

En: *Concilium* 152 (1980), pp. 40-52

Enrique Dussel

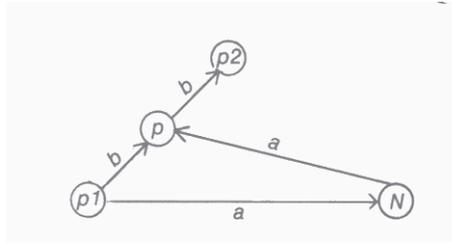
Christian Art of the Oppressed in Latin America (*Towards an aesthetics of liberation*)

THIS ARTICLE is an introduction to a subject of crucial importance, a theological aesthetics of liberation, and an outline of the problem.

1. 'ECONOMIC' STATUS OF THE EUCHARIST

In the Catholic liturgy the priest at the Offertory says the following prayer: 'Lord, we offer you this *bread* which has come from *working the earth*.' The bread which the celebrant holds up is not just symbolic, it is *real*, The work which produced it and the earth whose fruit it is are not symbolic, they are real. We must return to the reality which has often been hidden behind the symbol. It is the reality and not just the symbol 'which makes us think' (in Kant's or Ricouer's phrase).

The relationship between human beings and nature is work (*habodah* in Hebrew). Work is the intelligent effort by human beings to transform mere nature (the 'earth') and produce a 'fruit'. In the Bible the fruit of our labour *par excellence* is 'bread'-which is made from the Mediterranean crop, wheat, Thus the Eucharist presupposes *materially* the existence of 'bread' but its true status is *economic*, The economic relationship, as we understand it, is a 'practical-productive' relationship. The 'practical' relationship is that between two persons (me and you, man and God). The 'productive' relationship, as we have said, is the relationship between man and nature. The Eucharist is a relationship between two persons via the product of labour (and hence an economic relationship):



Work (arrow *a*) upon nature (*N*) results in a product (*p*) which is the condition for the possibility of the service of the cult (arrow *b*) man (*p1*) offers to God (*P2*). This cult or service (in Hebrew the same word is used as for work: *habodah*) paid to God is the offering of the product of labour. The cult is the *theological economy*, the ultimate proof of Christian life. On the cross Christ made his body the cult 'object' and offered himself to the father as a sacrificial victim. The victim (the dove, the ox or the martyr's own body) is the product of "work and history consecrated to God. But even in Israel God made known his will. The best service of God is to give food to the hungry: 'I want mercy and not sacrifices' (Hos. 6:6). God is the absolute *Other*. The poor person is the absolute *other* in the system of domination. Giving the poor the real and *material* product of one's labour is to offer the absolute Other one's life and the product of life for the reproduction and growth of life. The condition of a Eucharist acceptable to God is that the poor should *materially* eat. Thus justice in historical economic systems is the preliminary requirement for the celebration of the liturgy, because the Eucharist is the celebration in history of the perfect, Utopian economy. It is the banquet which requires that all who share it have satisfied their *material* hunger through historical justice. The Eucharist is a reminder of justice, it celebrates justice and foreshadows the justice of the Kingdom (by justice we mean also salvation and liberation). Thus the Eucharist is the critical yardstick against which every historical system of economic injustice must be measured.

2. A THEOLOGY OF PRODUCTION?

The theology of liberation, like all Christian theology possible today depends totally on a preliminary 'theology of production' (i.e., productive *creation*). From ancient times philosophy -and theology too- have discussed the 'work of art'-as Heidegger did for example in his *Der Ursprung des Kunstwerkes*.¹ The ruling class always paid attention to the works of artists and to art in general, from the Greeks (with their *techné*) and the Middle Ages (*ars*) to the aesthetics of Baumgarten. From his bourgeois standpoint Kant expressed it thus: 'The art of man is also distinguished from science as the practical faculty from the theoretical, the technical from the theoretical... Art is also distinguished from craft (*Handwerke*). Art is called liberal, whereas craft is paid. Art thinks of

itself as a game... whereas craft thinks of itself as work (*Arbeit*), that is to say as an occupation in itself disagreeable, and irksome whose only attraction is its effect, the wage: (*Kritik der Urteilskraft* 43, A 171).

Continuing via Hegel's *Aesthetik* to Heidegger, we find that the 'aesthetic' is the *clean* part of production, belonging to the ruling class and the geniuses, and leaving in the dark world of the irrational, contemptible, irksome and economic, the paid work of the worker under capitalism, whence however, the oppressed produce the *real* and *material* bread of the Eucharist (whereas the bourgeois artists build the fine churches, the stained glass windows, the statues of the saints, and publishers make fat profits with aesthetic missals etc.). On July 25 1976 the bishops of Guatemala wrote after the earthquake that destroyed the city and many great works of colonial art: 'From the historical point of view the cultural and artistic loss is irreparable. However all this was not the chief or only wealth of the Church. The Church does not get its strength or its true wealth from churches or from works of art collected through the centuries.¹² We are not despising 'sacred art' but we want to put it in its place within a 'theological economy' in which the aesthetic is not of primary importance in the 'theology of production'. First comes the daily work of the labourer. The most important thing is productive work for the essentials of life: food, clothes, housing (see Matt. 25:35) and only after this comes everything that improves the *quality* of life: enjoyment, delight, admiration. The million and a half human beings who are hungry and almost naked living in the satellite city of Nezahualcoyotl in Mexico and in the Indian towns, need life first (right to work, eat, basic necessities) and aesthetics later .

A 'theology of production' should think of the universe and nature as a 'product' of the divine vitality and God's creative act as an expression of himself as love. And it should think of man as a 'productive subject' (not an *ego cogito* but an *ego laboro*) who in producing the goods required for the *basic necessities* of human life creates the conditions for the celebration of the Eucharist: 'Take, *eat*, this is my body' (Matt. 26:26).

Need (unfulfilled negativity) is a tension towards the joy of satisfaction and fulfilment, and if this satisfaction is *just*, it is a foretaste of the kingdom of heaven.

A 'theology of production' is the *matter* (Christian materialism has nothing to do with Engels' 'cosmological' materialism, which in any case contradicts 'historical' materialism) of a theology of the sacrament.

3. PRODUCTION, ART AND SOCIAL CLASSES

It is well known that the 'Frankfurt School's' break with Heideggerian thought was, among other things, on aesthetics, Although the *Kritische Theorie* never emerges from a certain aestheticism into the broad field of

human production in general, that is to say, to the point of valuing work highly enough,³ Theodor Adorno at least reached the point of saying: 'Music-one of the arts-is not a manifestation of the truth (as Heidegger thinks) but it is in a real sense an ideology.'⁴ If art is 'ideology', this means it is *one* aspect of the total productivity of a social class.

In fact a social class is defined essentially by its material *substratum*: a certain type of work. The type of work determines (but not absolutely) the customs and culture of a human group. If it is true that there is a 'technical division' of work (for example between engineer and labourer) this means that the worker is situated in an historico-social division. In post-feudal European society, for example, the social classes are determined by the fact that some sell their productive labour and others hold the private property of capital. Among productive human actions of all kinds, 'artistic production' has a special place. An artistic action always remains connected (not absolutely) to the social class of the artist [that performs it. Likewise the ideal of beauty or fidelity is closely linked to the aesthetic value system of different social classes. For example Latin American neo-classicism (which began to appear from the beginning of the nineteenth century in the struggle against Spain) represents the irruption of a bourgeois oligarchy simultaneous with the expansion of Anglo-Saxon capitalism in Latin America. The baroque, on the other hand, corresponded to Spanish mercantile and pre-industrial capitalism. That is to say that there are not only *periods* in art, but in these periods there is a *contradiction* between the art of the ruling class and the art of the oppressed classes. It is obvious that triumphant, hegemonic, dominant art is the art of the class in political, economic, ideological and therefore artistic power.⁵ Thus through its objective content, art is 'in a real sense an ideology'. Expression in objects (words, images, sculpture, buildings etc.) manifests, justifies or criticises the given structures of a society. Art occupies a central place in the ideological struggle in the system (*as dominative art* when it reproduces and supports the system, as *liberation art* when it expresses the oppressed classes and offers models of the new and still utopian world). As one aesthete put it: 'If the future revolution is planned only for economic reasons and not also from the rise of a new sensibility which seeks new objectives and priorities, it will not be a revolution, and the artist is very important to an authentic revolution.'⁶

4. RELIGIOUS ART AND OPPRESSED CLASSES IN LATIN AMERICA

In general the history of art in Latin America well into the nineteenth century is fundamentally the history of religious art. At the same time it is the stage of a real 'struggle between the arts' of domination and of the oppressed.

The symbolic and mythical 'production' of the people, as Hugo Assmann pointed out, is the central moment in artistic production, secondary to the production of *bread*, but central in regard to other aesthetic productions (songs, poems, images, churches etc.). We shall take an example to illustrate the problem of the struggle between dominators and dominated in the three periods of Latin American religious art (pre-Hispanic, Spanish colonial and the period of dependence of Anglo-Saxon capitalism, until its defeat).

(a) '*Quezalcoatl-Tonantzin*' as symbols of the oppressed classes

In the ninth and tenth centuries A.D. a barbarous people of the Pima-Nahuas group invaded the high culture zones of Mexico. These were the Toltecas. Their second king, a young priest, Quezalcoatl-Topilzin, reigned in Colhuacan. He was full of wisdom, patience and holiness. He was obliged to abandon Tula and go north, promising to return from the east and, according to tradition, changing into the evening star (Venus):

'The Toltecas were wise thanks to Quezalcoatl,
the Toltecoyotl (all the arts combined) was his wisdom,
everything came from Quezalcoatl,
the Toltecas were very rich and happy.'⁸

When the Aztecs conquered, the Toltecas became an oppressed class, like the Greeks in the Roman Empire. But the Aztecs (like the Romans) had a guilt complex and feared the return of Quezalcoatl-who was particularly honoured in Cholula, the land of the Tlaxcaltecas, the first allies of Hernan Cortes. Quezalcoatl became the expression of the messianic hope of the oppressed in the Valley of Mexico. When the Spaniards came from the east, Moctezuma the Aztec Emperor himself trembled with fear-the hope of the poor was being fulfilled: 'It truly must be certain: wrote Bernal Dial in his *Historia Verdadera de la conquista de la Nueva Espana*, 'that we are they whom their predecessors long ago said would come from the sunrise ..'⁹

Likewise the farmers of the Valley were dominated by the Aztec nomads and warriors. Every year the oppressed farmers made a pilgrimage to the great sanctuary of the Earth Mother, the mother of the gods: 'The first of these goddesses,' says Sahagun OFM in his *Historia General de las cosas de Nueva Espana*, 'was called Cihuacoatl, which means Serpent's Wife (*sic*) and she was called Tonantzin which means our mother.'¹⁰

To which he adds in another place: 'One of these cult places is here in Mexico, where the hill called Tepeyac stands... here there was a temple dedicated to the mother of the gods who was called Tonantzin ...'¹¹

Quezalcoatl-Tonantzin was a 'fundamental pair in the Mexican pantheon, whose Creole avatars are inseparable. From the pre-Colombian past they are linked together as the two faces, male and female, of the creator first principle'.¹²

(b) St Thomas, apostle and the Virgin of Guadalupe as symbols of the liberation of the oppressed Creoles

On April 15 1549, Manuel de Nobrega related in Brazil that 'a trustworthy person told me that the cassava with which they make the bread in this country was a gift of St Thomas'.¹³ The same Jesuit relates having seen the apostle's footprints imprinted on a rock. ('Not far from here there are footprints imprinted on a boulder.')14 In Patagonia another Jesuit found other footprints of the apostle. In Mexico Quezalcoatl means 'twin' (the 'dual' origin of the universe), just as Thomas does in Greek (dual, divided, twin). Moreover the Toltecan god had a 'cross' on his pointed hat (because he was the god of the winds from the 'four' cardinal points. This cross and its relation to the Great Flood and 'so many other signs' made Fr Diego Duran, OP, think that the Toltecan priest and king -and thus god- was the apostle Thomas, no less, who went to India from Palestine (it was known that there were 'Christians of St. Thomas' in Mylapore), and thence had come to Mexico: 'God sent his holy apostles all over the world to preach the Gospel to every creature. ..and it was Topiltzin who came to this land, and according to the story told about him, he was a stonemason who sculpted stone images with curious workmanship, and we also read this about the glorious St Thomas.'¹⁵

This story deprived the Spaniards of their justification for the conquest of America: the Christian Gospel had been preached there before they came. This tradition, referred to constantly by the 'Creoles' (people born in America) became the ideological banner against the 'Gachupines' (Spaniards born in Spain). Tovar, Acosta, Torquemada and others are aware of this tradition. However, Gregorio Garcia wrote the crucial work: *Predicacion del Evangelio en el Nuevo Mundo viviendo los apostoles* (Baeza, 1625). If this was true, it gave the 'Creoles' the theological (ideological) right to fight colonialism from the beginning of the seventeenth century. Belief in St Thomas-Quezalcoatl was the first affirmation of national consciousness by the American Creoles, a class oppressed by Spanish bureaucracy. The apostle Thomas rose up against the apostle James, the saint venerated by the Spaniards in their struggle for liberation from the Arabs from the eighth century onwards, Thus Hernan Cortes took as his war cry against the natives: 'St James against them! ...After the battle they were afraid of our horses and shots and swords and crossbows and our brave fighting and above all the great mercy of God.'¹⁶

With good reason, St James was thought of by the natives as the god of

war and the horse of St James -as represented in the popular art of the Reconquest- was venerated more than the horseman himself.

In the 'Sad Night'-as history called it, when the Aztecs were on the point of defeating the invaders-Cortes prayed to the Virgin of Remedies, always the protector of the Spaniards, conquerors, rulers, white. And just as the Creole Thomas rose against the Spanish St James, so the Virgin of Guadalupe rose against the Virgin of Remedies. Everything began thus: 'Wanting to repair this great damage, our first religious (Franciscans) decided to place a church in Tonantzin, near Mexico, to the Most Holy Virgin who is our Lady and Mother.'¹⁷

An image of the Virgin of Guadalupe-who liberated Spain of the Reconquest and guarded the warriors who fought the Moors-rapidly gained the homage of the natives. They came to Tonantzin by tradition, and continued to venerate the mother of God. On the Virgin's shoulders shone the rays of the sun (the Sun, Huitzilopochtli, was the supreme god of the Aztecs); the blue of her cloak was the sacred colour of the gods, the sky (*teotl*); the moon indicated maternity and the earth; she was a mother like Tonantzin; she conquered the serpent (like Tonantzin who conquered over a cactus like the eagle the serpent) ...in fact she could be clearly decoded by pre-Hispanic codes (but of course with different meaning than for the Christians or the Spaniards).

The Virgin of Guadalupe of Tepeya was thus the protector of oppressed native class, she especially helped in the frequent floodings of the Valley and in the terrible plagues which decimated the Indian population.

But it was not until 1648 that the 'Creole' Bachelor of Theology, Miguel Sanchez, a Mexican and therefore oppressed by the Spaniards, wrote his *Imagen de la Virgen Maria Madre de Dios de Guadalupe milagrosamente, aparecida en Mexico* (printed by Calderon, Mexico, 1648). The author held that from all eternity God had ordained the appearance of the Virgin in *Mexico*, as could be clearly seen from chapter 12 of *Revelation*. In fact the text reads: 'A great portent appeared in heaven, a woman clothed with the sun' (Rev. 12:1). For the author this was precisely the Virgin of Guadalupe clothed in the rays of the sun. 'But the woman was given the wings of the great eagle that she might fly' (12: 14), meant the 'Aztec eagle' the imperial sign of the Nahuas. 'The serpent poured water like a river out of his mouth after the woman, to sweep her away with the flood' (12:15), meant Lake Texcoco, where Mexico City was situated. In the end the woman conquers the serpent (who had been the 'sign' for the Nahuas to found Mexico City in the middle of the lake) etc. Miguel Sanchez even said that the Guadalupe image was 'native to this country and the first *Creole* woman' (p. 195), 'God fulfilled his admirable plan in this land of Mexico. conquered for

such noble ends' (p. 49). Creole national consciousness, of the oppressed against their oppressors, depended much more on this tradition than on the reading of the authors of the Enlightenment. Patriots were imprisoned by the Holy Inquisition for their devotion to the Virgin of Guadalupe, like Fray Servando de Mier in the eighteenth century. Even in 1800 a subversive group of Creoles armed against the Spaniards called themselves the *Guadalupes*. When the parish priest Miguel Hidalgo, the liberator and founder of Mexico, sought a flag for the popular armies, which he led against the Spaniards in 1810 in Michoacan, by common consent they adopted the standard of the Virgin of Guadalupe, which was used in processions. And the priest Morelos, the leader who succeeded Hidalgo told his soldiers fighting for liberation to wear in their hats' a device of ribbon, tape, linen or paper declaring their devotion to the most holy image of Guadalupe'.¹⁸

Even in the Mexican revolution of 1910 the peasant leader Emiliano Zapata, who destroyed churches, took as his banner when he was occupying Cuernavaca, the Virgin of Guadalupe. The leader of the agricultural unions in California, Cesar Chavez (of the UFWOC) also took the Virgin of Guadalupe as the insignia of his union.

Thus St Thomas versus St James, the Virgin of Guadalupe against the Virgin of Remedies was a struggle between religious symbols, a class struggle, a contradictory art in which the poor and oppressed produced their own forms and used them against the dominators.

5. SOME EXAMPLES OF THE RELIGIOUS ART OF THE OPPRESSED

It is a difficult task to find works of art which are 'the religious art of the oppressed', because, since they are oppressed, their works are easily destroyed, because of the materials used, their lack of significance for the ruling aesthetic system, because they are in out of the way places etc.. However, there are clear signs of the presence of this art throughout the Church's life.

Think, for example, of the famous Latin American Christs, which some ascribe to popular *tremendism* (the grotesque). These Christs have deep wounds, enormous clots of blood, infinite sadness in their big eyes, great thorns, and a realism which is shocking in the pain portrayed. There is the 'Lord of Patience' in Santiago de Xicotengo,¹⁹ who is sitting down, defeated, with his head resting in his hands and his arm on his knee. How different from the triumphant risen Christ with great wide-open peaceful eyes, the *Pantokrator* of the Byzantine mosaics. In Byzantium he is the Christ-emperor of the ruling classes, in Latin America he is the suffering Christ of the oppressed classes. 'Christs representing the established

power and Christs representing the impotence of the oppressed are the two faces of the Christologies."

These suffering, *tremendist* Christs are the brilliant and authentic expression of an oppressed people, *identified* with Christ crucified and not yet risen, defeated by the Power of this World. ...and the hope of liberation. Francisco Goitia in his work *Tata Jesucristo*" shows in the praying faces of the natives the infinite pain and deep hope in their prayers addressed to the suffering Latin American Christ.

It is known by art restorers that frequently, when they treat sculptures of Christ crucified made of maize flour and beautifully painted, their internal vertebral structure is a stone icon of a pre-Hispanic deity. Thus the popular religious sculptor thinks of Christ crucified as the sublimation of his ancient gods, who were conquered by a Christ who was also conquered. In this double defeat, which is not just morbid masochism, they affirm the hope always deferred, but stronger than life itself, for liberation.

In the great colonial churches-which include some of the best expressions of the baroque, such as the splendid Jesuit churches of Tepozotlan in Mexico and in Quito with its marvellous Creole art-the natives introduced innovations into the decoration which became works unique *of their kind*, like the interior of the Church of St Mary of Tonantzintla in Cholula,²² where the plaster decorated in the native style is truly amazing. In other cases the native artists introduced modifications into the specifications of the architects, as in the Church of San Ignacio Mini, of the Jesuit settlements in Paraguay, which was finished in 1717. This church has 'such decorative richness that it covers the tympanum, cornices, counterpilasters with stylised leaves, eggs, ribbons, pearls and other motifs used with complete disregard for the order and harmony in classical architecture'.²³ Thus the artistic work of the oppressed is present in the works of the Christian oppressors, As well as visual art there is a vast field of popular art of the oppressed in music, There are carols in all rhythms (South American, Brazilian, Central America, Caribbean), 'Creole Masses' now stylised (like those of Ariel Ramirez) or the 'Mariachis' Mass of Cuernavaca Cathedral, among many others. Popular religious songs also express the sad and painful reality of the oppressed classes. Some display a tragic resignation, others are simply the artistic religious expression of the reality:

Friends, men are born
to suffer ,
till death comes
and beats them down,²⁴

Death is ever present in these popular religious songs. But this death is

lived with, even joked at, although it is treated with respect. It is called 'St Death' in Paraguay, and in Mexico he is 'conquered' on the Day of the Dead when each child receives a present of a skull made of sweet bread with his name on it, which they play with and then eat with delight. This 'skull' is not frightening. For those who live the life of the oppressed, death is not so terrible. As a Sandinista guerrilla recently expressed it:

Death come secretly,
don't tell me when
so the pleasure of dying
won't bring me to life again.²⁵

Clearly great artists can give these popular expressions unexpected brilliance, as in the case of Ernesto Cardenal-the artistic vanguard of an oppressed people: 'I believe that the contemplative, the monk and even the hermit, is really a revolutionary. He is 3;11;0 bringing about social change. And he also bears witness that as well as social and political changes there is a transcendent reality, beyond death; I believe it is important that there should also be people to remind mankind that the revolution goes on also after death.'²⁶ Likewise the great Jose Gaudalupe Posada uses the theme of death on the Day of the Dead and the peasants' death-in-life to formulate a political critical art of the 'skulls'.²⁷ Social, religious and eschatological criticism. And great Mexican muralists like Diego Rivera, Jose Clemente Orozco, David Siqueiros and Rufino Tamayo, who are anti-Catholic but non the less 'religious' in their chosen themes, give organic expression to popular art with the revolutionary techniques they use in their magnificent works.

Inside their homes, in peasants' cottages and the tin huts in the wretched shanty towns of the big cities, beside the image of the Virgin of Copacabana in regions which belonged to the Inca Empire or the Virgin of Lujan in the South, or many others, there are photos of relations (who, when they are remembered, protect from 'evil spirits'), and the lighted. . candle signifies the presence of the family. The 'family altar' is an art of the oppressed which expresses the longing for security and justice in an intimacy not violated by the capitalist system outside.

The numerous processions to popular sanctuaries-which the oligarchy does not join in-where special saints are implored with interminable prayers, movements of body, head and lips and offerings, for daily bread, health, work, safety. ..which the ruling system has denied the oppressed.

This art of the oppressed is an expression of bitter need, but it is also a protest and hope of liberation. ...Within popular Latin American messianism (particularly characteristic of the Brazilian *sertao* with its saints, . prophets and messiahs. ..persecuted and killed by the police and even

by parish priests at one time) there exists an authentic creative *productive* power, which reveals the historical liberating force of the poor .

6. AESTHETICS OF THE OPPRESSED AS LIBERATION ART

It is important not to confuse three kinds of Christian artistic expression:

(a) *The art of the ruling classes* or 'aesthetics of domination' (which includes the art of the *masses* or what Arnold Hauser called *popular art*, as opposed to the authentic art *of the people*.²⁸ This art is triumphant and can be seen in the restored German churches (glass doors, bronze decorations, perfect lighting, organs with wonderful acoustics etc.).

(b) *The art of the oppressed classes* or 'popular art produced by the working class, liberation art' as Nestor Garcia Canclini²⁹ describes it, an art which needs to be discovered and valued. Of course the art of the oppressed at a certain period (for example the Latin American *Creole* art of the eighteenth century) can be transformed into ruling class art (of the natives and workers in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries).

(c) *The art of the prophetic Christian vanguard* which is an integral part of the people's struggle. Among others we find here Ariel Ramirez in music, Ernesto Cardenal in poetry, the muralists in numerous parishes, centres and popular Christian meeting places etc. Both the art of the oppressed class and of its artistic vanguard are *liberation art*, which in Latin America today is revolutionary,³⁰ and supplies the essential requirement for the celebration of the Eucharist.

The 'theology of production' as part of the theology of liberation and which includes the aesthetic theology of liberation, should first investigate the economic conditions for the production of *bread* to satisfy the basic needs of the people-and only then can the Eucharist be celebrated. Secondly, it should study the *aesthetic* production of works of art which express in their 'fidelity' to the face of the oppressed (the bleeding Christs of popular Latin American *tremendism*) critical, prophetic and eschatological 'beauty'. This *fidelity* of expression of the poor, of Christ tortured and crucified, criticises the governing dominant 'beauty' of the system.

Christian *liberation art* of the oppressed classes, like the people in *Exodus* who expressed themselves in the simplicity and poverty of the nomad Tabernacle rather than in the splendour of the Temple in Jerusalem (criticised by Christ: Luke 19:46; 21:6), makes the *economy* the foundation of *symbols*. In developed capitalist countries there appears to be *freedom, bread* and *art* to celebrate the Eucharist, even though some think that really 'it is sacrificing the son to his father to take from the poor to offer sacrifice' (Ecclus. 34:20). The *bread* stolen from

the Third World cries to heaven, In developed socialist countries in Eastern Europe, like Poland, the people have *bread*--which is important--and some are asking for *freedom* to celebrate the Eucharist. In Latin America the people have no *bread* to celebrate the Eucharist because they are hungry, and only those in power have *freedom*. The oppressed people do not have the freedom to create the new world they need (bread and works of art) and which the Eucharist requires as a *preliminary condition* for its celebration. Only the oppressed people and a heroic prophetic vanguard risk even their lives, to create the new... as in Nicaragua today (June 1979), making their own bodies (the 'flesh' of the sacrifice) the living 'symbol', manifestation and witness (*martyrs*) of the kingdom: the new *bread* of the future Eucharist.

Translated by Dinah Livingstone

Notes

- 1, Klostermann *Holzwege* (Frankfurt 1963) pp. 7.68,
2. Pastoral letter of the Episcopal Conference 'United in hope' in *Praxis de los padres de America Latina* (Bogota 1978) p. 791.
3. As does, for example, Georg Lukacs, not so much in his *Eigenart des Aesthetischen* (Berlin 1963) but more particularly in his *Zur Ontologie' des Gesellschaftlichen , Seins*, XIII-XIV 'Die Arbeit' (Berlin 1973).
4. *Einleitung in die Musiksoziologie* (Frankfurt 1952), beginning of chapter 4. Herbert Marcuse in his recent work *The Aesthetic Dimension* shows how art cannot be reduced purely to the 'ideological' dimension, because it has a certain 'autonomy' and selfhood, but this autonomy, being 'relative' does not deny art's material conditioning. In this article we have concentrated more on the 'relative' than the 'autonomous' in art. See Theodor Adorno *Aethetische Theorie* (Frankfurt 1970).
- 5, See Nicos Hadjinicolaou *Histoire de l'art et lutte des classes* (Paris 1973). The author confines art unilaterally to ideology, and this reduction describes the 'relative' in art well but neglects the 'autonomous' -(although this autonomy is of course also relative), We discussed these questions in our *Filosofia de la poiesis* (Mexico I 978). It is worth pointing out that *Hegel's Aesthetics* is the best description of the aesthetics of the ruling classes: ' In the forms (*Gestalten*) it uses, art selects one stratum in preference to others, the stratum of the princes (*Fürsten*) ... Perfect freedom of will and production (*Hervorbringens*) cannot be achieved except in the representation of principality (*Fürstlichkeit*): *Vorlesungen über die Aesthetik*, I, III, b, II, I, a; *Theorie Werkausgabe* (Frankfurt 1970) XIII p. 251,
6. Marta Traba *Dos decadas vulnerables en las artes plasticas latinoamericanas*, 1950-1970 (Siglo XXI. México 1973) p. 179.

7. 'El cristianismo, su plus valia ideologica' in *Theologia desde la praxis de liberacion* (Salamanca 1973) pp. 171-202, especially 'La operacionalidad de los universos miticos y simbolicos' pp. 103-195.
8. *Codice matritense de la Real Academia de la Historia*, Sahacun, sheet 176, reverse side.
9. (Mexico 1955) Book I chap. 89 p. 266.
10. ed. Garihay (Mexico 1956) Book I chap. 6 I p. 40.
11. *Ibid.*, Book XI, Appendix 7-; III p. 352.
12. J. Lafaye 'Quetzalcoatl y Guadalupe' Fondo de Cultura Economica (Mexico 1977) p. 299.
13. *Monumenta Brasiliae Societatis Jesu I* (1538-1553) p. 117.
14. *Ibid.*
15. *Historia de las Indias de Nueva España*, chap. 79 (Mexico 1880) II p. 73.
16. Bernal Diaz del Castillo, *Historia Verdadera*, chaps. 52 and 63.
17. Torquemada *La Monarquia Indiana* (Mexico 1723) II Book X, chap. 7 pp. 245b-246a.
18. 'Sentimiento de la Nacion' (1814 copy) in *Boletin del Archivo General de la Nacion*, 2nd series, IV, p. 3 (1963).
19. M. E. Ciancas *El arte en las Iglesias de Cholula* (Mexico 1974) p. 164.
20. Hugo Assmann 'The power of Christ' in *Frontiers of the Theology in Latin America* (New York 1979) pp. 149-150.
21. Oil painting hanging in the Palacio de Bellas Artes, Mexico, dated 1927. See Justino Fernandez *A guide to Mexican Art* (Chicago 1973) p. 375. Consider the 'horrible' suffering expressed by the 'Cristo de la Columna' in the Church of Santa Prisca (Taxco, Mexico). Cf. Leopoldo Castedo *A History of Latin American Art* (New York 1969) p. 134.
22. L. Castedo *ibid.* p. 131.
23. Romualdo Brughetti *Historia del arte en la Argentina* (Buenos Aires 1970) pp.133ff.
24. Hose Hernandez *Martin Pierro*, verses 1688-1692.
25. J. A. Carrizo *El tema de la invocacion de la muerte* p. 720. See my *El catolicismo popular en Argentina* (Buenos Aires 1970) pp. 133ff.
26. *Santidad de la Revolucion* (Salamanca 1976) p. 21. The artist and prophet takes the people's *contempt* for death and gives it its radical sense.
27. See L. Castedo in the book cited in note 21, at p. 357.
28. *Philosophie der Kunstgeschichte*, chap. 5.
29. *Arte popular y sociedad en America latina* (Mexico 1977) p. 74. Here 'popular art' is the same as Hauser's 'art of the people'.
30. David Siqueiros says 'Criticism must be complete so that useful lessons can be drawn from it with the aim of making a real "revolutionary art" ('El camino contrarevolucionario de Rivera' in *Documentos sobre el arte mexicano* (FCE, Mexico 1974) p. 54,