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Myles Horton and Paulo Freire

We Make the Road by Walking

Conversations
on Education and
Social Change



Temple University Press
Philadelphia



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They sent the note to *me*! I was talking, you know. So we had to deal with those problems.

"The difference between education and organizing"

MYLES: One of the unsolved problems, even I think here at Highlander, is the difference between education and organizing, and that's an old question, it goes way back. Saul Alinsky and I went on a circuit. We had the "Alinsky/Horton show" that went out on the circuit debating and discussing the difference between organizing and education. At that time Saul was a staunch supporter of Highlander, and I was a staunch supporter of him, but we differed and we recognized the difference. We had no problem about it, and we tried to explain to people that there was a difference. Saul says that organizing educates. I said that education makes possible organization, but there's a different interest, different emphasis. That's still unclarified. In my mind I kept them separate because I could function much better having a clear cut idea about what I consider the difference in operating on that basis.

The reason it was such a debatable subject is because the overwhelming majority of the people who were organizing and who were officials of unions in the South had been at Highlander. So the public who only saw that didn't know what went on at Highlander, and they assumed that we were an organizer's training school. But I kept saying no, no. We do education and they become organized. They become officials. They become what-

ever they are, educational directors. Basically it's not technical training. We're not in the technical business. We emphasize ways you analyze and perform and relate to people, but that's what I call education, not organizing. When I wanted to organize—which I did at one period, something I'll go into later on—I resigned from the Highlander staff. I took a leave of absence from the Highlander staff because I didn't want organizing and education confused in the minds of the people. It was confusing enough as it was.

So Highlander's been in the situation where we were looked at from all kinds of different angles. We always had to watch not to accept the appraisal of other people, and try to make our own criticism relating to these critics. We just had to constantly keep clear about what we meant by education. One of the examples I used to use got me in trouble and still gets me in trouble when I use it. I'd say if you were working with an organization and there's a choice between the goal of that organization, or the particular program they're working on, and educating people, developing people, helping them grow, helping them become able to analyze—if there's a choice, we'd sacrifice the goal of the organization for helping the people grow, because we think in the long run it's a bigger contribution. That's still a hot issue. I used that illustration in a participatory research meeting when I was pushed on the difference. One woman there was organizing a hospital. She was just furious, because she thought it was inhumane to take that position, that my purpose was to develop people instead of particular issues. I would usually find there wouldn't

be that contradiction, you see, but if it came down to it, then you have to make that distinction. That's how strongly I felt about separating the two ideas.

PAULO: Could I make a comment just about that. I think that mobilization of masses of people has or had, inside of itself, organization. That is, it's impossible to start mobilizing without organizing. The very process of mobilizing demands organization of those who are beginning to be mobilized. Secondly, I think that both mobilizing and organizing have in their nature education as something indispensable—that is, education as development of sensibility, of the notion of risk, of confronting some tensions that you have to have in the process of mobilizing or organizing. Knowing, for example, the dialectical relationship between tactics and strategy. You have to have some tactics that have to do with the strategy you have. You understand the strategy as the objective, as the goal, as the dream you have, and as the tactics you raise as you try to put into practice, to materialize the objective, the dream. In the process of mobilizing, of organizing, you need from time to time to stop a little bit with the leaders in the groups in order to think about the space you already walked. In reflecting on the action of mobilizing and organizing, you begin to teach something. You *have* to teach something. It's impossible for me not to learn. A good process of mobilizing and organizing results in learning from the very process and goes beyond.

Until some years ago, among the left groups and left parties, we had strong examples of how education was not taken seriously during the process of mobiliza-

tion and organization, which were seen just as political process. In fact they are *educational* processes at the same time. Why this attitude? I think that the answer should be found in the analysis of or the understanding of education as something that really is superstructure and a productive reproducer of the dominant ideology. It's very clear, for example, in the seventies, the writings about education's power to reproduce the dominant ideology. It was, I think, because of this that the left parties and the groups always thought, in Latin America, for example, that education is something that comes *after*, after we get power. When we get power through the revolution, then we can begin to treat education. In this line of thought, this vision was not able even to make a distinction between the schooling system as Myles has underlined and the activities *out* of the subsystem. In fact, nevertheless, even education inside of the subsystem of education is not exclusively the reproducer of the dominant ideology. This is the task that the ruling class expects the teachers to accomplish. But it's possible also to have another task as an educator. Instead of reproducing the dominant ideology, an educator can denounce it, taking a risk of course. It's not easy to be done, but education cannot be exhausted exclusively as the reproducer of the subsystem of the dominant ideology. Theoretically it is not exclusively this.

Today I think that the tension is expressed in a different way. I know many people in the left parties in Latin America who discovered through practice what political education is. I think that the tension is being

treated in a different way today. When we're in the process of mobilizing or organizing, it begins to be seen also as an educational problem of process and product, because undoubtedly there is a different kind of education in mobilization before getting power, and there is also the continuity of that. That's a mistake committed before, that education should come just exclusively after organizing. Education is *before*, is *during*, and is *after*. It's a process, a permanent process. It has to do with the human existence and curiosity.

MYLES: If you're into having a successful organizing campaign and dealing with a specific project, and that's the *goal*, then whether you do it yourself or an expert does it or some bountiful person in the community does it, or the government does it without your involvement because that solves the problem—then you don't take the time to let people develop their own solutions. If the purpose is to solve the problem, there are a lot of ways to solve the problem that are so much simpler than going through all this educational process. Solving the problem can't be the goal of education. It *can* be the goal of organizations. That's why I don't think organizing and education are the same thing. Organizing implies that there's a specific, limited goal that needs to be achieved, and the purpose is to achieve that goal. Now if that's it, then the easiest way to get that done solves the problem. But if education is to be part of the process, then you may not actually get that problem solved, but you've educated a lot of people. You have to make that choice. That's why I say there's a difference. So when I went to organize for a union, I got a leave of absence from the

Highlander staff. I wouldn't do that as a member of the Highlander staff because I don't think organizing and education are the same thing. I do think participatory research and education are the same thing, but I don't think organizing and education are the same. I think the goal is different.

Now a lot of people use organizing to educate people. That's what I was trying to do when I was organizing textile unions, but when it comes down to it, I wasn't free to make a decision not to get a contract, to sacrifice the contract and the organization for education, because I was hired to organize the union. Organizers are committed to achieving a limited, specific goal whether or not it leads to structural change, or reinforces the system, or plays in the hands of capitalists. The problem is confused because a lot of people use organizing to do some education and they think it's empowerment because that's what they're *supposed* to be doing. But quite often they *disempower* people in the process by using experts to tell them what to do while having the semblance of empowering people. That confuses the issue considerably.

THIRD PARTY: Your description of organizing is a description of what most of education is. Most of education is specifying a specific objective and reaching that objective irregardless of how the process works.

MYLES: That's right. Schooling.

THIRD PARTY: So most schooling is in fact analogous to what you call organizing?

PAULO: But, inside of the process of organizing, as Myles said, first we have education taking part of the nature

of organizing. What I want to say is that it's impossible to organize without educating and *being* educated by the very process of organizing. Secondly, we can take advantage of the process of organizing in order to develop a very special process of education. Maybe I will try to be more clear. For example, when we are trying to organize, of course we have to try to mobilize, because mobilization and organization are together. But in the process of mobilizing and automatically organizing we discover as well, as in any kind of action or practice, that we must become more and more efficient. If you are not trying to be efficient in organizing workshops, the people will not answer you next year when you call. That is, efficiency, without being an instrument of enslaving you, is something that is absolutely necessary. Inefficiency has to do with the distance between what you do and what you would like to get. Do you see that we manage with efficiency in this place? I have my dream. Then what did I do in order to materialize my dream? Then my evaluation has to do with this.

Those who are engaged in mobilizing and organizing have to evaluate this process. In the process of evaluation, undoubtedly, there is an interpretive and necessary moment in which the leaders who are trying to mobilize and organize have to know better what they are doing. The organizers engage in critical reflection on what they did. In doing that the leaders start participating in a process in the next stage of mobilization and organization, because they change. They tend to change in their language. Do you see? If they don't do that they are not capable. They will change their lan-

guage, their speech, the contents of their speech to the extent that in mobilizing the people they are learning from the people. And then the more they learn from the people the more they can mobilize. It's expected. They can mobilize the people. Then because of that I always see that it's absolutely necessary for mobilizers and organizers to be quite sure about the educational nature of this practice.

In a second aspect we can show, in an analysis of the process we call mobilizing and organizing—which implies organizers getting more and closer contacts with groups of people—that the organizers are engaged, if they are good, in a kind of participatory research.

THIRD PARTY: If they're good.

PAULO: If they are good. It's necessary to say, if they are good. And if they are good in being involved in participatory research, they necessarily are grasping some issues that have to do with the expectations and frustrations of the people, some issues that have to do with people's lack of knowledge. Then it should be possible, starting from the process of mobilizing, to begin to create workshops, for example, for the people in which educators could illuminate the issues coming from the people. I see too that through educational moments in a mobilizing process, one takes part in the very process of mobilizing. The other one is something that comes up from, and because of, the mobilization process.

MYLES: Yes. I think certainly you can learn from mobilizing, but you can learn to manipulate the people or you can learn to educate the people. There's two kinds of learning that come out of the same experience. In

both the civil rights movement and the labor movement, there's no other identifiable source that produced as many organizers as Highlander did. There were so many organizing in the labor movement who came from Highlander that people called it an organizer's school. There weren't many organizers in the South. We were starting without much experience, so we had to develop a lot of organizers. I always said that Highlander was not a school for organizers. It was a school to help people learn to analyze and give people values, and they became the organizers. The reason so many of Highlander's people were successful organizers was because of that. Not that we trained them in techniques of mobilizing and organizing, because we didn't do that. The same training that people got to be an organizer, they got to be an official of the unions, they got to be a committee member, they got to be a shop steward. It was all the same. It wasn't technical. We didn't tell people how to do things. But they became successful organizers, and people who wanted to be organizers knew they came from Highlander, so they'd come to Highlander so they could be organizers. We taught them our own way, and the reason we did that was because we wanted them to be educators as well as organizers. Instead of just mobilizers we wanted them to educate the people. They were the people who insisted on having the educational program in their unions. When they'd organize the union, they'd immediately set up the educational program because they understood that was part of a union, whereas some of the people would operate from the top. They didn't want an educational program be-

cause they wanted to control it from the top. Now that was a different kind of organization. When I say the difference between education and organizing, I don't mean to say you can't have educating and organizing because that's what we try to do. An organizing experience can be educational. It can be. But it has to be done with the purpose of having democratic decision making, having people participate in the action and not having just one authoritative leader. Otherwise it won't work.

I'm not critical of organizations. In fact Highlander is based on organizations. In the old days, for example, we wouldn't take anybody at Highlander who wasn't a product of an organization, who wasn't involved in an organization, who didn't come from an organization. So to separate Highlander's thinking from organizations is a mistake, because we think organizations have to be the first step toward a social movement. What you do in that organization is different if you just think of organizing or if you just think of the way Highlander works. It's a little confusing, but in practice it seemed to work out pretty well.

PAULO: Organizers who hope to educate must increase their historical and cultural sensitivity. An educator or mobilizer without that vigil should change professions. Secondly, without the sensitivity of intuition, it's impossible to become an educator, but it is also impossible to become an educator by stopping at the level of sensitivity. I must be intuitive, but I cannot stop with intuition. I have to take the object of my intuition as an object of

my knowing and grasp it theoretically and not because it just exists, you see.

Myles, I remember that some time ago you talked to me about a difficult situation you had in the thirties with a worker-leader who wanted you to say what they should do. Do you remember?

MYLES: We had been successful at Highlander earlier in organizing a county in which we lived, organizing the unions, and organizing the county politically. We took over the county politically by using education, so I knew how to do that. I knew how education could be used as a means of building organizations, union and political organizations, but I didn't know what you could do in a short period of an organizing campaign, which has for its purpose getting a union organized and getting a contract. That's the purpose in setting up a union.

Within that framework I was interested in going as far as I could in helping people develop the capacity to make decisions and to take responsibility, which is what I think is the role of an educator. One of the things I was doing was working through committees to get the committee members to take the responsibilities and learn how to do things. We had a relief committee that needed a little help at first in how you handle relief problems and funds that come in. I finally got this committee and the others to the place where I didn't even need to know what was going on, and I felt that was kind of a measure of success. If they didn't come to me to ask me or to tell me, then I thought they're doing pretty well. But the strike committee was one of

the toughest; they had to think through the strategy of a strike. We had the local police force, the county sheriff, the state militia against us. So it was a tough job. They were trying to break the strike. The highway patrol had begun to usher scabs through the picket lines and they were beginning to really break into our solidarity. The strikers said: "We've got to try something new. We've got to do something." One guy said, "Why don't we just dynamite the damn mill?" "Then we won't have a job," they said, "that won't work." We were having a little meeting up in my motel room. There were very few places we could meet where we wouldn't be listened to. The room was probably bugged, and the telephone was. They kept throwing out ideas, and I'd raise questions to get them to think a little more about it. Finally they said they couldn't come up with anything, any strategy, or anything to do. They were getting desperate. They said: "Well, now you've had more experience than we have. You've got to tell us what to do. You're the expert." I said: "No, let's talk about it a little bit more. In the first place I don't know what to do, and if I did know what to do I wouldn't tell you, because if I had to tell you today then I'd have to tell you tomorrow, and when I'm gone you'd have to get somebody else to tell you." One guy reached in his pocket and pulled out a pistol and says, "Goddamn you, if you don't tell us I'm going to kill you." I was tempted then to become an instant expert, right on the spot! But I knew that if I did that, all would be lost and then all the rest of them would start asking me what to do. So I said: "No. Go ahead

and shoot if you want to, but I'm not going to tell you." And the others calmed him down.

PAULO: This is a very beautiful story, if you consider that the educator has to educate and then because of that, the educator has to intervene. When I speak about intervening, some people symbolize this as if I, the educator, should come with some instruments to cut trees, and so on. For me it's a fantastic example of how the educator radically educates.

MYLES: Sounds a little radical all right.

PAULO: The best way you had to intervene was to reject giving the solution and secondly to be honest. Say first, I don't know; and secondly, if I did know I would not tell you because doing it the first time means I would have to do it the second, third, the fourth. You see, it is the intervention of the educator. That is, you did not reject being the educator. It is beautiful.

MYLES: That's why I make the distinction between organizing and educating. Now an organizer's job, one who wasn't an educator, would be to get that contract the best way he could. That wouldn't have been a problem for him—to tell them what he thought was the best way to deal with that situation. His purpose was to get the organization's goal achieved, you see. And that's what an organizer's job is. An organizer's job is not to educate people as a prime consideration. His job is to accomplish a limited, specific goal. I'm not saying it isn't a wonderful goal for the people. I'm not saying it isn't valuable. I'm just saying there's a difference between organizing and educating, and I think there's a very

important distinction. And an educator should never become an expert, and an organizer quite often finds that that's his main strength, being the expert.

"My expertise is in knowing *not* to be an expert"

THIRD PARTY: Myles, is that sort of the same philosophy that you and Highlander used to exclude people from workshops who the people perceive as experts? I know we've had very similar discussions around other ways that people perceive authority. For instance, in the occupational health movement, when coal miners came to Highlander to learn about and talk about occupational disease, we didn't want doctors in the room. Is there something similar at work here between experts and charismatic leaders doing the same thing in a workshop process?

MYLES: I think we've had a lot of experience with that. Often when I say you start with people's experience, people get the point that you start and stop with that experience, but of course all of you know better. There's a time when people's experience runs out. I'll give you an example. We were working with a group of black parents here in a Tennessee town where only about 5 percent of the population is black. The schools had merged. They weren't integrated; they just absorbed the blacks and made whites out of them without schools changing any of their all-white, racist ways of doing. So the black kids were miserable. The parents at first insisted on them fitting in, and then they finally realized what they were doing, really brutalizing the kids by setting up situa-

tions in which they were discriminated against. So they came down to Highlander for a couple of workshops about this situation. They decided that they were going to have a lawsuit, go into court. Well, pretty soon they exhausted what they knew. At that point, I said, "Would it be helpful if we got a lawyer, a friendly lawyer, to tell you the processes you'll have to go through?" They said, "We'll welcome that." Now that's what I call an extension of their knowledge, their experiences, which stays well within the framework of where they are in their thinking. It's their idea. So at that point you can feed in a lot of information that they don't have.

I asked a friend if he could come out—as a teacher, not as a lawyer—to teach them about what having a lawsuit meant in terms of time, cost, likely results and so on. When he got through, they realized that the solution could be ten years off, because there could be appeals, and their kids would be out of school by the time that was over. It would cost a lot of money and, in the meantime, they would more or less just sit on their hands and do nothing. So it would in fact kill their organization. Now he was very sympathetic. He was very pro-integration and he was anxious to be helpful and what he did was extremely helpful. But he wanted to go ahead, go on and advise them about what to do. I stopped him at that point because I didn't want the expert to tell them what to do. I wanted the expert to tell them the facts and let them decide what to do. Now there's a big difference in giving information and telling people how to use it. I had to really just get a hold of him by the arm and lead him out of the room. He

was still talking over his shoulder when I was taking him out. He still wanted to help these people out.

Now that use of expert knowledge is different from having the expert telling people what to do, and I think that's where I draw the line. I have no problem with using information that experts have, as long as they don't say this is what you should do. I've never yet found any experts that know where the line is. If people who want to be experts want to tell people what to do because they think it's their *duty* to tell them what to do, to me that takes away the power of people to make decisions. It means that they're going to call another expert when they need help. They learn by doing what you're supposed to do, and there's no empowerment that comes as a result of that. There is an organizational success, maybe, as a result of that, but there's no *empowerment* of people, no learning. So that's my feeling about how you use and how you don't use experts.

THIRD PARTY: You could probably predict that this would come up. Why did you wait to bring the lawyer into the circle? Why wasn't he there from the beginning?

MYLES: Sure I knew it would come up. It had to come up, because I know the pattern in this region is you go into court and you lull people. But suppose I had said the first day that these people came to Highlander: "Now I know you're going to end up tomorrow talking about a lawsuit. We're going to get a lawyer out here and get this settled at once and let him tell you what to do." Then there'd be no learning taking place. There'd be some information shared, but no learning—no learning about how to deal with problems, no sense of responsibility.

They would learn that way to turn their problems over to an expert. People already do that all the time; they don't need to come to Highlander to turn things over to the expert. They've got to think through the information themselves or they can't use it when they get back. It can't be part of their experience, their experience of learning, and therefore be theirs, if you deny them the right of making it theirs. If I'm the expert, my expertise is in knowing *not* to be an expert or in knowing how I feel experts should be used.

"My respect for the soul of the culture . . ."

PAULO: How is it possible for us to work in a community without feeling the *spirit* of the culture that has been there for many years, without trying to understand the soul of the culture? We cannot interfere in this culture. Without understanding the soul of the culture we just invade the culture.

I think that it's necessary to clarify a point. I come back again to a question you [third party] asked us, in which you said you and Myles are demanding concerning vision and values. I come back again with a very good example now. My respect for the soul of the culture does not prevent me from trying, with the people, to change some conditions that appear to me as obviously against the beauty of being human. Let me give a concrete example. Let us take a main cultural tradition in Latin America that prevents men from cooking. It is very interesting to analyze that. In the last analysis, men created the tradition and the assumption in the

heads of the women that if men cook, they give the impression that they are no longer male. With that, men get advantages. Okay, this is the tradition. Let us take the second community in which men do nothing concerning the home work. Women have to do everything at home and also in the field, and men come back from the field just to eat, but the women also have been there working.

Now I am an educator, and I am discussing in workshops with this community. My question is this: is it possible for me, concerning my vision of the world—because I respect the cultural tradition of this community—is it possible for me to spend my life without ever touching this point? Without ever criticizing them just because I respect their traditional culture? No, I don't do that. But I am not invading in not doing that—in doing the opposite, that is, in criticizing, in challenging men and women in this culture to understand how wrong it is from the human point of view. One man told me that it is determined historically that all men have the right to eat what women cook. It's not like this because it is a kind of distinct destiny. It is cultural and historical, and if it is cultural and historical, it can be changed. And if it can be changed, it's not unethical to put the possibility of change on the table.

It's just one example, and there are lots of other examples concerning respect. I insist it is one thing to respect; the other thing is to keep and to increase something that has nothing to do with the vision of the educator. I prefer to be very clear and to assume my duty of challenging, but of course I know that I have the duty

to challenge that culture and those people. I also know that there is a time to start doing that. I cannot start on the same day I arrive. I cannot do that. Then the question now is not strategical, it's tactical. Strategically I am against it. I am in favor of the struggle of women. Tactically I can be silent six months about this, but the first occasion I have, I bring the issue on the table, even though it makes us uncomfortable.

MYLES: Paulo I'd like to get back to where we started on this. Now I'm all for those of us who are honest about our positions, who say we're against the system. We want to change the system. I'm all for us being extremely critical with each other about this problem. I have no respect for people who claim to be neutral or for institutions that claim to be neutral making criticisms of us—none. They have the power base to magnify all of their positions, and then they label it neutral.

PAULO: I remember how Amilcar Cabral, the great African leader, dealt with this. In *The Letters to Guinea Bissau*,* I discussed a little bit how Amilcar dealt with this. During the war in the bush, he always led seminars. He brought some people from the front with him to the bush. In the shadows of the trees, he used to discuss, to evaluate the war, but he always brought some issues about science, culture, teaching to discuss with the people. In one of the seminars, one of the issues he touched was the power of the amulet. He said: "One of you told me that you were saved because of your amulet. I would

* Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy in Process: The Letters to Guinea Bissau*, trans. Carmen St. John Hunter (New York: Seabury Press, 1978).

like to tell you that we save *ourselves* from the bullets of the Portuguese, if we *learn* how to save ourselves. I am sure that the sons of your sons will say sometime our fathers and our parents fought beautifully, but they used to have some strange ideas." He respected his culture but he was fighting against what he used to call the weakness of culture. He said, in his reflections about culture, that every culture has negativeness and positiveness, and what we have to do is to improve the positiveness and to overcome the negativeness. The belief in the power of the amulet was one of the weaknesses of the culture. It would be absolutely wrong if he said those who believe in the amulet will be in jail for two days. It would be an absurdity, but for me it should be also an absurdity not to have said what he said.

MYLES: He had to find a way to do it.

PAULO: Yes.

MYLES: We had to find ways to handle our own "weakness of culture." One of the real problems in the South in the early days of Highlander was segregation, discrimination against people of color, legally and traditionally. One of our principles is that we believe in social equality for all people and no discrimination for any reason—religious, race, sex, or anything else. The social customs were to have segregation. Now how did we deal with that social custom? The way that was used by most people working in what then was called race relations was to talk about it and pray over it and wait for magic changes, I suppose. Some dealt with segregation by having segregated programs, and educating Blacks here and whites there, like it was traditional to do. We

chose to deal with it directly, knowing that a discussion and analysis wouldn't change their minds.

We decided to hold integrated workshops and say nothing about it. We found that if you didn't talk about it, if you didn't force people to admit that they were wrong—that's what you do when you debate and argue with people—you can do it. People didn't quite understand how it was happening. They just suddenly realized they were eating together and sleeping in the same rooms, and since they were used to doing what they were *supposed* to do in society, the status quo, they didn't know how to react negatively to *our* status quo. We had another status quo at Highlander, so as long as we didn't talk about it, it was very very little problem. Then later on, participants started talking about it from another point of view, a point of view of experience. They had *experienced* something new, so they had something positive to build on. When we started talking about it, it wasn't to say: "Now, look you've changed. We were right and you were wrong." We said: "Now you've had an experience here. When you get back you'll be dealing with people in your unions who haven't had this experience, and they're going to know you've been to an integrated school. How are you going to explain it to them?" So they started, not ever talking about how they had changed or how they had faced this problem, but with how they could explain to other people. We just skipped the stage of discussion. Of course, it was going on inside all the time, but we didn't want to put it in terms of an argument or a debate.

Now we were violating the mores. We were doing

something; we weren't taking our time. We just did it, head on, from the very beginning. Sometimes you have to deal with those problems and sometimes you don't. Sometimes you can delay, sometimes you can't. I think you always have to be conscious of going against the traditions of people. You have to really think seriously about that.

PAULO: Absolutely. Even in order to change some traditions, you have to start from there. It's impossible not to.

THIRD PARTY: When you talk about looking at the traditions of a culture, you're saying part of my responsibility is to evaluate the culture, to criticize the culture, to accept and to understand it, but to criticize it. Then part of my responsibility is to take anything that I feel is unjust, unfair and try to do something about it. Isn't that fair?

PAULO: Yes it is.

MYLES: When people criticize me for not having any respect for existing structures and institutions, I protest. I say I give institutions and structures and traditions all the respect that I think they deserve. That's usually mighty little, but there are things that I do respect. They have to earn that respect. They have to earn it by serving people. They don't earn it just by age or legality or tradition.

We've got some good traditions in this country on paper and in the lives of people about individual freedom, which I value very highly. I used to say there are only two things that people who came to Highlander had to accept as a condition of coming, and that is no discrimination, period, and complete freedom of

speech. Now freedom of speech in this country, if you want to simplify it, is to me a value to be preserved and extended and built on. It's a tradition that we've developed further than most countries, and I value that. I'd like to see other countries have it. For another example, in the traditions of the Native Americans, we have the holistic concept of society being one, that the universe is one. People and trees and rocks and history are all merged. In Native American visions, they're all related. They have the vision but they know history. This holistic concept is the oldest tradition we actually have in terms of history. It's not widespread, but you can't say it's an *un-American* tradition. It's the most American kind of tradition.

I'm not saying that everything in a people's culture is bad. I'm just saying that you have to pick and choose and keep the good things. Now I have very little respect for the electoral system in the United States. I could have respected it in the early days, when the country was small and we had small population. The system that we have in the United States was set up at a time when the total population was the population of Tennessee. We've stretched it to try to make it work for different kind of problems and in stretching and adapting it, we've lost its meaning. We still have the form but not the meaning. There's a lot of things that we have to look at critically that might have been useful at one time that are no longer useful. I think there's some good in everything. There's some bad in everything. But there's so little good in some things that you know

for practical purposes they're useless. They're beyond salvation. There's so much good in some things, even though there's bad, that we build on that.

PAULO: I have the impression in our discussion that we have been getting around a central point. We have said lots of times since the beginning of our conversations, five days ago, that the educator does not have the right to be silent just because he or she has to respect the culture. If he or she does not have the right to impose his or her voice on the people, he does not have the right to be silent. It has to do precisely with the duty of intervening, which the educator has to assume without becoming afraid. There is no reason for an educator to be ashamed of this.

"I learned a lot from being a father"

PAULO: I remember I learned a lot from being a father.

MYLES: So did I.

PAULO: And I learned a lot from watching how Elza was a mother. I remember at home, Elza and I never said no without explaining the reason why. Never. If I said no, I would have to have some reason. Look, I don't want to give you the impression that I am a rationalist. No, it is not true, because I am a very strongly emotional being, full of feelings without any fear of expressing them. What I want to say is that behind *no* and *yes* there is argument and disagreement, and in every kind of argument and disagreement there are many things to be said. I just don't say no because I love you; I say no because I have some reasons to say no. Why not teach