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**A Freirian approach to world view instruction in the foreign  
language curriculum**

**Ivers, John Joseph, Ed.D.**

**The University of North Carolina at Greensboro, 1990**

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A FREIRIAN APPROACH TO WORLD VIEW  
INSTRUCTION IN THE FOREIGN  
LANGUAGE CURRICULUM

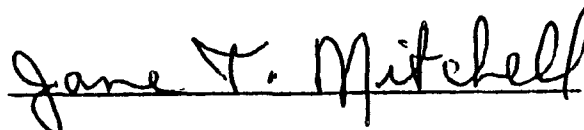
by

John J. Ivers

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1990

Approved by

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jane T. Mitchell". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above a horizontal line.

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In the field of foreign language education, the progress being made in enhancing multi-cultural understanding and providing the student with a comprehension of alternative world views has been very slow. Most cultural instruction is focused on trivialities and does little to stimulate deep cultural reflection. The goal of this study was to explore a method designed to lead the student to appreciate diverse ways of interpreting social reality and to foment contemplation on the student's own world view.

This inquiry is phenomenological rather than empirical. The method of the study was inspired by the theories of Paulo Freire and others. The cultural theme of the work was human value. My students examined aspects of Latin American social world views pertaining to issues of human worth. The process of examination included exploring the deep tacit assumptions that legitimated the particular convictions in the eyes of members of the Hispanic culture. After the foreign views were explored, the students were then encouraged to focus their attention on the same issues in U.S. culture. As with the Latin American world view, the U.S. world view was scrutinized with a look inward to discover the tacit assumptions that support and sustain our particular ways of interpreting reality. If students felt that their own cultural assumptions were inappropriate, and did not serve to enhance human value, they were asked to



propose alternative ways to view the world which would more favorably effect the worth and dignity of human beings.

It was found that the students gained important insights in many areas. First, they obtained an appreciation of alternative world views. This appreciation assisted in developing greater tolerance and in reducing prejudice. Second, the examinations of their own social reality served to broaden consciousness, and to stimulate deep reflection on ways to improve life in our culture.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
APPROVAL PAGE . . . . .	ii
CHAPTER	
I. INTRODUCTION . . . . .	1
Overview. . . . .	1
Need for World View Instruction . . . . .	2
Language and Culture. . . . .	5
World View Instruction in the Foreign Language Classroom. . . . .	6
Understanding One's Own World View. . . . .	7
Liberation from Cultural Oppression -- The Philosophy of Paulo Freire. . . . .	8
My Thoughts on Freire and Foreign Language Cultural Instruction. . . . .	11
II. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE . . . . .	13
World View Differences. . . . .	13
The Importance of Understanding Diverse World Views . . . . .	15
Culture Instruction in the Foreign Language Curriculum . . . . .	18
A Freirian Approach to Foreign Language Curriculum. . . . .	23
III. METHOD . . . . .	34
IV. RESULTS. . . . .	43
The Expansion of Consciousness -- Breaking Out of One's Paradigm . . . . .	44
The Process -- Dialogue . . . . .	49
Dealing With World View Challenges. . . . .	54
Viewing the World Through Different Lenses. . . . .	63
Disquieting Revelation -- A New Look at One's Own . . . . .	66
A Two-Edged Sword -- The Drawbacks of Progress. . . . .	68
Fetishism and Enslavement -- The Spoils of Success . . . . .	71
The Elderly -- Proud Product or Social Residue . . . . .	76
Reshaping Minds -- Reshaping the World. . . . .	81

V. CONCLUSIONS. . . . . 91  
VI. BIBLIOGRAPHY . . . . . 102  
VII. APPENDIX. INFORMATION ON THE INTERVIEWS . . . 106

CHAPTER ONE  
INTRODUCTION

Overview

During my years as a foreign language educator, I, as well as many experts soon to be quoted, have been made painfully aware of the shocking degree of cultural ignorance displayed by American students. This frustration is compounded by the apparent inability of present foreign language methods to effectively deal with the problem. My pursuit of a new and more productive approach has led me to the following assumptions: First, it is essential that foreign language instruction delve into the deep world of the distinct cultural assumptions that shape, and determine a foreign individual's interpretation of the world around him. Learning how Mexicans cook and what type of hats Bolivian women wear is simply not enough. Second, for an individual to better understand another world view, it is important that one have a basic understanding of his or her own world view (Heusinkveld 322-323). Third, students should be exposed to and discover for themselves, the powerful, yet tacit assumptions that manipulate the workings of both the foreign and home culture. It is hoped that the resulting critical reflection will enable the

student to become, in a sense, "liberated" from cultural "givens" that so effectively control and limit thoughts. The third and final assumption was reached as a result of my study of the philosophy of Paulo Freire. This introductory chapter will briefly examine all of the above assumptions. More detailed information will be provided in Chapter Two.

### Need for World View Instruction

In the not very distant past, the U.S. towered above all nations by its limited but significant ability to control and dictate world affairs ("Nation" 5). However, it is public knowledge that our former position of prominence is threatened or possibly lost ("Nation" 5). What factors are responsible for our current situation of diminishing influence and returns? This dissertation will concentrate on one of them: Cultural illiteracy.

Report after report such as "The President's Commission on Foreign Languages and International Studies," the "National Commission on Excellence in Education," and the "National Advisory Board on International Education" have stressed the great need for the U.S. to strengthen the teaching of foreign language and culture (Hoegl 282). One of the above reports states the following:

Achieving proficiency in a foreign language ordinarily requires from 4 to 6 years of study and should, therefore, be started in the elementary grades. We believe

it is desirable that students achieve such proficiency because study of a foreign language introduces students to non-English-Speaking cultures, heightens awareness and comprehension of one's native tongue, and serves the Nation's needs in commerce, diplomacy, defense, and education. ("Nation" 25-26)

Rachel J. Halverson also sums up the relationship between foreign language and culture instruction and America's needs:

In light of the increasingly international scope of our world as Americans, a frequent argument in support of expanded foreign language education is the promotion of international understanding. The underlying rationale for this assertion is that foreign language education fosters an expansion of cultural horizons and the communication skills necessary for harmonious international relationships. (327)

Americans need to become enlightened in multi-cultural affairs. Many Americans are not even aware that diverse world views exist.

The idea that different cultures possess different ways of looking at the world is a dominant pillar of anthropological and social science thinking. Anthropologist Edward T. Hall believes that culture effects our deepest behaviors and emotions. He thinks that our culture provides a model through which we view and interpret the world. Individuals in the same culture learn similar sets of patterns. People in another culture learn another set of patterns (6). A person's view of reality is structured with these patterns as the starting point.

Hall's views are given support by anthropologists Barton M. Schwartz and Robert H. Ewald. They assert that culture not only determines clothing and hair style, but also thoughts, feelings, ideas, and motivations (46). Schwartz and Ewald claim that ". . . every sector of human behavior, even dreams, fantasies, neurosis, and psychotic manifestations reveal cultural patterning". (46).

In the book Eye to Eye, Ken Wilber gives us additional insight into this problem. The volume constitutes a quest for a new paradigm to, in a sense, provide a bridge or common strand among the incredible multi-cultural diversity present in the world. Wilber's ultimate goal is a truly unified world view. He feels that such an accomplishment would be fascinating and extraordinary (1).

Almost any treatise involving foreign cultures cannot avoid dealing with world view differences. For example, the book Somos Gente Humilde by Michael James Higgins is a study on the Mexican poor. However, the American reader has to come to grips with things such as sexual norms and tolerances that are directly opposite those of the United States (173). In an unpublished dissertation entitled "Primary Schooling in Rural Tlaxcala, Mexico" by Harol M. Hoffman, the author studies the Mexican educational system. However, the work is replete with world view differences between the U.S. and Mexico, which justify, in the Mexican

mind, certain practices that would be unjustifiable in the United States.

It has been shown that the concept of different cultures possessing different world views is quite well accepted by experts. Experts feel one's culture effects the way one views and interprets the world. What might be considered terribly wrong in one culture could be totally acceptable in another. People apparently view the world through the window of culture.

#### Language and Culture

Edward T. Hall believes that language helps to define experience (15). Ned Seelye agrees. He speaks of a close alliance between language and culture (23). They can't be divorced (15-16). According to Howard L. Nostrand, language and culture are so close that ". . . a value, a custom, or a word has no one-to-one counterpart in another culture" (273). Linda M. Crawford-Lange and Dale L. Lange claim, "Culture is inseparable from language and therefore must be included in language study . . . ." (258)

The above references to the unity of language and culture serve as evidence to the need of integrating world view instruction into the foreign language curriculum. However the degree of this integration in current practice can leave much to be desired.



### World view Instruction in the Foreign Language Classroom

In a brief review of seven foreign language textbooks, only one was found which provided any information at all on comparative world views. All of the books contained some reference to culture, but it was limited to geography, history, holidays, etc. The one book that stood out contained information on comparing the importance of daily rituals, the appropriateness of using God's name, different views on the appropriateness of physical contact, when it would be suitable to compare oneself to an animal, and comparative feelings regarding isolation versus intimacy in friendships (Lamadrid et al.). A common belief among foreign language instructors is that by learning the language, one learns the culture. This idea is refuted by Ned Seelye. Seelye feels that mastering the language does not mean mastering the culture (21-22). He claims that upper division literature classes do not constitute an appropriate way to teach culture (18). Another expert, John Purcell, agrees. He feels, ". . . the nature of literature varies so widely that the picture students gain of the culture depicted therein may be distorted or falsified in some other manner" (19). If culture as a whole is not adequately taught in the foreign language classroom, how can world view, an important element in the larger cultural sphere, be adequately addressed?

For years, foreign language classes have been given the added responsibility for cultural instruction. However, the bulk of instruction goes to syntax, morphology, phonology, and semantics while culture takes a back seat (251). If any cultural instruction is offered at all in Spanish classes, it will most likely be on bullfighting, or Don Quijote and the windmills. On the basis of data already given and data to be provided in the next chapter, it should be evident that the time has come for foreign language classes to emphasize world view differences inherent in the target cultures. Specifically speaking, one of the aims of this study is to furnish the foreign language community with specific recommendations to enhance the acquisition of cultural literacy. Besides its aforementioned pragmatic value, who can criticize the humanistic merit of broadening one's understanding of the world and the diverse members of our single yet immense human family?

Understanding One's Own World View

Paula Heusinkveld, in an article published in Foreign Language Annals, claims that it is important that a student understand his/her own culture before attempting to comprehend another (322-323). She suggests that each student interview a foreigner to compare the student's conception of American culture with the impressions of an outsider (322-323). She goes further by suggesting that:

Perhaps foreign guests could be invited to class for all the students to meet at once. Again, the topics for discussion would include their preconceived ideas about the United States, their first impressions upon arrival, and their impressions after having spent some time here. (323)

Whenever cultural instruction leads to ideas and concepts in contrast to those of the native culture, Heu-sinkveld suggests that students debate the advantages and disadvantages of both cultural viewpoints (323).

#### Liberation from Cultural Oppression - The Philosophy of Paulo Freire

The work of Paulo Freire has had a considerable impact on the basic tenets of this dissertation. It would be appropriate to provide a brief overview of his thinking.

In his book Pedagogy of the Oppressed, Freire himself explains that the aim of his theories is to facilitate the happiness of humankind by liberating it from the chains of the many forms and facets of domination (39). He finds humans to be not solely dominated politically, but also he finds humankind to be oppressed and controlled by the world views we are forced to accept (135). Through the subtle workings of hegemony, we are presented a picture of the world with no other alternatives available or even feasible to our incredibly limited mindset. It guides humans to the point where their lifelong goals and commitments are based and balanced upon the false needs of fetishism (44).

According to Freire, we live a life based on myths (135). They tend to be accepted largely without question. These myths serve to manipulate the masses into conforming to the dominant ideology of the culture (135). Freire warns of the "internalization of the oppressor" (166). Liberation is enhanced when such cultural givens are critically examined.

The educational system, as a reflection of the society that created it, serves to legitimate the myths (65). It also serves to create people who don't make waves, and don't do their own decision-making. Freire claims that this turns people into objects (73). Creativity and free thinking are stifled as to create something more akin to a machine than a self-actualized human being. It brings about what Freire calls "an unnatural, living death" (171). This unfortunate result is brought about in part by our educational philosophy. To better explain this philosophy, Freire utilizes the analogy of a bank, where a student's "account" is continually being added upon with more knowledge to process and store (58). He claims that people are not liberated, or their happiness enhanced, when their brains are only knowledge storage facilities. Humankind is best served by an approach that emphasizes reflection and action on the world (praxis) (120). Freire stimulates such by his problem-posing methodology. Students are forced to

confront their own reality by tackling problems that confront them and their peers (66). By examining the problems, students begin to comprehend the heretofore invisible monster of oppression that held them in its grasp. They begin to see their problems in the context of the larger cultural sphere (68-69). By working out solutions to the problems, the students become empowered. They learn how to create their world instead of just floating along like a feather in the wind (141). As a result of the enlightenment and empowerment that come from Freire's approach, the students can become "masters of their own thinking" (118). The cords of an oppressive mythology are now somewhat loosened, allowing an individual more freedom and self-actualization.

The method is based on love and humility (78). The Freirian teacher is one who is humble and acts more as a facilitator and friend rather than an authority demanding respect (67).

What does all this have to do with foreign language education? Some work, involving Freire and foreign language instruction has been done. In chapter two, I will review this work and offer my ideas concerning its utility.

#### My Thoughts on Freire and Foreign Language Cultural Instruction

Every facet of a person's or society's world view is sustained by certain tacit assumptions that serve as pil-

lars of legitimation. In a study concluded for an educational research class, I looked at many differences in world view between Latin America and the United States. I found some interesting and profound dissimilarities. However, at the same time, I discovered that some of the tacit assumptions supporting and sustaining those differences were remarkably similar, if not identical, to tacit assumptions commonly held in the U.S. In other words, even if the outward manifestations were different, the tacit assumptions were often the same.

I would propose the following for foreign language cultural instruction. First, in college level beginning classes, cultural information should be discussed in English. I feel it is absurd to think that constructive, empowering, and liberating dialogue can be obtained any other way. Second, foreign language cultural instruction needs to look at the powerful effects of world view instead of quaint and cute cultural oddities. Instead of studying how Peruvians weave and the type of sandals Mexicans prefer, we should be looking at things such as gender roles, conceptions of success, deference to authority, conformity versus nonconformity, the myths that legitimate oppression, and what determines the degree of an individual's worth? It is better to know how one justifies the torture and killing of a bull than to memorize the several stages of a bullfight.

After each cultural facet is investigated, the students should examine the tacit assumptions that support the particular aspect. After the tacit assumptions are brought out, they should be compared to the assumptions related to the same issue in the U.S. This will be just as difficult, if not more so, than any of the previous steps and the experience can be quite uncomfortable.

It is hoped that such experiences will help students to liberate themselves from many of the myths surrounding them. The students should reflect on the value of these assumptions and whether they personally agree with them or not. They can discuss how to convert their reflection into action. This action can be targeted toward either maintaining what they see as a very positive social reality or toward changing what they see as a social wrong. The students slowly become liberated from their roles as objects. They become "masters of their own thinking" and they can effect change in their own way.

## CHAPTER TWO

### REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

#### World View Differences

The generalizations expressed in Chapter One regarding the existence of world view differences lacked a significant amount of specific examples. For the reader to better understand what constitutes a difference in world view, distinct and common representations will be provided. John C. Condon, while discussing ethnocentricity among student populations, expressed the following:

Usually, teachers are aware of what they perceive as a cultural variation based on the student's physical appearance, style of clothing, or manner of speaking. The more important considerations, of course, are those which are not so apparent: How the student has been taught to view the world and to act and react.  
(14)

Condon's article is replete with examples of world view differences with potential for causing classroom confusion. For example, he explains the bewilderment of an Egyptian student as to why American professors apologize when arriving late to class while American students do not (18). A student rocking back and forth in a chair will upset many an American teacher due to the danger involved. A similar action would upset a Japanese teacher due to the disrespect involved (11). Sometimes an American student



can do nothing right. European instructors of Americans might say that students from the U.S. won't take a definite stand and argue on it. While, on the other hand, a Japanese instructor of the same students might assert that American students are too emotional and confrontational (16).

Tora Tuve Ladu provides a contrastive world view of North Americans and Latin Americans. Some of the main points are as follows: Latin Americans tend to resign themselves to fate rather than attempt to overcome it. Adjustment to tribulation is favored over resistance. If God wills it, fighting would be senseless (31). Inner serenity is based on an acceptance of reality (17). Latin Americans have never bought into the North American idea of deferred gratification. North Americans live in today for tomorrow. Latin Americans live in today for today (32). Hispanics tend to seek leisure at the expense of extra work more than Anglos. Their point is this: "If you work to live, then why do you kill yourself working?" (18). As can be imagined, the importance of wealth and possessions is another point in contrast:

The acquisition of material possessions is generally less important than considerations such as romance, beauty, courtesy, graciousness, and intellectual interests. They are apt to give greater value to a smooth turn of phrase, a gracious gesture, or a line of poetry than to a well-made material object or a piece of machinery. (18-19)

During a two year residency in Mexico, I made the following observations: In Mexico, being on time for a social gathering is inappropriate behavior. Not much of anything starts on time. Bribery is not considered deplorable. In many situations, it is quite an acceptable practice. There are certain ways one does not knock on doors. To do so inappropriately would be insulting to the reputations of the females residing within. To call someone "fatso" is a common way of addressing overweight people. The concept of waiting in line is either not understood or not practiced by a significant percentage of the population. Pushing and shoving is very common. If things are so different in Mexico, what would they be like in China or Saudi Arabia?

It has been demonstrated that one's interpretations, decisions, actions, goals, and feelings are strongly influenced by world view. Evidence has been provided which demonstrates that there are different ways of viewing this existence and that individuals interpret experience in different ways.

#### The Importance of Understanding Diverse World Views

A well-known national report claims:

Our Nation is at risk. Our once unchallenged preeminence in commerce, industry, science, and technological innovation is being overtaken by competitors throughout the world. ("Nation" 5)

Later the same report discusses our shrinking planet and the lack of intellectual resources in the U.S.:

The world is indeed one global village. We live among determined, well-educated, and strongly motivated competitors . . . America's position in the world may once have been reasonably secure with only a few exceptionally well-trained men and women. It is no longer. ("Nation" 6)

Herman B. Wells emphasizes the "global village" concept:

In addition to the basics, our principal goal should include assurance that the oncoming body of students has a sense that this is one world. . . . It is one world economically and increasingly one world in the sharing of cultural values. (355)

The importance of understanding multi-cultural diversity is underscored by the following facts: International trade accounts for twenty-five percent of the U.S. GNP. Forty percent of U.S. farm land produces for export. Twenty percent of U.S. industrial output is for sale abroad. One in five Americans depends on international trade for employment. Seven thousand U.S. companies conduct business in other countries (Hoegl 283).

For years now, the United States' share of the world market has been diminishing (Hoegl 285). It is known that the lack of language ability hinders the building of relationships and results in limited marketing opportunities (Inman 251). Gerald Unks states:

The United States is having to rely more and more on foreign sales; yet we are sending our salespersons into the world market with the severe handicap of being unable to speak the client's language. (319)

Unks goes on to say, "Bilingualism is misnamed; it is actually economic survival" (321).

The above quotes emphasize linguistic ability, however, it bears repeating that communication without a knowledge of a language's cultural base is severely restricted. Language and culture are basically inseparable (Crawford-Lange 258). The U.S. not only stands to benefit economically from multi-cultural awareness, but the nation's diplomacy and defense will also profit. Mistakes in dealing with Vietnam and Iran might have been avoided if decision-makers were more aware of cultural realities (Unks 320). Multi-cultural awareness is essential if foreign policy is to operate smoothly. The Soviet Union is miles ahead of the U.S. in this regard. In Russia, there are more teachers of English than there are students of Russian in the United States (Unks 319).

Knowledge of foreign language and culture will not only be useful to businessmen and the U.S. government. The time is coming when everyone will feel the deficiency. Francesco Cordasco and Louis Roederer state the following:

On the other hand, even the knowledge of only one foreign language and civilization will help us come out of our self-imposed isolation. This is no mere luxury today. It is already a necessity and will be

still more so tomorrow in a world where people will spill over national boundaries, and where languages and cultures will be jumbled together at the touch of a T.V. dial. (68)

At this time, approximately one-fourth of the American population does not speak English as its primary language (Unks 319).

What about the humanistic side of multi-cultural awareness? According to John H. Murphy, the great majority of people that take language classes are already overburdened with prejudice and misinformation regarding the foreign culture (225). In a 1987 newspaper article, I was quoted as follows regarding the goal of foreign language education:

We want to broaden their understanding of the world they live in. There seems to be a tendency among Americans that the whole world is right here. We have very little exposure to foreign languages and cultures. . . . Part of what we are trying to do is to make the students aware that other people speak, think, and live differently. . . . We want to help them appreciate other traditions and cultures and to dispel . . . prejudice . . . . (Patterson 1-2)

Cultural instruction can also aid in developing a better sense of oneself and one's own culture (Webber 253).

#### Culture Instruction in the Foreign Language Curriculum

The teaching of culture is widely recognized as being an essential component in any second language course. However, recognition is one thing and implementation is another. The teaching of culture is not given high priority

in many if not most foreign language classrooms (Crawford-Lange 258). Mark Joel Webber expresses the attitude of many instructors regarding culture:

It is seen as something to fill in the spaces when we have a few minutes that cannot otherwise be properly filled out; or when our students are not capable of real learning and need a change of pace. (252)

Rachel J. Halverson makes the following assertion:

Two vital elements of effective communication in a foreign language, the understanding of the foreign culture and the acquisition of vocabulary in a cultural context, often receive inadequate or inappropriate attention in the classroom. (327)

The foreign language teaching profession has made incredible and exciting advances in recent years. However, the teaching of culture has not advanced proportionately (Heusinkveld 321). Many old, ineffective methods prevail (Heusinkveld 321). However, many instructors are not even familiar with the old, and ineffective due to poor training in cultural instruction (Crawford-Lange 258).

Culture education in foreign language classrooms tends to involve a brief exposure to unusual, exotic, well-known characteristics and does nothing to change a student's American perspective (Heusinkveld 321). "Deep culture" such as the people's attitudes, beliefs, and underlying values are generally ignored (Heusinkveld 321). Many cultural lessons sound as if they come out of geography

books. Also a common approach to cultural instruction is to emphasize the stereotypical and the quaint (Webber 251).

Of course, even the stereotypical and the quaint is better than nothing at all, which is exactly what some students get due to a very common, yet erroneous conception; the idea that when learning the language, cultural knowledge automatically results as a free accessory.

Claire Kramersch makes the following statement:

To this day, the field of second language acquisition research is heavily oriented toward transformational generative linguistics, psycholinguistics, and cognitive psychology. Sociology, cultural anthropology, and sociolinguistics have not had nearly as strong an impact on the way the general public views language and foreign language learning in particular. (243)

Kramersch blames the problem on:

. . . the erroneous belief that conscious learning of the linguistic structures of language will automatically translate into their correct and socially appropriate use in communicative situations . . . .  
(243)

Cordasco and Roederer share Kramersch's opinion:

We must be careful if we want to avoid wrong ideas. The mere knowledge of a language can not in itself enable us to truly comprehend the way of life, or the thinking, of a foreigner. (68)

The highly linguistic approach used today discards an essential component for achieving genuine communication.

Kramersch adds the following:

. . . the philological, text analytic approaches to language learning have failed to achieve the communicative competence necessary to use the language appropriately in social settings . . . . (247)

Businessmen are learning this the hard way. Eduardo

A. Peniche claims the following:

Not only is there a language barrier, but a cultural one as well. This problem has become more acute as greater emphasis is placed on increasing export trade from the United States by both national and state governments. (191)

Culture teaching methods can be extremely diverse.

Howard L. Nostrand, an internationally recognized leader in the culture teaching field, has identified many common methods currently in use. Some are easily understandable and will require no elaboration. Others will. According to Nostrand, culture can be taught through literature, cinema, theater, radio and T.V. broadcasts, pen pal programs, tape pal programs, and actual target culture living experience (285-293). He also lists several other methods that will require some description such as culture capsules and clusters (300).

A culture capsule is basically a very short explanation of a difference between an American and a foreign custom. Relevant visuals and regalia are a necessity (Seelye 129). Culture capsules tend to deal mostly with customs such as foods eaten, entertainment, etc. They generally do not deal with world view. A culture cluster



is simply a group of approximately three culture capsules that are related in some way (Seelye 132).

Nostrand also mentions the situational dialogue as an approach (285). This consists of a written dialogue between two members of the target culture. Culture themes are included within the conversation. This affords the student the opportunity to, in a sense, peer in from the outside. Situational dialogues are used in many textbooks as a way of teaching grammar, vocabulary, and culture at the same time. The vast majority of them deal with superficial differences that have no real relevance in understanding a foreigner's way of thinking. A typical example of one would be a conversation regarding what took place at a relative's birthday party, emphasizing who tends to be invited, how extravagant they generally are, etc (Abreu and Rameh 193). Role plays can be used to give the student a cultural experience (Nostrand 291). An example could be a student seeking to barter with another student posing as a shopkeeper. Role plays, by their very nature, could be used to emphasize everything from the superficial to deep differences in thought.

Another form of cultural instruction is the mini-drama (Nostrand 289). Mini-dramas can be effectively used to teach almost any type of cultural difference and are especially effective in dealing with deep world view contradictions. A mini-drama usually emphasizes a misunder-

standing between two different cultures (that of the students and the culture being studied). The misunderstanding is eventually resolved by helping the member of the student's culture to understand the thinking of the foreigner. A very impressive mini-drama is presented in Seelye's book. It deals with a Mexican boy who gets in trouble in an American school because he will not look at the teacher when being accused of misbehavior. This action is taken as a sign of culpability. In the end, the principal is told that in Mexico a boy is taught that lowering the head is a sign of respect for authority and not of culpability (110-112). Although the mini-drama can be extremely effective in dealing with world view differences, it is rarely used.

Probably the most promising method to date is called the "culture assimilator." A culture assimilator, like the mini-drama, focuses on some sort of misunderstanding between people of two cultures. The assimilator is in story form however. At the end of the story, the perplexed reader is given four possible solutions to the problem. Only one option is correct. The student chooses which solution he or she feels is best. After the choice is made, the reader is provided with explanations of the rightness or wrongness of each option. Again, this method affords one a tremendous opportunity to highlight world view differences. Yet, as in the case of the mini-drama, the culture assimilator is almost never utilized as an

instrument for culture dissemination.

James Hammers has suggested that foreign language students write a fictional autobiography of themselves as members of the target culture (53). This idea shows promise, however, significant instruction in culture would be necessary as a prerequisite.

#### A Freirian Approach to Foreign Language Curriculum

There have been several attempts to introduce Paulo Freire's pedagogy into foreign language education. The endeavors have used his approach as a basis for developing the entire foreign language curricular model, whereas my thinking would limit the use of Freire to only the teaching of culture which constitutes only a small segment of the total curriculum.

To better emphasize the need for experimentation with a Freirian approach, it is first necessary to expose the shortcomings of the present curricular model which holds a virtual all-subject monopoly. This approach is what Lange calls the "Industrial Model" of education (72). The Industrial Model follows three basic steps: The statement of specific objectives, choice of activities related to desired outcomes, and evaluation to determine if the objectives have been met. The great majority of curriculum development in the United States follows this process (Lange 72). This powerful system has come under incredible attack in recent years. Scholars, in ever increasing

numbers, are criticizing the model for repressing the creative individuality of human beings and turning them into obedient, "personalityless" robots. Bowles and Gintis claim the following:

In short, the history of twentieth-century education is the history not of Progressivism but of the imposition upon the schools of "business values" and social relationships reflecting the pyramid of authority and privilege in the burgeoning capitalist system . . . . "Scientific Management," with its attendant fragmentation of tasks, and imposition of bureaucratic forms and top-down control held sway. (44)

Bowles and Gintis ask some tough questions such as: "Why do schools reward docility, passivity, and obedience? Why do they penalize creativity and spontaneity?" (42)

These men are just a few of the scholars expressing concern. Probably the foremost among them is Paulo Freire. Freire claims that "education is suffering from narration sickness" (57). He refers to a life molded by these techniques as ". . . an unnatural living death: life which is denied its fullness" (171). He feels that impeding two-way communication between the teacher and student is to reduce the students to the status of things (123). He says ". . . to alienate men from their own decision-making is to change them into objects" (73).

According to Dale L. Lange, Freire would affirm that, ". . . the acquisition of skills and knowledge is a secon-

dary objective of education . . . . For him, the primary intended outcome of education is creative action" (72-73). Nina Wallerstein says of him, "Freire encouraged people to view themselves as active creators of culture, not passive recipients of history. . . . Freire challenged his students to believe in themselves as agents of change" (11). Freire himself says that, "Men are fulfilled only to the extent that they create their world . . . and create it with their transforming labor" (141).

How does all the above relate to second language pedagogy? We will get closer to the issue by looking at one of the pillars of the Freirian approach: Problem-posing. Nina Wallerstein describes the problem-posing approach in the following quote:

. . . people's lives can be the basis for teaching English, using the problem-posing approach developed by the Brazilian, Paulo Freire. Freire began his literacy curriculum with students' lives and their fatalistic attitude that they could never effect change. Using carefully selected words and pictures that presented the problems and potential in their lives, he motivated students to analyze their experiences -- why they lived in slums, why others lived better, and what they could do about their problems . . . . Problem-posing is based on the premise that education starts with issues in peoples' lives and, through dialogue, encourages students to develop a critical view of their lives and the ways to act to enhance their self-esteem, and improve their lives.  
(3)

The remainder of this chapter will concentrate on two adaptations of Freire's methods for the express purpose of

foreign language instruction. In both methods, the problem-posing approach is central.

First, let's examine the Freirian approach developed by Dale L. Lange. The process is divided into eight separate stages.

Stage one involves the choosing of a cultural theme (Lange 88). No possible themes are mentioned, so let's choose "bullfighting" as an aid to help us better understand the process.

In stage two, aspects of the theme are presented via pictures, slides, written texts, videos, tapes, etc (Lange 88).

Stage three consists of the students analyzing, describing, and writing their own personal reactions to the theme and the cultural characteristics found within it. (Lange 88).

In stage four, students are to indicate their language learning needs in order to communicate effectively on the theme (Lange 88-89). They will therefore need to become familiar with bullfighting vocabulary and at least be familiar with present tense verb conjugation.

Stage five initiates the language learning process where students receive instruction in the language presented with a representative cultural theme. The method of language instruction is not mentioned and may be unimportant to this approach. It is during this stage that stu-

dents become aware of the need for obtaining communicative abilities so that they can adequately converse on the subject (Lange 89).

In stage six, students verify their original perceptions of the subject and after reviewing the data available to them with their fellow students, they compare their original perceptions to their present ones (Lange 89).

Stage seven provides the opportunity for the students to converse with each other on how their perceptions of the subject have changed due to their recent experiences.

Stage eight involves an evaluation of language and cultural proficiency. We read:

. . . learners demonstrate the integration of their language proficiency and cultural awareness through the development and presentation of critical incidents, mini-dramas, culture capsules and clusters, simulations, and dialogues in the target language. (Lange 89)

Lange emphasizes that the model is only a theoretical one, and does not boast of a strong experimental base (89).

Although I feel the approach is positive with good potential, I could not help but notice a few possible drawbacks. First and foremost is my feeling that this approach would have difficulty functioning well in beginning language courses. Lange admits that preliminary language instruction could be needed and that this is a serious internal problem (89). Another problem I see is that

the needs created by the specific problems are "artificial" needs, not the real life needs envisioned by Freire. For example, American students are not usually directly confronted with Spanish cultural problems and the need to speak Spanish to communicate about those problems is a manufactured necessity.

Another basic characteristic of Freire's approach is somewhat overlooked in that students are not literally changing the world they live in and creating a better life for themselves. This is the final goal of Freirian philosophy. I feel it simply cannot be ignored.

The second Freirian adaption we will examine is one created by Nina Wallerstein for use with ESL students in the United States. Later, we will look at adapting this method for use in non-ESL foreign language courses.

The first step in the Wallerstein approach is to gather data on the problems facing her students while living in this "foreign" land. Problems such as calling the doctor, feelings of vulnerability, the desire to learn English while maintaining their own culture are examples of situations that need to be recorded for future use (5). The instructor should observe the students and their peers in their neighborhoods, working places and homes (13). When the preliminary data are complete, we are now ready to construct what Freire calls "codifications" or problem situations (Freire 117). Wallerstein says that there are



five characteristics to a good problem situation. They are immediately recognizable, contain inherent contradictions, pose one problem at a time, have no given solution, and must not be overwhelming (20).

With the situations ready to go, it is time for class to begin. During class, the important word is dialogue. There is to be continual dialogue between the teacher and students and among the students themselves. The teacher is also a co-learner and there should not be much distance between the pupil and instructor (15). Wallerstein says of dialogue: "The goal of the dialogue approach is to encourage critical thinking about the world . . . . Critical thinking begins when people make the connections between their individual life and social conditions" (16).

In Wallerstein's program, one must follow five steps in bringing the dialogue to fruition (20-21). The first step involves describing the situation presented. Everyone participates and the teacher uses interrogative words with which the students should already be familiar (19). The second step involves recognizing and defining the problem that exists within the situation. Again interrogative words come in handy here. The third step involves eliciting similar situations from the students' personal lives. Students share experiences with each other. The codification itself could be a true life experience of one of the students (29). Step four attempts to fit students' ex-

periences into a larger historical, social, or cultural perspective. Here the interrogative word "why" can be effectively used, such as, "Why are people this way?" In step five, the class discusses alternatives and solutions to the problem situations. This is the crowning step because it allows the students to change their lives for the better, gain more control, and become more liberated from the limitations that bind them.

The steps are given flavor by the addition of group work (27), written dialogues, and role plays (10). These generate motivational energy and encouragement (10).

Wallerstein seems not to favor any particular type of teaching methodology for grammar and vocabulary acquisition. She uses a mixture (36).

Another pioneer in using Freire in English as a Second Language courses is Tomas Graman. In an edition of the Harvard Educational Review, he discussed Freire's methods in a way very similar to Wallerstein's approach. He feels the time has come to put Freire into practice:

What is needed in the field of second language pedagogy is an approach that addresses the existential, political and axiological questions touching the lives of both students and teachers. If the teachers want to encourage critically conscious second-language learning, they should take action to put Freire's pedagogy into practice in the classroom. (441)

Problem-posing is also central to his approach. He claims the following:

Students build critical knowledge and language to express it, as Gramsci indicates, through engaging in "problematizing" reality -- that is, learners must identify problems and come to recognize and understand the significance of those problems in relation to their own lives and the lives of others. Such critical reflection and consciousness must then lead to attempts to overcome problems and to improve the conditions that give rise to them. (436)

Regarding cultural acquisition, he claims:

In addition, learning a language that reflects another culture allows people in the acquisition process to encounter and confront linguistic, cognitive, and axiological conflicts. These states of confusion are optimal moments for acquiring not only a new language and higher levels of intellectual development but also other perspectives on human values. (442)

I see several problems with the Wallerstein and Graman approaches. First, as with Lange's version, it would be almost impossible to use the method with beginners. Wallerstein comes to grips with this problem, however, and admits that beginners might just be able to handle step one (description) with maybe a few written dialogues to be read or performed in front of the class (28). Later, she claims that beginners can probably handle the first three steps (35). The use of interrogatives by the teacher assures active participation among the beginners and the teacher should also bring out autobiographical information, followed by limited problem-posing in the form of simple stories (35).

Despite the drawbacks, the Wallerstein-Graman approach constitutes an excellent methodology for the teaching of ESL. However, as I see it, the utilization of this particular method in non-ESL, American foreign language courses would necessitate the sacrifice of at least one very basic Freirian or foreign language teaching principle. First, as with the Lange approach, American foreign language students are not suffering with Spanish cultural problems, therefore any problem-posing utilizing Spanish culture would have to be artificial and not real-life. Another option would be to use real-life American problems and discuss them in the target language. This idea, unless geared toward eventual cross-cultural comparison, would sacrifice the cultural acquisition potential of the method, which in my opinion, is one of its most vital points.

As I see them, the strengths of both the Lange and Wallerstein-Graman approaches lie in the "dialoging" with its accompanying comradeship, purpose, goals, and lack of intimidation. We often talk about how foreign language courses are designed to improve cultural understanding. In my opinion, there are few if any curricular approaches better equipped to deliver on this point than the two just discussed.

## CHAPTER THREE

## METHOD

The investigation will be phenomenological in nature. This is not a scientific, empirical undertaking. Nothing is being measured nor proven. Instead of attempting to measure the effectiveness of the method in question, I endeavor only to explore the chasms of the mind and how the particular process influences human consciousness. The work will deal largely with interpretations. I hope to provide insight on human reflection resulting from the critical examination of opposing and native world views. I will note some of the diverse human reactions that occur when acted upon by the catalyst of profound cultural contemplation.

As is consistent with a phenomenological study, the work will be replete with my personal interpretations of what occurs. These interpretations will be based on the very human and subjective experience of teacher-student interaction. Although I am confident most people reading this study would generally reach similar conclusions concerning the method's utility, the views expressed in no way are intended to reflect all inclusive "laws of human nature." Nothing said in this work is to be considered

conclusive. The study will not focus on distinct parts but rather will examine the whole and the effectiveness of the general process. I am not concerned with obtaining information on any particular aspect of world view. The work will deal with the method's effectiveness and its ability to kindle critical reflection on one's view of reality.

I have chosen one major cultural theme. The theme is human value. Every cultural facet examined in this study revolves around this issue. Fortunately, there are many cultural manifestations of human value that afforded me a wealth of applicable issues. Some of the subtopics treated were conceptions of success, prejudice, manners, competition versus cooperation, materialism (fetishism), and treatment of children, the elderly, and the disabled. All of the above subtopics were not scrutinized in depth, but rather were examined with the main theme of human value in mind.

The lessons were given from a Freirian perspective. Such a perspective was discussed and referenced in the second chapter. The following is a review of some of its main points: Human beings can be oppressed by their world view. Through the subtle workings of culture, they are presented a picture of the world with no other options available or even feasible to them. It can guide humans to the point where their lifelong goals and commitments are

based and balanced upon false needs. People allow themselves to be manipulated by social myths rather than making their own decisions and charting their own courses. Students should be encouraged to critically reflect upon the pillars of their social reality. Education should do more than simply facilitate the acquisition of knowledge. Humankind is best served by an approach that emphasizes reflection and action. One's pedagogy should be based on love, humility, and respect for all human beings. The Freirian instructor acts more as a facilitator and friend rather than an authority demanding respect.

An overview is necessary to provide the reader with an understanding of the general procedure and structure of the cultural presentations. First, the students are presented with a brief lecture on the subtopic emphasizing points having to do with human value. Much of the lecture consists of my reading directly from information obtained in interviews I conducted with Latin Americans. Information on the interviews can be found in the appendix. To better demonstrate the general procedure, let's assume that the subtopic chosen is that of "machismo." Step one would normally consist of my reading from information obtained in the interviews concerning machismo in Latin America. After the brief reading and/or lecture, the class would be asked to determine the basic cultural suppositions that support

the obvious social manifestations. For example, some tacit assumptions regarding machismo in Latin America could be: There are jobs, which if men do, somehow make them less masculine. Sharing responsibility leads to domination by the female spouse. Earning money is a masculine trait. If a husband does not make enough money to cover all the family's needs, it is the fault of the husband himself, not society, culture, economics, or other circumstances. If you are a "real man," you will not have economic problems.

After the tacit assumptions have been brought out, they are examined and students are encouraged to comment on them and express their feelings. The above process affords the student a rare look on the "inside" of another world view. This method, I feel, provides deep, stimulating, genuine, and mind-broadening cultural instruction which I consider far superior to the simple, shallow, and artificial culture instruction currently found in foreign language education.

The second stage of instruction deals with the students looking inward at themselves and at the culture that has shaped their reality and has given them a paradigm through which to judge the world. The students would then examine machismo in America and mentally dig deep to ascertain the American cultural suppositions that shape and sustain it. Upon discovering the tacit assumptions that



have always been within them, the students are encouraged to comment and express pro/con views. In such a discussion, the class would examine the subtle things that exert such a powerful influence upon the way men view the value of other men and even themselves. The following are examples of some things the students might come up with: Some men can be more "man" than others. Some attributes that could serve to determine a person's manliness might be (depending on the sphere of society one most often occupies): Money earned, car driven, quantity of body hair, muscular development, deepness of voice, athletic abilities, familiarization with sports information and trivia, height, manner and/or crudeness of speech, ability to be unemotional, capacity to conceal fear, leadership tendencies, and mechanical talents. The class would then examine that if true, are these positive or negative ways to judge value and do such judgements contribute to or detract from one's personal peace, male-female relationships, and the happiness of all humankind. Why?

Now having critically viewed a particular aspect of their own culture, the third step concerns action. If the students disagree with some or all of the assumptions, they would be asked to discuss ways to induce change. The session would then end with an exchange of ideas on how each student can effect positive change utilizing his/her

newly gained insight.

All of the cultural lessons have been recorded on tape. Student comments found on the tapes will be used to illustrate my theories and interpretations of what is occurring. These tapes will be preserved and made available for examination should anyone request it. Also, some comments will stem from anonymous papers the students were asked to write at the end of the semester after all the lessons had been given. I only requested one paper per student. This was the only time students were asked to write anything. The papers were handed in to student volunteers who forwarded them to me.

Due to the fast-paced nature of beginning foreign language classes and the huge amount of linguistic information that is expected to be assimilated, it was only possible to spend roughly twenty to thirty minutes a week on the lessons in each class.

All cultural lessons were conducted in English. This choice was made due to the beginning nature of the classes (first year), and my belief that it would be difficult to express deep critical reflection in a language one does not yet speak fluently. The fact that English is used as the medium of instruction could cause some individuals to question the reasoning behind the utilization of such a method in a foreign language class. The rationale is

simple. First, foreign language is one of only a few scholastic disciplines that provide the opportunity for reflection upon different cultures. Second, the examination of foreign and often opposing world views presents the perfect springboard for the critical analysis of one's own. I feel, it is easier to critically examine one's own models of reality having been exposed to thought-provoking, stimulating, and often unsettling alternatives.

The cultural lessons were carried out at Ricks College in Rexburg, Idaho over a period of one semester. I used them in all of my first year foreign language courses. Over eighty-five students were involved. Ricks College is a junior college owned and operated by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormon). The college emphasizes academics rather than technical training. Generally speaking, its main purpose is to grant associate degrees to students transferring to four year schools. For a junior college, it is very large with a Fall 1989 enrollment of 7,784 students. The school maintains an open admissions policy. The following is a breakdown of the student body. This information was obtained by the college administrative officer over statistics:

Male	41%	Returned LDS	
Female	59%	Missionaries	17%
Freshmen	73%	Single	90%

Sophomores	27%	Married	10%
Full-time	93%	Mormon	99%
Part-time	7%	Non-Mormon	1%

#### Geographic Origins of the Students

Idaho	38%	Montana	2%
Utah	11%	Wyoming	2%
California	9%	Other States	17%
Washington	7%	(all 50 represented)	
Oregon	4%	Canada	3%
Colorado	3%	Other Countries	1%
Arizona	2%	(37 represented)	

#### Size of Home Community of Ricks College Students (1988)

Farm or less than 500	19%
500 - 9,999	29%
10,000 - 499,999	47%
More than 499,999	5%

#### Estimated Total Family Income Before Taxes (1988)

Less than 18,000	17%
18,000 - 29,999	28%
30,000 - 41,999	27%
More than 41,999	28%

In 34% of my students' households, the parent who earns the largest salary would be classified as blue collar. The remaining 66% of households saw the primary earner being classified as white collar.

Roughly five to seven percent of my students could be classified as minorities. This seemed indicative of the

college as a whole, and also the geographic region. Despite the small number of minority students, a wide variety of groups are represented at the school. They are Blacks, Hispanics, Asians, American Indians, and Polynesians.

## CHAPTER FOUR

## RESULTS

This chapter constitutes a phenomenological look at the teaching of culture from a Freirian perspective. It must be kept in mind, however, that Freire's pedagogy lends itself to many variations and the adaptation which is the subject of this dissertation is only one of many options. Therefore, what is discussed below should in no way be considered the last or only word on the subject. It is important that the reader keep in mind the nature of a phenomenological study versus an empirical one. Nothing is being measured nor proven. The study is not concerned with extracting information on any particular facet or area of world view. This work explores the effectiveness of the method and its potential for stimulating and broadening human consciousness. The study contains a great multitude of quotes by students involved in the culture lessons. Much of the quoted material was transcribed from tapes made of the classes. Some comes from anonymous papers written on the subject by the participants and handed in to a student volunteer. The papers were later forwarded to me. This chapter begins by examining the difficulty faced by students in grasping the idea of world view and the strug-

gle of having to deal with assumptions totally foreign to one's mental models of reality. We will observe the student's consciousness evolve from a very narrow perspective where reality is simply a given to a point of understanding, tolerance, and critical reflection. Next, we will examine the inner turmoil, enlightenment and often outrage that can occur once an individual turns such reflection inward and comprehends, maybe for the first time, the powerful, yet silent pillars of his/her social reality. Last, we will observe the possibilities of converting reflection into action and utilizing our new knowledge to effect positive change in our individual lives and especially those of others.

In this chapter, I will often refer to "models" of reality. It must be made clear that this is not a concept that has somehow been developed as a result of this study. Although much of what I say concerning models comes from my own reflection, the idea of mental models being involved in the brain's interpretive processes was introduced to me several years ago when I read Marc Belth's book The Process of Thinking (New York: David McKay Company, Inc., 1977).

The Expansion of Consciousness -- Breaking Out of One's Paradigm:

To understand another language, it is inevitably necessary to crawl inside the minds and hearts of other cultures and find what it is about their lives that causes their language to be the way it is, tear down

our mental Berlin Walls, as it were. This semester, I think some mental Berlin Walls did come down, along with the real one.

This student comment, written shortly after that almost unthinkable, yet joyful event, exemplifies one of the principle goals of this method; the tearing down of the social, mental, and cultural walls that so effectively limit our conception of the world. However, as in Eastern Europe, the process that culminates in the downing of a wall can be long and arduous. The first stage in an effort to enhance cultural reflection is the recognition of what were described in chapter three as "tacit assumptions." The tacit assumption recognition process is in itself quite challenging and poses a problem for the most astute of beginning students. For example, at one point the lesson brought us into a discussion of cooperation versus competition in Latin American and North American school systems. It was determined that if an American student fails or receives a grade lower than his/her expectation, it is generally considered to be the individual's fault. It was now time to examine the tacit assumptions behind that particular idea. Tacit assumptions had been explained to the students on several previous occasions. The concept was understood, however, the ability to go beyond the topsoil into the profound depths of one's own consciousness was often not easily mustered. Tacit assumptions given



were as follows:

- S1: "Individualism."  
S2: "We are tested on just what we know."  
S3: "Every man is for himself."  
S3: "You have to do what you can to get yourself up. If you don't do that its your fault, your problem."

Although the above would all qualify as tacit assumptions, they reflect a lack of ability to get to the meat of the issue. Not one student brought up the deeper assumption that serves as a foundation for the ones mentioned; the idea that all people can do well if they just try hard enough. Only when this particular assumption was brought to their attention and challenged, did I observe any reality shaking reflection taking place. Things really got stirred when I mentioned that in some places in Latin America, students are often given the freedom to cooperate on tests and exchange answers. The following are tacit assumptions concerning why similar behavior is not normally permitted in the U.S.:

- S1: "It was a test. You are supposed to do it on your own based on your own intelligence."  
S2: "How are you supposed to be good at something if you have help?"

This last response afforded me the opportunity to query as to why our society frowned on certain types of help. The responses ranged from the superficial to critical reflection:

- S1: "That's the way we've been brought up."  
S2: "So we can use it later."  
S3: "We need to be independent."  
S4: "Because there is lots of competition out there .  
. . . all of our life we are going to be competing."  
S5: "Don't you think that one reason why we have that  
view is because by helping the other person get an "A"  
we lower our competitive edge?"

The final response was of the type I had been waiting for. It is the type of statement that can be a catalyst for deep cultural reflection. Metaphorically speaking, it opens a door which if walked through, can expose a person to the powerful yet often invisible forces in his/her own culture and at the same time can stimulate critical thinking concerning alternative mindsets. Later in the chapter we will discuss what occurs when one passes through the door, however now, for the time being, we will still concentrate on opening them.

Consistent with the general cultural theme of human worth and value, many of our discussions centered around the treatment of certain segments of society. In one lesson, we examined, among other things the treatment of children in Latin America. It was brought out that in Latin America, it was inappropriate for children to remain in the room when adults were visiting. I made my normal request for tacit assumptions. It often seemed as though the first few tacit assumptions offered were like shovels of dirt being thrown out of a hole; a rather necessary, but

annoying process of arriving at buried treasure underneath.

Finally, a student reaches the door:

S1: "Just that, children shouldn't be involved, I don't know. Just, adults are more important or whatever."

If we were to pass through this door, which of course we did, it would afford us the opportunity of reflecting upon socially imposed roles and the effects these roles have on those who are forced to play them. We would examine if our rhetoric concerning children is consistent with our actions. The field is wide open for a discussion regarding the assignment of value to human beings based on physical or mental characteristics.

A discussion on the treatment of the elderly bore even better fruit. After a lesson on the way the elderly are treated in Latin America (which is markedly different from the U.S.), I told of a conversation with my wife's grandfather (an American) where he related to me his feeling of worthlessness. I then requested American tacit assumptions. Since this lesson was one of my later ones, the students' ability to provide me with appropriate and deep assumptions had greatly improved. Some of the ones they provided were as follows: One must be earning money to be worthwhile. Being productive is very important. Love and esteem are earned by levels of material success. It is

important that one be good at something. One must be active to be valuable. A person is not successful unless he/she is independent. To be a valuable person, even just being average is not good enough.

Although they never reached the point where picking out assumptions was effortless, the students eventually became much more adept at it. Occasionally, no time elapsed at all before the cultural issue was pounced on. Here is an example of a discussion on behavioral norms in Latin America. I mentioned women are never supposed to swear. The following response came immediately:

S1: "It's chauvinistic."  
 T: "It's chauvinistic. Why is it chauvinistic?"  
 S1: "Because men shouldn't swear either."  
 T: "That's right. So let's go deeper then. What is the tacit assumption then?"  
 S1: "That women should play certain roles."

If the students found something wrong with Latin American culture, it was quickly realized that similar maladies were in plentiful supply right here at home.

#### The Process -- Dialogue:

I have taken 2 semesters of Spanish in high school, and we never before did what we do in this Spanish class. Sure we learned about Spain and some of their customs, but we never before just talked.

As mentioned and referenced earlier, a Freirian approach is one of dialogue where both the teacher and stu-

dents learn from each other. A student is not simply reduced to an information receptacle. The affective filter is low, allowing the students to feel comfortable in expressing their opinions in an atmosphere of tolerance:

I enjoy having the chance to voice my opinions and thoughts on the topics being discussed in the cultural lesson for that day. The ideas that others bring up in class cause me to think even more. Most of the time you need the opinions of others to help further formulate your own opinions.

As the comments proceed, and I end up talking less and less, the students appeared to be actually learning from each other, drawing on each other's unique experiences. Past experiences were often brought out which had bothered them, and now, as a result of the discussion, had taken on new meaning.

It was always preferable to allow the students to just discuss the issues among themselves, however, there were many occasions where all my prodding could not get them to carry on extended conversations. A more directive but open format was then appropriate. The following is an example of one of my more teacher directed lessons. Even though I was heavily involved, dialogue is constant, and critical reflection is continually taking place. We will enter in at the middle of the lesson and skip around. Please forgive my own grammatical errors in speaking. It is amazing what you learn by listening to yourself on tape:

T: "Let's say, the average American, if he met the Chairman of the Board for Texaco Oil, and he met a person who collected garbage . . . . Who would he show more respect to?"

S1: "Texaco Oil."

T: "Texaco Oil. Why?"

S2: "Cause he's better than him."

T: "Okay, why is he better?"

S3: "Because of the difference in the job."

S4: "Because he has a higher level job."

T: "A higher level job, why does that make him better?"

S4: "It doesn't."

S5: "That's what society says."

S6: "He makes more money." (said sarcastically)

T: "He makes more money, and that's what society has taught us. Now the fact that he has more of this (I pull a twenty dollar bill out of my wallet) whether it is in Colombia or the United States (pause -- I lose my train of thought. I walk over to a female student and show her the twenty dollar bill.)

T: "Do you have this much money on you?"

S7: (giggling and embarrassed) "No."

T: "Looks like I'm better than you, huh? (I now direct my words to the whole class.) I am better than her. I have more worth, more value as a human being than her right?"

Several sentences deleted.

S6: "She spent her money on things society can see better (referring to her nice clothes) so she is worth more. (laughter)

Several sentences deleted.

S8: "One of the big problems in the world . . . is that someone lower gets jealous of someone up higher because of what he may have."

Several sentences deleted.

T: "In Latin American culture, . . . who deserves to live well?" (a question obviously not original to me)

S6: "People that work hard."

T: ". . . Now, do these people in Latin America, do they all work hard, or do none of them work at all, or do they (pause) a mixture."

S8: "Mixture."

T: "Mixture. So there are some in here (referring

to a chart on social stratification I drew on the board) that do work hard, probably most of them.

S8: "But the upper class won't pay them the money they deserve."

T: "Okay."

S9: "And it could be the other half that doesn't work hard that gives everybody the bad name."

T: "Uh huh. That could be too."

S9: "Even the people that do work hard, the generalizations in society are stereotyping them."

T: "Yea, that could be, I am sure that maybe there is ten percent of these people that are lazy. Then that would somehow form to legitimate what these people are saying up here (referring to the chart). What are these people up here saying? They are saying those guys are poor because why?"

S4: "They deserve it."

T: "Because they deserve it, and for several reasons, why?"

S4: "They're lazy."

T: "They're lazy."

S4: "They're dirty."

T: "They're dirty, and they don't have . . ."

S8: "Brains."

T: "Brains. Okay, Is that true?"

S(plural): "No."

Several sentences deleted.

T: "So, Latin America (pause) big problem. Okay, and they assign value, they assign value according to intelligence, according to work, according to money, okay. In the United States we do that too don't we? (I blew a good opportunity for reflection here.)"

S1: "Yes."

T: "Okay, anymore comments?"

S10: "I was just talking (to a classmate) about people dealing with other people and . . . I think basically that we as a people have selfish desires you know, and we think, well you know, if I treat him better, personality wise, you know like, they are both the same. But you're not looking at that, you looking at, um, manipulation . . . ."

Several minutes deleted. I relate a personal experience.

T: "He made me feel like I was a part of the conversation you see. Even though I was a nobody. In American society, you know, who would have the value

there?"

S1: "The attorney."

T: "Who was I?"

S1: "A nobody." (laughter)

T: "Why was I a nobody?"

S4: "You hadn't proved yourself."

T: "I hadn't proved myself. What does that say about American culture and Latin American culture . . . ?"

S6: "You have to prove yourself."

T: "You have to prove yourself. Why do we have to prove ourselves?"

S4: "How is anybody going to know how important you are?" (laughter)

T: "Yea see, that's the question. Why do we have to prove ourselves?"

S11: (reflective tone) "Maybe we don't."

This final statement of "Maybe we don't." was, in my opinion, the pinnacle of the lesson that day. The young man who said it was one of my deeper thinkers and has impressed me as being a very sincere individual. I could tell that we had reached the point where mental models of reality were being challenged. Although, mental models of reality were being challenged throughout the lesson, they were never so threatened as in the last statement. It is important to note that I do not in the least pretend that all of my students felt that the poor were lazy, dirty, deserved their lot, and had less value than people with more money. I do not claim to have hoisted them out of some dark cavern of ignorance. Although that analogy might not be inappropriate with some, the great majority already possessed the mental models relating to the oppression of the poor. It is my feeling, that the culture lessons,



besides occasionally aiding in formulating new models, very often served to legitimate and strengthen models that already existed and helped the students view them in a new light. During the culture lessons, I would propose that paradigm realignment was being carried out in the following ways. First, previously understood models were strengthened. Previously understood models went from a recessive state to a dominant state. Previously understood models were altered. New models were created by taking bits and pieces of older ones and reformulating them in different ways. Examples of the many forms of paradigm change will be more obvious as we proceed.

Dealing With World View Challenges:

Another point I would like to bring up about the culture lessons is the fact that I learned not only about Mexican culture, but about American culture. I learned things I had never thought about. Not so much learned things, but we talked about things I had never realized . . . .

One can know things and never "realize" them. The cultural lessons were a catalyst in aiding many students to penetrate into deeper realms of social consciousness. I use the words "many students" because I feel that some, although having gained a significant degree of multi-cultural understanding, never quite left the level of critical consciousness they originally occupied. One of my more recurring problems was the deeply embedded concept that the

American world view is somehow "better." One of my more poignant examples is as follows:

Many of them (Latin Americans) do not have the desire to work and try to make things better in their own lives. They are satisfied with the lives they have. It takes time to grow but somewhere someone has to start.

In other words, the poor Latins are socially behind the times and it is up to us with our superior wisdom to help them out. This concept, so very American, showed up on more than one occasion. During the aforementioned discussion on cooperation versus competition in school, some of the students expressed the idea that "we are taught better values here."

Of course, there are many things wrong in all cultures and I saw nothing inappropriate when students sincerely expressed their disagreement with particular aspects of Latin American culture and chose to stay faithful to their American viewpoints. The following is an example of fair and respectful criticism:

Another area that we could use a little help in is living too much in the future. But, I feel that they live too much for the present and don't really plan for the future. We don't enjoy the present because we are too worried about being happy in the future. There needs to be a happy medium between the two of enjoying the present but also planning for the future. I guess we could both use a little help in this area.

Of course, as Americans, the students tended to view the issues treated through the eyes of pragmatism. For example, when discussing discrimination in employment they felt that the discrimination was probably brought on as a result of Latins having poor English skills and thereby creating a negative effect on business efficiency. When discussing materialism in both the U.S. and Latin America, some students felt that since Latins are poorer, they simply can't be as materialistic and therefore must fall back on things like family closeness, aesthetic appreciation, etc.

Along with the problems of attempting to explain the world through a pragmatic paradigm, the students struggled for explanations within the realm of individualism rather than looking to society as a whole. In this society, and maybe in all, it seems that people are culturally programmed to turn their wrath inward at themselves or at others and never at the societal institutions and beliefs that, as football coaches in a press box, invisibly yet powerfully direct man's assault against man. A good example of society's ability to make a clean getaway comes from the answers received to a question I posed concerning the reasons old people dread dependancy. The answers were as follows: They are used to working. It is hard to break old habits. They become bored. They miss the friends and

associations they had at work. Working brings with it a lot of self-satisfaction. As can be observed, not one even considered looking into society's conceptions regarding worth and value and what one must do to be high on the worth totem pole, and that being dependant was socially the equivalent of worthlessness. After being patient, the cultural no man's land was finally invaded:

S1: "Well, it goes against society's norms, I mean that's not . . . (pause)

T: "Well, what does society say about value?"

S1: "Society says if you're not productive, if you don't add to the culture, add to society, add to your life, and other peoples lives, then you are not worth anything because you're not adding, you're not helping."

The students, of course, got better with time, however having them think deeply and critically was no easy task considering that, as a result of our educational system, they are used to being continually spoon fed. They were always looking for time-worn phrases and ideas to substantiate or explain what they were learning and always elaborated on the obvious. They were able to pull out examples in their own lives that bothered them, but were not able to easily get to the root of the problem. They instinctively knew when something was wrong, but explaining why the problem existed and discovering the origin of the malady was a struggle. I wonder if this is the reason people can be good at recognizing evil, but yet be so inadequate in

dealing with it.

On the order of recognizing wrongs, the students became adept at perceiving stereotypes:

I never thought much about how different societies treat different cultures and societies. Our society most especially, it seems to stereotype other cultures.

In a discussion on race and discrimination, students were quick to, on their own, bring stereotyping into the picture:

Well, before a child is even born into society or culture, there are certain stereotypes that are going to follow it into the world. I mean, if he is white and middle class, born into a white middle class family, he or she will have certain stereotypes that will follow him. If he is a Mexican, then there are certain stereotypes as well that they will be judged by even though they may not follow it at all in their lifestyle.

As the lessons progressed, I felt they gained a greater appreciation of social role expectations and how they can lock us into a limited and often distorted view of reality. As a result, the students also gained insight into the dangers and problems associated when one leaves his or her socially created "comfort zone." The following comment came during a discussion over why some Latins, once in the United States, become ashamed of their heritage and even their complexion:

What I think is weird or sad or whatever, is that, like everybody here has friends or whatever, that have accepted the American way and are ashamed because they are not that white or whatever. We feel bad for them or however we feel. But if there were somebody that was proud of the way they are and were trying to change society, and make it acceptable for them to have dark skin, we might consider them as being rebels and trying to take over, you know what I mean?

The idea of being locked in to certain forms of behavior and the consequences of deviating from the standard, hit home the concept that we are all "prisoners" doing time in whatever reality we have been born into. Escaping can be hazardous, and once on the outside, one must continually resist and avoid efforts at recapture. Such a concept cannot help but inculcate the idea of the difficulty faced by those who view another culture through their own set of rules and the incredible propensity toward misunderstanding and intolerance that results. An excellent example of such recognition, plus critical reflection is found in one of my anonymous papers:

I learned that societies everywhere have standards. No matter what culture you come from, there will be rules placed on you by society as a whole. People are not very tolerant of different people who do not fit these so called norms or follow the rules. We are a world of conformists.

We are also intolerant of other societies whose norms or social customs are not the same as ours. This is a shame because many times we could learn many helpful things from other peoples.

Through class discussion I have learned that deep down we are all insecure. This is what causes us to set rules and judge others. No one wants to be looked down upon, therefore we do anything to fit into social

norms. It's too bad we can't just let everyone be what they please, and appreciate them for that.

I also learned that different settings can be present and the rules no longer ring true. In another country suddenly new social norms are forced upon you. And foreigners will judge you according to their rules whether you know them or not. But by the same token you will judge them according to your rules also.

We need to realize that just because people are different doesn't mean they are bad. I found it interesting to hear cultural differences during class. Its good to look at life from a different point of view, because no one is right or wrong.

All in all I found the culture days quite interesting and informative. They were discussions I enjoyed and learned from. It opened my eyes to a few of the problems in our society, as well as those in other countries.

Frankly, I was amazed at the degree of understanding and critical reflection displayed by this student. It must be kept in mind that Ricks College is a junior college with an open admissions policy. Most likely this person is only eighteen or nineteen years old. It appears, based on this comment, and many others of similar quality, that this Freirian inspired method of teaching culture has incredible potential for expanding one's reality, and forging a more profound ability to explore and comprehend new horizons. Understanding is also evidenced by the metaphorical nature of some of the student comments:

It is not until we go to another country that we begin to see a few of the culture scripts we have been playing our entire lives.

Metaphors were used throughout the discussions in a wide variety of subtopics. The use of metaphor is essential to the process of understanding. It is a system of model comparison where something is comprehended based on its similarity with previously understood information. The following is another example of the use of metaphor to grasp the meaning and significance of new information and/or reflection:

I think a lot of it has to do with that we are so competitive with each other, that, it is kind of like, a theory when you put beetles in a jar. They all try to climb out, but they won't let anybody, they won't let each other get on top of the other one to climb out orderly . . . .

An understanding of the metaphorical nature of reality plus the concept of different rules and distinct models of social appropriateness and necessity, aid individuals, at least in part, to be able to get into the other person's shoes so to speak and attempt to see the world as they do, instead of assuming the existence of a worldwide, all inclusive paradigm. The following is an example of a student attempting to understand how people in a foreign culture might view the world differently than the way it is viewed in this society:

I think a big part of it has to do with, also, their culture, how they are raised, because we're raised success-oriented so we are all looking for success. Whereas they're already poor, basically. So they



don't look so much, that hey, we can reach that success, but they are looking for someone who can, and so maybe that makes them more aware of those who are successful, where we are aware of those that are successful around us, but we are looking for that for ourselves. So we don't pay that much attention to the others who have done it.

The ability to reflect on alternative models of reality can be useful in reflecting on aspects of one's own. Occasionally, students would be brought into reflection on the origins of our social givens. This type of reflection I find extremely beneficial for reasons that are hard to explain. Despite the difficulty, I will make the attempt after the following example:

I think that's how money got started too, because if everything was given to us, then there would be, it would be fine, you know, and everybody would have everything. But there were people that were more greedy, and they would say, "Well, I'll give you two of this if you give me one. Trade me for this one bigger thing." . . . And then they started bringing money into it cause money was valuable and gold and things. And that's how we got to have money and how people are always money hungry.

I include this statement knowing full well that most "educated" people would waste no time in being critical and in tearing down the inexperienced reasoning encountered in this argument. However, within this statement we find something more precious than comprehending historical accuracies and "truth." First, we find the acknowledgement that the social given called "money" had a beginning and

that there was a time when an alternative model was in place. If something can have a beginning, it can have an end. To reflect upon the birth of something is at the same time, reflecting on its mortality and vulnerability. This person has acknowledged that money is not an eternal principle always exercising its influence upon the universe. It is a model utilized in human relationships, but a model nonetheless. It may be one of hundreds of models that could possibly fulfill the same societal functions and needs. Yes, it was born, and the day may come when it will die, replaced by a concept, as yet unthought of, but free from the essence from which so much difficulty has sprung.

Viewing the World Through Different Lenses:

Why do we have enemies anyway?

What an incredible question. When it fell from the girl's lips I found myself taken aback. It was the first time in all of the cultural lessons that our roles of teacher and student seemed to be reversed. I was always the one who so willingly provided the difficult questions. Now the situation had changed. I awkwardly attempted to provide answers from within my own social paradigm. I uttered the word "economics." My response did not satisfy me. For a moment I was a student, struggling but unable to escape from the cultural monster that held me in its grasp.

I, who had prided myself in being able to see the world from many different angles, found myself unable to adequately respond to an idea so beautiful, yet so foreign.

When people view the world differently, it affords them the opportunity to look back at their lives and reinterpret experiences. People from different cultures can see and hear the same human interactions but yet their interpretations of what occurred will be different because of distinct cultural models being used in the brain's interpretive process. The same can occur within one culture when a person is provided with new models. With these models at hand, one is now able to react differently to the present as well as to change conceptions of past events:

The one lesson that really hit me most was the one on manners. I feel that I have been effected by this. I have been brought up in a middle class where certain expectations are held. I was taught how to eat right in a restaurant, talk to elders, and act in public. My boyfriend was taught differently, his culture is more casual in their attitudes. I felt I was better than him because I fit in better and I felt that I was more well-bred than him. I really liked him but I was embarrassed to go out in public with him. This did not make me a better person but a worse one.

The fact that the students now had alternative models from which to view reality doesn't mean that they all rejected the old ones. Some did, some did not. If the new models did not reach a point of dominance over the older ones, then the students continued to view the world in the

same way as before except for the concept of differing multi-cultural viewpoints which I am quite sure everybody understood and some probably understood long before they ever took my Spanish class. However, I feel it is quite apparent that as a result of the culture lessons, many new models all of a sudden found themselves in the judgement seat, and as a result, the student's mode of viewing the world changed. The following is one of many prime examples:

Here in my own family, I've seen my younger brothers of the ages 9, 11, and 13, borrow small amounts of money from each other and then charge interest. I've always laughed and thought what good business men they will one day be, but now I can instead see selfish motives they might feel once they are older. . . . More than anything, I've learned about myself and what I can do to be a better person.

If this particular student had not had the cultural lessons she would have continued to see things the same way. If his/her older models had never been challenged and dethroned, the three brothers would continue to be viewed as future high financiers rather than young men laying the framework for later exploitation. Could it be that the solution to all of the world's social problems lies in the adoption of some new models and the rejection of some old ones? If this is true, then the more accustomed we become to seeking, discovering, and adapting new ways of viewing the world, the greater chance we have of recognizing and

dealing with the many factors that combine to make this world a somewhat less than perfect place.

Disquieting Revelation -- A New Look at One's Own:

In the United States, each individual seems to be competing with everyone else, including family members. There is very little cooperation and kind support from friends and family. Everyone is eager for "self-independence." As the saying goes, "Everyone for himself." Unfortunately this attitude can infringe major consequences on others. My step-brother, a very close friend, falls under these consequences. He was an only child and his father and school peers felt they had to "look out" for themselves first. Unfortunately, he was the victim of these circumstances and during a July 4th weekend -- How ironic! -- Independence Day, he committed suicide.

As is known by all teachers, some lessons go better than others. On one occasion, I gave a culture lesson where, among other things, we examined the effect that socially created tacit assumptions have on our own sense of worth and self-esteem. It was seen how people are often forced to view themselves as a thing of little value when basing their perceptions on a particular and most often cold model of reality. As the class ended, I was somewhat alarmed to discover a girl in tears, remaining in her seat quietly talking to another female student. I was concerned that possibly without knowing, I had offended her. As I was preparing to leave, she walked up to me and apologized for being so emotional. She explained that she had a stepbrother who had committed suicide. She wished he could

have been here during the lesson, and could have heard what was said. If he could have heard this, she felt, he might still be alive. I imagine the author of the above anonymous comment, and this particular girl, are one and the same. So far we have seen several examples of individuals discovering negative traits within themselves and society and we will see a lot more. The first step to improving the world is the realization that certain wrongs exist. However, this particular method can also have the opposite effect of liberating an individual from the many unfair labels and burdens that society so willingly thrusts upon him. One of the major goals of the lessons was to enhance the students' perception of the worth, and dignity of all humankind. This also includes, and possibly starts with themselves. On one occasion I was discussing the social conceptions which serve to justify one person thinking he/she is less or more than another. It was determined that we are expected to be good at something. I then posed the question as to what worth has an individual in society if he/she is in such a state where they simply cannot do anything. It was agreed that such a person would not really be valued in our particular social environment. I received some interesting comments. Some, such as the following, exhibited the students' ability to come up with models that were more akin to the concept of a just and

kind society:

Everybody does produce something but usually their product is not recognized. Take homemakers. . . . In some parts of society . . . that is very very looked down upon because they are not producing a product. . . . However, when you step back and look at it, they are producing the most important product of all; (the girl making this comment was referring to the raising of children and how women get little credit just for being mothers) And old people, that is one of the main reasons we cast off our elderly, because we perceive them as not producing anything, when in fact, they are so full of knowledge and wisdom, we can learn from them, . . . however, that is not perceived as a product, and like you mentioned, retarded people, who can't do anything, or quote unquote are not good for anything, they teach the rest of us patience and care and that's important. That produces a product but it is not perceived as such.

A change in the perception or model of the ambiguous word "product" can have repercussions through innumerable aspects of one's world view. Such cultural "domino effects" indicate that big change can result from little things.

#### A Two-Edged Sword -- The Drawbacks of Progress:

Learning about another's behavior and culture has motivated me to examine and define my own. In class I've compared South America's culture to North America's culture. In evaluating the differences in the cultures, I have redefined my own beliefs on people's behavior and treatment in society.

In North America the "self" is isolated and left to defend itself. Others' attempts to care and help a person are looked at through skeptical eyes. North Americans are concerned with I or me, not us or we. In an "I" society, selfishly motivated individuals demean others to achieve success.

Whether one agrees or not with this person's statement, it is clear that the learning of another culture, and also, as I believe, the method involved in the cultural instruction, activated a process resulting in native culture redefinition. During the lessons, I felt that a considerable amount of redefinition was going on in their attitudes toward the so very American conception concerning the utility of progress and success. Students came to view negative aspects of this powerful, and often uncontrollable wave that we continually ride. Students are probably as accustomed to hearing people extol the virtues of success as they are of peace. At least now, for a few, one of those terms is no longer completely without blemish:

Another aspect of their culture that I really like is that they are so easy going. Americans take life and the things of this world too seriously. Life should be enjoyed. Of course work and progress is important, but I think that Americans get so caught up in succeeding, that they lose some of their basics. We need to spend more time enjoying nature, art, the beauties around us.

This particular student, as with most, probably already possessed the conception that there is more to life than success. However, many people refuse to accept this concept as evidenced by their actions. The idea expressed by the student is well known but yet recessive. Its influence is overridden by the powerful model of success that is so intricately tied into one's concept of self-worth.



The unnerving amount of stress that comes as a by-product of this societal force was often the source of concern:

Our culture is a fast-paced, stressful way of life. There are always twenty things to do. It is stressful because you're trying to live up to people's expectations, try to be one of those who stand out, to be the best, to always look good and have money.

From several of the student comments, it is obvious that the Latin model of a more relaxed, less stressful environment appealed to them. The following comment, although not mentioning the Latin model specifically, exhibits an understanding of that foreign world view:

We are more of a high strung society. Like he was saying earlier, we are more success-oriented. We are more worried about getting somewhere rather than sitting back and watching things happen and, you know, seeing what else is going on around the world. We're worried more about us, and what's happening to us.

Stress was simply one of several concerns that surfaced in our study of conceptions of success and their effect on human worth and value. Motives for seeking success were examined and they seemed to fall short of anything noble or praiseworthy:

Don't you think that it goes along with his success idea, that we want to leave our mark. We want to be the one that everybody looks up and says wow, I wish I were like that.

As can be inferred from the statements, the students are coming up with theories to explain why things are as they are. How many times in our life experience do we ever question why we seek for success. To some, a question of that nature could be consistent with asking why we eat or seek shelter. In most minds, there exists a fine line between natural and artificial/social reality.

Much attention focused on drawbacks in the process; the way we achieve. After critical reflection, the students seemed to sense that there was a sort of ugliness about it. The idea that the path to success was as a trail up a high mountain that could be scaled with effort was found to be an inappropriate metaphor. It was seen more as a contest, where there were winners and losers. People won by beating someone else in a very intense game:

S1: "I think one reason it is different, . . . Americans are as competitive as they are, not only do you want to get the 'A,' but you don't want somebody else to get the 'A.'"

Several sentences deleted.

T: "Yea, in American society, how do you get ahead?"

S2: "Stepping on everyone."

#### Fetishism and Enslavement -- The Spoils of Success:

It's almost like a game with the Americans, "one who dies with the most toys wins."

The process of critically viewing the very foundations of one's culture cannot help but enlighten us on the utter absurdities of life. Were the rules developed by a set of intelligent human beings or by a madman? One is naturally inclined to believe the former, however, after careful examination, the latter seems uncomfortably plausible. As is evident in both the preceding and following comment, the students seemed to rebel against what some viewed as the senseless insanity revolving around the power of money:

Well there's like, there's only one thing in this country that will make you socially acceptable. I mean you can be as ugly as all heck but if you have money you're just the coolest.

In that statement, I sensed not only sarcasm, but yet a bit of frustration as well. For years, the student could have fought hard to earn money to be consistent with the dominant paradigm which so selectively dished out the coveted and highly prized ambiguity called esteem. Not being able to make the grade in itself would create extraordinary frustration in anyone. However, now I was sensing a different kind of frustration. Maybe a more powerful one. It was the frustration that comes from knowing that what you are seeking, what others will continue to insist that you seek for, and what you must continue to seek for to retain social acceptability is little more than an absurdity. What a powerful frustration! To

think that your own worth and value will be determined by it! Sarcasm was a way of striking back.

The students, to a small extent, understood the very Freirian concept of the oppressed attempting to become like the oppressor. The following comments were made during a lesson that somehow evolved into a discussion on why the rich are often not punished as severely as the poor when involved in criminal activity. They reflected and formulated theories:

S1: "Well, if we punish the rich people, then society doesn't have anybody to look up to. It's like society needs somebody that is above them. So if we punish them (pause). You know what I'm saying?"

Several statements later.

S2: "Maybe in society we have to have heroes, we have to have idols, maybe we've become naive because when our idols ever do something wrong, we think he couldn't have done that, he's my hero."

T: "And what makes these rich people our heroes?"

S3: "They've got what we want."

It is amazing to what extent people will go, to imitate individuals whom society says have "made it." These individuals seem to set the expectations for all of us and we seem to blindly follow along always seeking their approval. Most of the students readily recognized this concept and were all too aware of the great lengths a person would go to conform and hence gain an ever so small piece of societal esteem:

People in our society are basically self-centered and materialistic. If you're not beautiful, you're nothing. That's why we have anorexia and bulimia and massive cosmetic surgery like lipo suction and face lifts. People are so worried about their outfits and cars. But media, and adult and peers influence us to believe this is the only way to live and be happy.

The student's comments imply that there are other paths to happiness besides socially marked out ones. The implication is also that such alternate paths could very well be much less complex. I also detect the feeling that a socially acceptable path might be nothing but a counterfeit; a state that resembles progression toward that ever so coveted prize, yet gives no real returns. The return could possibly be a permanent trip to a world of a belly never filled and a thirst never quenched:

America is the "Land of Opportunity." We as Americans believe that, so what we have is never quite good enough, there is always something more out there.

It seems to me that the student, by saying that America is the "Land of Opportunity," is expressing our particular world view, which in many respects, has been converted into reality for the benefit of a very large number of its citizens. The student claims that the phrase connotes that such opportunities are endless and that this social concept has influenced our thinking to a large degree resulting in a state of unsatisfied materialism. It is logical to assume that our phrases would, to different

extents, reflect our world views and exert a considerable influence on our reality. Whether the student is right or wrong, it seemed to me that the judgement on materialism was that it is, in a sense, a Siren song, which instead of dashing your life's vessel to pieces on the rocks of greed, you could be condemned to live under a system of counterfeit happiness. I am sure that again, this was not a new concept to some. However, whether it was new or just a reminder, I feel all potentially benefitted.

It would be natural to assume that such reflection would lead one into pondering over priorities. Take, for example, the following statement:

We no longer strive for personal peace and happiness, we strive for personal property and possessions. There are 2.5 cars per family in America. Now you tell me who has priority problems.

Despite, the obvious problems with the logic exhibited in this statement, the student is expressing a truth nonetheless. The truth is that we in America have a habit of going beyond that which is sufficient for our needs and, as a result, easily fall prey to the whims of fetishism. He/She claims that we should be searching for personal peace and happiness rather than personal property and possessions. This seems to be a break with the never articulated but very well understood cultural assumption that amassing personal property and possessions enhances

one's happiness. No matter who one asks concerning this assumption, the answer will most likely be negative regarding whether happiness can be found in material things. However, though it might be in vogue to deny it, our actions substantiate the legitimacy of the idea every day. This student may be doing the same thing, however the fact that data (2.5 cars per household) was introduced to support the point, indicates that he/she was associating the concepts being discussed in class with facts learned in different settings. This procedure of categorizing facts and therefore making judgements on them seems to indicate that at some point the negative model of materialism was inculcated within his/her reality. How much influence the class had on that will never be known and for all intents and purposes is not measurable. All I have to rely on are my own observations, and student statements which almost overwhelmingly support the idea that significant and positive changes in critical consciousness occurred.

The Elderly -- Proud Product or Social Residue:

In our society, getting old is dreaded. It's not the physical aspect as much as it is the mental. Our elderly people are made to feel as if they are burdens upon society. The Mexican people, however, have a much better way of dealing with their elderly. They live with the idea that they spent their lives taking care of and raising a family, so it's the least a family can do to take care of them.

In all of the subtopics of human worth and value discussed, none came close to having the impact that was felt as we explored the treatment of the elderly. As to why this was so, I can come up with no satisfactory explanation. It seemed that the issue deeply stirred their feelings of decency and justice. As I myself reflect on their reactions, maybe the key can be found in the fact that the treatment of the elderly is markedly different in Latin America than in the U.S. According to my procedure, they were exposed to the Latin model first and then were left to reflect on their own. The Latin model, in my opinion, and in the opinions of many of the students, is one that allows for a much greater degree of dignity and self-worth. Interviews with Latin informants who had spent large parts of their lives in both cultures verified my own perceptions (having lived in Mexico two years) that the elderly in Latin America do not suffer, at least to any close extent, the feelings of uselessness, and of being a burden that are so often experienced in the United States. Here we encountered a model, whose distinct cultural tacit assumptions, brought about surprisingly different results on human worth and value. This, I feel, might have been the catalyst for such a strong reaction. The thought going through their heads may have been, "They can do it, why can't we." or "Why won't we."



Before moving further into the subject, I would like to make some comments concerning the quote found at the beginning of this section. The student states that getting old is dreaded. That certainly is not news to anyone, however, his/her statement regarding the dread originating more from the depths of the mind rather than the deterioration of the body interests me. He/She says that the elderly "are made to feel as if they are burdens upon society." The whole statement implies an understanding of the strong undercurrents in culture that can push one society one way and another society, another way. The idea of being made to feel a certain way, is a testament to the incredible effect social tacit assumptions have on our perceptions. Now let's examine some of the cultural forces that "make" the elderly feel as they do:

. . . we put them on a pedestal (our parents) and if .  
. . my mom were to move into my family, she would feel  
that she wasn't that great person she used to be to  
me.

My question was, and is, why? Why would she feel that way? After reflection, it was decided that one is expected to give before one takes. One should never just take. I would, without too much concern over being challenged, say that the very same idea exists in Latin America. What therefore is the difference? The difference is, I believe, can be found in the student statement at the head of this

section. In Latin America, the elderly gave in the past. Now it is their turn to receive. In the United States, the paradigm operates somewhat like a vending machine, you must give a little, and then take a little. It doesn't matter if you spent the last several years throwing spare quarters into the slot without taking anything out. Taking is the direct and immediate result of giving:

I think, in our society that, success is partly perceived as getting out on your own and being independent and that has been in this society so long that, I think some old people don't want to live with their kids. They don't want to go to a home either, but they don't want to live with their kids.

Independence affords one the opportunity of at least appearing that he/she is not continually on the take. Dependence is just another synonym for take. The student has recognized the importance of independence in the societal success formula. The elderly realize it too, however, to them, it is a given. To my students, there were no givens:

We shut out the older people. I don't think we really care. It's like they are old, they can't do anything, they're probably going senile.

The first two sentences of this statement don't really say very much but they do, at least, show recognition of the problem. The more a problem situation is articulated, the greater the chance is that progress will be made in

effecting a solution. The third sentence contains what we discovered to be an important, yet often overlooked element in American culture's success equation. It is the need to be "doing something." The more the students looked at it, the more they became convinced of the idea's power. The concept also opened up paths that lead to increased understanding of other related models:

S1: "I think we also value youthfulness too."  
T: "Why do you think we value youthfulness?"  
S1: "We think they can do more."

By understanding the powerful concept of the necessity of being actively engaged in something, the students were able to utilize this knowledge to assist them in grasping the roots of other related models. Now, they were equipped with another concept which would undoubtedly assist them in comprehending the plight of the elderly, by facilitating the students' ability to view the world through the lense of the senior citizen.

The ability to vicariously place oneself in the position of another, can only occur when one is familiar with the models of the other's reality. Seeing life through another's eyes can allow the students to, at least in part, feel what they feel and experience the other's thoughts, concerns, and emotions. As a result, the students often reacted with anger upon sensing injustice they may have

never before experienced as evidenced in the following two quotes:

I think America needs to open its eyes and learn from our southern neighbors. We are having a problem with neglecting our elderly and now is the time to stop it. It's time to stop being so self-centered and learn to return a little of the time and love that they have so freely given us. After all, who gave us life, the most precious gift of all.

It is unfair what the American culture does to the elderly. Putting them away, letting their wise minds rot away because they are absolutely unused anymore. It seems that when the body gets older Americans look down on it. We are a society crazed with usefulness. No one seems to care with what the elderly can do or what they know. . . . It is a sick thing when a country such as ours has lost so much to greed and vanity and let the old and knowledgeable just rot away with no one to listen to them, or even care.

Anger and shock at injustice is, and will always be, one of the preliminary steps to effecting positive change in the world. The final section of this chapter deals with just that. In what ways could the students convert their reflection and new knowledge into positive results?

Reshaping Minds -- Reshaping the World:

I come from a place where the Mexicans just about outnumber the other people during harvest, and it is so easy to put yourself above them because they are different than you. But after these discussions, I have got a better outlook on them. They have made me see that every culture is different. I can see now why they do the things they do and I will accept them for being from a different culture.

As mentioned in chapter three, the third highlight of each cultural lesson should be discussion concerning appropriate ways to utilize the newly gained knowledge to assist in making the world a better place. As with all facets of the lessons, at first, and even later on to a lesser extent, critical and deep reflection did not come easy. Probably, one of the greatest obstacles to effective, potentially problem solving dialogue was the profound influence of pragmatism on American thought. There surfaced what could be called, "pragmatic problem fixers." An example of one such problem fixer concerning the plight of the elderly is as follows:

Let society know about it. Write to your senator. Do everything you can. If you really want to help old people out . . . write to the President. Let him know your opinions.

Although the suggestions made by this student are certainly not inappropriate nor useless, they truly reflect our American mentality of limited means to change, of working within the paradigm instead of having the courage and vision to begin to construct new ones. They seem to offer nothing but "bandaid solutions" that will never be effective as long as a hostile model of reality is in place. Another example of a pragmatic problem fixer was a suggestion that the situation could be a little ameliorated if we held more family reunions and made sure we took the

older people to them. Another student suggested that we adopt programs and ways of making old people at least feel like they are useful (even though they really aren't).

Some of the more potentially positive suggestions dealt with changes in world view that, if adopted by society, would allow for more favorable results:

We will often talk to small children as if they are stupid. They're not stupid, they're just unskilled. We do that with old people a lot. Society has conditioned that old people are old and senile, deaf and blind, and can't take care of themselves, when, in fact, they usually can if permitted to.

Here we see more than just petitioning the President. We see the suggestion that working towards a new model of human relations and potential, can exert major changes in our attitudes and, as a result, our actions. After the above statement, the students discussed how we tend to stereotype all older people and how this is extremely unfair. They also felt, that by denying them certain priviledges (one that comes to mind is the right to work after retirement age) we deny them the satisfaction of independence and activity which is so necessary while living under our present paradigm. The idea later surfaced concerning the real need that many of elderly do have for charitable support. The pain and difficulty of accepting help, under our present models, was discussed and it was determined that in order to alleviate the problem, a shift

in our world view was necessary. How does one teach people that it is okay to accept help when it is really needed? This may be one of the most difficult questions of our day and possibly history, considering the incredible strength of the bond between cultural expectations and human dignity. After pondering the issue, the students could not find any reason why accepting charity, when in need, could be considered wrong. One student, after reflecting deeply on the issue, called the idea of not wanting to accept needed charity "backwards." Now, if the feelings of the class could become the dominant cultural sentiments of the nation at large, what a terrific burden of guilt would be lifted of the shoulders of those least capable of bearing it.

Concerning how one should go about changing the world into a better place, there was considerable feeling that the transformation would have to start with the individual. This, at first, bothered me because I felt that it was only the utilization of a time-worn and often useless phrase. I have since changed my feeling and recognize that most time-worn phrases carry with them much often disregarded truth. I got tired of hearing that it must "start with ourselves." However, I admit, that is where it must start:

I think, if we could all, have this unconditional love towards older people, not that you have to go out and like teach society that, but if you do it yourself, by

example, maybe people can see that.

The idea this person was trying to get across was, I think, that just by changing yourself, the world is improved. The icing on the cake results in the possibility that more people will see your actions, be impressed by them, inculcate them into their lives and possibly set up a never ending positive chain reaction of good influence. I like this concept, however, my only concern is that there have been good examples throughout history and can we say for sure that the world has changed for the better? I feel that in many ways it has, and the concept expressed by the student should not be disregarded as a lot of useless idealism. The person who made the above comment was by no means alone in his/her sentiments:

I think the only thing we can do is be an example. If you really feel that way, then follow through with it and do what you think is right. Don't worry about society and stuff like that. That might get you into trouble sometimes, but if you really feel that way and you believe it strong enough to do something about it like being an example and take care of an old person that needs help or whatever the case may be.

This student, while articulating basically the same thing, adds extra insights into the problem. First, he/she alludes to the difficulty of doing anything that in anyway conflicts with the normal operations of society's judgement mechanisms. Parting with normal social attitudes can be a



stressful experience for a person. Such stress is brought on as a result of our powerful urges to feel accepted and valuable. Nonconformity places such a status at risk. The student is trying to get across that society will never improve unless enough people, as individuals, begin to revolt by behaving in ways that are counter to negative social norms. One problem is that most people are not capable of behaving in such ways because the social reality is their only reality and there are simply no other options available. This is one of the benefits of world view instruction in that it provides the student with alternative ways of viewing the same things:

Although both of them are pretty good (Latin American and North American cultures), I can see things in each that would improve the other and possibly help solve some social problems. It is always beneficial to become acquainted somewhat with other cultures. Not only does it make one more knowledgeable, it can improve your life.

The potential for improvement in all societies is enhanced by being willing to search for answers among the paradigms of others. The student makes the point that not only does such a process have positive implications for society, but that it can also be used to improve one's individual life as well:

Spanish culture has made a great impression on my life. It has shown me, as an American, what I have to be thankful for, yet has also shown me what I and the

rest of America lack in. Knowing this, I can change my ways and make a difference in the 'American Way.'

This student brings up an interesting point. He/she claims that the culture lessons helped to create a feeling of gratitude towards different aspects of American life. This, I feel, can be very positive. Whoever said that when there is change, it is for the better? How many good social institutions have been replaced by bad ones? The concept of appreciating what is good in America, in my opinion, is a step in the direction of preserving the positive from the potential for negative change. In this study, we always discuss the potential for positive social change. If the potential exists for positive, it also exists for negative. If the teaching of alternative world views can also make the student more appreciative of his or her own, then we are adding a plus to the list of benefits.

One of the dangers, however, of looking too favorably upon one's world view, is the prospect of developing or maintaining a feeling of superiority. The lessons seemed to squash that concept rather quickly. It soon became apparent that no culture could claim preeminence:

If you think about it, our way of doing things isn't necessarily better in anyway, but just different.

The idea that no whole society was better than any other soon became somewhat of a cultural given in all of

the classes. Differences were recognized and discussed, however, the culture as a whole, including the U.S., was never judged as being good or bad, worse or better:

Most of the things that we talked about were very new to me and very surprising. I think that because America is such a wealthy nation, we tend to think of ourselves as being better than other nations, especially those that are as underdeveloped as Latin America is. But, I have found that we Americans can learn much from the culture of these people.

The feeling I received from interacting with the students, was that before the lessons, most of them did sincerely feel that U.S. culture was somehow superior. I am sure that the view was fomented by our superior economic position. Of all the potential influences in world view, it seems logical that economics would be one of the most powerful. It may also be an extension of our society's model of the more you have, the more you are worth. By placing our culture on equal footing with another, it seemed to increase the degree of tolerance for differences, some of which, of course, are quite broad:

I used to be a bit racist towards them (Mexicans) because of the things they did. But, I didn't understand where they were coming from and that maybe they were raised differently. Like, if a Mexican couldn't do something, sometimes they would wait for someone to help them out and I would call them lazy. But I prejudged them because I hadn't walked a mile in his mocassins so to speak.

With the attitude of superiority gone, one automatically falls from the judgement seat and finds himself on the level with the rest of humanity. Fear and misconceptions are reduced. The difference in the way others react to their world is reduced to only a manifestation of rich cultural diversity. This is evidenced by the following two quotes:

. . . not only do we live in separate countries geographically, but we don't talk the same language on how to live our lives. We do different things. But to say one is wrong and one is right is to say apple pie is better than cherry pie. Says who?

You know, the more I think about it, the more I realize that every culture is going to be different, that's what makes each one unique, just like every individual is unique. We all have different experiences to undertake in our everyday lives, and that is why we are and should be different. But, we can still learn from one another, and better ourselves by seeing what we like about our culture, and what we want to change. The more open we let our minds be to understand people, the better off we will be. Although, a lot of times, this can be frightening, because of that fear of the unknown which lingers in all of us. We should give others a chance before judging them. Often time if we do this, we will find that our fears were for the most part in vain.

The lessons occasionally brought out sympathy for the plight of the inhabitants of the many poverty-stricken Latin American nations. This, I viewed as positive, knowing full well the American tendency to judge poverty as the result of laziness and lack of ambition:

Though ours (way of life) in America may seem harder and at a faster pace, I don't believe ours is any

better. Although theirs is a poorer country, they still work just as hard as us, and many times harder. Theirs is the will to stay alive. . . . My heart pours out to them when I try to imagine what they must go through in a day.

Many of the students seemed to understand the absolute necessity of multi-cultural understanding and the terrible consequences that have often resulted, and will continue to result, from the lack of it:

The fact that so many people do not realize how very different the rest of the world is nor understand why it is that way is incredible. Most of my friends don't realize that there are other worlds out there. In my opinion, this is one of the biggest contributors to racism and contention that there can be. When they are eventually thrown into an environment different from their own, they don't understand it. People often criticize and develop a hatred and intolerance for things they don't understand.

In rejection of different cultures, we find war, murder, hate, gangs, nasty political rebellions; all because of misunderstanding.

If one desires to effect positive change, what better way is there than to promote reflection that has the potential for diminishing hate and intolerance? As a result of the reshaping of one's cultural consciousness, the world may be positively reshaped in proportion.

## CHAPTER FIVE

## CONCLUSION

The Freirian inspired cultural lessons seemed to serve as a launching pad for a very worthwhile and life-changing educational experience. It is quite surprising that the results articulated in chapter four can be attributed to spending roughly only twenty to thirty minutes a week on the lessons in each class. The end product plus the small amount of time required to stimulate such favorable consequences bear testimony to the method's effectiveness. This chapter will summarize the benefits accrued.

First, it is clear to me that virtually all the students gained an enhanced sense of multicultural awareness. Some may not have learned to reflect deeply concerning their own culture nor even completely understood the concept of world view. However, I am certain all grasped, to different degrees, the incredible degree of multicultural diversity, and the concept that foreign views of reality were often quite dissimilar to ours. I feel, if I may use Freire's model of the banking concept of education, that their knowledge accounts were filled with interesting and occasionally useful facts regarding other cultures. This, however, is far from the aim of the study, but for what it

is worth, I believe a lot of that took place and the interesting nature of the discussions served to only enhance it.

The concept of world view acted as a framework for further reflection and understanding. Grasping the idea of distinct ways of viewing reality is an essential step in the process of expanding one's consciousness. It opens a door to an entire universe of possibilities and forces upon one the often difficult realization that his/her social world is only an artificial conglomeration of infinite options. I feel that most students eventually understood this point to one extent or another. Some simply recognized that distinct world views existed, and for others, the fact that they did and the implications of their existence forged an emphatic change in their thinking and in their lives.

One can discuss the concept of world view indefinitely with little results unless the ideas presented are converted into real life examples. There is no better way to teach about world view than to have students examine another one. Of course, one of the first steps in the method is to familiarize the pupils with certain Latin American views of reality. It was decided that the optimal way to accomplish this end was a close perusal of the tacit assumptions that legitimated certain aspects of the cultural traits being studied. The process of digging down to deep

cultural assumptions can be somewhat challenging. It necessitates continual patience. The instructor must have the ability to keep his/her mouth shut when the urge to open it becomes almost unbearable. The ability to unearth tacit assumptions seems to improve significantly with time. Now, armed with albeit a very partial understanding of the unwritten constitution of a another culture, the way is now open to, in a sense, put oneself in the place of those in the target society and see the world somewhat through their eyes rather than one's own.

The aptitude gained by the students in retrieving tacit assumptions from Latin America can now be utilized in obtaining an understanding of another unfamiliar culture; their own. Maybe for the first time, the depths of their social reality are probed. This probing often resulted in surprise, disagreement, and occasional pain. Getting to the bottom of their own tacit assumptions was no easy task. It was like the popular gag gift of giving someone several packages inside each other, with the final package being small and unobtrusive, but yet the one containing the prize. However, when the students reached the "final package," they encountered some difficulty in opening it. It was as if they were entering a sort of cultural no man's land or forbidden zone. Maybe they were afraid to press on further or possibly they encountered difficulty in thinking



much more deeply than accustomed to? I mentioned that the problems of the world seemed to be viewed from a totally individualistic viewpoint rather than the view of individuals being acted on and accepting the socially created value hierarchy. Going from blaming the individual to blaming the views that influenced him/her seemed to be the point of difficulty. I have never gone so far as to claim that people, short of mental illness, and other extremes, are really not responsible for their choices and lack the freedom to direct their lives. I believe that people have and continually exercise their intrinsic freedoms in ways that can ultimately result in good or bad and that individual responsibility is there whether we like it or not. However, my feelings, which have been greatly strengthened as a result of the lessons, are that the restrictions of world view greatly limit an individual's choices and inhibit his/her progression from one sphere of consciousness to another. An individual is responsible for what he/she does with the options available within his/her culturally created reality. Often, as with old people, the options that might lead to their real but yet artificial requirements for happiness are extremely limited. Under the right circumstances, they could be nonexistent. An exposure to another world view adds to the options and affords the individual a new and often welcome perspective on things.

The tacit assumptions of one's own culture are potential catalysts for profound reflection. Earlier, in chapter four, I used the metaphor of a door that is opened. Outside is a new world, not limited by the former unspoken parameters. Once a door is opened, the next step is to walk through. To walk through, I found it essential that the assumption, and hence, world view be challenged. However, often, especially later on, a simple "Why?" would suffice.

Reflection on the unspoken pillars of their world, allowed the students to formulate their own theories as to why things are rather than just blindly accepting their former social givens. Cultural ideals concerning human worth and value were examined, challenged, and in the mind of each individual student, either accepted or rejected. I believe none of the students received the impression that our society is largely evil and off-base and that we needed to shake it up and start all over again. Rather, I believe the impression received was that society is imperfect. There are some things good, some bad. What was good in the mind of one student may have been bad in the mind of another. That is fine and to be expected. What is important is that social mores that place limits on the dignity and value of people be interpreted in the student's mind, as what they really are; socially dominant ways of assessing

human worth, not rock solid reality as firm as the mountains. Knowing this, and also being aware of other alternatives, allows the student to make his/her own decisions concerning the value of people and not be hedged in by social mindsets.

The interpretive process is largely facilitated by the Freirian concept of dialogue. The students seemed to enjoy the freedom of expressing their opinions without the danger of being harassed or humiliated by the instructor. This right to freedom of expression seemed to exert its influence over the students who, as a result, seemed to become more tolerant and respectful of the opinions of their peers. The exposure to such diversity of ideas did nothing but add to the richness of the discussions. As time went on, more and more students felt comfortable in responding and the amount of teacher talk decreased in proportion. The attitude of the instructor plays a significant role in lowering high levels of anxiety and in encouraging participation. The one method of encouraging participation that should not be used is the figuring of class participation into the grading procedure. Students need to be aware that whether they continually comment, or continually keep their mouths shut, it will have no influence whatsoever on their grades. The worst thing one can do to stifle sincere and creative reflection is to have

the dreaded guillotine of grades dangling over their heads. In my class, there were no class participation grades, no culture questions on tests, and the culture papers were anonymous so I could not have graded them even if I wanted to. Grades were based upon one's acquisition of the Spanish language, and the cultural lessons were viewed as a time to sit back, relax, be yourself, contemplate, and enjoy the thrill that can result from exploring and discovering new worlds.

As mentioned and referenced earlier, the Freirian instructor is one who assumes a position of equality with the students rather than superiority. All participants in a class can, at times, be both teachers and students. This does not mean that the instructor must give up his/her administrative and directive authority, but rather that his/her lack of omniscience is recognized as well as the capability of the students for bringing forth new knowledge for everyone's edification. The predominance of such an attitude, allows for a friendship and closeness not often felt in teacher-student relations.

According to Freire, contemplation on the world is, for the most part useless, unless such reflection leads to positive action upon reality. The new knowledge should never be relegated to the "That's neat" category where it may never be heard from again. It is vitally important

that one's reflection be viewed as something that can eventually be utilized to trigger the ushering in of more love and justice into the world. I discovered that the method has the potential for changing humankind in the following ways. First, the understanding of the concept of distinct world views tends to allow the student to see the flaws in his/her ideas concerning cultural superiority. Having discarded the notion that one culture is somehow better, the student is forced to recognize the viability of foreign cultural concepts. The foreign ideas, now graced with respectability, are no longer utilized in their most common role of legitimating prejudice and discrimination. The student may even encounter an aspect of the culture that is more appealing than the corresponding aspect within his/her own. If this is the case, the new respectful attitude facilitates the concept's inculcation within his/her mindset.

Second, the reaching inward and the challenging of one's own cultural assumptions, can lead one to the adoption of more positive and constructive views of what the world should be. Once a student discovers what he/she considers to be a more honorable and equitable model of reality, the pupil is encouraged to live with that particular world view in place. People living in accordance with just and fair models cannot help but assist their

culture in becoming a more fair and just realm in which to live.

This dissertation has dealt with only one adaptation of the pedagogy of Paulo Freire. Many other adaptations besides this one and the ones already in existence are possible. Future research should concentrate on other models to offer a variety of options to the legion of foreign language teachers, each with their own distinct personality and style.

It would also be interesting to examine what differences would result if the method which is the object of this study were to be utilized with a more exotic language and culture. For example, on the long cultural continuum, English and Spanish cultures are relatively close compared to English and Japanese. It could be that the Japanese world view would be more capable of arousing deep cultural reflection because of the more profound differences that exist.

The utilization of the method at different grade levels would pose another interesting investigation. The mechanics and results would most likely be different at the high school, middle school, and elementary school stages.

Moving upward into upper-division and graduate level foreign language classes would also necessitate a different angle of approach. It would seem that such a situation

could afford the teacher the opportunity of utilizing the target language as the medium of instruction. The use of the foreign language could give rise to a myriad of unanswered questions concerning its effect on student consciousness and interpretation. The door would be open to discuss the effect of language upon one's perception of the world. One could probe into the deep cultural meanings so evident in many popular phrases and even in the way the language is constructed. Such an approach could "kill two birds with one stone" by providing the students with both essential vocabulary and with a perception of the foreign world view. This concept, which can so easily be identified with the theories of Sapir and Whorf, may constitute an interesting variation, or addition to the method as presently formulated. In the near future, one may not even have to wait until upper-division classes to begin considering the idea of teaching the cultural lessons in the target language. With the advent of foreign language in the elementary schools, the students may come to college quite fluent. With fluency already achieved, one will have to come up with many ideas such as the one above to enrich a student's foreign language experience. There is much room for future investigation.

In conclusion, less than a century and a half ago, the institution of slavery was fully operable within the boun-

daries of the United States. The world view at the time allowed it to exist and a limited and fragile perception of reality legitimated the concept. Slavery, the Roman Coliseum, and the Spanish Inquisition are just a few of the many past horrors that somehow found themselves well entrenched within a paradigm for a long period of time. The people of those stages in history may have never imagined that we in the "modern age" would look back at their common practices with such revulsion. Slowly, too slowly, those particular models of reality were replaced with more humane ones. As in times past, the majority of people today sit back, float through life, and accept too many assumptions as givens. Who knows but that in some era far in the future, we will be looked at with disdain, and if we could be called to account for the wrongs of our epoch, for many of us there would be only one thing to say; the sad and pitiful phrase, "I just didn't realize."



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APPENDIX  
INFORMATION ON THE INTERVIEWS

The following is a report on information obtained in lengthy interviews with two Colombians (male and female - middle age) and one Puerto Rican (male - middle age). The interviews were not held in an attempt to prove or discover the specific world view of any particular entire society. The results were used to provide the students with a taste of the degree of diverse thinking between members of distinct cultures and to stimulate critical reflection by bringing forth alternative ways of reacting to the world. During the culture lessons, I often read from the following report to get things going. I only read the sections that dealt with the actual information given by the informants. I did not read the parts where I make comments or derive tacit assumptions. I left the process of coming up with tacit assumptions to the students themselves.

The interviews were held in Spanish to enhance the informants' potential for clear and concise articulation of his or her views. All quotes have been translated by me. I have categorized much of the information into general classifications to facilitate the writing and reading process. Although I had a list of questions to use if the

conversation ran dry, for the most part, it was not needed. Upon gaining comprehension of what I was looking for, the informants took the ball and ran with it. Most of the questions I asked them were made up on the spot with the intention of obtaining clarification on certain points or to probe into deeper realms of meaning. This study is written for an American reader, therefore, I will not take the time to explain how the various cultural norms differ or are similar. The incongruous/congruous nature of basic tacit assumptions will be obvious for the most part.

It must also be made clear that the ideas expressed do not represent the views of all Colombians and all Puerto Ricans. It would be safe to say that they represent the views of a significant percentage of the population and could plausibly be considered broad generalities. In no way should the results of this study be used to stereotype any member of the target cultures. Because racism is a problem in America, it doesn't mean that all Americans are racist.

To begin, I will discuss information gathered on one of the most intriguing and pervasive cultural norms in Latin America; the concept of machismo. First, I will set down the data obtained. Second, I will deal with the tacit assumptions behind the statements.

On the subject of machismo, two of the informants mentioned how surprised they were to come to the United States and see men helping in the laundromat and in the kitchen. Such things are apparently not commonplace in Colombia. In the words of one informant, if a man in Colombia were to help in the kitchen, "he is no longer a man." A man feels that by not exploiting his female partner, he is allowing the woman to dominate him. The man must be in control. Needless to say, the idea of women working is not looked upon favorably. Women do work, but such a situation is far from ideal. A question often asked in male circles is: "If you are so much a man, why does your wife have to work?" Another saying is that the woman who earns a significant amount of money is "more man than her husband."

Machismo even permeates a father's relationship with his children. If a father does not pay for all his children's education, he is not looked upon well. A Colombian informant proudly exclaimed that her sister's husband (who had limited means) put ten children through college without them having to work or even take out a loan.

Some tacit assumptions from the preceding information are as follows: There are jobs, which if men do, somehow make them less masculine. Sharing responsibility leads to domination. Earning money is a masculine trait. If a

husband does not make enough money to cover all the family's needs, it is the fault of the husband himself, not society, culture, economics, or other circumstances. If you are a "real man" you will not have economic problems.

After experiencing the poignant assumptions upon which machismo is based, one can easily comprehend why alcoholism constitutes such an appalling dilemma in Latin American society.

Moving to another subject, all three informants felt that Americans could use a good course in manners. I say this literally because apparently in some places in Latin America, students are required to attend classes to teach them proper etiquette. To them, many Americans come across as being uncultivated, uncouth, and crude. Here are some examples of American incivility: People spit in front of others. They put their feet on chairs in front of them. Friends find humor in insulting each other. Women swear. Children don't leave the room when older people are having a conversation. Adults wear shorts in public. Americans can sit next to each other, like on a bus, airplane, etc, and not exchange even a single word.

Even though the outward manifestations are different, the tacit assumptions derived from such information are similar in both cultures. The data is consistent with the understanding that a person's value is partially based on



his/her familiarity with, and application of, societal rules of behavior. Other assumptions are as follows: Both sexes should not use the same linguistic forms. Older people are more worthy of respect than younger people. What younger people have to say is not as important as older people.

I found their conception of success to be, for the most part, consistent with the North American view. The informants felt that success was not totally tied up in the acquisition of material things. A successful person is someone who excels in something. A successful person is also one who is progressing in one way or another. A self-made man is greatly admired. If a person wins a million dollars in the lottery, he/she is not considered successful. He or she did not obtain it by hard work and determination.

Such ideas are based on suppositions shared by both cultures. I feel I should insert here that I do not intend to be critical of an idea just because I list it as a tacit assumption. There are some excellent and beautiful tacit assumptions in both cultures. It is up to the reader, with his/her own existential encounter with the world, to determine the morality of those terribly powerful inferences.

Regarding success, some of the suppositions are as follows: One must "prove himself" before being worthy of

society's esteem. Man is by nature competitive. Some people are better than others. The value of an achievement is lessened if you had help. All economic possibilities are within everyone's grasp, it is a matter of commitment and determination.

On the subject of discrimination in the United States, I encountered some difference of opinion. Both Colombians felt they were discriminated against because of their race. The Puerto Rican did not. According to the Colombians, they were treated the same as any other minority. However, to make matters worse, their faulty command of English aggravated the situation. They felt many Americans did not have the patience to deal with a tongue-tied foreigner and that such a problem was a catalyst for discrimination. Surprisingly however, the Colombians showed little anger at such treatment. Instead, they blamed themselves. They felt that they should have been smart enough or have taken sufficient time to learn better English. The same thing occurred when discussing less qualified Americans being promoted over more qualified Latins. One responded, "Well, I guess that is the way it should be. After all, this is their country."

The Puerto Rican claimed that he had never suffered discrimination and he felt that most Latins come here with a discrimination complex and are just waiting to be kicked.

Interestingly, one of the Colombians, although definitely claiming to have suffered discrimination, also alluded to the existence of some sort of persecution complex. She related a story where she and a group of Latins entered a restaurant just as a group of whites were getting up from their table. One of the Latins angrily whispered to the others that the whites felt that they were too good to eat with them. The Colombian woman said it was obvious to her that the whites had finished their meal and had begun to get up before the Latins had even entered the room.

The preceding information dealt largely with personal experiences. Few tacit assumptions can be drawn. However, those few are powerful. They are: Discrimination can be deserved. If a person worked hard enough to improve himself, discrimination would be lessened. A citizen should be treated better than a noncitizen. If a person is a member of the majority, he/she is most likely racist.

After this particular discussion, I steered the topic toward discrimination in their native lands. Again the Colombians differed with the Puerto Rican. Both Colombians claimed that blacks are persecuted in their country. They admitted that white skin is favored and considered more attractive and desirable. "The lighter, the better" was the message I received.

Having heard much about anti-Indian sentiment in Latin America, I inquired regarding the Indians in Colombia. The Colombians claimed that the Indians are not well liked because they are dirty and are known for committing acts of thievery. They explained that there were many racist saying concerning Indians such as: "He isn't worth anything, he is an Indian." or "Be careful, he is acting like an Indian." To call someone an Indian is an insult. My informants felt that such sentiments were inappropriate, but at the same time, thought that the Indians were partly to blame for their plight. I asked if the Indians were Colombians. The female responded, "Yes, they are Colombians." The male quickly added this clarification, "They live in Colombian territory."

The Puerto Rican informant felt that there was no significant discrimination in his native land. He claimed that everything such as neighborhoods, schools, and churches are desegregated and that interracial marriages are common. He said that it is common to see couples, one partner black and the other a hispanic with very light skin.

Tacit assumptions from the above are as follows:  
(From Colombia) Minority cultures should adopt the rules of the majority. Indians are not real Colombians. Indians generally act in inappropriate, dangerous ways. It is

better for one to be nonIndian than Indian. Lighter skin is better than darker skin. (From Puerto Rico) Color of skin is unimportant.

The idea of respect for authority contains some interesting conceptions. First, the Colombians were shocked at how Americans make fun of their President. They felt that he was worthy of more respect and honor. The Colombians also felt that teachers are more highly esteemed in their country. All students must stand when the teacher enters the room. I inquired as to what reasons they had for requiring students to extend respect to the teacher. The reasons were as follows: He/she gives them knowledge. He/she is their superior. He/she is older.

The deeper meanings of what was said seem to be the following: A person's station in life determines his/her worthiness to receive respect. The same is true with regards to age and degrees of knowledge. The giver of knowledge is greater than the recipient. There is something sacred about being the leader of one's country.

The aesthetic plays a significant role in their lives and culture. In Colombia, artists and authors apparently are well-known and greatly respected. According to the informants, any person on the street can name and discuss the country's prominent artists and authors. Laymen are more capable of artistic criticism. The informants claim

that actors in Colombia are not as good as the ones in the U.S. They feel it is because Colombian performers are continually fearful of public disapproval and it effects their concentration.

The Puerto Rican informant also discussed the difference in artistic appreciation between his native land and the continental U.S. He felt that Americans don't appreciate beauty like Latins do. Last Christmas, he drove from Winston-Salem to High Point and then to Lexington to see some manger scenes described on the evening news. He also said, "There is no life in American celebrations." He used church services as an example. Puerto Ricans tend to be more happy and excited when they sing in church, while Americans tend to be calm, and unenthusiastic. He mentioned that American church services are more organized and structured. He claimed that, "There is no order in Puerto Rican churches." However, order and structure did not seem all that important to him.

Here we encounter some tacit assumptions in possible conflict with those found in the U.S. From the above information, one can assume the following: Appreciation of the aesthetic is an important and valued part of life. People don't perform well under pressure. The aesthetic is more important than structure and organization. Suppres-

sion of emotion is seen as lack of enthusiasm rather than reverence.

During the middle of our interview when the subject suddenly turned to politics, the male Colombian informant leaned toward me and said in a low voice, "You know John, would you believe that there is a man where I work who recently changed his party registration?" I could tell we were on to something big. I responded that I had changed my party affiliation just last year. Both informants were shocked. They could no believe what they were hearing. They asked what my parents thought about it? They inquired as to what terrible thing caused me to do so. According to the informants, in Colombia, one hardly ever changes political affiliations. One is born and dies a member of the same party. To change parties would mean ostracism from friends and family. It is okay to marry someone from another party, however, each spouse remains loyal to his or her group. I got the feeling that changing political parties for them was as socially unpalatable as a fundamentalist Southern Baptist converting to Islam.

The unspoken assumptions here revolve around loyalty. They imply that loyalty supercedes personal preference. There are some areas in our lives where exercising our freedom to choose is inappropriate. The solidarity of the

group matters more than individual self-actualization. Conformism is better than nonconformism.

Puerto Ricans, even though they are Americans, apparently don't conform to American ideas about the value of hard work and deferred gratification. According to the Puerto Rican informant, his countrymen don't labor as hard as the people in North Carolina. He claims that here people work hard with the goal of obtaining more possessions. In Puerto Rico, "They work to live and to enjoy, not just to possess." Having leisure time is probably more important than having possessions. Businesses close much earlier there and rarely open on Sunday. He said, "People don't enjoy their work here. There is a time for everything. Work isn't everything. It is just one thing."

His statements seem to imply the following: Work is to be enjoyed rather than endured. The purpose of life is to experience rather than possess.

Needless to say, coming to America constituted a considerable culture shock. I asked them what it was like when they arrived? How was their adjustment and how were they coping with the wide cultural differences? "Frustration" seemed to be the key word. All three mentioned the enormous difficulty encountered in their struggle to speak and understand English. This frustration is not concomitant with the frustration this author felt in German class.



The linguistic agony cut to the very heart of distinct cultural attributes and necessities. For example, Latins are great talkers. Their culture demands that they carry on conversations with whoever is in their vicinity, even strangers. They also find much joy in a good conversation. Their idea of a good time is sitting with friends and talking. Now, imagine trying to satisfy cultural and personal linguistic needs through a language one can hardly speak. All informants have been here ten to fifteen years and still have major problems with English.

Learning English is just one of the sandy dreams quickly swept away as their feet first tread our golden shore. The informants talked about how they thought the U.S. was synonymous with paradise. It was supposed that one could succeed economically with only effort and skill. They would all rather be here than their native lands, however, the U.S. they know now does not conform to the illusions of fifteen years ago.

It was gratifying to know that they were impressed with what they considered to be a very low crime rate. Apparently crime is much more rampant in many parts of Latin America. I queried the Puerto Rican informant as to the reason for such disparity. He dismissed economics as having anything to do with it because of the availability of welfare. He claimed that in Puerto Rico, the standard

of living is so low that a family on U.S. welfare can live comfortably by local standards. Two reasons were finally put forth. First, parents in Puerto Rico exercise very little control over their children. Second, the availability and use of drugs and alcohol aggravate the situation. The informant's responses indicate the following suppositions: Children need to be molded and controlled. They will go bad if left to themselves. They are made good through external guidance.

Another gratifying aspect of the interviews was that in their opinion, Americans were a very caring people. They were surprised at how much Americans were willing to sacrifice for the good of others. It was mentioned that the Jerry Lewis telethon would never work in Latin America and that nobody would even consider volunteering their time to help strangers. I asked if this were possible because of the high degree of poverty. The answer was no. Not even the rich would participate in such activities. No one believes in work without pay, unless it is a family situation. It was said that if someone were to go to a social organization and volunteer their time, there would probably be a big article about them in the newspaper. They were fascinated with the concept of social cooperation. Americans cooperate with each other in order to achieve common goals; everything from fighting poverty to waiting in a

straight line at the grocery store. According to the informants, in Colombia and Puerto Rico, it is more every man for himself (except in family circles). I lived in Mexico for two years. I noticed that where in the U.S., people would form a line and wait their turn, Mexicans often created a situation which more closely resembled a run on a bank. It was mentioned that just as the extended family is more united in Latin America, society as a whole is more united in the U.S.

The above comments indicate the following assumptions: All good deeds should have a personal reward associated with them. Outside of relatives, humans are not responsible for the welfare of other humans. Life is a struggle where survival of the fittest applies. There will be winners and losers. Nice guys finish last.

Since I have mentioned the strong family bonds which exist in Latin America, it would be appropriate for me to discuss this issue more in depth. According to the informants, the Latin American family tends to conform to the following patterns: It is expected that old people will live with their children. A Latin American feels proud if he has his grandparents in the home and is taking care of them. Sending one's parents to a nursing home is unthinkable. The Puerto Rican informant related two incidents at his work which caused him surprise. First, there was an

older gentleman who had serious problems with his feet. Even walking was a struggle. The man had five children. The Puerto Rican could not understand why his children would not take the man in so he could quit his job. Second, there was a twenty-five year old girl who was in the process of looking for an apartment. She was presently living with her parents. The informant asked her why she wanted to leave home. The girl replied, "Why not?" She was already paying considerable room and board at her parents' home. This greatly surprised him because in Puerto Rico, one never pays room and board to parents. To charge children room and board somehow shows that you do not love them and they do not belong. The Colombians felt the same way. They both said that a child should be able to live with parents free of charge at anytime.

Family members away from home can count on relatives in times of financial crisis. I asked, "Doesn't one feel uncomfortable asking for financial help?" The male Colombian informant replied, "One doesn't have to ask." Apparently, relatives keep such close contact that financial needs are fairly well known.

On the subject of contact, I related an incident where I went to a far away city, stayed with my aunt and uncle two days, and during those two days, none of my nearby cousins came to see me. The informants were surprised and

felt sorry for me, as if I had undergone some sort of humiliation. They said that in a similar situation in Latin America, the house would be full of all the nearby relatives. I then asked, "Do they come because they really want to come, or because it is their obligation to do so?" It was agreed that they came because they wanted to. The Colombians talked about high phone bills because they were always calling brothers, sisters, aunts, uncles, and cousins. It seemed clear to me that there was an extended family closeness that I had never experienced.

In Latin America, it appears that being a member of a family entitles one to certain rights. Apparently, one has the right to be taken care of, respected, befriended, and loved. Such rights do not have to be earned. One does not have to prove oneself. They come with membership.

Somehow, in my interview with the Colombians, we got into a discussion comparing North American versus Latin American dress standards, especially with regard to females. Some of the information obtained was interesting. The Colombians agreed that American women were not very elegant. They didn't care as much about how they were dressed. They even wore tennis shoes with holes in them. The informants felt that Latin American women, despite their poverty, spend a considerable amount of money on clothes so they will be attired appropriately. North

Americans look more to comfort whereas Latin Americans look more to style, looks, and appropriateness. Apparently, Latins have a ball making fun of the way people dress in the United States. After hesitating, for fear he would offend me, the male Colombian informant related a popular saying regarding American dress standards. It was, "Americans only wear tennis shoes. They don't even know what a shoe is." The Colombian woman related that she wears tennis shoes here but she can't do so in Colombia. There, it is even very important that one's purse match one's shoes. If one came to work dressed inappropriately, he or she would be fired. She also said that if she were to walk out in the street, in Colombia, wearing shorts, all the neighbors would be staring at her with their mouths open. It wouldn't matter how hot it was. Shorts are only acceptable on the beach.

From the conversation, I gathered that men had to also conform with regard to dress, and that no double standard existed. Also, in a separate interview, the Puerto Rican mentioned that he could not wear shorts in Puerto Rico under the same circumstances where he could do so in the U.S.

The information on dress carries with it the following tacit assumptions: A person's dress is a manifestation of his/her value as a human being. Clothes are not only for

keeping warm and for maintaining sexual modesty. They play important roles in a culturally-created social game.

The intricate social game includes an interesting set of mores regarding male-female interaction. The Colombian male informant found American women to be much more liberal than women in Colombia. He was surprised that his female companions at work spoke freely with him about almost any topic, including sex. According to the informants, in Colombia, a woman can have only limited discussions with a man until she develops a trusting relationship with him. This takes time. As I dug considerably into the intricacies of developing this trust, I discovered the following: It is more appropriate for a married man to establish a friendly working relationship with a single woman than for a married woman to do so with a single man. The same rule applies to whom one can go out to eat with at lunch time. Men are also more free to express their opinions regarding an attractive woman. The Colombians felt that American men were much more reserved and polite. It is common for Colombian women to get pinched as they walk in crowds. Being touched by men also occurs frequently. Men often say things to women as they walk down the street. They range from the crude and offensive to the respectful and poetic. The Colombian male informant gave me an example of one. It was, "If you cook the way you look, I

would eat your food burned." A woman is supposed to act like she hasn't heard anything and continue walking.

Some of the obvious tacit assumptions are as follows: Men are supposed to be the pursuers, and women the pursued. Men can express their sexual instincts, women should not. Maybe they should not even have them. Women should be more chaste than men and should avoid even the appearance of inappropriate behavior.