questions of power relations between social classes and possibilities for social empowerment. Some of the pamphlets have addressed the role of the charismatic "Lula," the president of the Brazilian Workers' Party. "Lula," a native of the Northeast, has become the idol of the marginalized. For that reason after the difficult economic times brought by conservative civilian rule to Brazil, "Lula" has lately turned into one of the most promising candidates for the next presidential election.

A juxtaposition of technology and tradition is now a main feature in the dwellings inhabited by rural migrants of the shantytowns: a television set often stands beside a religious image. The symbols associated with rural traditions, become refunctionalized in new settings. In Brazilian favelas, for example, rooms are painted pink to recall rural dwellings, while refrigerators or TVs

become domestic altars. The bearers of rural culture have moved to the city, and the retransmission of their culture through new urban channels means that popular culture can neither be seen in its former rural purity, nor as something that the culture industry has destroyed.

In the new peripheral sites the Northeast peasantry has also been able to articulate emancipatory proposals using media technology outside the control of culture industry. A case in point is the experience lived by the population of a shanty town 'Vila Aparecida,' outside Sao Paulo. Since the majority of the inhabitants are illiterate peasants, the community group set up a 'People's Radio' station in the hope that an oral means of communication would facilitate mobilization. The main objectives were "to recover the voice of its people, its history, religion, culture, and to provide basic information, to support the organization of struggles of the community and to promote the transformation of society through tasks undertaken in common" (Rowe, 1991, p. 116). The radio's weekly programs included readings of the Bible adapted to and interpreted in the light of the experiences of the inhabitants, the presentation of sociodramas created and presented by people from the area, announcements related to the organization of community

groups, information on the price of food, as well as rural and urban music. Intertwined with everyday life, the radio has developed a form of political mobilization which transcends the confines of class and political parties, and in the process give rural symbols new urban meanings. The symbols are once again the bearers of a collective memory, but the content of that memory has radically changed.

Tango: A Form of Expression in the Argentine Urban Context

While the Northeast peasants showed a variety of cultural traditions, the population of public mental hospitals in Buenos Aires, was part of a completely different cultural space. Enrique Pichon-Riviere worked in those institutions for almost three decades. Most of his patients were male, and had developed an enormous taste for the tango. As Macedonio Fernandez (1965), an accomplished writer, has said "tango was the only thing that we did not import from Europe." Though new generations have replaced the tango with nationalist versions of rock, until the early sixties tango offered the male population in particular, a sense of place and history. I believe that for those generations tango operated as a trench where Argentineans in search of

identity could shelter and resist the nondomestic invitations to universalism. Pichon-Riviere's preference for that original music, and his investigations of some of its lyrics, functioned not only as an importance source for understanding the ideological formations in some of his patients, but also their emotional states.

Until 1917 tango had been a dance performed in the suburbs (orillas) where the rural presence was the strongest. When song lyrics were included in the tango, they denounced conditions in the overcrowded 'conventillos' (tenement buildings with one room per family) and expressed the hostility of the inhabitant of the suburbs toward the 'cajetilla' (the city dandy) and toward the industrialization of the city. The tango was danced by couples who embraced closely and it permitted a display of male sexual domination--both contained and provocative--that was associated with the machista code of the city dandy, with its ambiance of prostitution and knife-fighting. Thus, to accept the tango, was a form of rebellion against civic virtue and morality. Once the tango migrated to the city, it lost its element of social critique and developed a new repertory based on individual emotions. Through radio and film it became part of mass

culture and thanks to figures like Carlos Gardel, who took tango to Paris and New York, it entered the middle-class's repertoire.

As I said before Pichón-Rivière (1975) enjoyed discussing tango with his patients, and he also elaborated some thoughts on that expression of popular culture. His major work centered on the lyric writings of Enrique Santos Discépolo, a prolific writer of emblematic tangos. According to the psychoanalyst, Discépolo codified the national character. By drawing on his Italian working-class roots, Discépolo explored the fantasies elaborated by immigrants on their way to America. His lyrics describe life in the patio of the 'conventillo' (the space for community life) where love, hate, loneliness, and envy were displayed. Discépolo's ideology, Pichón-Rivière's argues, is essentially an individual romanticism, at times tinged with anarchist connotations but surrounded by a fear for social change (p. 161). While Discépolo came from the working classes, he acquired a petit-bourgeois reluctance to change the social order. His early conversion to Peronism seemed to signal a personal identification with the oppressed, this was later overshadowed by Perón's course of actions and Discépolo's own disenchantment with that administration.

One of Discépolo's major works Confesión (Confession) narrates the story of the infidelity of a wife, encouraged by the attitude of a greedy husband. The lyrics speak of the guilt intertwined with sadism which appears in the abandoned husband's rhetoric. In the greater social context the story voices the end of the chaotic but democratic administration of Irigoyen, and the passive attitude of a society that does not confront the new military coup. Pichón-Rivière sees the nation (a feminine noun in Spanish) grabbed by the authoritarian hands of the military (masculine). What is fascinating about Discépolo's work is the depth of his lyrics that emphasize the responsibility of the Argentine people (the husband, in this case) in the fate of their country. According to the psychoanalyst, a metaphorical analysis of the lyrics suggests that, unconsciously, even the so-called 'supporters' of Irigoyen were responsible for the return of dictatorship. I may argue that this reading can be applied to the wider context of Argentine society. The permissiveness that is usually accompanied by slang expressions such as 'no te metás' (don't get involved), has become the trademark of our national character. Discépolo's later works convey a cynical and Machiavellian tone that reveal once again, the confusion, moral

disintegration, and deception brought by Perón to Argentina.

Soccer: Its Political Significance in Brazil and Argentina

I would like to begin this section by saying that although I have rarely experienced any pleasure in the spectacle of soccer, the sport has affected my daily life. Its constant interference in family gatherings, television programs, and social events has given me a particular dislike for the sport. Despite my negative feelings toward soccer I believe that the sport is one of the most important cultural expressions shared not only by Brazil and Argentina but by most of Latin America. For that reason besides addressing the importance that soccer had for the interventions of Freire and Pichón-Rivière I will also refer to its impact during the military dictatorships that followed the authors' interventions. Freire gives soccer an important place in his life. According to the educator soccer "united the hungry." In his conversations with Myles Horton he recalled that his dreams of transforming society began when he played soccer with classmates from different social classes in the streets

(Horton, 1990, p. 57). Pichón-Rivière also enjoyed soccer, as an adolescent he founded a grassroots soccer club in the Northeast of Argentina, and later when he lived in Buenos Aires, he regularly took his three sons to watch soccer games.

Pichón-Rivière (1985) used soccer to lower the anxieties of his patients in the asylum. He found that the sport offered good possibilities for group affiliation. When writing on soccer, the psychoanalyst studied the articulation of soccer teams from a sociopsychological perspective (pp. 69-87). He compared the organization of teams to the gathering of other social groups. In his view teams seem to experience a process of slow transformation. What appears as a collection of individuals at the beginning, later becomes a coherent group that frequently embodies the expectations of a country. For that reason Pichón-Rivière provides an analogy between the behavior of some players and that of some nations. The psychoanalyst argues that when a team wins its players celebrate cheerfully. On the other, when they lose they tend to blame the adversary or any other factors for their loss. Pichón-Rivière points out that some nations sometimes show similar reactions when they face difficult circumstances producing, as in the case of

soccer teams, a response that lacks dialectical analysis. They react by employing mechanisms of defense that frequently exclude self-examination.

Pichón-Rivière's reading centers on the notion that soccer can become an effective tool to organize people. He compares its operation to that of a therapy group where the interaction among participants leads to the elaboration of tactics that aim for a strategy. During a soccer game, fans tend to assign 'magical capabilities' to players. Fans project their desires on the players, and if the latter fail, the crowd turns against them. According to the psychoanalyst the soccerball, as an object of desire, has the potential of concentrating and dispersing anxieties. I think that this could be one of the reasons why the sport, as an element of desire, has been manipulated by diverse groups with different ideological agendas in Brazil and Argentina.

Soccer was introduced to Latin America by the British in the 19th century (Rowe, 1991, p. 138). At the time, the sport, along with squash and cricket became an elitist game played by the upper classes. Gradually, the practice of soccer began to show some changes and it was taken up by the middle and lower classes. An example of

that change can be seen in Brazil, when at the beginning of the century former slaves and rural immigrants began to roam the streets of Rio looking for work. These people started to play the game in abandoned lots in the downtown area. Then, as a way to contain the marginalized and ward off social anarchy, authorities and businessmen started to construct soccer playgrounds. In this process of popularization, the unemployed blacks and mulattoes became the best players, and for that reason, soccer changed its style. In contrast to an early emphasis on discipline and technique that was part of the British style, the new Brazilian game focused on improvisation, elegance, agility, and intuition. Though explanations for the shift in style vary, I believe that an experience of insecurity and despair may have forced these people to develop new tactics of survival in a society that excluded them for social and cultural participation.

A good example of the new style can be seen in the famous soccer player Mane Garrincha. Argentine fans argue that during a game in Costa Rica, Garrincha doubled past his opponents. As he arrived at the goal he pretended to shoot, but instead, in an ironical gesture, he dribbled around the goalkeeper. Finally, Garrincha shot the ball through the goalkeeper's legs. However, as the ball

entered the net, the final whistle was blown and the shot was disqualified. When his exasperated team asked him why he had not scored before, he replied: "Well, the goalie did not open his legs earlier." The incident explains not only the ability of the player, but also his commitment to playing for the pleasure of it, without much interest in a victory won by complying with the rules.

In Chapter Four I referred to the populism of Vargas that operated in Brazil between 1930 and 1945. In order to encourage social integration Vargas promoted soccer federations and built stadiums. During that period the new style of soccer quickly spread throughout the country. What I find important about this dissemination is that the sport became a vehicle through which class, ethnic, and neighborhood alliances were articulated: in this way soccer helped in the formation of a national identity. The new version of soccer that was transmitted by radio and the press, did not carry a connotation of class prestige. Soccer clubs emerged offering a degree of grass-roots democracy not otherwise possible in a hierarchical society. For that reason these clubs can be seen as one of the few organizations where popular aspirations and experience acquired form. Another high point of Brazilian soccer was the period of popular democracy led by Joao Goulart, which as I have said

before, ended with a military coup in 1964 and the imprisonment of Freire. During this period the Goulart government promoted popular culture as the basis of a national identity and facilitated the transformation of soccer into a ritual of social identity. Soccer clubs also flourished during that period, and the marginalized began to believe that they could have some access to power.

The important period in the relationship between soccer and the state ended with the coup. A second period began in the 1970s, a decade characterized by repressive dictatorships in both countries, Brazil and Argentina. The governmental model in both countries aimed at accelerating economic growth by importing foreign capital in the form of technology and loans, and by drastically cutting salaries. These efforts of "development" were accompanied by the virtual abolition of civil rights, the suppression of political parties, and the persecution and torture of dissenters. The central, developmental model was Brazil's national policy at the time when the national soccer team won the World Cup in 1970 for the third time. The victory was used by the repressive government to legitimize their version of nationalism and progress. When the team returned from Mexico, then president Medici

welcomed them with carnival celebrations. The team anthem Pra Frente Brasil (Forward Brazil), similar to the one used currently by the Fascists in Italy, was adopted by the regime, and was played by army bands, on radio, and on television. It conveyed the message that, like soccer, the nation was progressing toward modernity. In line with its ideological assumptions, the government decided to make some changes in soccer, despite the team's success. What the government proposed was a return to the British style that emphasized technique and discipline. The return to a "white" game is viewed by many as the beginning of the deterioration of Brazilian soccer.

In looking at the relationship between soccer and the state, it becomes evident that the sport has been used to promote social integration and to further the hegemonical interests of diverse groups in power. By saying this I do not want to give the impression that the vast majority of the population passively accepted the government's model of national identity. I am saying that different historical interests have been able to see the potential of soccer as a vehicle for gaining popular support. At the same time some groups of the marginalized have also been able to see the importance of the sport as a tool for contesting dominating discourses. Matthew

Shirts (1988) argues, in his essay Socrates, Corinthians, and the Question of Democracy and Citizenship, that soccer teams and clubs have often operated as spaces of resistance in Brazil. Shirts points out that in 1982, during the beginning of political liberalization, the competition for leadership of the Corinthian Club was won by the 'Corinthian Democratic Movement.' This movement not only sought to replace the authoritarian organization of the club with greater participation of players and fans, but also looked for a return to the Brazilian soccer style. As a famous player named Socrates has argued, that style represents "the struggle for equality as well as the preservation of a pleasurable activity." By 1984 this movement broke out of soccer clubs and went to organize rallies in support of free elections. In this case soccer became an important vehicle for expressing new versions of citizenship in Brazil.

While the development of soccer in Argentina in many ways resembles its development in Brazil, there are also significant differences. In Argentina the organization of the sport led to the formation of unions whose goal was to prevent the exploitation of players, and to support their rights. According to Pichón-Rivière, certain social behaviors construct the conduct of soccer players in specific societies at particular historical

times. In the Argentine context when soccer was presented as an expression of Argentine identity, it fostered a desire for group affiliation, which ultimately developed into a profitable professional association. Thanks to the players' union, soccer has given players the opportunity to reach a standard of living they would never have otherwise achieved. Sometimes the sudden opportunity to scale the social ladder quickly affects their personal lives in negative ways. Such is the case of the famous Argentine player Diego Maradona who in spite of being a millionaire some time ago became associated with drug dealers.

According to Pichón-Rivière, soccer in Latin America represents the only hope that Third World societies have of joining the First World. Underdeveloped countries tend to have institutions that lack legitimacy. They may be feared, but they are not respected or taken seriously. Soccer, however, can hold the attention of 'the people,' and winning a game can therefore become the springboard to power, prestige, and leadership. When reading Pichón-Rivière's analysis I remembered a similar situation that occurred in the Argentina of the fifties. During the nationalist government of Juan Perón, the leader nationalized the railroads which had been in British hands since the 19th century. During that time

the Argentine soccer team defeated the British. That historical moment is popularly remembered as much for the 'nationalization' of soccer as for the actual nationalization of foreign interests (like railroads). The resentments that Third World societies have toward the former colonial powers are expressed through symbolic acts such as soccer games as through real political actions. Often the antagonistic feelings toward the First World embodied in sport are encouraged by authoritarian and ethnocentric groups that control the government and security forces.

In Argentina soccer has often been used as a means either of social control or for the expression of popular solidarity. As in Brazil, the sport has served to further the interests of diverse ideologies. Populist leaders like Peron, neoconservatives like Menem, or dictators like Galtieri, have all developed tactics to support soccer clubs, visited their stadiums, and mingled with players and fans. Soccer events have even produced a truce between the worst of enemies, as was the case of the 1978 World Cup played in Argentina. During that time, leftist guerrillas were involved in a fight against right-wing forces. The interest in soccer was so vast that both sides committed themselves to a cease-fire during the games played by the Argentine team.

The Argentine military hoped to use the World Cup to manipulate the masses and project internationally an image of a "civilized" Argentine society. The regime invested financially in every aspect of the event: new stadiums were built, international advertising firms were hired to promote the event, even while the economy of the country was being destroyed by hyperinflation. Henry Kissinger presided at the games, honoring with his presence the role of the military in Argentina. International media flooded the country, and its presence was seen by the regime as a great opportunity to show the degrees of "development" that Argentina could offer to international interests. In other words, the Soccer Cup was intended to solidify the power of the military. The world would be able to see that the government, like the event it was hosting, was world-class.

At the time, soccer in Argentina also embodied the hopes and expectations of the marginalized. As Pichon-Riviere has argued, the sport can become an effective tool of communication among people. Perhaps this was the tactic that the Mothers of Plaza de Mayo had in mind when they used the attention surrounding the World Cup to express their despair and their struggle. The 1978 event gave this group of courageous women the opportunity to contest the dictatorial forces of a government that had

tortured and killed their children and grandchildren. Risking their lives, these defiant women showed their rage and despair in front of foreign cameras. This historic act brought international attention to a tragedy that had destroyed the lives of thousands of Argentineans. The images of "modernity" and "progress" faded in the background as these women told their stories of torture, rape, and disappearances. For the first time the world became aware of the fate suffered by men, women, and children during the "Dirty War." The brave resistance of these women punctured the right-wing's facade and thereby changed the course of history. The news of the Argentine tragedy prompted human rights groups to act, and the underground resistance began to receive international support.

Soccer in 1978 gave both the dictators and the Mothers of Plaza de Mayo a good opportunity to produce their versions of national identity and popular culture. The military tried to use soccer as a way to manipulate the docile and obedient masses. They thought of the sport as the stable medium which they could convey their ideology to the masses. The mothers, on the other hand, also used the sport, but they used it to undermine the regime. It proved to be at least as effective as tool for them as it was for the military. While the state tried to

produce a homogeneous version of soccer in order to consolidate their power, the mothers produced another version of the sport that expressed their resistance to the authority of the state. Soccer, then, presented itself as an expression of popular culture that produced conformity and resistance simultaneously. The military tried to produce the illusion that there was one kind of Argentine history, one kind of soccer. By imposing their own version, they tried to suppress the different histories of the disempowered. In sharp reaction, the mothers used the very event the military had orchestrated to challenge the system that repressed them and to preserve the memory of their own struggle against social and human destruction.

By examining some Latin American expressions of popular culture I have tried to show that intellectuals such as Freire and Pichón-Rivière developed an understanding of culture very different from the dominant one. As they did not want to romanticize everyday life they investigated daily expressions in order to understand the contradictory nature of subjectivity. They also hoped their work would help individuals and societies develop better responses to social conditions. Their contributions aimed at reclaiming an identity for the marginalized. In light of their work I think that

cultural studies has the potential to inform pedagogies and to clarify how knowledge, identities, and desires, are produced by different individuals. Studying popular culture can help to elucidate how practices of power construct institutions, texts, lived experiences, and teachers may begin to understand how experiences outside school construct students' identities. As a result of that, popular cultural studies may provide a theoretical model for rethinking schooling while at the same time giving a discourse of intervention and possibility. In Chapter Six I will explore the importance of popular cultural studies for pedagogy in the American context.

PART III

THE AMERICAN RESPONSE TO MARGINALIZED GROUPS IN SCHOOLS

CHAPTER VI

MINORITY AND POPULAR CULTURE IN A PEDAGOGICAL ENCOUNTER

Racial Minorities: Their Marginalization

So far I have been mainly referring to the lives of peasants and mental patients in different societies. For the last chapter of this dissertation I will turn to the American scene. Because my experience in this country has exclusively been in the field of education, I will focus on the lives of students in American schools. Though my main concern is the situation of racial minorities, I will make some references to the experiences of all students since I believe that the intervention that I will propose later in this chapter has the possibility to speak to the desires and the frustrations of many young people.

As I said in Chapter Four, dominant political projects in Latin American education aimed at integrating new nations by molding their population into acceptable patterns. They fought against "barbarity" and the diversity of their population often determined the impact of the educational proposal. The sheer range of contradictions evident in Brazil (a combination of regional, ethnic, cultural, and socioeconomic differences)

did not allow for the cultural homogenization that occurred in Argentina. Though in the nineteenth century the Argentine educator Domingo F. Sarmiento viewed Northern European immigration as an asset for the civilization project, educational projects that emerged later subjected immigrants to the rules of the game as established by the ruling oligarchy. The latter had called for European immigration to deal with problems of underpopulation in the national territory. The source of oligarchic wealth was not dependent upon a workforce or technical advances as in the United States, but rather upon the low rents coming from extensive exploitation of the lands. Thus Argentina received its immigrants in a different way from the United States. In Argentina, immigrants faced a closed economic system where almost all the land belonged to a few families and where industrial development was limited. For the Argentine oligarchy immigration was an unfortunate necessity because they considered that the 'mestizo' was an inferior race. The oligarchy saw integrating immigrants as a political-pedagogic matter. For this reason they created laws to repress political activities and unions for immigrants, and established public schooling on every corner of the nation to impose the culture of the oligarchic state. By the end of the nineteenth century

most of the immigrants, with the exception of the British community, shared with the oligarchy the belief in a myth: that national unity was possible only through sociocultural homogeneity.

In the United States, on the other hand, the process of immigration was related to the needs of a future industrialized nation. In The American School 1642-1990, Joel Spring (1990) points out that culturally the common school movement attempted to assure that one set of cultural values remained dominant, as large groups of immigrants with different religious and cultural values entered American life (pp. 84-90). This primarily meant protecting a Protestant ideology against the influx of other religions. For that reason schooling in the United States was viewed as an institution of assimilation, to bind the population and to undermine the threat of southern European immigration whose values might weaken the dominance of Northern Europeans. Spring also argues that the development of the common school reflected changing economic conditions. The early growth of industrialism placed a premium on education as preparation for work. Knowledge, then, was power in the evolving modern industrial setting, and workers did not want to be kept from that source of power.

In the early days of the American common school movement, education was to provide equal opportunity by giving everyone a common and equal education, after which the social race would begin, with everyone competing for places in the social and economic structure. In the twentieth century, on the other hand, the provision for equality of opportunity was made by the school system through vocational guidance and differentiated curriculum. In other words, what Spring is saying is that the twentieth century brought the end of common education and the beginning of different education based on individual differences. That is to say, the race and social position of individuals was no longer determined by the marketplace, but by the supposedly scientific selection process started in the schools. Scientific methods of measurement began to determine 'objectively' the intelligence, ability, and interests of the students. Therefore, one could very well argue that the twentieth century school with its tendency to promote conformist Northern European ideas and values incorporated those outside that group into a special kind of a secondary status. As a result minorities experienced severe racial discrimination inside and outside schools.

While it is fair to point out that some minorities such as Irish, Italian and Greek, have been integrated

into American society, other ethnic groups continue to be excluded from social and cultural participation. Why do societies exclude part of their population? Though racism may be one of the reasons for exclusion, sometimes societies have a tendency to exclude basically for economic reasons even if this is not easily detectable at first sight. In the case of Brazil, for example, illiteracy in the peasants operated as an important factor to guarantee cheap labor in the fazendas. In the past, segregated public schools in the United States functioned in a similar fashion, in the sense that they helped to maintain an inexpensive source of labor. It is not hard to imagine the economic benefits provided by segregated schools in California, where Asian parents worked at low wages in factories and farms, or the advantages for agriculture or industrialization that segregation brought to the South. At the same time schooling for children of Mexican migrant workers would also ensure that the experience of the parents was repeated by their children. How did segregated schools help to maintain cheap labor and to reproduce existing social structures? These schools provided an inferior education when compared to the education provided by schools that served middle-class European American. As they encouraged habits and values required for menial employment, they reinforced a belief

in the superiority of middle-class Northern European Americans and, in some cases, they contributed to the internationalization of a label of inferiority in some of their students.

Policies of segregation were followed by policies of assimilation. In any case, they did not produce the results expected because they did not promote the forecasted economic development. During the 1960s when civil rights and poverty were national concerns, the federal government made education part of a national campaign against poverty. Like the common school reforms of the nineteenth century, the federal government's War on Poverty of the 1960s attempted to eliminate poverty partly through educational programs. At the time it was believed that discrimination and poverty were the two reasons why schools could not identify talented individuals that served the needs of a national economy and defense. For that reason civil rights legislation gave the federal government the responsibility to end all forms of segregation and discrimination by ensuring that schools were no longer committing discriminatory actions against minority groups (Spring, 1990, pp. 321-337).

What I find important about these national efforts to compensate the poor and integrate them into society is that the underlying principle was a belief that people

were poor because there was something wrong with their culture. Marginalized were viewed as responsible for their own situations, for that reason 'they' were expected to change and not the system that produced poverty and marginalized a portion of the population. How was racial inequality understood at the time? If my reading is correct I can see a tendency in both American conservatives and liberals of the sixties and seventies to explain inequality by 'blaming the victim.' That is to say, those groups leaned toward a reading that explained racial inequality as the result of biological and/or cultural handicaps in minority students. For some conservatives racial inequality was the result of the genetic inferiority of minorities, and for that reason, when these people attended schools they failed to secure the type of academic credentials that would guarantee social status and rewards. Though new conservatives do not rely on a biological explanation, they still see school failure in minorities as the result of the cultural deviance and negative attitudes toward the self experienced by these groups. Liberals, on the other hand, avoid the biological and cultural analyses of conservatives, but they also fault individuals by putting the blame on minorities' lack of access to the cultural and intellectual resources that are available in white

middle-class homes. Though their argument deserves special attention, I think that they tend to place too much emphasis on individual solutions.

To sum up, both conservative and liberal produced theories that found the causes of racial inequality in difference of cognitive capacities, family structures, and sometimes linguistic styles. I believe that the two have failed to examine the system that produced those differences. By saying this I am not implying that the issues raised by the two groups did not differ. On the contrary, liberals have consistently argued for the importance of education in democratic participation. For that reason they have struggled for teacher autonomy, for an increase in their salaries and for improvement in their working conditions. They also need to be recognized for their support of programs that fight inequality and for their introduction of academic pluralism and exposure to non-Western cultures. Despite their many contributions, by their faith in the expansion of the market to solve problems of society they tend to overlook the social complexity that students will face when they leave schools.

How have conservatives and liberals responded to the needs of minorities in schools? To influence positive changes in minorities Cameron McCarthy (1990) points out

that mainstream responses have tended "to generate microlevel, process-product studies of the educational variables such a teacher behavior, peer group interaction, and instructional style" (p. 16). In other words, what McCarthy is suggesting is, that this approach to help minorities is completely decontextualized from the structural, economic, and political dynamics that constraint and shape the life opportunities that minorities have beyond the school. When addressing problems of inequality, McCarthy argues, these mainstream educators have tended to emphasize the causal role of values and individual agency. In other words, as schools are not seen as sites that produce social differences, but as neutral technical institutions. When psychological approaches ignore variables of class, gender, and culture, there is a tendency, I believe, to focus on individual differences and to conclude that the academic performance of minorities can be improved by teaching skills and competencies. Though individual psychological approaches may temporarily improve the academic life of some students, they are restricted to the boundaries of the school. As long as education is seen as separate and detached from the political and economic life of the country, minorities will see few opportunities in their lives. At the same time, as I do not understand equality

as being sameness, I think that educational institutions need to find a way to deal with those differences that are part of schools. It is hard to believe that people's attitudes toward other cultures can be changed by projects of integration that concentrate exclusively on quotas and ratios. Positive race relations also need to become vital components of teachers' pedagogies. In other words, teachers and students need to engage in a dialogue that addresses the multiple narratives and histories that make up American society.

The Conservative Response to Racial Minorities: A Brief Historical Perspective Beginning in the Seventies

Joel Spring (1990) refers to student protests and the failure of liberal programs to achieve substantial racial equality as the two major events that prompted the emergence of conservative educational policies in the 1970s. According to Spring conservatives believed that instruction based on the interests and choices of the students undermined the intellectual content of schooling. They charged progressive education with causing a decline in the quality of American schools. For that reason conservatives attacked students' demands for curriculum choice. Excellence, standards, discipline, homework, and

evaluation in the classroom became the central concerns of political conservatives. American conservatives began to blame their country's economic failure on the failure of the schools to teach to certain standards. They believed that the funds and the time spent on poor and minority youth had not only failed to achieve success, but also had lowered standards to such an extent that even the best students received a mediocre education at the time. As conservatives view education as a primary factor which both creates economic well-being and preserves the moral fabric of life, this perspective allows them to diffuse any debate about the failures of the American system and locates the causes of economic problems in the schools (pp. 321-377).

Despite some commonalities among factions within the conservative movement there are also important differences that need to be addressed. Fundamentalist conservatives, for instance, are especially concerned with morality. They prefer community-controlled to centralized federal or professional control because they want schools that address their own values. They want to teach religion and eliminate "cultural relativism" and the "values clarification" of secular education. The back-to-basics movement that appeared in the 1970s was a thrust against the lack of discipline in schools, and an

attempt to a return to the old order with a pedagogy of disciplined and orderly students. Classical conservatives, on the other hand, are concerned with classical Socratic education to produce intellectual leadership for the nation. They argue against vocational education and seek a return to liberal studies in the university. As they oppose the blind acceptance of computers in education they emphasize the importance of humane learning.

The 1980s brought a deep recession and a declining international economic position for the United States. These developments showed conservatives not only that schools had failed to provide economic growth but also that the back-to-basics curriculum, with its emphasis on morality, could not produce individuals to succeed in a complicated international economy. As a result of that "excellence" education emerged for the most talented and "basic" for the majority. The "excellence" movement was led by William Bennett who advocated critical thinking in science and math to enhance economic competitiveness and a notion of uncritical social studies curriculum featuring traditional culture and downplaying the contributions of working people, minorities, and America's drawbacks.

This movement brought together business leaders, state officials, and academicians, eager to follow

Bennett's prescription for economic competitiveness and cultural cohesion. While this group tends to deny their political agenda, with their attempts to include business, government, and their emphasis on content and character, they contribute to producing workers and citizens that praise the advantages of the private sector. By structuring the educational discourse in terms of competition and privatization, some conservative educators currently support public funds for private schools. I believe that this indicates that conservatives fail to see that a democratic society that does not provide education for all its citizens is a democracy in crisis.

The Liberal Response: Multicultural Education

What is Multicultural Education? In Race and Curriculum Cameron McCarthy (1990) places multiculturalism as the product of a historical conjuncture that involved the state, contending racial minorities and majority groups, and policy intellectuals in the United States. In the sixties blacks and other minorities were concerned that curriculum and educational policy did not address issues of racial inequality, minority cultural identities, and the distribution of power inside institutions. For American racial minorities such as blacks, Native

Americans, Asians, and Latinos, the incorporation into the new American order also implied a process of deculturalization that consisted of erasing cultural traits. These groups of marginalized accused schools of being racist and of excluding their needs. As a result of that they demanded greater participation in the organization of schools (pp. 38-56). It was in this context of protest, McCarthy argues, that educational policy makers and liberal educators began to forge the new discourse of Multiculturalism.

What I find important about Multiculturalism is that despite its changes over the years it has consistently maintained one key element: the importance of culture as the vehicle for the resolution of racial antagonism in schooling. This is relevant, I believe, because it is a starting point for the validation of minority culture. While compensatory programs of the sixties tended to view the culture of the marginalized as a handicap to educational proposals, Multicultural Education gives their culture a vital and defining role.

Though my active experience with multiculturalism is restricted to an interaction with second language teachers and the experiences of my daughter in public schools I will proceed to comment on the three models presented by Cameron McCarthy. McCarthy begins with the

model of Cultural Understanding that aims at improving communication among different ethnic groups. The discourse of this model emphasizes reciprocity and consensus, and with the underlying assumption that by promoting racial harmony among teachers and students of different groups American schools will benefit from cultural enrichment. I do not believe that this model will improve racial relations. The study of culture is much more than getting along, or teaching isolated lessons. This superficial approach will never change people's negative reactions to other cultures. This is the sanitized version that is being used by some public schools at present, where different cultures are treated so lightly that often discussions do not go beyond celebrations of ethnic festivals or decorations of bulletin boards. In addition to its superficiality this model encourages a notion of cultural essentialism by presenting people's values and lifestyles as static and eternally fixed.

The model of Cultural Competence gives cultural pluralism a central place in the curriculum. I am familiar with this model because it supports the teaching of foreign languages, bilingual, bicultural, and ethnic studies. Programs such as these aim at preserving cultural diversity. What does competence imply in this

context? According to McCarthy this model of Competence not only aims at preserving minority cultures but also at preparing these groups for their social and cultural negotiations with mainstream society. It differs with the first model because European American students are expected to acquire knowledge and familiarity with the language and the culture of minority groups as well. In that sense Cultural Competence aims at overcoming racial conflicts by cross-cultural interaction. It is evident that this second proposal is stronger than Cultural Understanding, at the same time, it presents several drawbacks. Though the affirmation of minority culture is an asset to the model, it becomes contradictory by its own argument. By addressing different cultures supporters of this model are not suggesting that all groups are equally valued in the social space. On the contrary, as they aim at integration and negotiation with middle-class European American culture there is the underlying assumption that the latter is being privileged. In this sense, this model does not provide many changes to the social validation of minority experiences.

Despite my disagreement with the final goal of this model I would like to add that I fully support projects that include minorities such as ethnic, bilingual/cultural and women programs because I believe that today they are

the only available sources to address and affirm cultural differences. Though I have no conceptual reservations with these programs I have some concerns about their administration. I have some reservations about the impact that these programs can have in certain institutions when they are placed in peripheral positions. When administrators offer these courses as separate, these programs tend to encourage a belief that their 'different' components deserve only marginal attention. As a result of that, they are sometimes viewed as auxiliary by some students and teachers. By their decentralized position they fail to voice minority issues in the wider and dominant spectrum. The inclusion of an elective course in Women Studies for example, has helped bureaucrats in some institutions to keep the voices of women somewhat contained, and as a result of that important women issues fail to be addressed by every course of any institutional curriculum.

The last model in McCarthy's analysis of multiculturalism is Social Emancipation. This model not only argues that the study of ethnic history, culture, and language of the plurality of students will improve the self-esteem of minorities, but it links academic failure of these students to the attitude of teachers and to the suppression of the minority culture in the school

curriculum. For that reason emancipatory educators point out that if teachers and students address the culture of minorities with respect, academic performance in the latter will improve. The major difference between this model and the other two rests in its argument for changes also outside the school. Its supporters claim that if minority culture is addressed by institutions these groups will be able to break the cycle of poverty and the market will be in the position to absorb qualified employees. I agree with McCarthy when he argues that this proposal sounds extremely naive when it correlates success in the marketplace with the study of culture. Though a program like this may help reduce alienation in the lives of minorities I do not believe that their academic performance and their future opportunities will "miraculously" change by addressing their culture with respect.

At the same time I think that McCarthy tends to provide a simplistic version of Social Emancipation when he fails to address the many contributions that are daily enriching this model. Though McCarthy's work needs to be understood as a production of 1990, his inclusion of Giroux in this group overlooks important issues. I do not think that Giroux, even at the time, could have linked education to equality of jobs. In addition to that,

Giroux's contribution, cannot be reduced to aiming at success in the marketplace. While Giroux does not dismiss its importance, he moves beyond a liberal position to support a project of possibility that aims at the reconstruction of the social imagination in the service of human freedom.

In addition to people like Giroux I would also like to include here the important contributions of Sonia Nieto (1992) to this model. Nieto has enriched the multicultural movement by producing a concept of education that challenges schools to become a major source for social justice. In Affirming Diversity she includes the conflicting voices of students and encourages them to become critical thinkers capable of reflecting on their own personal and collective culture, on social issues, and on their own abilities to produce changes in their lives and their society. Multicultural education, Nieto argues, needs to be proposed in a sociopolitical context that provides basic education for all students and challenges them to reject racism (pp. 207-223). This notion of education uses critical pedagogy as its underlying philosophy and, much in the same fashion as Freire, focuses on knowledge, reflection, and action as the basis for social change.

Minority Culture: Its Relevance for a Pedagogical Encounter

It is evident that the multicultural movement has given serious consideration to the multiplicity of cultures that make up American society. Though I have some reservations about the impact that the study of cultures can have in the lives of students outside the school I believe that the exploration of diverse cultures can not only help to reduce alienation in some students but it can also contribute to turn schools into more exciting and relevant spaces for young people. With this idea in mind I will dedicate the rest of this chapter to explore the possibilities of articulating minority and popular culture as tools of a pedagogical encounter.

Often dominant school culture represents, legitimatize, and privileges voices of white, male, middle and upper classes to the exclusion of the economically and socially disadvantaged. Though school failure in minorities may be attributed to many variables, the exclusion of their culture in schools can especially increase the alienation of those students who resist prevailing cultural expressions. I think that by avoiding discussions on culture, schools may become detached from life. In addition to that, some sites produce curriculum

proposals that are at odds with the needs of some students because they tend to emphasize a content that is irrelevant to the lives and lifestyles of young people and their families. As a result of the separation that exists between some schools and certain portions of the community students become disconnected from those educational experiences that frequently bring boredom and sometimes rage to their lives.

In The Closing of the American Mind the conservative thinker A. Bloom (1987) aims at eliminating "culture" as a serious object of knowledge. According to Bloom culture is many times interfering in our search for eternal truth. Despite his feelings toward culture, Bloom ends up privileging Western Culture because he argues that the referent of Western civilization is not culture but the love of wisdom, of self-knowledge that is not context-bound (p. 73). According to Bloom Western civilization has the capacity to transcend daily life to reach universality. Lower cultures are viewed by Bloom as cultures unable to transcend daily life because they are attached to family and community values. With his abhorrence for mass culture, his rejection of experience as the arbiter of both taste and pedagogy, Bloom attacks popular culture, ethnic and racially based cultures and cultures grounded in sexual communities. Bloom's

discourse implies the denial of cultural differences as valid and legitimate for an educational project. The experiences of women, Native Americans, blacks, and others, are silenced, their language and meanings are exiled at the margins, while students' performance is measured against criteria and demands of the dominant culture.

Contrary to Bloom's analysis I believe that when students are part of a school experience that excludes and devalues their culture, their lives are constructed around pain and alienation. Sonia Nieto (1992), in Affirming Diversity argues that some students are facing the dilemma of choosing between success in school or loss of their heritage and background. In other cases, despite arguments that praise their ethnic configuration, students often show little understanding of the sociohistorical formations that inform their heritage. By appealing for a recuperation of minority cultures I am not trying to exclude the important contributions of Western thought. It would be intellectually naive to propose something of that order. On the contrary, I believe that those important expressions need to be addressed and analyzed critically as well. At the same time, I think that sometimes certain versions of Western thought, when presented as the dominant version, tend to exercise

symbolic violence on minority students by stressing values, tastes, and desires of prevailing groups exclusively. What I am suggesting is that there is more than one way of seeing the world. When reality is presented in schools as static, finished, and eternal, the underlying tensions, contradictions, struggles, and passions of people throughout history tend to be dismissed.

Some of the students' narratives described in Affirming Diversity reminded me of the alienation experienced by Brazilian peasants in the 1960s. In both cases dominant views tended to exclude the history and experiences of the disempowered. As a result some peasants and minority students share a conviction that they have no culture and, for that reason, nothing important to argue. In other words, what the group lack is a sense of affirmation, a belief that by placing themselves in history they can begin to create and recreate ideas and to affect the world in a number of ways. Though I may sound somewhat dogmatic I believe that students, as truly participants in a democratic process, need to understand the complexity of their heritage, the impact of their background in the world and the many perspectives involved in its interpretation. By analyzing different

perspectives students can begin to use them to understand and act upon the contradictions they uncover.

I believe that culture is integral to learning, while at the same time it affects individuals differently. Given individual differences, historical circumstances, social classes, family structures, geographical locations and a number of other differences, it would be folly to believe that culture in an of itself accounts for all human differences. As culture is neither static nor deterministic, it gives us just one important way in which to understand differences among students and thus can indicate appropriate modifications for a pedagogy. I do not want to imply that the introduction of cultural studies in a class is the determinant factor to improve academic achievement. What I am saying is that teacher's pedagogy may be positively affected when it is informed by culture. A teacher's pedagogy is often influenced by a lack of knowledge of the diversity of students, and information about that diversity may in some ways affect the learning process. Because many educational projects still function within a framework that is exclusively Eurocentric, few teachers are prepared to understand the different ways in which minority students articulate their desires.

When I speak of investigating the culture of students I am not implying that their voices and meanings need to be taken as givens, celebrated naively, or blindly accepted as important to the pedagogical encounter. What I am saying is that teachers have the obligation to understand where their students come from in order to engage them in supraindividualistic projects. By the inclusion of culture I am proposing an analysis that is articulated in a demanding and rigorous context where controversial topics are confronted with high expectations. By presenting knowledge as complex and contradictory schools may become more exciting and relevant for young people.

Popular Culture: Its Pedagogical Importance

Schools as cultural sites need to allow students to recognize the multiple narratives and histories that make up American society. Having said this, I want to argue that this is an extremely conflictual and difficult task, especially when problematized in relation to issues of class, race, gender, and ethnicity. Many times school culture and home culture appear to be at odds. As they are produced by different experiences, they have different values and expectations for students. As a result of that some minority students may experience their cultural

heritage in a scenario of multiple contradictions that include pride, shame, satisfaction, and conflict simultaneously. Pride in their culture is neither easy nor uniform, and sometimes students begin to realize that they know little about their background. When schools choose to ignore the cultural background of some of their students, they engage in a process of symbolic violence that causes conflict in some students. As a result of that institutions begin to send contradictory messages and some students may start to believe that what is not taught in school is not worth learning, that in order to succeed in life they need to become white, or in some cases, they may even blame their communities for their academic failures.

Conflicting and contradictory scenarios are not only the result of the confrontation between home and school cultures but also the consequence of the diversity of issues that are at stake in peer culture. Despite frictions, there are times when students are able to understand who they are in ways that are different from the identities informed by the dominant culture. Because of their involvement with a school culture with its own ritual manifestations and forms, students tend to recreate their own expressions in different ways, retaining some aspects of home experiences, modifying others of peer

culture, and reinserting them in a different context. I believe that if teachers do not address the background and preferences of their students in some way, they are suppressing students' desires to interrogate and to participate in the world. I believe that popular culture has the potential to enable to speak not only to those who have been socially and culturally silenced but also to the majority of the students because it offers a space where their experiences are mediated by their history, language, and background.

Though I will later address the difficulties that popular culture may bring to a pedagogical project, I want to clarify here some of my concerns to avoid further misunderstandings. By suggesting the introduction of popular culture I am not trying to imply that popular culture is the only alternative to a meaningful school experience. What I am saying is that popular culture is one among many options that can attract some students. At the same time I am not suggesting that it will allow students to form a bond with each other. On the contrary, I see the pedagogical encounter as a site of struggle and differences where some students resist, others firmly oppose, all become interrogating voices that confront their views and struggle for the possession of some kind of meaning.

Also, by arguing for popular culture as source for the exploration of personal histories I am not thinking of turning classroom experiences into therapy sessions. Though my writings so far may give the impression that I have tried to show too many similarities between the roles of therapists and teachers, I think that fundamental differences exist. Despite the similarities that appear in the pedagogies of Freire and Pichon Riviere the two practitioners worked in different fields. As a result of that their intellectual formations and the problems they had to deal with were not the same. I think that when students are in need of psychological assistance they have to seek the opinion of a professional who, by his/her training may be more qualified to attend to those needs. I do not think that teachers should be providing that type of service.

In my experience I have often felt uncomfortable by the sharing of personal stories that characterize some progressive pedagogical encounters. Though this process may have the strategic advantages of relaxing the atmosphere of a class, by its insistence on the personal, classes are sometimes turned into shallow and narcissistic discussions often devoid of any rigorous analysis. I am not saying that a sociopolitical analysis is the only

response to a pedagogical encounter. Though I am inclined to that line of interpretation and I am glad when some of my students produce those type of responses, my experience in the classroom has taught me that kind of analysis is often resisted by students who come from a different culture, generation, geographical location and lived experiences. What I find particularly troublesome about the psychological scenario of personal explorations is that, in some cases, it has turned class experiences into cameo television shows. This contemporary world of simulation has reached the classroom and as in the larger society it has become more and more difficult to distinguish fiction from reality. Also, the roles of teacher and psychologist have become confused, and I do not think that it is safe for students to be under the supervision of an unqualified and sometimes powerful "therapist." Students may have insightful and important things to say without overtly having to disclose their personal experiences, unless they are willing to do so.

Having discussed those concerns I will try to argue the problematics involved in popular culture when articulated as part of a pedagogical project. What is popular culture in these days? Why do I support its introduction? Do I want to validate students' lives or do I want to use popular culture as another strategy to

control their lives? What is the purpose of listening to cultural expressions which are so alien to my own experience? When I speak of popular culture I am referring to a complex terrain of affective investments, pleasure, knowledge forms, and images, organized by the struggles in existing gender, ethnic, and class relations, within which meaning and subjectivity operate. While Bloom argued against rock music as the source that has spiritually paralyzed American youth, I have lately come to understand that cultural expressions such as rap, television, rock, and many others, despite being highly mediated and presented as objects of consumption, represent important sources that explain the imaginary lives of students. These expressions are crucial elements that construct subjectivity for people for whom dominant culture is not available or is irrelevant.

It has taken me a long time to understand the importance of the culture of my students. When I arrived in this country right after the dictatorship in Argentina I found that some of my students had a tendency to be apathetic, and selfish, in their preferences. When they spoke about their tastes for Reagan and Rambo I immediately read them as homogeneously conservative. At the time my simplistic argument did not look at the historical specificity of the formations of youth in

contemporary American society. I was unable to understand the complex sociocultural apparatuses which articulate the historical context, the way these construct the experiences of youth and how young people sometimes find different ways to contest those constructions. By talking to students I was, and still am, disturbed by their preferences for what could be called a "pleasure for temporality." What I am saying is that I have found in some of my students an enormous investment in temporary emotions. Despite the intensity of those feelings, love and passions do not last and rage also seems to evaporate rapidly. Though I have lately seen in some of them a need to return to traditional values and practices, such as marriage or a search for heroes in their lives, I sometimes sense that deep inside they have a precarious confidence in their ability to keep those commitments or find those expectations.

I have always thought that what appears in the surface is only part of a cultural space. For that reason it has taken me a long time to understand that what I consider shallow or superficial is the space where some of my students spend their lives. The surfaces of life become the sites at which reality is collected and pleasures are produced. Last semester when I taught a course in Latin American culture I tried to teach my

students to produce a deeper analysis of society. While some of them became engaged, others resisted a reading which was alien to their experience. While there are many factors to be incorporated to that scenario, such as the struggle between a radical Latin American teacher and her white middle class students around a discussion that centered on American corporate intervention in Latin America, these components are not enough elements to explain some of their resistance. Students were not exclusively resisting because they are conservative, (although that may be part of the explanation) they were also resisting an analysis which is rarely done in other classes and which does not respond to their daily experiences outside that particular class.

In the past when students told me that they supported the Gulf War or liked conservative politicians, such as Reagan, I assumed that they gave me those answers because they shared Reagan's values. Now I am beginning to think that perhaps I am wrong about that assessment. Perhaps they supported the war because they were impressed by television's construction of Sadam Hussein as a "savage," or that they liked Reagan because he was less boring and acted more like a President. That may be one of the many reasons why young people nowadays actively

refuse the politicization of reality. It is not only that they do not understand politics or that they are not alienated. Some understand politics, others are alienated but they do not make sense of their alienation in political terms, their power lies in denying any ideological analysis. Though such a conclusion hurts me, it helps me to understand the distance that exists between their construction of the world and my own. Also, as a teacher, I need to begin to understand their constructions of meanings and dreams in order to engage them in a critical dialogue.

It is evident that the power of images is changing society; young people are producing meaning in the media. While I am writing this narrative, the chase for O. J Simpson has finally ended. In a world where differences between reality and image seem to have disappeared, images of television construct people's lives as a show. Television can make its events more important than reality, it can become more real. Simpson who grew larger than mere human, with his televised chase and the intense and emotional participation of his fans in the TV screen showed the importance of this culture of simulation. Even before his trial experts in law are already speculating about the impact that Simpson's persona may have in the judgment of a jury. By saying this I am not trying to

imply that images affect people in the same way. On the contrary, diversity in audiences produce different investments and interpretations of cultural phenomena, but those mediated images still become more important than the narratives behind them.

Understanding the power of images in the construction of students' world does not mean that I will passively accept their versions without further questioning. As I said before I see the classroom as a dialogical encounter where people struggle for meaning. As a teacher I have the obligation to listen to my students's voices, at the same time I also have the right to express my concerns without denying their voices. As in any type of educational intervention, there are risks to be taken. Some students may refuse to listen or to speak for fear of being scrutinized, they may be afraid of disclosing the only expressions that give them control of their lives. Some of them may be disturbed and suspicious of a discussion of their culture in an environment that traditionally operates to regulate their practices. By introducing popular culture as part of a critical encounter I believe that as a teacher I can begin to understand how experiences outside school construct students' identities. At the same time students

themselves can start to elucidate how they construct those meanings and identities. In other words, teachers and students can begin to link school with life.

The Element of Pleasure in Popular Culture

Popular culture is relevant to understand the historical formations that constitute students' experiences, but its crucial importance rests, I believe, in its power to bring an unconscious corporeal pleasure to individuals. Though popular practices may be combinations of body and ideological meanings, the corporeal is a crucial component in the place of reception. Most of school experiences have taught us that what is acceptable is distant while at the same time we need to keep that distance in order to produce some meaning. Popular culture, on the other hand, gives us the possibility to be implicated in that desire. Corporeal pleasure may be emancipatory or repressive, it may not be exclusively argued as something uncritically imposed from above; it may be better understood as part of a process where affective investments are intertwined and negotiated with knowledge forms that sometimes dominate and liberate at the same time.

What I find relevant about popular culture is that it cannot be analyzed totally within the limits of

rationality. What I am saying is that sometimes I may find myself consenting to forms of domination that I consciously admit as politically wrong. How do I explain, for instance, my own fascination with a Spanish magazine that deals exclusively with the lives of the European aristocracy? While I can argue that I read the issue to understand their ideological formation, my argument does not speak of the pleasure I experience when I read it. What I am saying is that an analysis of popular culture cannot be restricted to the limits of rational forms of knowledge, and to their organization with meaning. This view fails short of explaining how people consent, accommodate, and negotiate certain aspects of culture that they consciously consider politically wrong and how they are implicated in the meaning and pleasure they ascribe to those lived experiences. This may also explain that my affective and semantic investments in that magazine can be mutually excluding.

By bringing pleasure to the class teachers can start to investigate what is relevant to their students, why some resist school knowledge, why conflicts arise, and also why their native culture many times marginalize students when they leave home. In other words, teachers can begin to understand the cultural and discursive

struggles around the social construction of youth, and the ways individuals are already implicated in them. Only then they can operate on the contradictions with the formation of youth and between those formations and the other social positions individuals occupy.

While I think that popular culture can contribute in some sense to attract a wider range of students and to give them some sense of control over their own lives, there are also many risks involved. Affective investments have a real cultural hold, they help people to construct their relations to culture, for that reason they are life affirming. When such a culture is introduced as part of a classroom practice it may lose the affective investments by becoming another distant object of study, and it may also contribute to reaffirm the notion that, in order to be accepted, culture needs to be distant. Perhaps an analogy could be made to the pleasure one can experience in reading an engaging novel. When some kind of literary analysis is required the detachment with the text seems to produce a temporary loss of unconscious desire.

Despite that temporary loss I want to argue here that an analysis of popular expressions can help students to discover the secrets behind that pleasure. In other words, by rewriting a cultural expression, knowing can be

turned into a mental and bodily experience simultaneously. At the same time, as teachers involved in a sophisticated analysis which sometimes is not part of our experience, we need to accept that we cannot explain everything. It would be too authoritarian to try to understand everything. We need to accept that our analysis is produced at a certain time and space by the encounter of people with different lived experiences and affective investments, and that the uncovering of contradictions is not final but requires a continuous process of rethinking. Popular culture may have the potential to recreate educational sites not only as centers for critical dialogue but also as spaces for the production of students' own versions of youth culture.

I started this chapter by showing how conservatives and liberals articulated various responses to address the needs of disadvantaged students in America. While their proposals differed, both groups often ignored the culture of underprivileged students. Starting in the 1970s supporters of Multicultural Education argued for the first time that the multiplicity of cultures that make up American society were important components to a pedagogical practice. In light of their work I explored in this chapter not only the relevance of minority culture

but also the potential of popular culture as a tool that validates the experiences of the majority of young people.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSIONS

I started this dissertation by addressing forms of oppression, technologies of control that permeate experiences, and often produce a dissociation between personal and social identities. Memories of oppression can be linked to some kind of hope when they reclaim the voices of the oppressed and materialize those subjected knowledges into a project of possibility. Memory, I believe, has the potential to liberate, to bring the repressed unconscious to some kind of conscious form, to confront the structured silences of generations in flight from their own collective histories. Because I believe that memories of exclusion have the potential to be turned into narratives of resistance to domination I have tried to open a space that affirms the histories of peasants, mental patients, and minorities. I have aimed at reformulating those narratives into a new confluence that by acknowledging their history of oppression builds on opportunities for liberation.

As Eduardo Galeano (1973) has argued, "the marginalized are not forced to absorb an alien,

desiccated, sterile memory fabricated by the oppressor, so that they will resign themselves to a life that is not theirs, as if it were the only possible" (p. 288). In other words, history is not a linear succession of events where people do not have the possibility to challenge the complicated relations of domination. For that reason I have tried to enter in a dialogue with the past in order to illuminate future projects of emancipation. In trying to remember I know I have forgotten. By including some I have excluded others. In other words, by acknowledging some of my ideological ascriptions in a system of power relations I recognize my own history as oppressor and oppressed.

Despite the many constraints which are part of my narrative I did not want to avoid the discourse of memory. I wanted to contest social amnesia and challenge the complicated relations of domination. When narrating this story I had to recognize the conjunctural, contingent, partial and specific struggles which make up the cultural and social space from which I am speaking. At present when intellectuals are self-detached, when image seems more valued than narrative, when pastiche and simulacra invade daily life, meaning appears elusive and dispersed. Postmodernism with its emphasis on how life is constituted as a text, has dissociated culture from its

history. As a result of that dissociation the development of an ethical imagination that reminds us of our commitment to personal and collective struggle has become a problematic task. In spite of those difficulties, I am not personally prepared to accept the end of history, nor to passively immerse myself in social amnesia. Though many postmodern critics may have given up on history as a tool of contemporary analysis, I want to argue for an emphasis on its relationship with culture.

Gramsci illuminated Freire and Pichón-Rivière in order to place an analytical emphasis on historical and cultural formations and on the relations between knowledge and human agency. Within this perspective, subjects, groups, social sectors and nations play simultaneously the roles of educator and student. As Freire has pointed out, nobody educates anybody, nobody educates himself/herself. Men and women educate each other through the mediation of the world and begin to produce some meanings and significance. Though it is evident that cultural contacts (global, regional, personal) are produced and developed within, and through, conflict and inequality, new possibilities of understanding may be appearing. Those people rendered as marginal or peripheral have, I argue, have much to contribute toward the building of a new

culture and for the construction of alternative discourses and practices for the new century.

I believe that in cultural contact there is the concrete possibility of learning. As I view Freire's and Pichón-Rivière's production as contributions that go beyond the boundaries of Latin America I think that powerful countries such as the United States can benefit greatly by looking at the complexity of poor and underdeveloped nations and at the interventions formulated in those geographies to overcome their constraints. Perhaps this contact may help to understand that Third World nations are more than cheap labor or raw materials, and that countries of diverse formations can engage in a dialogue that addresses different ways of living, communicating, understanding nature and social organizations. Perhaps cultural contacts may provide opportunities for narrating education and mental health from a historical perspective that fosters the pursuit of liberation as a social function and encourages to listen, observe, and affirm multiple voices.

I had specific reasons to include Pichón-Rivière and Freire in this work. I wrote about them because they lived and shaped history rather than watched it through imaged-produced desire. They did not betray their principles to become "armchair intellectuals" who

theorized arguments from an ivory tower. On the contrary, the two thinkers constructed their lives in a different way. They did not write in order to change how people think, but rather they theorized concepts in a specific social space that had not lost contact with the masses. That connection with the people has an enormous emotional power when one knows that while Freire still reads Gramsci, he listens to the Gramsci of the favelas twice a week, or that before writing on soccer Pichón-Rivière discussed his arguments with his patients. Those touching narratives bring me memories of 'Che' Guevara in the Sierra in Bolivia and of his obsessive determination to remember the language of the peasants and their dreams. In this sense both Freire and Pichón-Rivière appear as organic intellectuals because they did not come as outsiders bringing theory to the masses. On the contrary, they were theorists fused organically with the culture and social practices of the marginalized. The two were able to fuse with the oppressed, to make and remake the conditions necessary for a radical social project.

Based on a recognition of the cultural underpinning of folk traditions, and the importance of collective construction of meaning, Freire and Pichón-Rivière put theory into praxis by linking the categories of history,

economy, class, and politics with the concepts of culture and power to develop a language of critique and possibility that proved to be successful for some portions in the spectrum of the disempowered. Despite the limitations which are part of their work I believe that their critique needs to be recognized and valued. I am not against critical interrogation of their work, but I am saying that what needs to be acknowledged is that their work remains compelling. The strength of education lies precisely in its limitations, in the impossibility of doing everything.

By writing on Pichón-Rivière and Freire I wanted to explore my admiration for these intellectuals. I respect their elegant disposition to resist attacks and their ability to actively engage in a critical dialogue with those who opposed their ideas. Their responses always seemed to be above vulgar and mean-spirited observations that inevitably form part of interpersonal relationships. As bell hooks (1993) remembers in "bell hooks speaking about Paulo Freire" when she interrogated Freire on the sexism of Pedagogy of the Oppressed, Freire gently addressed her questions without belittling her feminist critique. In other words, he exemplified with his actions the theoretical assumptions of his work. Pichón-Rivière, on the other hand, is also remembered for the same

qualities and for his tireless struggle in the midst of constant professional antagonisms that intended to invalidate his progressive therapies and his personal reputation. The two thinkers committed themselves to affirming their personal and social responsibilities, to showing their love and respect for their lovers, their children, their friends, and for those groups who did not have a voice in their societies. At present when social despair and cynicism permeate social structures, when commitments are readily displaced, it is refreshing and enlightening to remember voices, that spoke and shared knowledge, ideas, and resources, with those who needed or were more segregated. With this dissertation I hope to add some tools for the deconstruction of reifications around the social order and for the possibilities of social agency. With this dialogue I want to challenge current preferences for simulation and invite them to search for a discourse of lived experiences, where individuals can narrate their relations to society, and otherness, while deepening their vision of society. Perhaps the future will produce institutions with considerably more of humanity, where people do not need to be socially castigated on grounds of being sick, poor, or different. Perhaps schools and communities may be able to engage together in a critical dialogue, and asylums may be

transformed into group care units heavily inserted in community life. Perhaps we may begin, once again, to believe in the possibility of building alternative approaches where individuals assume material agency as social subjects in the reconstruction of a less unfair world.

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