

FROM POLITICS TO ANTIFETISHISM

What was discussed in chapter 2 at six levels of reflection (proximity, totality, mediation, exteriority, alienation, and liberation) must now be discussed again in terms of four metaphysical moments: politics, erotics,* pedagogy, and antifetishism. We thus have more problems to resolve. Our discourse, incorporating more and more elements, gains in complexity and allows us to approach reality more concretely.

3.1 POLITICS

3.1.1 *Status Questionis*

3.1.1.1 The proximity from which I set out in this chapter is not that of mother to child; I shall here emphasize the person-to-person relationship (brother-to-brother, sister-to-sister, brother-to-sister, sister-to-brother) or politics insofar as (quantitatively) it has a much greater frontier of influence, and (qualitatively) it functions as the first conditioned conditioner of the other three moments—that is, of erotics (3.2), of pedagogy (3.3), and of antifetishism (3.4).

3.1.1.2 To simplify the exposition, though it is already ab-

*The terms “sexuality” and “erotics” are sometimes interchangeable, but erotics is broader and more comprehensive; eroticism extends to nonsexual ambits (e.g., gluttony). See Emmanuel Levinas, *Totality and Infinity* (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1969).

breviated, I shall not linger on the moment of political proximity (the thematic of 2.1 on the level of politics), which is to some extent defined in 3.1.3-4; nor shall I here dwell on political mediations (2.3), because they will be taken up to some extent in the exposition of economics (4.4). On the other hand, the word “politics”, here has a broad meaning. It includes not only the activity of a politician, a professional in politics, but also all practical, social, human action that is not strictly sexual, pedagogical, or anti-fetishist. Politics applies as well to the one governing as to the one being governed on the international or national level, to groups and social classes, to social formations and their modes of production, and the like. I want the expression "person-to-person" to suggest this very broad conceptual extension.

3.1.2 *Political System*

3.1.2.1 The practico-political relationship, person-to-person, always manifests itself within an institutionally structured totality as a historical social formation, and also ultimately under the power of a state. From the clans or tribes of the Paleolithic periods to the villages or cities of the Neolithic, to the confederation of cities or kingdoms (such as those of Mesopotamia of the fourth millennium) or empires (the Persian, Chinese, Roman, Aztec, or Incan, or that of Spain, England, or the United States), political life is systematic. Aristotle, Augustine, Vico, Hegel, and Marx, as well as Parsons, Weber, and Lévi-Strauss, all agree that politics manifests itself as a functional totality. If it is a totality (2.2), it has a foundation or *proyecto*, Being (2.2.5), in a dialectical unfolding (2.2.8), in geopolitical or utopian temporality (toward the future).

3.1.2.2 A political system is an institutional system—that is to say, a whole structured into parts that take charge of occupations or professions, responsibilities shared in diverse modes of productivity. There are shepherds, farmers, goldsmiths, priests, merchants, rulers, and so forth. A function is an occupation or daily routine for performing a task. Each function is organically linked with others, and they form among themselves a functional organic whole. This functionality has been on the increase throughout the centuries; it goes into effect with the birth of a

system and little by little, if it can, it reaches a classic epoch. Decline sets in when the functional whole no longer responds to the new demands of a new historical age.

3.1.2.3 The concrete practical whole on the political level can be denominated "social formation." The place where power is exercised is called the state. It is obvious that the state has a relationship with the social classes or stable groups of persons that take form because of the division of labor, ideologico-cultural formation, and other factors (all in relationship to the practical productive totality, which can be broken down into modes of production; 4.4.3). This does not mean that the state does not acquire a certain autonomy relative to social classes (as is the case in certain populisms in dependent capitalism). Political relationships, on the other hand, also depend on social relationships of production that are established among the classes. That is, the practico-political level cannot but take into account the productive person-to-nature relationship (4.3) and because of it the economic person-to-product-to-other relationship (4.4).

3.1.2.4 It is a fact that every political system has a practical model; nevertheless, it could not be formulated explicitly until our epoch. In any case, systems have stability due to the functional institutionality of their organic parts. The political system is a system of systems: not as one that constitutes, but as one that conditions the cultural, military, and other systems.

3.1.3 *Political Worldwide Exteriority*

3.1.3.1 Beyond the political totality functionally structured, that of structuralism and functionalism, one finds the people—in its worldwide meaning, that of a peripheral nation (2.4.6.2). I define as a people those who are oppressed by a political totality, who maintain a cultural exteriority, the peripheral political other .

3.1.3.2 The oppressed classes, as oppressed, are dysfunctional parts of the structure of a political totality. They are parts that must perform functions that alienate them, impede them from satisfying the needs that the system itself inculcates in them. These exploited and unsatisfied classes long for a new system (3.1.7) because, in addition, they have experience of another

world exterior to the system that oppresses them. History is anterior to the oppression a people suffers, and because of this it has a different sense of life; it constitutes another culture.

3.1.3.3 On the international frontier, thanks to the theory of dependence and of unequal development, we are able to discover a worldwide system whose center is the United States and, with relative interdependence, Europe, Japan, and Canada. The rest is oppressed periphery (including even South Africa and Australia). The peoples are the peripheral nations as partial totalities, dependent and dominated, included in an unjust system that suppresses them. The "others" of the empires, of the imperialist capitalist social formation (of the United States, for example), are the Latin American, African, and Asian countries. The exteriority of these nations is not only economic (today they are in great part included in the imperialist system), but historical, political, and cultural as well. This exteriority comes into focus as a distinct manner of living, manipulating, comprehending, and interpreting technological instruments, mediations. The peoples of these nations are peripheral social formations.

3.1.4 *National Social Exteriority*

3.1.4.1 If the advance of a certain nationalism against an entrenched government was the position of Kemal Atatürk, Gandhi, Sukarno, Nasser, Senghor, Cárdenas, or Perón, nevertheless they differ from a Mao Tse-tung, Ho Chi Minh, Frantz Fanon, Lumumba, Agostinho Neto, Castro, Sandino, or Allende in terms of the concept of a people within a nation. That is to say, anti-imperialism can be purely apparent (as in the case of Golbery de Couto e Silva, Mobutu, the shah of Iran), or it can be equivocal (as in the case of Latin American populisms, the position of the majority of the Arab leaders, or the Congress Party of India), or frankly revolutionary. Anti-imperialism is real when nationalism is defined by the oppressed classes. That is why it is necessary to make precise the notion of a people within a social formation.

3.1.4.2 "The people" can be an oppressed nation (3.1.7); it can also be the oppressed classes within a nation. The geopolitically oppressed *classes* in the peripheral nations are the rural classes (Amerindians, *campesinos*, sharecroppers, field hands,

clans, or tribes); in the national peripheral space they are negated by the centrality of the privileged capitals in those same dependent countries.

3.1.4.3 But the people, besides rural dwellers, also includes the emergent working class that is slowly taking form in the industries set up to reduce dependence on foreign imports.

3.1.4.4 In the peripheral nations there are, then, dominant classes (directors of transnational corporations, oligarchies of landowners, national managerial bourgeoisies, military and technological elites), middle-class sectors (professionals, owners of small businesses, public officials), the oppressed classes (the peasantry, the proletariat), and marginal groups (seasonal laborers, domestic servants, beggars).

3.1.4.5 The peripheral nation as a totality is not a people, except by reason of its oppressed classes.

3.1.4.6 The oppressed or popular classes of dependent nations are the ones that preserve in their own culture (3.3.4) the maximum exteriority of the de facto worldwide system; only they, given their metaphysical alterity, can project a real and new alternative for future humanity.

3.1.5 *International Alienation of the Social Formation of Dependent Nations*

3.1.5.1 On the international or worldwide level, alienation of peripheral peoples results from imperialism. Philosophically it is founded on North Atlantic ontology. Militarily it is the control of the oceans and continents by means of armed forces and satellites that police the skies. Culturally it is the ideology of the communications media. (It is defined in terms of economics in 4.4.)

3.1.5.2 In effect, the poor countries of the world have become the enemies of the center (2.5.2), as has been seen in the meetings of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) convoked to fix the prices of raw materials. The everyday person of the center, in the process of growing fascism, fears the brown, black, or yellow demographic multitudes. Although they have been totalized and systematically exploited (2.5.4), the center still cannot find rest. Neo-Malthusianism is anxious to check the advance of the periphery.

3.1.5.3 The praxis of imperialistic domination is carried out at two levels: the economic—by the theft of the value added to raw materials by workers subjected to neocolonialism (1.2.4)—and the political—governmental power supported by military control.

3.1.5.4 In effect, hunters killed animals in order to live. Later they used their hunting arms against other persons, and thus the warrior came to prominence. Aided immensely by modern technology, warriors became military professionals. Military art, the science of violence, is the ultimate and most precise essence of the praxis of imperialist domination. It is because of this that the Pentagon carries the responsibility for injustice at the international level of violence in the production and use of arms. Imperialist praxis becomes even more Machiavellian and immoral when it plots the assassination of a political figure of the periphery (the CIA in Chile), or when North American entrepreneurs, according to investigations brought about by the Lockheed scandal, think that it is not wrong to corrupt the buyers of their products in the periphery.

It becomes evident that, in the opinion of North Atlantic ontology, the inhabitants of the periphery are not humans (at least not "like us," as unscrupulous transnational entrepreneurs would say); they can be corrupted and killed like laboratory guinea pigs. This is the praxis of imperialism—a praxis that manifests its inner reality. Philosophies can be very humanistic (within a dominating totality) but, like that of Aristotle or Hegel, they justify the status quo of their own social structure.

3.1.5.5 Within the essence of the ethos of imperialist domination can be found the disciplined certainty of the bureaucrats or fanatics (more dangerous, because of their good and even virtuous consciences, than liars) who are faithful to their daily patriotic and religious duties with the unshakable conviction that they are advancing the cause of civilization, culture, democracy, and freedom by means of blackmail, corruption, exploitation, hunger, assassination—all the suffering of the periphery.

3.1.6 *Alienation in National Social Formation*

3.1.6.1 Today the classes in the center and in the periphery are qualitatively distinct and even contradictory. Perhaps they

will not be tomorrow. The bourgeoisie of the center can exploit the bourgeoisie in the periphery; the proletariat of the center can oppress the proletariat in the periphery. The class doctrines of the nineteenth century and those that carry out analysis only on the national level have not taken into account the difference between classes in the center and in the periphery. Because of this, even orthodox Marxism should be recast from the point of view of geopolitical worldwide spatiality so that it could devise a hermeneutic with appropriate categories.

3.1.6.2 Alienation of the oppressed classes in the periphery is carried out through the drainage of the surplus value of products as they pass from the countryside to the city, from the rural to the urban citizen, from distant provinces or states to national metropolises such as Buenos Aires, Rio de Janeiro, Mexico City, Cairo, Bombay, and Hong Kong. In the industrial centers there is always exploitation of labor by capital (except in socialist countries of the periphery), of workers by owners. Field hands within the country-city framework and the proletariat in the capital-labor framework are the most alienated on the national social level of peripheral social formations.

3.1.6.3 When these classes become conscious that they are dominated, they confront the forces of internal order (ruling and oppressive). Whereas imperialist armies carry on international suppression, it is the professional armies of the periphery—the armed forces of internal occupation and the police for control of the streets (when they are not the political secret police used by fascisms of dependent and underdeveloped capitalism)—that are the agents of national repression. The ethos of social domination is militant and military; it organizes terror, torture, bombings, and kidnappings.

3.1.7 *National Liberation from Imperialism*

3.1.7.1 Throughout the periphery there is a belated but increasing awareness of the necessity of liberation—that is, the need to break the chains of a dominating dependence. It is at the same time a national political and a cultural reality (of the Latin American, Arabic, African, Hindu, Southwest Asian, and Chinese cultures). The heroes of this historical process are known throughout the world, even if their efforts were not crowned with ultimate

success during their lifetime; they are at least symbols of nations that will one day be free. Ho Chi Minh, Mao Tse-tung, Ben Bella, Lumumba, and "Che" Guevara symbolize this new age of world history. The theorists of this phase are Theotonio dos Santos, Enrique Falleto, Frantz Fanon, Samir Amin, Abdel Malek, and their Vietnamese and Chinese colleagues already mentioned. Nevertheless there are not among them philosophers in the strict sense of the word, who gave metaphysical articulation to historical praxis. This book was written to help fill that vacuum.

3.1.7.2 Struggles for the liberation of the periphery—national but at the same time cultural and continental—are very diverse. Each kind of liberation must take into account the prison from which it exits. Hence the models of political liberation confronting imperialism must be very distinct, taking into account the concrete historical exteriority, originality, and alterity of each region and country. The sheer domination of the dominating center cannot intrinsically define any dependent nation; dependency is just one aspect of the national peripheral totality, which does not include one's own national exteriority.

3.1.7.3 Starting from the extreme left and moving toward the extreme right, political parties, pressure groups, and present-day models can be categorized in a fanlike manner: from groups of the new left (from Trotskyite guerillas in Argentina to the leftists of the Chinese cultural revolution, or some groups of Palestinian guerillas), to the popular socialisms (of China, Vietnam, Cuba, and Angola), passing through the popular leftist fronts (such as the Sandinista Front in Nicaragua, the Farabundo Martí Liberation Front in El Salvador), through populisms of diverse inspiration (Cárdenas in Mexico, Vargas in Brazil, Perón in Argentina, Sukarno in Indonesia, Mahatma Gandhi and the Congress Party in India, Nasser in Egypt, Nyerere in black Africa), through modernizing militarisms (such as Velazco Alvarado in Peru, Qaddafi in Libya), to neoliberalisms (the Christian democratic parties in Latin America), to the traditional center-right conservatisms, to dependent capitalist fascisms (such as Golbery do Couto e Silva in Brazil and Pinochet in Chile, among others).

All these models form an immense gamut of political possibilities. Of all of them, nevertheless, only the popular and democratic socialisms prove to be a model of real liberation, of

autonomous choice for the periphery. This does not mean that all countries are able to bring this about here and now; but the truth is that the rest of the models, above all the misleading populisms of national liberation with an interclassist front (such as that of Perón and Nasser), betray their inefficiency when, in a crisis, the dominant national classes ally themselves with transnational corporations and with imperialism against the oppressed classes, against the people. Kemal, Nasser, Haya de la Torre, Senghor, and Sukarno fell into this error. If the oppressed classes (3.1.8) do not head up the process, it will revert to dominative dependence or to counterrevolution; in short, there will be no liberation.

3.1.8 *Liberation in its Strict Social Sense*

3.1.8.1 The political process of liberation runs its course in the national social periphery of the rural and working classes. From the beginning of modernity they have been the ones who accounted for the wealth that colonial empires extracted from their colonies—the Amerindians who mined gold and silver, the blacks sold as slaves, the Asian farmers. They are the world proletariat, the poor in poor nations, the despoiled in despoiled nations. The social revolution of peripheral countries, the taking over of power by the oppressed classes (essentially farm workers and day laborers) is the *conditio sine qua non* for authentic national liberation. There is no other authentic alternative for the future. Only in the liberation of the periphery, within the peoples of the periphery, in its oppressed working classes and rural groupings, is there the possibility of a future world culture that can bring about a qualitative leap to originality, newness. If instead the biological or cultural genocide of peripheral peoples takes place, the center will feed itself on the sameness it has ingrained within itself. "It will eat its own excretion." The death of the child, of the poor, will be its own death.

3.1.8.2 Imperialism and the neocolonial oligarchies in dependent countries permit the creation of employment in the periphery, the founding of industries to substitute for foreign imports, even national development—but never that full power be exercised by the popular masses. Baran and Sweezy, critics of the center, point out that imperialism cannot afford to lose the

political control it exercises over peripheral countries, because it would lose markets that yield enormous profits. That is why popular liberation, the seizure of power by popular groups, threatens the very survival of the entire system of the center, of capitalist social formation.

3.1.8.3 Liberation implies the taking over of power by the popular classes in order to organize "social formation." Philosophy of liberation, on its political level, must be very clear about this; otherwise it could deteriorate into a confusing, misleading, reformist, or petit bourgeoisie ontological ideology. The political philosophy of our epoch can no longer divide governments into monarchies, aristocracies, and democracies, as did the conservative Aristotle (who wrote his Politics to "save" or "conserve" the polis, revolution being political evil itself—that is, antiliberation). Today nations are divided into states and social formations of the center and of the periphery. The center exercises hegemony through imperialism of a multinational, operative, capitalistic type. In the center there are semidependent states, such as Western Europe and Japan. In the periphery there are social formations, states, that are free because of the efforts of the people, such as Cuba, Vietnam, China, Angola, and Nicaragua; the intermediary imperialist class (the dominant oligarchical or bourgeois class) has disappeared. There are also social formations, peripheral states, in search of development in diverse postures within capitalism (3.1.7). And there are fascist models of dependent capitalism in the current phase of imperialism.

3.1.9 *The Projecto and Dignity of Liberating Praxis*

3.1.9.1 The liberating politician is the prototype of the statesman, especially if we keep in mind that within contemporary peripheral social formations the last court of appeals is political. I am not referring to antiheroes—Caesar, Cortes, Napoleon, Hitler, and those responsible for the wars in Vietnam and Angola. I am referring to Joan of Arc, Washington, Bolívar, San Martín, Agostinho Neto, Castro, Mao, and those who give up their lives for the oppressed. Their liberation struggle negates the negation of the oppressed and affirms their exteriority. They are like Moses or Muhammad, symbols of a people that is born, that

grows, that lives. They are prophets of life, not of death; founders of freedom, not its assassins. Between George Washington and Henry Kissinger (now that his responsibility for Allende's downfall has been established) there is the passage from the creation of a new state in justice to the decadent maintenance of an empire of injustice and oppression.

3.1.9.2 The *proyecto* of liberation that a people carries affirmatively in its culture is the future common good, the positive, authentic, human, ethical utopia. It is because of this that life itself is interpreted by the valiant as a mediation (2.3).

3.1.9.3 The *proyecto* of liberation, future Being (non-Being in the present system), is the analectical foundation (abysmal, chaotic, and anarchic for the present system; (5.3) toward which liberating praxis throws itself vehemently, anxiously, and totally. When the traitorous soldier was about to plunge his bayonet in Lumumba's entrails, that hero exclaimed, "All for the liberation of the African people!" His life was an offering and homage in the *proyecto* of a new country. The supreme moment of his liberative praxis was his own death. His blood fertilizes the birth of a new Africa. That is why his subversive praxis was ethical; what he undertook—destruction of the old, the dead—was metaphysical.

3.1.9.4 Political systems or social formations go through four structural moments that are analogous but never identical. The period of liberation begins with resistance to oppression, repression; it takes up the struggle that dominators have necessitated (for them it is perverse) and to which those who are liberated respond (for them it is honorable, good, heroic).

The second period entails the organizations of the state and a new mode of production. It is the time of Lincoln, of Lenin, of Borge. It is the time for justice; there is room for everyone; there is much to do; everything lies ahead. Liberation is a time of struggle (because of this, a time of military priority, but of the nonprofessional military). Joan of Arc was a shepherd, Washington a gentleman farmer, Hidalgo a priest, Belgrano a lawyer, Trotsky an intellectual, Mao a teacher, "Che" Guevara a medical student, Camilo Torres a priest, Lumumba a teacher, Agostinho Neto a poet, Sandino a worker. They were civilians; their military valor was civil patriotism. At the moment of reconstruction the

great politicians appear (military art gives place to political wisdom in its authentic liberating sense).

The third period is the classic epoch, stabilization, the slow ascent. Patrician creators give place to the elders (the senate), to conservatives.

The fourth phase is at the same time one of splendor and of decadence. It is in this phase that the state and the social formation jell; the productive forces grow; the domination of the oppressed becomes repression. Again military art acquires a primacy, although not as the valor of the civilian but as the discipline of military bureaucracy, of a profession that must be entrenched. It is the epoch of the empires, of bread and circus, of the slaughter of liberators because they are subversives. It is the time of the Pentagon, of control of the frontiers, of not allowing the barbarians to cross the Danube... or Mexicans to cross the Rio Grande.

3.1.9.5 During the time of liberation, of praxis as service, ethos is structured around the virtues of fortitude, just valor, patient prudence, and temperance that is estranged from comfort because it is ready to give all—even life itself, if necessary—for the new homeland. The empathetic pulsion of alterity for the poor, the oppressed, the people, is the liberating ethos, the unquenchable fire that feeds on the limitless generosity that is the measure of all other human gratuitousness. An awesome responsibility, more overwhelming than imprisonment or torture, mobilizes the liberator to project history toward a more just and more human goal.

3.2 EROTICS

3.2.1 *Status Questionis*

3.2.1.1 Political injustice is parricide, the death of a brother, of a sister, of a close relative. Injustice or perversion on the erotic level is uxoricide (death of the woman in a society where macho phallocratic ideology reigns, as we shall see). Erotics defines the man-woman relationship. We should never confuse the human being (species) or person with the man (masculine person) or the woman (feminine person).

3.2.1.2 From the multitude of persons in the ebb and flow of everyday life, suddenly there emerges someone who is no longer merely a colleague, a fellow citizen, but a woman for the man, a man for the woman. Sexual exteriority is cut off from political totality; the political experience is different from the sexual experience, which is touch and contact with the intention of sensitizing the body of the other. The erotic is a new chapter in metaphysics.

3.2.2 *Erotic World*

3.2.2.1 The *ego cogito* had favored the cognitional aspect of human nature. Thanks to Freud, the *ich wünsche* (I desire) was rediscovered. And the assertion can be made that the *ego* of the *ego cogito* has been a phallic masculine *ego*. (Descartes negated his mother, his lover, and his daughter. He searched for total solipsism.) Freud, inasmuch as his intention was therapeutic, did not describe sexuality as, for example, Merleau-Ponty would describe it.

3.2.2.2 Plato affirms in the *Symposium* that ever since the androgyny (a strange being formed by a woman-man) separated into two beings, men have loved women—that is, they seek the return to "the same" (*to auto*). Aristotle agrees in saying that sexuality, in its finality, brings it about that "the same [the species] remains the same" by means of procreation. If the man penetrates the woman, it is only so that through conception the eternal species may attain immortality. We have already noted that at the peak of the Middle Ages Thomas Aquinas teaches that "the mother only supplies the matter, but it is the father who gives Being to the child." "The same" is the phallic; it is the *eros* that desires sameness. Moreover, with the contempt of the body came contempt of sexuality.

3.2.2.3 It is only in our epoch, at the end of the nineteenth century, that there begins an anti-Cartesian, antidualist reappraisal of the ancient doctrine of the dual—body-soul—substantiality. Merleau-Ponty affirms that the normal person can constitute a sexual intention. Such an intention consists in sexualizing an object, the body of the other. Sexuality would be a sensitization of the body of the other. One's whole world is eroti-

cized when this intention, which is not a mere representation or a mere biological determination, is constituted. It demarcates a phenomenological region proper to oneself. This intention energizes the erotic situation; it knows how to maintain it and give it continuity until its accomplished fulfillment.

3.2.3 *Erotic Exteriority*

3.2.3.1 The world eroticized as a totality tends to ignore the other by the pulsion of totalization (and because of this it is a schizoid or closed world; 3.2.5-6). On the contrary, normal human sexuality begins with "Let her kiss me with the kisses of her mouth," "Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth." It is the proximity that sets limits to and overcomes the erotic world that constitutes sexualized objects. Before the sexualization of the object, beyond the sexual object (Freud's *Sexualobjekt*), the other provokes distinct sexuality. The other, male for the female and female for the male, not different but distinct (2.4.4.2), advances from political distance to the proximity of the kiss, or *eros*, of coitus. Maximum distinction becomes maximum convergence: proximity in nakedness (because dress de-eroticizes the political or pedagogical relationship but is an impediment for *eros*), in beauty, the *pulchritudo prima* that measures all other beauty.

3.2.3.2 If we can surpass the body-soul dualism and affirm the unity of the flesh (*basar* in Hebrew), we shall be able to understand that the sexual, even more than the sensibility of the other's body, means complying with the other's desire as other, as another flesh, as exteriority. The person, subject to the pulsion of alterity (unknown to Freud), by which one tends to the other as other, really touches what is beyond the horizon of light or of ontology. The erotic, which is authentic metaphysics, advances to the shadowy area where the other dwells. The other, whose sexuality invites me to the complementarity of absence, can never be taken as a mere object or thing. On the contrary, upon losing one's alterity one also loses the capacity for the plenitude of *eros*, gratuity, self-donation, freedom, justice.

3.2.3.3 The exteriority of the other as the possibility of negation of provocation is the very origin of human orgasmic realization.

3.2.4 *The Metaphysics of Eros*

3.2.4.1 Sexual intention begins by touch, contact, caress.

Caressing is nearness, proximity; it is a progression restrained by modesty but tempted to profanation; it is a growing and voluptuous "exploration," in which two persons advance and drawback, asking the other as other, without words, whether their desires are mutual. It is secretly stretching out one's hand in the night beyond Being and light (the ontological), without looking for or clarifying any sense (the phenomenological), without intending to set any value. The caress advances, avoiding encounter with resistance from the freedom of the other, which is always possible.

Nudity always tends to the sadism of violation or the masochism Of being violated. Alejo Carpentier tells us that "close to Rosario I shared the primal sensation of beauty, beauty physically perceived, enjoyed equally by the body and the mind, which is born with each rebirth of the sun."

3.2.4.2 The closeness-farness rhythm, which is the summary of all life and history, is lived in the act of coitus (through the contact of the phallus with feminine flesh and of the clitoris with masculine flesh) in a cadence that grows until it arrives at the ecstatic paroxysm where subjectivity and the "I" decentralize in order to become totalized in the embrace of mutual voluptuosity—if it is done in justice—of orgasm.

3.2.4.3 Coitus is one of the privileged metaphysical experiences of the human being. It is access to the area of reality beyond the horizon of the world. It is beyond reason, where desire takes us as a satisfaction of the other's desire. It is no longer a mere desire or other-directed pulsion but the very realization of desire in proximity. The sexual organ is in the human being the presence in totality of the absence of the other; it is a call to the realization of the other in the other's negativity.

3.2.5 *Uxoricial Machismo*

3.2.5.1 The death of one's brother or sister, fratricide or sororicide, is political alienation. In our culture and epoch the death of *eros* is the assassination of the woman: uxoricide. The macho ideology is the counterpart of uxoricide. The best Euro-

pean diagnosis of machismo has been proposed by Freud. He clearly saw that "sexuality is by nature masculine," and because of this the phallus was defined as constituent and active and the vagina as passive and constituted, the sexual object. "Being is; non-Being is not" in erotic ontology should be stated: "The phallus is; castration is not." That is, woman is not; she is only an object, as was the Amerindian, the African, the Asian, the poor nations, the oppressed classes, the politically disenfranchised. If the constituent "I" is the "phallic *ego*," then the Being of machismo, the foundation of the alienating sexual totality is "phallicity" (the phallus as phallus). It can then be understood that if woman is not, in non-Being everything is indistinct: *En la noche todos los gatos son pardos* ("at night all cats are dusky"). The phallus can no longer perform the sexual act because upon entering into relationship with the sexual object (woman), the man enters indifferently into commerce with his mother and wife (because in non-Being there can be no difference, not even between the clitoral-vaginal intentionality of the wife and the mammary-oral intentionality of the mother; the woman is indistinctly mother-wife). The ontic, concrete, sexual act is always incestuous.

3.2.5.2 From Being as abstract or fundamental phallicity, the *imago patris*, which Mitscherlich does not define adequately, stretches out the horizon of the comprehension of all erotic relationships. It is there, within the alienation of the woman, that the oedipal situation arises. The son's love of his mother is ambiguous (at least as far as the father is concerned); the father, the phallic *ego*, sets up his son as his opposition, for he has intercourse with non-Being, the sexual object, his woman (wife)—the same woman (mother) whom the son also tries to totalize (in reality it is the unsatisfied woman who totalizes herself through her son). In the conflictive presence of an actual phallus (the father) and a potential phallus (the son), confronting the same woman (without difference between mother-wife but defined as object-woman), the son cannot help repressing his phallicity and remain forever in a neurotic, pathological, perverse condition of desiring incest.

3.2.5.3 Machismo, as an ideology that cloaks the domination of woman defined as sexual object, not only alienates the woman but also makes the male impotent inasmuch as it impedes

his relationship with a woman. He turns to solipsistic masturbation, to something that fulfills his autoeroticism.

3.2.6 *Eroticism and Political Domination*

3.2.6.1 Phallocracy, constituent domination by the phallus, is sometimes a substitute for or a determinant of plutocracy. In the process of the conquest of Latin America, the European not only dominated the Amerindian man but violated the Amerindian woman. Cortes lived in concubinage with Malinche, an Amerindian. The *ego cogito* establishes ontologically both the "I conquer" and the phallic *ego*, two dimensions of domination of person over person, but now of one class over another class, of one nation over another nation. Sexuality is thus a replica of political, economic, cultural domination.

3.2.6.2 On the world level, the problematic of sexual alienation has been given little or no study. In some African cultures it is not so much the father, mythical ancestor and protector, but the older brother of the mother who fulfills the function of the repressive, castrating, phallic *imago*. The manifestation of prostitution as a phenomenon of the popular classes, in the center as well as in the periphery, shows phallic domination concomitant with economic domination. The tango *Margot* by Celedonio Flores (1918) narrates the sadness of a poor boy from a peripheral barrio in Buenos Aires on seeing his loved one, Margarita, a shanty town girl, become transformed into the plaything of a wealthy man from the city center (and that is why she adopts the rococo French name Margot).

3.2.6.3 The woman of the people, the woman within a peripheral culture, ends by undergoing a threefold attack, a triple violation: violated for being from an oppressed culture and nation, for being a member of a dominated class, for being a member of a dominated sex. She is a poor woman of the poor—Indian, African, or Asian—victim of imperialism, of class struggle, and of macho ideology.

3.2.7 *Erotic Liberation*

3.2.7.1 The liberation of *eros* will be accomplished through the liberation of woman, which will allow the male to regain part

of the sensitivity lost in the macho ideology. Liberation from the ancient patriarchy (which the Indo-Europeans and Semites transmitted for millennia) is liberation of the woman who has always been defined as castrated, as nonphallic. It is necessary to begin again.

3.2.7.2 Just as the male has an active, constituent, phallic openness (*Offenheit*) to the world, so also has the woman, as wife, an active, constituent clitoral-vaginal openness (to the phallus of the husband), and as mother a mammary openness (to the suckling of the infant). Positively defined (phallic non-Being is really something distinct: active clitoral-vaginal reality), woman has a distinct and positive orientation with respect to the male (clitoral-vaginal) and to the child (mammary-oral). Liberation is negation of domination. Liberation is real sexual distinction: the male affirms his phallic openness (with what risk that may entail) and the woman equally affirms her clitoral-vaginal and mammary-oral openness (in her dimension as wife and mother; 4.2.6.2).

3.2.7.3 In the coital proximity, the praxis of the liberation of the other as other, the sexual rhythm as a liturgy in respect for the other, fulfills the desire of the other as other, as sexed in another way, as erotic alterity. Only in the real exteriority of the other, a free and sexually distinct other, can orgasm be a human act that gives full sway to the political and the pedagogical.

3.2.7.4 Detotalization, deobjectification, or distinction of the woman is the *conditio sine qua non* for normalcy, which is nonpathological, nonrepressive of *eros*.

3.2.8 *The New Home*

3.2.8.1 The orgasmic plenitude of human love between male and female constitutes the foundation, the essence, the nucleus of home. In the center of home is the fire, the hearth—a hearth that warms, that protects against wild animals and the elements, that lights up the domestic world, that cooks the food, that exudes intimacy. Hearth, wood, love. The proto-home, the first home, is a dwelling centered around the hearth and the male-

female proximity. Proto-home, unique and circular dwelling—proto-kitchen, proto-bedroom, proto-dining room, proto-living room. It is an all-purpose, unicameral dwelling, not yet partitioned into the house of multiple rooms and functions. The essence of the home is the warmth of *eros*.

3.2.8.2 Male and female joined in the warmth of coitus is a new analogical unit: the couple.

3.2.8.3 Through fecundity the couple can transcend to the child. In this way, in the complex couple-child relationship, does the home appear. The home is a basic totality that prefigures all the remaining totalities: male-female erotics, parent-children pedagogy, sibling politics. All of them together around the table, the hearth, constitute the home, the family. All of them are together there before they are together in the political assembly or the apprenticeship classroom.

3.2.8.4 The macho ideology alienates the woman; the alienated couple distorts the child; the distorted child is ready for political injustice. The liberation of woman does away with machismo and permits the appearance of the couple who are equals (sexually distinct but persons [faces] with equal right to life, work, education, politics, etc.). The couple permits the appearance of offspring, of siblings. The death of the old house, that of the phallic family, permits the appearance of a new home, the liberated home where there reigns an expansive, innovative, fecund, nontraumatic sexuality.

3.2.9 *The Projecto and Praxis of Erotic Liberation*

3.2.9.1 Phallic ontology conceives of human erotic perfection as asexuality. Given the fact that "phallicity" (Being as phallus as phallus) falls into an irresolvable aporia (all phallic acts are incestuous: they are directed toward mother and wife at the same time), the only way to be perfect is through *ataraxia* (imperturbability) or *apatheia* (apathy): the supreme pleasure is contemplation. This is castration by sublimation, the only moral solution to the macho ideology. Its counterpart is the morality of *parthenos*

(the virgin offered to the sacred phallus). This cannot be the *projecto* of erotic liberation.

3.2.9.2 In the periphery—as well as in the center, but with easily understandable differences—aristocratic families, oligarchies, and elites preserve fetishist practices that have been inherited from conquistadors, colonizers, oppressors, and imperial bureaucrats or institutions imposed by the communications media. Concubinage with aborigines, with black slaves, and prostitution of the working-class girl are among those practices. To liberate the cultural eroticism of dependent peoples and cultures and that of the popular classes, to give them back their dignity, could be the goal of a worldwide campaign for sexual liberation.

3.2.9.3 Inasmuch as sexual intercourse involves exposure in the presence of the other in nudity, it is always a risk; the other can instrumentalize me or play with my obliging gratitude. It seems that the one who has no doubt about the other has already instrumentalized that person as a sex object. In this case, there is no risk, because alienating totality has already been established and the act is intrinsically perverse. On the contrary, if it is an authentic, obliging sexual openness (in whose serving of the other's desire the praxis of erotic liberation is fulfilled), the response of the other can always be reifying. Nudity that does not blush is not authentic human sexuality. One can always fear being used by the other. Fear, always possible, that is the guarantee of authentic, other-directed sexuality, is modesty. Modesty complements erotic beauty and accompanies its fullest realization in justice.

3.2.9.4 A Chinese poet writes in the Chi-King: "A son is born. He is placed on the bed and wrapped up in rich cloth. The lord, the chief, the sovereign is born. A daughter is born. Wrapped up in common cloth, she is placed on the floor. There is in her neither good nor evil. Let her learn how to prepare wine, how to cook meals. Behold what she ought to know."

3.2.9.5 The wife of the man in the oppressed classes and peoples is today the dominated one par excellence in the world. A Latin American gaucho, Martín Fierro, sings sadly of his misfortunes:

And my poor wife,
God knows how much she suffered!

They tell me she took flight
 with I don't know what hawk
 without doubt to look for the bread
 that I could not give her.

3.3 PEDAGOGICS

3.3.1 *Status Questionis*

3.3.1.1 The pedagogic has to do with the parent-child, teacher-pupil proximity at the point where politics and erotics converge. The child born in the home is educated in order to form part of a political community; the child born in a culture is expected to found a home. That is why pedagogical discourse is always twofold, and the planes continually become confused. This matter has been more or less well stated in what is called the "second Oedipus complex." The young man in his adolescence again situates himself in an oedipal conflict, but now in a socio-psychoanalytical context. The pulsion toward the mother is at the same time toward the ancestral, the popular culture; the interposition of the father is likewise that of society or the state. His "ego ideal" (father-state) is in crisis. The young man cannot identify with a decadent *imago patris*; the oedipal conflict persists, and its revelation is youthful rebellion as a symptom of sexual and political repression.

3.3.1.2 Pedagogics occupies itself with the education of not only the child, the pupil, in the family but also of the young and the people as a whole in educational, scientific, and technological institutions, and by the mass media. It is ideological and cultural schooling.

3.3.2 *Pedagogical Systems*

3.3.2.1 As long as humankind has been in existence, there has been transmitted to a new generation, to the child, the totality of mediations that constitute the world. The transmission of accumulated culture is accomplished by pedagogical systems, from the most ancient and simple (such as teaching how to polish a stone) to the most recent and complex (such as putting satellites in orbit or making decisions by computers). It is evident that in pro-

portion as there is more to transmit (quantitatively and qualitatively) pedagogical systems have become better. From the simple advice of the father in the Paleolithic Age they have reached the universities and research institutes of the highest technological precision.

3.3.2.2 The domestic pedagogical system educates within the traditional ethos of the people, within the social class of the family. The system can be patriarchal, where the male dominates the female, and the couple dominates the child. This pedagogical system is erotically uxoricidal but pedagogically filicidal (3.3.5). The oedipal situation is inherent in certain pedagogical systems, but not others—that is, if we can trust certain conclusions of Margaret Mead. In any event, the character of future citizens depends on the manner in which their personality has been sexually forged in the home, in proximity with the mother and in correlation with the presence of the father and siblings.

3.3.2.3 The pedagogical system, political or social, also educates within the prevailing social ethos, but sometimes there are supplemental institutions, such as the ancient schools of the *amautas* (sages) of the Incan empire or the priests in ancient Egypt. These institutions are not dispersed moments; they form systems. The educational system and the mass media are today the two most important systems in the formation of the average person.

3.3.3 *Erotic Pedagogical Exteriority*

3.3.3.1 Exterior to the systems of education already in place, a new person, an other, is born. Husband and wife, if they decide in freedom and gratuity to give reality to someone who is not yet, constitute themselves as that one's origin, in the procreative fecundity that proceeds from nothingness to the reality of the child. The child is a newness, the new one, the one who seals the reality of the sexual male-female union as husband and wife. Paternity-maternity (a new qualitative moment added to mere masculinity-femininity) is correlative to filiality. The metaphysical moment, with which we have been concerned all along in this work, is clearly revealed.

3.3.3.2 The politically responsible person can take charge

of the poor or oppressed already there. The sexually responsible person can take charge of the violated woman in a macho world. But in pedagogics metaphysical anteriority shows itself in a still better manner, anterior to ontological anteriority: the anteriority of the freedom of progenitors. From procreative freedom a child is brought forth into the light of the world, the real future that is utopian criticism because it is exterior to the organized, traditional, already given order. Procreative fecundity and the responsibility for justice are what give reality to the new order, the new person.

3.3.3.3 The child is the exteriority of all erotics, its metaphysical goal, its real fulfillment (4.1.5.5). Moreover, the child is distinct, not merely different, from the couple; the child is the other from whom one always has to learn how to listen in silence to the new revelation that is brought to past history as tradition. The child is innovation itself, new time and, therefore, eschatological; the child is ultimate time. That is why in the presence of the new one, in the presence of mystery, we ought to have a sacred respect and silence in order to learn how to listen to the provocative voice that makes tradition fruitful and makes it history.

3.3.4 *Political Pedagogical Exteriority*

3.3.4.1 The child, the new one, is not an orphan; it is the offspring of its parents and of a people. The progeny of a people is its youth; and it is the people itself inasmuch as it is oppressed, inasmuch as it is cultural exteriority. The peripheral nation, or Latin American, African, or Asiatic culture, is exterior to the reigning cultural system, that of the center. The exteriority of national culture provokes and questions the hegemonic cultural system. And in those same peripheral nations there are the oppressed, rural manual laborers, marginal classes; within each nation they play the role of cultural exteriority.

3.3.4.2 The African, Asiatic, and Latin American cultures have their own validity, which has not been understood by or incorporated into the hegemonic school or university systems or their public communications media, because they are scorned as nonculture, barbarism, illiteracy, witchcraft. They are interpreted by the reigning, rationalistic, would-be universal cultural

system as nothing, non-Being, chaos, irrationality. The scorn that is held for these cultures is analogous to the scorn that the father of Oedipus had for his son, phallus in potency and therefore despised.

3.3.4.3 The culture of the oppressed groups and classes of these three continents—popular culture—is the one that preserves the best of the Third World and is the one whence new alternatives will emerge for future world culture, which will not be a mere replication of the structures of the center. The exteriority of popular culture is the best guarantee and the least contaminated nucleus of the new humankind. Its values, scorned today and not even recognized by the people itself, must be studied carefully; they must be augmented within a new pedagogy of the oppressed in order to develop their possibilities. It is within popular culture, even traditional culture, that cultural revolution will find its most authentic content.

3.3.5 *Filicide*

3.3.5.1 The cultural death of the child is pedagogical alienation. The child is killed in the womb of the people by cultural repression. This repression will always be carried out in the name of freedom, of course, and by means of the best pedagogical methods.

3.3.5.2 Huitzilopochtli, the Aztec sun god, said to the falcon god, in a popular myth, that in order to go out each day he needed the blood of children, of the young. The old god needed young blood. It is the mythical death of the child! Socrates, as mentioned before, likewise kills the young, making them believe that the (Greek) answers toward which he subtly directed his disciples were nothing less than the eternal and divine truths (he divinized Greek culture). But let us consider a still more subtle dominator.

3.3.5.3 Jean-Jacques Rousseau idealized, in the name of nature, the emergent bourgeois culture. For this he first needed to enter into a pedagogical contract with his pupil (complementary to a social contract). The preceptor (the father or the state) obliges the pupil to be or to behave like an orphan (without mother and hence without popular culture) and to be obedient in everything,

as Rousseau explains in *Emile*. Claiming that nature expresses itself in reality, the repressing preceptor obliges Emile to follow a fixed curriculum tenaciously in order to merit his title of petit bourgeois, with even a European tour (the delight of the bourgeoisie of the time) and with a perfectly docile wife, a repressed housewife.

Rousseau's *proyecto* is ideological in two ways: first because he disguises the bourgeois class as *nature*; then, because he does not give any critical attention to this cover-up and makes Emile accept, in the name of criticism, a course of action in all naivety. Pestalozzi, Montessori, and Dewey do no more than continue on the same ideological road, perfecting the process of domestication with more modern techniques.

3.3.5.4 Poor repressed Oedipus is the product of a modern macho, individualistic education, which finishes by educating the wolf that Hobbes needed, the person who is ready to fight always and anywhere in order to subsist in a world of competition.

3.3.6 *Portrait of the Colonized*

3.3.6.1 Albert Memmi and Frantz Fanon portray the visage of the politico-culturally domesticated person in the periphery. In order to understand this topic we must make certain distinctions.

3.3.6.2 By "imperialist culture" or "culture of the center" I mean the culture that dominates in the present order. It is the refined culture of European and North American elites. This is the culture that all other cultures are measured against. The *Mona Lisa* critiques all other paintings; Beethoven's Fifth Symphony catalogs all other musical compositions; Notre Dame is the prototype of all churches. And this culture has the collective means of communication in its hands (the United States originates and transmits 80 percent of the material that is used in Latin America by daily newspapers, magazines, radio, movies, and television).

3.3.6.3 This culture is partially refracted in the oligarchical culture of dominant groups within dependent nations of the periphery. It is the culture that they admire and imitate, fascinated by the artistic, scientific, and technological progress of the center. These elites, alienated minorities in their own nations, are scorned

by the creators of the culture of the center. Someone is black and plays the piano!—as if a hyena were to perform acrobatics or a donkey to play the flute. On the masks of these local elites the face of the center is duplicated. They ignore their national culture; they despise their skin color; they pretend to be white; they speak English or French; they dress, eat, and live as if they were in the center. They are the outcasts of history.

3.3.6.4 The culture of the oppressed, not as a people (3.3.8) but as repressed, is the culture of the masses. It is the reproduction *ad nauseam*, the *Kitsch* vulgarization, of imperialist culture re-fracted by the oligarchical culture and passed on for consumption by magazines, pulp novels, pornography, and the like.

3.3.6.5 This entire process of cultural alienation is profoundly ideological inasmuch as it expresses supposedly universal knowledge or ideas (because they are those of the center) and inasmuch as it hides the domination that oppressed countries and classes suffer. It is by means of the culture of the masses that ideology propagates imperialist enterprises and produces a market for its products (4.3.3). Cultural domination is thus an element of political (3.1.5-6) and economic (4.4.6-7) alienation; it is like the vanguard of the army that reconnoiters the terrain for the next attack. Ideological cultural imperialism today surpasses all other types of anterior cultural influx, and it is assured of all the support of the sciences and of those whom Chomsky calls "intellectual warriors," the elite formed at Harvard or Yale.

3.3.7 *Anti-Oedipus*

3.3.7.1 To liberate the son is the task of metaphysical pedagogics. Neither the father nor the son must be assassinated. In reality in *Totem and Tabu* it is not the father who is killed but the old man, inasmuch as he is overcome because he can no longer dominate his sons, now adults. The oedipal situation is an alienating and alienated situation. To allow the son to be, so that Oedipus grows as another, as the anti-Oedipus, is to respect him in his exteriority. Of course, to avoid committing filicide he ought not to have committed uxoricide.

3.3.7.2 A free woman allows for the appearance of a real couple. The orgasmically fulfilled couple engenders the child in

love. The parents are responsible for its distinct alterity; they listen with devotion to the child's cry, protest, and juvenile criticism. If there is no castrating father, there is no castrating mother, and the son is defined not as phallus, potentially an enemy, but as mouth-hands-feet that attaches himself in order to obtain nourishment. Thus he does not address the woman in her clitoral-vaginal openness but in her nourishing, protective, soft, and warm maternal breasts. In the nipple-mouth proximity, the child, fulfilled, not repressed, slowly and surely starts on the road of alterity that will take it to adult sexuality and politics.

3.3.8 *Liberation of Popular Culture*

3.3.8.1 The liberation of the oppressed is put into effect by the oppressed, but through the mediation of the critical mentality of the teacher, the leader, the organic intellectual*—with and within the people.

3.3.8.2 Beyond the oligarchical culture of the dominating elites can be found the national culture, an equivocal culture because it includes oligarchical conditioning. In any event, the affirmation of national culture is a liberating confrontation with imperialist culture and a first necessary step on the road of the cultural revolution of the periphery.

3.3.8.3 Popular culture includes the culture of the masses, the oppressed as oppressed, and reflects imperialist culture and the properly distinct exteriority of oppressed groups. The cultural revolution by liberation must start and must be put into effect by the people and from within its popular culture. Such a culture possesses the symbols, the values, the uses, and the traditions of accumulated wisdom, as well as the memory of historical commitments; it knows its enemies, its friends, and its allies. Popular culture, far from being a minor culture, is the relatively least contaminated and radiative nucleus of resistance to oppressors by the oppressed. But it does not come to life spontaneously.

3.3.8.4 A people alone cannot liberate itself. The system has contaminated it with the culture of the masses, the worst thing

*The term "organic intellectual" was popularized by Antonio Gramsci. It refers to an intellectual who does not live in an ivory tower—who lives and works in and with the people, as an "organ" in the body politic.

that the system has to offer. It is because of this that the critical mentality of the organic intellectual, of critical communities or political parties, is indispensable so that a people acquire a critical mentality and discern the worst that it has in itself (introjected imperialist culture) and the best that it has from antiquity (cultural exteriority, the maximum of potential criticism without actual awareness). Philosophy has much to do in this field (5.9.5).

3.3.9 *The Proyecto and Praxis of Pedagogical Liberation*

3.3.9.1 The *proyecto* of pedagogical domination annihilates the culture of peripheral nations and oppressed classes. The *proyecto* of pedagogical liberation, on the other hand, which opposes the "passivity" of the student, as Paulo Freire would say, affirms what the people has of exteriority, of its own values. The *proyecto* of pedagogical liberation is not formulated by teachers; it is already in the consciousness of the people. It is the metaphysical *a priori* of the process, the one toward which there is a broad proclivity arising from protracted popular struggle, the *proyecto* of "the excellent ancient popular culture," Mao would say.

3.3.9.2 This *proyecto*, it is true, can be attempted by the converted colonized, the intelligentsia that discovers its own people. Frantz Fanon would say that in the first phase colonized intellectuals assimilate the culture of (imperialist) occupiers. In a second phase they recoil from what they have done and resolve to return to the people. Finally, in a third period, after having tried to lose themselves within the people, to identify with the people, they come to understand that they must shake the people. Instead of favoring the people's lethargy they become the ones who awaken the people. Nevertheless, the critical action of the organic intellectual is not sufficient, as Gramsci would say.

3.3.9.3 What is needed is the revolutionary worker from within the popular culture, a person of the people, who has never left the people but maintains a critical attitude, the one who leads a people to its own cultural affirmation. Until a critical alertness is formed within the praxis of popular leaders, all education will be elitist and dominative.

3.3.9.4 The ethos of pedagogical liberation demands that the teacher know how to listen with respect in silence to youth, to

the people. Only the genuine teacher who has become a patient and enthusiastic disciple can attain to an adequate discernment of the reality in which a people finds itself. Pupils, the young, and the people admire teachers who, in their lifestyle, in their living together with them, in their humility and service, dedicate a critical awareness to affirming the values inherent in the young and in the people. Such teachers manifest a collaboration that unifies, mobilizes, organizes, and creates.

Anti-ideological veracity is the fundamental pedagogical attitude. It is an uncovering of the deceits of the system, a negation or destruction of what the system has introduced to contaminate the people, and an affirmative construction of cultural exteriority. To perform this task today in the periphery is to risk death because critics, the ones who demand a more just future, are the first to be jailed, eliminated, assassinated. But they are the harbingers of what is to come. I have suffered it in my own flesh, and many colleagues and companions have suffered it also.

3.3.9.5 From liberating revolutionary culture will spring forth a new world culture, an alternative much richer than imperialist culture. We shall say with the poet Carlos Fuentes, "You, my son, will be my triumph; the triumph of woman... Malincochitl, goddess of the dawn... Tonantzin, Guadalupe, mother."

3.4 ANTIFETISHISM

3.4.1 *Status Questionis*

3.4.1.1 We are here at the origin and the end of metaphysics. It is a matter of archeology, if *arche* signifies source or spring whence everything proceeds and toward which everything tends (more *Abgrund* than *Grund* or *Ursache*; more abyss than foundation or cause). In this section our discourse reaches its end and confronts itself with the phenomenon of fetishism. I call "fetishization" the process by which a totality is made absolute, closed, divinized. Political totality is fetishized when it takes over within imperialism (3.1.5) or nationalistic totalitarianism (3.1.1). Erotic totality is fetishized when it succumbs to fascination with the perverse phallus of macho ideology (3.2.5-6). Cultural total-

ity is fetishized when oligarchical ideology alienates popular culture (3.3.6) or castrates the son (3.3.5). Fetishism is the death of totality, of the system, of discourse.

3.4.1.2 Antifetishism, a negative notion that deliberately tries to veil its infinite metaphysical affirmation, is the guarantee of the perennial dialectic of history, of the detotalization that liberation produces in all fossilized systems. Atheism vis-à-vis the present system is a prerequisite for innovative, procreative, liberative praxis.

3.4.2 *Fetishization of the System*

3.4.2.1 The English word "fetish" comes from the French *fétiche*, derived from the Portuguese *feitiço*, derived from the Latin *facticius*, "factitious." A fetish is something made by the human hand but made to appear divine, absolute, worthy of worship, fascinating, tremendous, that before which one trembles in fear, terror, or admiration. Every system tends to fetishize, totalize, absolutize itself.

3.4.2.2 When a political system attains central power, geopolitically, economically, and militarily speaking, it divinizes itself: "Hail, Caesar!" declared the gladiators before dying. "The Spaniards immolate a great number of Indians to their god, which is gold," it was said in sixteenth-century Latin America. *Gott ist mit uns* was written close to the swastika in Nazi Germany. "In God we trust" is printed on the U.S. dollar (which moreover has a symbol of the Trinity on it, the eye of divine wisdom, and other fetishistic symbols). The doctrine of "national security," upheld by the CIA, is affirmed in Brazil in terms of the defense of Western and Christian civilization. It is in the name of matter—in whose presence Holbach, Engels, and even Goethe felt a sacred respect—that more than one bureaucracy reigns. (It is well to point out that between matter as totality and idea there is neither practical nor ontological difference; their logic and divinity are identical.) Once it is divinized, who dares to blaspheme the dignity of an absolute state (a Leviathan on earth, Hobbes would say)?

3.4.2.3 When an erotic system comes to be in force and is accepted by the oppressed, it is likewise divinized. In macho ideol-

ogy the perverse phallus, that of the uxoricidal and castrating father, is fetishized. Not only in the phallic cults of sacred prostitution, but in the daily cult that the wife and son must render to the husband-father, in vaginal passivity and in the castration of Oedipus, the phallus is fetishized. The divine is "father" (alienating father). Who will dare to challenge the phallus in the name of woman?

3.4.2.4 When a pedagogical system, a "sacred cow" Illich called it, comes to be identified with truth itself, with absolute truth, ideology reigns over the ones who remain hidden and are interpreted as nothing, as barbarians: "Being is, I am Being; non-Being is not: the periphery, the oppressed classes, the poor, the others are not." It is the sacralization of pedagogical fetishism. Parmenides was its first high priest; Rousseau, the greatest of the Europeans; the followers of Dewey, its acolytes.

3.4.3 *Atheistic Antifetishism*

3.4.3.1 To deny the divinity of a fetishized system is authentic atheism. It is the negation of a negation (3.4.4.5). Antifetishism is knowing how to return things in a practical way to their rightful places, to reduce them to their truth. It is not to say—with Hegel or with Nietzsche—"God is dead!" The question is: Which God has died? The fetish? Europe as divinized? It is not a question of rending one's garments because someone says, "There is no God!" The question is: Why do they eat my people just as they eat bread (Psalm 14), and do not give bread to the hungry?

3.4.3.2 It is, then, metaphysically correct to say that "the beginning of all criticism is the criticism of religion"—that is, the religion of the system, fetishistic religion, the religion of medieval Christendom (which was not Christianity but a culture, as Kierkegaard fittingly pointed out) and of the modern bourgeoisies. The fetishism of capital has nudged aside all the other gods from the altar of the center, and it is carefully worshiped by the great enlightened democratic potentates fat from so much consumption. On its altars were immolated the Amerindians in the gold mines, the black slaves, the colonial Asians, the woman as grantee of useless luxury and leased vagina, as Esther Vilar would say, the

son as potential market for unnecessary merchandise.

3.4.3.3 Marx says that atheism as a pure negation of essentiality no longer makes sense; atheism negates a god (fetish) *and* affirms, by reason of this negation, the existence of human beings, of the poor, of the oppressed. For this very reason Feuerbach said that it is necessary to abandon the Hegelian fetishistic theology and open up to anthropology (to the other person). Such atheisms are a precondition of the possibility of liberative revolution and of support exterior to the prevailing present system.

3.4.4 *Necessary Hypothesis for Revolutionary Praxis*

3.4.4.1 In his *Philosophy of Poverty* Proudhon confesses that "studying in the silence of my heart the mystery of human revolutions, the great Unknown, God, has become for me a hypothesis—I mean, a necessary dialectical moment." This explains why John of the Cross says in *The Ascent of Mount Carmel* that "after everything there is nothing", or why Babeulf, the first socialist, wrote to his wife in 1794, when the French Revolution was at its peak, that he hid himself in the "night of nothingness." The nothingness of the system, beyond all Being, that which transcends totality, the metaphysical ("in the presence of which it is necessary to keep silence," Wittgenstein would say) is non-Being—the other than the given. To be open to nothingness, radical nihilism, is to expose oneself to the freedom that the system does not condition.

3.4.4.2 The unknown is the necessary postulate or hypothesis. If the system is divine, it is immutable. If it is not divine, one must be atheistic about it. But one can hardly deny the divinity of a system, present or future, if one does not affirm that the divine is other than all systems. Only this affirmation—first practical and then theoretical—is the condition that makes revolution possible—liberating mobilization against a fetishized system.

3.4.4.3 The practical affirmation of atheism is the struggle for justice. That is, whoever fights for the liberation of the poor affirms in a practical manner that the system is unjust, that it is not divine. Hermann Cohen in his work *Vernunft und Religion* fittingly says that the prophets discovered where the poor were within the state, and from them they worked out a pathological

diagnosis of the system. Thus, to discover the poor and take risks for them is to know the nondivinity of an oppressive totality (because divinity, the absolute Other, is goodness itself, justice).

3.4.4.4 The person who is overcome by the metaphysical passivity anterior to all worldly anteriority and assumes responsibility for the oppressed, in the presence of the absolute other, is a bearer of religion—not fetishized religion but metaphysical religion, the origin of all just systems. Unshirkable responsibility, stronger than death, is the procreating, metaphysical fecundity of all that is new in history. The liberating heroes of future homelands feel responsibility for their oppressed (3.1.9); parents are responsible for giving a critical reality to their offspring out of sheer generosity (3.3.7); teachers are responsible for giving a critical awareness to their students, to the people (3.3.8). The one who takes responsibility for the oppressed, the one who is persecuted, imprisoned, tortured, and assassinated for taking responsibility for the poor, witnesses in the totality of the glory of the Infinite.

3.4.4.5 Pure atheism, without affirmation of the infinite Other, is not sufficiently critical; it permits the fetishization of a future system. Only if it is affirmed that the divine is other than all possible systems will liberating revolution be possible. Hence disbelief in the fetish—atheism—must be affirmed as the exteriority of the absolute and of the Origin. The center set itself up as divine: it rejected anthropological exteriority (the Amerindian, the African, the Asian) and hence also absolute Exteriority. Antifetishism is negation of the negation of absolute Exteriority. To affirm absolute Exteriority is to close the road to a future tautological negation of the liberating affirmation. It is, as Proudhon said, the necessary hypothesis of all revolution.

3.4.5 *The Metaphysics of Historical Mobilization*

3.4.5.1 Atheism vis-à-vis the fetish is the negative precondition for revolution; affirmation of absolute Exteriority is the affirmative and definitive precondition for liberation. Both preconditions are practical. It is in action that the fetish is denied and Exteriority affirmed—when one assumes responsibility for the

oppressed. Now let us turn to the theoretical precondition for liberation.

3.4.5.2 Fetishism, like the tragic pantheism of the classical ages (for example, that of the Greeks and Romans), not only divinizes the system but also takes hold of its instrumentalities, practices, and institutions. The whole and the parts are divinized (2.6.6.2). Inasmuch as the function that something fulfills within the system is identified with its reality, everything is eternalized. A group of armed subversives, the Machabee brothers, arose in revolution against the Hellenistic empire in the second century B.C. They and their mother were the first ones to affirm that the absolute Other "created all out of non-Being." Tertullian affirmed against Hermogenes: "God created all things from nothing" (*ex nihilo*). To create means to give reality without antecedents, from what is not yet constituted, from outside any system or social formation.

3.4.5.3 The metaphysical theory of creation is the theoretical support of liberative revolution; it is the most thorough-going deposition that no system is eternal, because everything, even the sun and the earth, is contingent (it could be nonexistent) and possible, nonnecessary (at a given time it was not).

3.4.5.4 The metaphysical contingency and possibility of the totality of the cosmos (3.4.6) amply guarantees the contingency and possibility of the institutions of a given social formation, of any political, erotic, pedagogical, and even religious systems. Contingency thus gnaws at the claim to divinity made by an oppressing state. It takes away its eternity and places it in a dialectical liberating movement.

3.4.5.5 The metaphysical theory of creation gives fluidity to the whole and to all its parts. Neither the cosmos, nor the world, nor any system is divine. The theory of creation denies such divinization and affirms disbelief in fetishism: the fetish itself is a creature, workmanship of human hands only, a creature made by a creature. That is, if everything is created, nothing is divine. The theory of creation is the atheization of the cosmos and of the world.

3.4.5.6 Medieval christendom misunderstood this doctrine; it gave emphasis to the notion that the Absolute had created the world *as it is*. Creation thus lost its metaphysical bite and became a fetishist ideology.

3.4.6 *Ethical, Cultic, Economic Constitution of the Cosmos*

3.4.6.1 For those who hold themselves responsible and in peril for the sake of the oppressed, nothing is allowed to impede their feeding of the hungry, not even the private property—natural or divine (in historical and fetishized reality)—of the one who has obtained bread unjustly. Everything can be modified in order to serve the oppressed.

This systematic or worldly plasticity is likewise projected to the cosmos. The cosmos itself is experienced as suspended from and in a creative Freedom that places the cosmos, matter (3.4.8), at the disposition of the liberator and the oppressed. The constitutive intention that utilizes the cosmos and nature as a mediation is a cultural-economic integration (hence cultic) of the cosmos in political discourse.

3.4.6.2 The cosmos—the totality of reality, of real things keeping among themselves a transcendental bond or referential unity, constitutive by itself—appears to the interpretation or praxis of the liberator as created by unconditional Freedom, as the theater of service (3.4.8) and matter to mitigate the hunger of the hungry (4.4.9). The cosmos thus acquires an ethical constitution. It comes forth from Absolute Freedom to be used with freedom at the service of the other.

3.4.6.3 We do not adore the cosmos (nature) now, as Greeks, Romans, Egyptians, Aztecs, Incas, Hindus, and Chinese did. We use the cosmos as a mediation of service, of cult. The cosmos has an ethical constitution insofar as it has a creator; it has a cultic-cultural constitution insofar as it has been worked on (4.2.4.4) in justice. The metaphysics of practical freedom resides in the cosmos historically, in a defetishized way. It will never bow down to matter as eternal divinity (the naive materialism of Goethe or Engels); it will simply use matter as a mediation.

3.4.7 *Reality, Essence, and Existence*

3.4.7.1 Only now can we turn to these classic concepts, though they take on another sense. Reality is totality creatively constituted; it is the relative unity of all substantivity “of itself,” from within itself, anterior or prior to all posterior manifestation

in the world. The real is the cosmos as totality, the *prius* of the world.

3.4.7.2 Outside the creative and absolute fecundity, the cosmos is existent (placed-outside: *ex-sistere*). Eternal Being is not existent, only "sistent"; it is real by itself (*a se* and not only *ex se*). The existent is the creature, moment of the real cosmos, actuality of the constituted totality effective of itself and from within itself.

3.4.7.3 On the other hand, the essence of cosmic things is the unity of the constitutive notes that act synergetically, codetermining each other. The constitutive or real essence is individual; it is what constitutes the reality of the thing that exists in itself. The essence constitutes the substantivity of the real, as Zubiri might say. Thus, properly speaking, the totality of inorganic, natural, physical things has essence, one and only, inasmuch as they constitute only one system, only one astronomical substantivity (4.1.3). For its part, the totality of organic things likewise has one essence, because it reacts as one substantivity (4.1.4). Only the human being, each human being, is in reality one substantivity (I do not say "substantiality," because "substantivity" assumes substantiality in the way that the human organism assimilates a substance such as sugar) inasmuch as its freedom seals the unity of its constitutive notes with real autonomy and operativeness (4.1.5).

3.4.7.4 Only a person, and each person, is really a thing, *res eventualis*, a thing that has a history.

3.4.8 *Critical Materialism and Worship as Economy*

3.4.8.1 The system, when it is totalized as a closed world, tends to become fetishized, as already noted. Only the imploratory provocation of the other, of the poor, unsettles the established order and the easy conscience of the dominator. The questioning of the oppressed, the protest of the poor, is the epiphany of the revelation of the Absolute. To reveal is nothing more than to beseech from exteriority in order to mobilize the praxis of the liberator—that is, to make of inert matter (the cosmos) the object of service-worship.

3.4.8.2 Naive cosmological or acritical materialism affirms

that everything is matter. By matter is understood a mythical reality that would be something like an infinite mass, an infinite rock. If everything is matter, and a person its epiphenomenon, as Engels thinks in *Dialectics of Nature*, if matter is infinite (which is a contradiction in terms), if it is eternal (that is, it has no beginning and no end; it is "from always," strictly speaking), if it has life, intelligence, beauty, and so forth, in potency or in act, it means that now matter is divinity. (It has all the characteristics that can be attributed to divinity.) All reality arises by differentiation from the original identity of matter. In this case, everything is internal to matter; there is no freedom or responsibility; determination and necessity reign supreme. Everything is divine. Likewise, the oppressive empire, castrating machismo, and filicidal pedagogy are divine. Who would be able to rise blasphemously against the eternal wisdom of matter? Who would dare to alter its sacred source? Paradoxically, naive materialism ends up being fetishist and carries on like any other type of pantheism or idealism.

3.4.8.3 On the contrary, authentic materialism or critical materialism (which parallels authentic atheism or radical atheism) interprets nature (see chap. 4) as matter for work (*C* in diagram 4). Things are relevant inasmuch as *with them* (that *with which* the artifact is manufactured is its materiality) are fabricated things needed by the other as such, beyond the present system of necessity. The materiality of the sense-thing, its possibility or mediation for service, is what in 3.4.6.3 is called the cultic-cultural constitution of the cosmos.

3.4.8.4 For Hegel the supreme worship or liturgy is rendered by the perfect act of absolute religion. That worship consists in the certainty possessed by the subject of the absolute state, by an act of faith, that the representation is the idea, in other words, the certainty of being God. This certainty of being the manifestation of matter can be had by a member of the bureaucracy or by a North American government official defending Christian civilization. It is the certainty of the fascist who keeps a "good conscience" while assassinating a hero of liberation.

3.4.8.5 On the contrary, the absolute worship to the infinite Other, the absolute economy, is to give to the other, in justice, matter worked on. To serve (*habodah*) is as much to liberate

the oppressed as it is to perform divine service or worship. A just economy, as the sum total of artifacts produced by human labor and distributed with equity among a people, is worship of the Infinite: by giving food to the hungry, and the poor, to the defenseless and the widowed, to the solitary and the orphaned, liturgy is rendered to the Absolute.

3.4.8.6 Authentic materialism is correlative to the cultic utilization of the cosmos: the fruit of labor and earth is offered to the Absolute Other (4.3. and 4.4) when service is rendered to the poor.

3.4.9 *The Festival*

3.4.9.1 I am not speaking here of the *homo ludens* of Nietzsche and his commentators. It is not a question of the Dionysiac or Bacchanalian feast, of the wine that intoxicates those who are able to acquire it, the feast of dominators, that of *otium* or *orgia*. It is another type of celebration.

3.4.9.2 Worship of the Infinite is liberation itself. The feast of the Infinite is the rejoicing of liberation. But, as Rosenzweig tells us, peoples remember and celebrate only the times of their own liberation; never are victories of other peoples celebrated.

3.4.9.3 The festival of liberation of those who sing, dance, run, jump, exult in rejoicing, is the celebration of release from the prison of oppression—the political celebration of the compatriots who create the new homeland, the erotic celebration of the couple who find orgasm fulfilling in mutual rapturous service; the pedagogical celebration of youth in rebellion when it seems to them that they are already touching with their hands a more just, more human world, which they can enter without being repressed. That festival, the fiesta that Nicaragua now celebrates on July 19, under the leadership of the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN), is a rejoicing in liberation.

3.4.9.4 I am not talking here about the Sunday that simply injects a parenthesis into the work week. Nor do I mean the friendly card game that lets us think we are living in heaven upon earth, without responsibilities, without justice. The game of placing between parentheses (*Einklammerung*) is phenomenological; it is the entertainment of the circus, of the clowns who make

others happy while they themselves weep under the mask of solitude and anguish. That is the feast of dominators; they want to forget daily life because, although they pretend to have triumphed, they know that what they have achieved is fictitious, a fetish.

3.4.9.5 The supreme worship, the praxis of liberation, gives supreme happiness. The festival of a people that liberates itself is the infinite, incommensurable festival, the one that measures all other rejoicing and makes it possible for us to continue living. It is a spilling over into history of the joy of the Absolute.