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"IN THE WINTER QUARTER, 1970, I COORDINATED A COURSE CALLED 'COMMUNITY EDUCATION AS CULTURAL ACTION.' IN IT WE STUDIED PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION, PARTICULARLY THE WORK OF PAULO FREIRE. THE ADAPTATION OF DR. FREIRE'S STRUCTURAL IDEAS TO THE ORGANIZATION OF SUCH A COURSE, AND OUR RULING QUESTION MIGHT HAVE INTEREST FOR A WIDER AUDIENCE. OUR RULING QUESTION WAS "DOES THE THOUGHT OF PAULO FREIRE HAVE APPLICABILITY OUTSIDE THE THIRD WORLD AND IN AN ADVANCED TECHNOLOGICAL SOCIETY?"

THE COURSE WAS TAUGHT TO JUNIORS AND SENIORS IN "COMMUNITY STUDIES" A NEW INTERDISCIPLINARY MAJOR AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA AT SANTA CRUZ. THERE WERE TWENTY-TWO STUDENTS IN THE CLASS.

IT WOULD HAVE BEEN ABSURD TO OFFER A COURSE IN THIS NEW EDUCATIONAL METHOD BY USING THE OLD "BANKING"¹ APPROACH WHICH DIRECTLY CONTRADICTS FREIRE AND HIS THEORY. THE MEDIUM TRANSMITS A POWERFUL MEANING OF ITS OWN, AS McLuhan has shown.² FREIRE SAYS THAT THE ESSENCE OF EDUCATION IS DIALOGUE, SO THE MEDIUM FOR UNDERSTANDING HIS MESSAGE MUST BE DIALOGICAL.³ BUT WHERE IS THE DIALOGUE WHEN THE MATERIAL FOR THE CLASS IS ALMOST ALL IN FOREIGN LANGUAGES WITH THE IMPLIED NECESSITY OF MANY HOURS OF LECTURE DEVOTED TO THE BASIC INFORMATION REQUIRED TO UNDERSTAND FREIRE'S IDEA? THAT WAS OUR PROBLEM.⁴

THE FIRST SOLUTION WE ARRIVED AT WAS TO SPEND THE FIRST HALF OF THE QUARTER IN AN INTENSIVE STUDY OF FREIRE'S THOUGHT. THE SECOND HALF WOULD BE DEVOTED TO A PRACTICUM IN THE METHODOLOGY.

THE STUDENTS OBJECTED WITHIN THE FIRST TWO WEEKS. WE DISCOVERED THAT THIS WAS A BAD WAY TO SPLIT THE TIME. THEY ARGUED THAT THE DISCUSSIONS OF THEORY WOULD BE MORE CLEAR IF THEY WERE EXPERIENCING THE METHOD IN ITS CONCRETE REALITY AT THE SAME TIME. THEY WERE RIGHT, SO WE CHANGED TO ONE MEETING A WEEK DEVOTED TO LECTURES AND DISCUSSIONS OF THE THEORY. THERE WAS A SECOND WEEKLY MEETING TO EXPERIENCE THE METHODOLOGY, AND AN OPTIONAL THIRD MEETING A WEEK AT ^{MY}HOME. THE THIRD MEETING WAS WELL-ATTENDED, IN

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FACT BY EVERYONE, AND USUALLY WAS SPENT AS A "CULTURAL DISCUSSION GROUP."⁵

THE LECTURE-DISCUSSION SERIES WAS MADE UP BY SHORT LECTURES ON THE CENTRAL THEORETICAL MATTERS SUCH AS "MAN'S RELATIONSHIP TO THE WORLD," "DIALECTICAL EPISTEMOLOGY," BANKING EDUCATION," "CODIFICATION," GENERATIVE THEMES," "THEMATIC UNIVERSE," ETC. EACH SHORT LECTURE WAS FOLLOWED BY A DISCUSSION WHERE WE TRIED TO CRITICIZE THE MATERIAL THAT HAD BEEN PRESENTED. SEVERAL OF THESE SHORT TALKS-FOLLOWED-BY-DISCUSSION WERE PRESENTED IN THE COURSE OF THE TWO HOUR CLASS PERIOD.

THE FIRST LECTURE ON THEORY WAS AN EXPLANATION OF FREIRE'S CONCEPT OF "THEME" AND "PROBLEMATICIZATION," IN ORDER TO MAKE CONCRETE HIS THOUGHT ON DIALOGUE. THE PURPOSE OF THIS WAS TO EXPAND THE POSSIBILITIES OF THE DISCUSSIONS WHICH WERE TO FOLLOW EACH SHORT LECTURE. THE GROUP WAS ENCOURAGED TO SEE EACH LECTURE AS A "CODIFICATION" OR "THEME" WHICH WE COULD PROBLEMATICIZE TOGETHER IMMEDIATELY AFTERWARDS. THIS WAS THE BASIC STRUCTURE OF THE DIALOGUE.

THE METHODOLOGY PART OF THE COURSE COULD NOT BEGIN BEFORE A FUNDAMENTAL DECISION WAS MADE. WOULD WE USE OURSELVES AS THE CULTURAL DISCUSSION GROUP, AND DO THE THEMATIC RESEARCH ON THE U.C.S.C. COMMUNITY, OR WOULD WE SEEK OUT ANOTHER GROUP, EITHER AT THE UNIVERSITY OR IN THE TOWN OF SANTA CRUZ TO FUNCTION AS THE DISCUSSION GROUP, WHILE WE DIRECTED IT?

THERE IS NO PERFECT SOLUTION TO THAT QUESTION. IT IS VALUABLE TO EXPERIENCE THE METHOD FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF A CULTURAL DISCUSSION GROUP PARTICIPANT, YET THE PRINCIPLE AIM OF THE COURSE WAS TO CAPACITATE PEOPLE TO COORDINATE SUCH GROUPS. THE LEADERSHIP FUNCTION COULD NOT BE LEFT OUT.

WE SOLVED THE PROBLEM BY A COMPROMISE. THE WHOLE GROUP

FUNCTIONED AS THE CULTURAL DISCUSSION GROUP. THE THEMES WERE PRESENTED TO THIS GROUP AS A UNIT, BUT EACH THEME WAS COORDINATED BY THREE MEMBERS OF THE SAME CLASS WHO MET SEPARATELY, DESIGNED THE CODIFICATION AND ACTED AS THE COORDINATORS FOR THAT DAY. THIS IS NOT A PERFECT SOLUTION BECAUSE THERE IS ALWAYS SOME CONFUSION ABOUT ROLES. IT IS AMAZINGLY DIFFICULT TO SWITCH FROM "EXPERT" COORDINATOR TO "NAIVE" PARTICIPANT IN THE SAME GROUP FROM ONE WEEK TO THE NEXT. IN FUTURE SESSIONS OF THIS SAME COURSE I HOPE TO SOLVE THE PROBLEM BY RECRUITING PEOPLE FROM OUTSIDE THE CLASS TO BE THE DISCUSSION GROUP. THE MEMBERS OF THE FREIRE CLASS WOULD TAKE TURNS COORDINATING THIS COMPLETELY SEPARATE GROUP. TO RETAIN THE ADVANTAGE OF EXPERIENCE AS A GROUP MEMBER, THREE OR FOUR CODIFICATIONS WHICH ARE "CLASSIC" FOR THE STUDENT COMMUNITY WOULD BE PRESENTED AT ANOTHER TIME TO THE FREIRE CLASS WITH MYSELF OR A GRADUATE OF THE PREVIOUS COURSE AS COORDINATOR.⁶

ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT, BUT AT THE SAME TIME DIFFICULT AND SUBTLE SKILLS INVOLVED IN THE FREIRE METHOD IS THE ANALYSIS OF THE TAPES. WE TRIED TO DO THE ANALYSIS OF THE TAPES THAT WE HAD MADE AS WE WENT ALONG, BUT THE FACT THAT THE TAPES WERE OF OUR OWN GROUP MADE THAT EXTREMELY DIFFICULT. ANALYSIS WOULD ALWAYS BE REPLACED BY A FURTHERING OF THE DISCUSSION OF SOME INTERESTING POINT, SO THE TAPE ANALYSIS TURNED INTO A PROCESS OF CONSCIENTIZATION. THIS IS NOT BAD FOR THE GROUP, BUT BLOCKED SOME LEARNING ABOUT ANALYSIS. THIS IS ANOTHER REASON WHY IT WOULD BE ADVANTAGEOUS TO GET OTHERS INVOLVED AS THE CULTURAL DISCUSSION GROUP.

ONCE THE DECISION WAS MADE THAT WE WOULD STUDY OUR OWN GROUP WITH THE UNIVERSITY COMMUNITY AS OUR CONTEXT, WE SET TO WORK TO THINK OF A WAY TO GET AT THE IMPORTANT THEMES. THE FIRST STEP WAS TO OBTAIN AN EXHAUSTIVE LIST OF THE POSSIBLE THEMES. FROM THIS WE HOPED TO SELECT THE "LIVE" ONES, AND FROM THERE START THE PREVIOUS RESEARCH

THROUGH INTERVIEW AND PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION IN OUR COMMUNITY. WE NEEDED TO HAVE A CONCRETE STARTING POINT, SOME POSSIBLE THEMES TO JUDGE THROUGH OUR RESEARCH.

ONE POSSIBLE STRATEGY TO GET THIS STARTING LIST IS TO GO THROUGH THE SOCIOLOGICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL LITERATURE AND FIND THE CONTRADICTIONS, VARIABLES, RELATIONSHIPS, ETC. WHICH HAVE PROVEN PERENNIALY IMPORTANT IN ONE PLACE OR ANOTHER. WE DECIDED ON ANOTHER METHOD, BASED ON THE FACT THAT THE MEMBERS OF THE CLASS WERE PARTICIPATING MEMBERS OF THE SMALL COMMUNITY WE WERE STUDYING, NAMELY, BRAINSTORMING.

IF WE COULD BE OPEN AND FRANK ENOUGH, WE WOULD, BY OURSELVES, BE ABLE TO COME UP WITH A LIST OF THEMES THAT WOULD BE MORE THAN ADEQUATE AS A STARTING PLACE. FOR THIS BRAINSTORMING SESSION THE ONLY INSTRUCTIONS WERE THAT THE GROUP SHOULD BE AS CREATIVE AND IMAGINATIVE AS POSSIBLE. "DON'T WORRY ABOUT THINGS THAT MIGHT SOUND CRAZY, AND LET'S GO." THIS IS THE LIST THAT FLOWED OUT:

STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

TIME, HOW IT IS SPENT

LEISURE

COMMON INTELLECTUAL CONCERNS

ISOLATION

MEANING OF LIFE

IDEALS

WHY ARE STUDENTS HERE

WHAT DOES MONEY GO TO

LIFE GOALS

POLICE

HOUSING

SEX

POLITICS

RELIGION

EDUCATION

DRUGS

MEDICAL PROBLEMS

THE FACULTY

BEING STUDIED

PARENTS

PEERS

CONTACTS WITH THE OUTSIDE COMMUNITY, BOTH HOME AND SANTA CRUZ

WHO GETS IN TO THIS UNIVERSITY?

SOCIO-ECONOMIC BRACKETS

WHAT CLASSES ARE POPULAR?

ETHICS

THE FOUR YEAR COLLEGE TRIP, AND LEAVING IT AT THE END

NATURE-ECOLOGY

MY ROLE IN SOCIETY

THE DRAFT

ADMINISTRATION

WOMEN

MINORITY GROUPS

AFTER THE LIST WAS MADE WE COMBINED AND ELIMINATED SOME THEMES - OR PROTO-THEMES AT THIS STAGE - AND THEN ASKED EACH PERSON TO SELECT SEVERAL WHICH WERE OF PARTICULAR PERSONAL INTEREST. WE DISCOVERED THAT BY THE USE OF A BLACKBOARD AND A BIT OF LEVITY IT WAS UNNECESSARY TO ASSIGN TOPICS. AFTER ABOUT FIFTEEN MINUTES OF CHAOS, ALL THE THEMES WERE AUCTIONED OFF TO PEOPLE WHO WERE INTERESTED IN THEM. IT WAS UP TO THE INDIVIDUALS TO DESIGN THE QUESTIONS AND NARROW DOWN THE CONCEPTS IN SUCH A WAY THAT THEY COULD BE TALKED ABOUT.

WE THEN ASKED FOR VOLUNTEERS FOR SOCIOLOGICAL REPORTS AND SEVERAL PEOPLE CAME FORWARD TO WORK ON UNCOVERING THE RATHER SPARSE, BUT INTERESTING DATA THAT OTHERS HAVE COLLECTED ON OUR UNIVERSITY COMMUNITY.

THE THEMATIC RESEARCH WAS DONE THROUGH INFORMAL INTERVIEWS. THE STUDENTS TRIED TO GET OPINIONS ON THESE TOPICS FROM AS MANY OTHER STUDENTS AS THEY COULD. SOME ASKED DIRECT QUESTIONS, OTHERS TRIED TO GUIDE THE NORMAL CONVERSATIONAL FLOW INTO A CHANNEL THAT WOULD REVEAL SOMETHING ABOUT THE THEME.

THE NEXT TWO METHODOLOGY SESSIONS WERE DEVOTED TO REPORTS. THE GROUP EXCHANGED INFORMATION FROM EACH OTHERS' RESEARCH EXPERIENCE. INDIVIDUAL WRITTEN REPORTS OF THIS INTERVIEW RESEARCH WAS PART OF THE WORK FOR THE COURSE.

WE WERE BECOMING MORE AND MORE CONSCIOUS OF WHAT PEOPLE ON OUR CAMPUS THINK IS IMPORTANT AND INTERESTING. WE WERE ALSO BEGINNING TO SEE RELATIONSHIPS AMONG THEMES, AND SOON WE WERE ABLE TO PICK SEVEN THEMES WHICH APPEARED TO US TO BE THE MOST BASIC. THESE WERE THE ONES WE WERE BETTING WERE GENERATIVE THEMES. WE DID NOT FEEL READY TO DO A SOCIAL ANALYSIS AT THIS STAGE. OUR CRITERION FOR THEMES EMPHASIZED PERSONAL INTEREST. THE POSSIBLE SOCIAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE THEME WAS A SECONDARY CRITERION. AFTER WE WERE THROUGH, WE REALIZED THAT, AT LEAST IN THIS CASE, THE TWO OVERLAPPED.⁷

SEVEN THEMES WERE CHOSEN BECAUSE OUR GROUP DIVIDED INTO SEVEN TEAMS OF THREE PEOPLE EACH. THERE IS NO "CORRECT" NUMBER OF THEMES BECAUSE THE GOAL IS CONSCIENTIZATION, WHICH IS A DEEPENING OF AWARENESS. IT IS NOT A QUESTION OF "COVERING THE MATERIAL" BUT OF THE PEOPLE CREATING AND RECREATING THEIR VISION AND REALITY AS AN ORGANIC WHOLE. ONE THEME DEEPLY UNDERSTOOD AND RECREATED BY THE GROUP IS MUCH TO BE PREFERRED OVER "GETTING THROUGH" A SET NUMBER OF CODIFICATIONS.

ONE THEME WENT TO EACH GROUP. THE SMALLER GROUPS WERE SELF SELECTING BY THE SAME METHOD OF BLACKBOARD, CHAOS AND LEVITY.

THE GROUPS THEN WENT TO WORK TRYING TO MAKE A CODIFICATION OF

THESE THEMES. I DID NOT ATTEND THE MEETINGS OF THE SMALLER GROUPS, BUT THE MEMBERS INFORMED ME THAT THEY WERE THE HARDEST, MOST TIME CONSUMING, AND YET MOST BENEFICIAL ELEMENTS IN THE COURSE. THEY FELT THAT THEY HAD TO DEEPEN THEIR OWN UNDERSTANDING OF THE THEME, CONTINUE TO DO RESEARCH IN THE COMMUNITY TO GET MORE OF AN UNDERSTANDING OF IT, AND FINALLY CREATE THE GRAPHIC REPRESENTATION OF THE THEME IN SUCH A WAY THAT THEY COULD BE PROUD OF IT.

THE THEMES WE CHOSE ARE EXPRESSABLE IN THE FORM OF THE FOLLOWING CONTRADICTIONS. NATURALLY THE THEME ITSELF IS SOME ASPECT OF THE CONTRADICTION AND IS BASED ON AN UNDERSTANDING OF IT THAT FITS THE UNIQUENESS OF THE COMMUNITY BEING STUDIED.

THE CONTRADICTIONS WERE:

GROUP VS. INDIVIDUAL

PARENTS VS. STUDENTS

BOY VS. GIRL

MAN VS. MACHINE

IDENTITY VS. DISINTEGRATION

CHANGING PRESENT VS. A BLANK FUTURE

POWERLESSNESS VS. MASTERY

ONCE THESE BASIC THEMES WERE ADOPTED BY THE GROUP, THEY EVOLVED MUCH MORE, NOT ONLY THROUGH EXTENDED EXPOSURE AND THOUGHT, BUT ALSO THROUGH THE DISCIPLINE OF THE VISUAL MEDIUM WHICH THE CODIFICATION IS. THE EFFORT INVOLVED IN TRYING TO PRESENT THESE THINGS IN A VISUAL WAY WAS A GREAT ANGUISH FOR SEVERAL GROUPS, BUT EXTREMELY IMPORTANT AS A CREATIVE ALTERNATIVE TO THE PURELY VERBAL MEDIUM.

PREPARATION COMPLETED, THE CODIFICATIONS WERE PRESENTED BY THE GROUP OF THREE TO THE LARGER GROUP. THE GROUP AS A WHOLE HAD NEVER SEEN THE CODIFICATION BEFORE. ONE OF THE GROUP OF THREE ACTED AS COORDINATOR OF THE DISCUSSION; THE OTHER TWO WERE TO WATCH FOR

SUBLIMINAL COMMUNICATION FROM THE DISCUSSION GROUP, AND ALSO TO BE AWARE OF THE COORDINATOR SO THEY COULD GIVE A HELPFUL CRITIQUE AFTERWARD. FREIRE SUGGESTS THAT A PSYCHOLOGIST AND AN ANTHROPOLOGIST PERFORM THE ROLES OF THE TWO STUDENTS WHEN THE METHOD IS USED IN THE REGULAR COMMUNITY.

A CRITIQUE OF THE COORDINATOR AND OF THE GROUP WAS MADE IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE DISCUSSION, PRIMARILY BY THE TWO OTHER MEMBERS OF THE CODIFICATION TEAM AND MYSELF. SUGGESTIONS AND ANALYSES FROM THE OTHERS IN THE GROUP WERE ALSO ENCOURAGED.

EACH SESSION WAS TAPE RECORDED. WE DID NOT HAVE SECRETARIAL HELP, SO WE WERE NOT ABLE, WITH ONE EXCEPTION, TO TRANSCRIBE THE TAPES AND GIVE THEM TO THE GROUP FOR FURTHER STUDY IN PRINTED FORM. INSTEAD, AT A LATER TIME, WE LISTENED TO THE TAPES. WE STOPPED THE TAPE ANY TIME SOMEONE IN THE GROUP WANTED TO SPEAK. ONE COMMENT USUALLY LED TO OTHERS. IN THIS MANNER WE DEEPENED OUR UNDERSTANDING OF THE THOUGHT AND LANGUAGE STRUCTURE OF OURSELVES AS THE GROUP. THIS IS THE POINT WHERE THE LACK OF DIFFERENCE BETWEEN DISCUSSERS AND RESEARCHERS WAS MOST KEENLY FELT.

WE USED A VIDEO TAPE SEVERAL TIMES. WE FOUND THAT IT WAS AS EASY TO FORGET THE CAMERA AS IT WAS TO FORGET THE TAPE RECORDER. THE INVISIBILITY OF THE CAMERA, PSYCHOLOGICALLY, WAS CORROBORATED BY THE ONLY EXPERIENCE WE HAD WITH A NAIVE GROUP. THE NAIVE GROUP WERE STUDENTS NOT IN THE CLASS, AND INVITED JUST FOR ONE DISCUSSION. THEIR SESSION WAS VIDEO TAPED AND THE CAMERA CAUSED NO APPARENT DISCOMFORT.

WE ARE NOT SURE WHETHER THE VIDEO TAPE IS WORTH THE EXTRA EXPENSE AND EXTRA MAN TO OPERATE THE CAMERA. IT IS SOMEWHAT HELPFUL FOR THE INTERPRETATION. VOICES WHICH WERE TAKEN AT "VOICE VALUE" ON A NOISY TAPE RECORDING, BECAME EMOTION-LADEN FACES ON THE VIDEO TAPE.

MORE MEANING CAME THROUGH.

THERE IS A QUESTION TO RESEARCH HERE BETWEEN MAXIMUM CONVENIENCE AND MAXIMUM MESSAGE. THE MOST CONVENIENT, OF COURSE, IS THE TYPED TRANSCRIPT WHICH LEAVES OUT ALL VOCAL INFLECTIONS, BUT WHICH CAN BE HANDED AROUND TO MANY PEOPLE FOR MANY CRITIQUES FROM MANY POINTS OF VIEW. IT HAS THE ADVANTAGE OF LEAVING THE PACE OF LISTENING UP TO THE INTERPRETER, RATHER THAN TO THE INEXORABLE TURN OF THE TAPE RECORDER'S MOTOR. THE VIDEO TAPE PACKS MUCH MORE MEANING, BUT IT IS INCONVENIENT AND EXPENSIVE TO USE. IT WAS LITERALLY A HEAD ACHE FROM THE EYE STRAIN. THE PLAIN TAPE RECORDING HAS VOICE INFLECTION BUT THAT DOES NOT REVEAL ENOUGH TO MAKE IT SUPERIOR TO THE TAPE-SCRIPTS.

SINCE THIS WAS A COURSE DEVOTED TO OBTAINING EXPERIENCE OF THE RESEARCH METHOD, WE DID NOT FEEL COMPELLED TO COMPLETE THE LAST STEP OF DOING A WRITTEN ANALYSIS OF EACH DISCUSSION WITH A VIEW TO UNDERSTANDING HOW TO ARRANGE FURTHER EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE. IT COULD HAVE BEEN DONE HOWEVER, AND SOME OF THE THEMES LIKE "ISOLATION" AND "BLANK FUTURE" CRY OUT TO BE CONTINUED.

THE EXPERIENCE OF THE COURSE DEMONSTRATED THAT DR. FREIRE'S METHOD DOES NOT ONLY APPLY TO THE ILLITERATE AND ECONOMICALLY EXPLOITED, IT ALSO BELONGS TO THE LITERATE, MANY OF WHOM ARE EXPRESSING THE FACT OF THEIR OWN EXPLOITATION IN OTHER WAYS. THE STUDY OF THE THEMES WAS RECEIVED BY THE STUDENTS WITH EAGERNESS AND ENTHUSIASM. THE ENCOUNTER WITH THE THEORY WAS OFTEN A DIFFICULT AND PATIENCE-TAXING EXPERIENCE. THE CULTURAL DISCUSSION GROUPS, ON THE OTHER HAND, WERE RECEIVED WITH AN ALMOST FEROCIOUS HUNGER. THEY WANTED TO EMBRACE A HUMANISTIC ANALYSIS OF THEIR OWN LIVES AND THEIR SOCIETY, AND THEY DID.

MY EVALUATION, BASED ON THEIR COMMENTS AND A QUESTIONNAIRE IS THAT EVEN THOUGH THE CLASS WAS INSTITUTED TO TEACH THEM A METHODOLOGY, AND SEVERAL HOPE TO USE THE METHOD WHEN THE TIME IS RIGHT, THE OVERALL

EFFECT OF THE CLASS WAS UPON THEMSELVES AS A CULTURAL DISCUSSION GROUP. PARTICIPANT WON OUT OVER RESEARCHER IN THE SPLIT OF INTEREST. THEY HAVE EVEN TRIED TO KEEP THE GROUP GOING TO THE PRESENT, SO THAT IT COULD CONTINUE TO HELP THEM IN THE PROCESS OF THEIR OWN CONSCIENTIZATION, AND ABOVE ALL HELP IN OFFERING THE GROUP SUPPORT THAT THEY ALL NEED WHEN THE CONSCIENCE WHICH COMES FROM CONSCIENTIZATION CALLS THEM TO ACTION OR DEEPER FEELINGS.

THE ABOVE IS ONLY PART OF THE EVIDENCE FOR THE USEFULNESS OF THE METHOD AMONG THE LITERATE AND ELITE. THE OTHER PART OF THE EVIDENCE COMES FROM THE FACT THAT THE STUDENTS WERE, IN FACT, DISCOVERING FOR THEMSELVES A SOCIAL SCIENCE CURRICULUM. THE THEMES WHICH MOST INTERESTED THIS PARTICULAR GROUP, ALREADY SELECTED EMOTIONALLY AND MENTALLY BY THEIR COMMON CHOICE TO GO INTO COMMUNITY STUDIES, TURNED OUT TO BE THE THEMES UPON WHICH THE SOCIAL SCIENCES ARE BUILT. THUS IT BECAME CLEAR THAT UNIVERSITY LEVEL EDUCATION COULD START WITH EMPHASIS ON THE THEMES WHICH TRULY INTEREST THE GROUP. OUR EXPERIENCE REVEALS A RATIONAL BASIS FOR A CERTAIN ECUMENISM BETWEEN THE PROFESSIONALS OF THE SOCIAL SCIENCES AND THE STUDENTS; IT IS THE BASIS OF A DIALOGICAL EDUCATION IN THE SOCIAL SCIENCES. NATURALLY OTHER GROUPS WOULD HAVE OTHER INTERESTS.

IT SHOULD BE POINTED OUT, HOWEVER, THAT THERE IS A SERIOUS CONTRADICTION BETWEEN THIS WAY OF EDUCATION AND THE UNIVERSITY AS "SCHOOL." THE GRADING, DEGREE GRANTING, BODY-OF-KNOWLEDGE-ACCRETING FUNCTIONS OF THE SCHOOL-UNIVERSITY ARE IRRELEVANT TO THIS TYPE OF EDUCATION.⁶

THROUGH THIS EXPERIENCE IT BECAME CLEAR TO US HOW FREIRE'S IDEAS CAN BE PRACTICALLY EDUCATIVE AT ANY LEVEL. THE QUARTER STARTED AS A COURSE IN TEACHING THE METHOD TO OTHER FUTURE TEACHERS WHO WOULD USE IT FOR COMMUNITY EDUCATION AMONG THE MORE POWERLESS GROUPS IN OUR SOCIETY. THE STUDENTS TURNED IT AROUND AND DEMANDED THE TIME FOR THEMSELVES AND THEIR OWN CONSCIENTIZATION. IT IS AT LEAST A START IN THE APPLICATION OF THE FREIRE METHOD IN NEW CONTEXTS.

FOOTNOTES

1. "BANKING" IS A METAPHOR USED BY FREIRE TO SUGGEST THE MENTALITY WHICH SEES THE STUDENT AS AN EMPTY VAULT AND THE TEACHER AS A BANKER WHO HAS THE RICHES TO PUT INTO THE POOR STUDENT'S SAFETY DEPOSIT.
2. McLuhan, Marshall, UNDERSTANDING MEDIA: THE EXTENSIONS OF MAN. SIGNET, NEW YORK, 1964.
3. FREIRE, PAULO, PEDAGOGY OF THE OPPRESSED, HERDER AND HERDER, NEW YORK, 1970, SEE CHAPTER 3.
4. THE "OUR" INCLUDES THE STUDENTS. FROM THE START, THE OVERCOMING OF PROBLEMS IN THE COURSE WERE SEEN AS A COMMON TASK.
5. FREIRE'S ENGLISH TRANSLATORS ARE USING THIS TERM FOR THE "CIRCULO DE CULTURA," THE WORD HE INVENTED TO TAKE THE PLACE OF "CLASS" WHICH, IN PRESENT USAGE, IMPLIES PASSIVITY ON THE PART OF THE STUDENT. CIRCULO DE CULTURA IS MEANT TO IMPLY THE CREATIVITY INVOLVED IN MAKING CULTURE, AND IN EDUCATION BY DIALOGUE.
6. THIS APPROACH WILL SOLVE ANOTHER PROBLEM OF ROLE CONFUSION, FUTURE COORDINATOR VS. PRESENT EDUCATEE, MENTIONED ON PP. 9 AND 10.
7. A THEME IS, AMONG OTHER THINGS, A RELATIONSHIP WHICH STANDS ON TWO FEET. ONE FOOT IS THE PERSONAL INTEREST OF THE PEOPLE IN THE COMMUNITY. THE STARTING POINT OF THE DISCUSSION IS THAT PERSONAL AND FELT INTEREST. THE OTHER FOOT IS THE SOCIAL RELEVANCE OF THE THEMES. IF EVERYONE IN SOME COMMUNITY WERE FANATICALLY INTERESTED IN BASEBALL, THE THEME OF BASEBALL WOULD FULFILL THE FIRST CRITERION, BUT IT WOULD NOT REST VERY FIRMLY ON THE SECOND BECAUSE IT PROBABLY HAS NO SOCIAL RELEVANCE, AND SO IT WOULD NEVER BE A GENERATIVE THEME. THERE ARE ALWAYS SURPRISES THOUGH. IN THE COMMUNITY OF EL RECURSO IN CHILE WHERE THE GENERATIVE THEME RESEARCH WAS DONE BY A TEAM TRAINED BY DR. FREIRE HIMSELF, ONE OF THE CODIFICATIONS WAS ON WORK AND RECREATION. THE DISCUSSION TURNED TO THE FOOTBALL PLAYER. IT CAME OUT THAT ONE OF THE FEW WAYS THAT THE LOWER CLASS PERSON CAN MAKE A LOT OF MONEY IS BY BECOMING A SOCCER STAR -- AND A QUANTITY OF MATERIAL SURFACED ABOUT ASPIRATIONS. THESE INSIGHTS COULD HAVE BEEN DEEPEMED TO REVEAL THE SOCIAL DIMENSION; AND BE A GENERATIVE THEME.
8. SEE ILLICH, IVAN, CELEBRATION OF AWARENESS, DOUBLEDAY, GARDEN CITY, 1970, AND HIS SOON TO BE PUBLISHED BEECHER LECTURES.