LEADERS IN EDUCATIONAL STUDIES

LEONARD J. WAKS (SERIES EDITOR)

Leaders in Critical Pedagogy

Narratives for Understanding and Solidarity

Brad J. Porfilio and Derek R. Ford (Eds.)

SensePublishers

Leaders in Critical Pedagogy

LEADERS IN EDUCATIONAL STUDIES

Volume 8

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Scope:

The aim of the *Leaders in Educational Studies* Series is to document the rise of scholarship and university teaching in educational studies in the years after 1960. This half-century has been a period of astonishing growth and accomplishment. The volumes in the series document this development of educational studies as seen through the eyes of its leading practitioners.

A few words about the build up to this period are in order. Before the mid-twentieth century school teaching, especially at the primary level, was as much a trade as a profession. Schoolteachers were trained primarily in normal schools or teachers colleges, only rarely in universities. But in the 1940s American normal schools were converted into teachers colleges, and in the 1960s these were converted into state universities. At the same time school teaching was being transformed into an all-graduate profession in both the United Kingdom and Canada. For the first time, school teachers required a proper university education.

Something had to be done, then, about what was widely regarded as the deplorable state of educational scholarship. James Conant, in his final years as president at Harvard in the early 1950s, envisioned a new kind of university-based school of education, drawing scholars from mainstream academic disciplines such as history, sociology psychology and philosophy, to teach prospective teachers, conduct educational research, and train future educational scholars. One of the first two professors hired to fulfil this vision was Israel Scheffler, a young philosopher of science and language who had earned a Ph.D. in philosophy at the University of Pennsylvania. Scheffler joined Harvard's education faculty in 1952. The other was Bernard Bailyn, who joined the Harvard faculty in 1953 after earning his Ph.D. there, and who re-energized the study of American educational history with the publication of *Education in the Forming of American Society: Needs and Opportunities for Study* (University of North Carolina Press, 1960). The series has been exceptionally fortunate that Scheffler provided a foreword to the volume on philosophy of education, and that Bernard Bailyn provided one a foreword for the volume on the history of American education. It is equally fortunate that subsequent volumes have also contained forewords by similarly eminent scholars, including James Banks of the University of Washington, who has been a creative force in social education for decades and the prime mover in the field of multi-cultural education.

The *Leaders in Educational Studies* Series continues to document the growing and changing literature in educational studies. Studies conducted within the established academic disciplines of history, philosophy, and sociology comprised the dominant trend throughout the 1960s and 1970s. By the 1980s educational studies diversified considerably, in terms of both new sub-disciplines within these established disciplines and new interdisciplinary and trans-disciplinary fields.

Curriculum studies, both in general and in the particular school subject matter fields, drew extensively from work in philosophy, history and sociology of education. Work in these disciplines, and also in anthropology and cultural studies among others, also stimulated new perspectives on race, class and gender.

This volume, like previous volumes in the series, brings together personal essays by established leaders in a major field of educational studies. Subsequent volumes in the series will continue to document other established and emerging disciplines, sub-disciplines and inter-disciplines in educational scholarship.

Leaders in Critical Pedagogy

Narratives for Understanding and Solidarity

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Dedicated to the memory and legacy of Dennis Carlson

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SHIRLEY R. STEINBERG

PREFACE

Remembering Our Firsts, Naming Our Mentors

There are those *firsts* moments in life we remember…our first bike, first kiss, first time behind the wheel, first moment we identified our own sexualt(ies), first time we read *the* book or heard *the* song*;* and the first time we were introduced to Paulo Freire. We place our own positionality within critical pedagogy by how we first came to know Paulo Freire. To separate Paulo from critical pedagogy is not possible, he is our progenitor. I cannot begin to preface the life stories of critical pedagogues without disclosing a bit of my own story. And this story was written through the influences of many who remain my mentors…and some who are my anti-mentors.

I was an undergraduate education student in Lethbridge, Alberta…a misplaced Yankee Jew who found myself in Mormonlandia, amidst farmers, Hutterites, and many, many Native Reserves. Putting off my assignments to the end, I bolted awake one winter's eve, realizing I had a book review due the next day in my Multiculturalism course. Quietly scrambling to the living room, I sat down, ready to speed-read *Pedagogy of the Oppressed.* I didn't quite understand the use of pedagogy, but I knew oppressed. I expected the fast read would take an hour, then planned to throw together the review. Enough time to get back to bed before the kids got up.

You all know the story, I turned the pages and "couldn't put it down." For the first time, words were put into my mind and organized the musings I stored…thoughts I had been unable to articulate or to act upon. Freire identified core elements of my own world. Born in Baltimore, Maryland, I lived close to a park children played in: seeking water in drinking fountains: White and Colored. We moved to Los Angeles and I wasn't allowed to play with Mexican children and where I was called a *Jew Bastard* in third grade. I grew up through the Viet Nam War, and only the poor Black or White kids from my high school were shipped out. And in Canada, I lived 2 hours from an enormous Reserve where every day, the *Indian bus* left early to come to our school, inevitably late, due to old creeky buses and potholed roads. I understood what oppression was in my world, in my context. And I understood Freire.

The next year, my critical education began in earnest with Julia Ellis as my undergraduate mentor, teaching me critical ways in which to engage in problem solving. Kathleen Berry taught me context, and about poverty and the working class. Two years later, I returned to school for a master's degree, and David Smith was my guide. One of the first days of class, David showed a film from the 70s, *Starting From Nina,* and Paulo Freire came alive on the screen as he described the inequities and needs of teachers in working class Toronto. During those years I realized that all that *stuff*, all those hours in teacher education courses weren't relevant, but those precious hours with my first mentors shaped my need to become critical, pedagogical, and political.

Irony and destiny surrounded my birth into critical pedagogy. At a dinner, I listened to a speech from my then-partner condemning involvement of the political, the critical into public education. This (and other issues) led to the end of the unpleasant union. Weeks later, I was funded to attend a conference in Dayton, Ohio reputed to be "swarming" with critical types. Julia Ellis and I flew to Bergamo, and 24 hours later, I met Joe Kincheloe. Joe overheard me speaking about my work on the Stand Off Reserve in Alberta, and interrupted me to discuss our common interests. That discussion lasted over 20 years, and our friendship, marriage, and partnership was based on the radical love we found within our own critical pedagogies.

In 1992, Donaldo Macedo phoned Joe and told him if we could find the money to fly to Boston, he would take us to dinner with Paulo. I'm still not sure how we found the funds for two plane fares, but the memory of a Portuguese restaurant with big pots of chicken and vegetables, eating, talking, talking, and eating for four hours is embedded in my soul. This was the day that Paulo introduced the notion of radical love to us. He illustrated how the personal and the political intertwined to create the strength needed to subvert the current state of education and of disenfranchised groups. After this meeting, Joe and I were committed to spending our lives, our radical love in the pursuit of equity, activism, diversity, and criticality. We made many friends and even more enemies in those two decades. We learned that critical pedagogy wasn't a badge of popularity in an instrumentally rational world, and that challenging the lack of criticality within schools was a bit of a professional death sentence in many faculties.

For many years, our critical journeys were and are influenced by the words of those in this book along with so many others. We became acutely aware of pedagogical deconstruction and suspicious of curriculum. Along with our knowledges came the attached friendships, as we found years ago that our work was dangerous work, and safety was manifested in the relationships we made and nurtured, the critical friends we had. Everyone has their Paulo moments, and many of us are old enough to have memories of times spent with him. He laughed at the solemnness he was confronted with, joked about "Freirean methods," and eschewed the deification often thrust upon him. He understood that he had contributed and that he had important things to say, but was chagrined at those who wanted to promote a unilateral politic and

ended up creating a canon of no canons. While each of us have our stories, our ways, our attempts to criticalize pedagogy, we also must attempt to embrace the humility needed, the radical love expected, and embrace the vision of hope Paulo gave us, even in the worst of our times. For every life story in this book, we have multitudes to find and to nurture. It is an honour to be amongst the rebels in this book.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The material that comprises Peter Mayo's chapter originally appeared as responses to questions in two separate interviews one (by Juha Suoranta) which appeared in the *Review of Pedagogy, Education and Cultural Studies* and the other (by Hrvoje Simicevic) in *Truthout* and the Croatian journal *H-Alter*.

Peter McLaren's text contains sections from published material. It begins with some autobiographical material from *Life in Schools*, and some material published in various internet conversations and internet journals.

Sonia Nieto's text initially appeared in the Journal of *Language & Literacy Education*, 9(1).

Curry Malott's chapter initially appeared in the *Journal for Critical Education Policy Studies*, 12(1).

BRAD J. PORFILIO AND DEREK R. FORD

SCHOOLS AND/AS BARRICADES

An Introduction

When, on September 17, 2011, a handful of people set up tents in New York City's Wall Street financial district—the capital of capitalism—few would have predicted that it would inaugurate a movement that is likely to be a popular reference point for decades to come. The movement grew almost overnight in New York City and just as quickly spread to towns and cities across the country and the world. This somewhat nebulous movement—with a much higher level of internal organization that is usually attributed to it—introduced new terms and frameworks into popular discussions in nearly all facets of society. It also brought to the center of activist discussions and praxis the question of pedagogy that had been relatively absent, or at best implicit, in recent decades. To be sure, questions about organization and the relationship between protest movements and society, for example, have always been pedagogical at heart. But at the nightly (and, really, all-day) meetings in Occupy encampments the pressing question of teaching and learning relations was constantly being forefronted and explicitly addressed.

Thus, it is not just for critical pedagogues and critical educational scholars that the present volume has been compiled. While the book does indeed provide a historical exploration and documentation of the development of critical pedagogy as a contested and dynamic educational field—as well as analyses of that development and directions toward possible futures—it is also intended to provide an accessible and comprehensive entry point to a new generation of activists and organizers who place questions of pedagogy at the heart of their thinking and doing. In this sense, we see this book as embodying the *praxis* that is at the base of the orientation of critical pedagogy.

Critical pedagogy has variously inspired, ignited, troubled, and frustrated educational scholars for several decades now. Yet the fact that the term is still called upon among a variety of different orientations, we posit, is illustrative of its continued relevancy. The question, "What *is* critical pedagogy?" is one that will elicit various and probably irreconcilable answers. The late Ilan Gur-Ze'ev (2005) noted that it has become difficult to "speak of… the various conflicting pedagogies that propagate themselves under the banner of 'Critical Pedagogy'" (p. 7). The debates that have taken place around and within the field over the last several decades testify to the great instability of the term as a signifier, a discursive formation, and a practice.

Jennifer Gore (1993) noted the ambivalence of the term 'pedagogy' itself over 20 years ago, preferring instead to write about 'pedagogies' in order "to signify the multiple approaches and practices that fall under the pedagogy umbrella" (xi). In addition, then, to "critical pedagogy," what constitutes "critical" and what constitutes "pedagogy" is not set in stone, but open to contestation and debate.

As is the case with any attempt to label a work under any banner, then, this book itself performs and constitutes, in part, what scholars count as "leaders." We have been cognizant of this performative aspect from the beginning of editing this collection and soliciting contributions from scholars. We have tended toward being expansive rather than restrictive in our construction of the field of critical pedagogy. We were pleasantly surprised at the prompt response of contributors and their willingness to undertake the project. While some were unable to contribute due to health reasons or work obligations we think that, in the end, this volume represents the various tendencies within critical pedagogy as it has unfolded over the last four decades.

MAPPING CRITICAL PEDAGOGY

While any origins story is necessarily elusive and at best partial—including, we note, the origins story of Occupy Wall Street—it is generally agreed that critical pedagogy has its origins in the critical theory of the Frankfurt school. In one sense, the theorists of the Frankfurt School were attempting to re-think Marxism in an effort to overcome what they saw as the limitations of Soviet-style socialism and the economic determinism that predominated much of Marxist thought during the mid-twentieth century, and contributed to the ascendancy of positivism. In attempting to combat the trend of economic determinism they emphasized the superstructural elements of society and the role that elements such as culture, knowledge, language, and desire play in the maintenance and reproduction of oppression, inequality, and injustice (i.e., capitalist social relations). Many of these elements, such as knowledge and language, are of course intimately connected with schooling and education, which leads Peter McLaren (1989), for example, when outlining the major concepts utilized in critical pedagogy, to write about such concepts as ideology, hegemony, cultural capital, and discourse.

Leaving aside the myriad debates about base and superstructure—and the way that many Frankfurt theorists ultimately posited superstructural determinism against economic determinism—critical pedagogy picks up on the idea that educational processes, practices, and modes of engagement play an active role in the production and reproduction of social relations and systems. Critical pedagogy seeks to understand and is concerned with the ways that schools and the educational process sustain and reproduce systems and relations of oppression. The idea is that, if education is a site for the reproduction of oppression, it can also potentially be a site for the disruption of oppression and even liberation. Theorists of critical pedagogy see themselves as concerned with how to alleviate oppression and human suffering

through pedagogy. Thus, its attention is focused on power relations both in the world, and in the university, school, and classroom. As such, the task of critical pedagogy is to guide scholars, schoolteachers, and citizens to understand what is responsible for oppression in schools and society and what steps are necessary for the dismantling of oppressive systems.

We might say that the "first wave" of critical pedagogy in the 1970s and into the early 1980s inherited most directly the theoretical inclinations of the Frankfurt school and its insistence upon the centrality of class. This "wave" is associated with the early work of scholars like Paulo Freire, Henry Giroux, and Ira Shor. A "second wave" continued to develop around the early 1990s that, as a whole, and in contradictory ways, built upon, problematized, and even outright rejected the initial work of critical pedagogues. There are two overlapping routes that comprise this generation of scholarship. The first route critiques critical pedagogy from the feminist (and feminine) standpoint. The second route travels along the inroads made by poststructural and postmodern philosophies. It is perhaps partly because of the time in which these criticisms arose, during the late 1980s and early 1990s, when poststructural and postmodern theories had already made sufficient advances into academia, that the two branches of critique are deeply interrelated. After all, the modern categories and frameworks are often tantamount to male categories and frameworks, and modernity is frequently seen as synonymous with masculinity.

One of the foundational critiques of critical pedagogy, and even today one of the most frequently referenced, is Elizabeth Ellsworth's (1989) essay "Why Doesn't this Feel Empowering? Working through the Repressive Myths of Critical Pedagogy." In this essay, Ellsworth confronts critical pedagogy from a feminist and poststructural position. Ellsworth draws on her experiences facilitating (not "teaching") a politically motivated and active college course. She argues overall "that key assumptions, goals, and pedagogical practices fundamental to the literature on critical pedagogy—namely, 'empowerment,' 'student voice,' 'dialogue,' and even the term 'critical'—are repressive myths that perpetuate relations of domination" (p. 298). The reasons for the dominating effects of educational theories and practices motivated by liberation, she argues, stem from the decontextualized, abstract prescriptions in the critical pedagogy literature and a particular conception of power. A similar claim was made by Jennifer Gore (1993), who wrote that critical pedagogy operates on an understanding of "power as property." Such an understanding is implied in the very word 'empowerment,' for "to em-power suggests to give power, to confer power, to enable the use of power" (p. 95). Gore (1993) acknowledges that some critical pedagogy theorists have recognized how power is "embodied in concrete practices" (p. 94). Still, however, power is seen as something that can *either* repress or liberate. Critical pedagogy is seen as the praxis that can liberate the oppressed. Here Gore takes up Foucault's (1983) famous declaration that "everything is dangerous" (p. 231) because of the inseparability of power and knowledge. Because power exists only in circulation, it can't be isolated from the knowledge (language, ideas, forms of communication, etc…) through which it circulates.

In general, this wave was defined by the belief that critical pedagogues influenced by the Frankfurt school are correct to examine the forces behind unjust power relationships inside of schools, but several scholars felt their insights lacked the sophistication to understand the myriad forces giving rise to the lived experiences of teachers and students and lacked the sensitivity to recognize the complexity behind how social domination operates on the structural axes of race, gender, sexuality, and (dis)ability (Steinberg & Kincheloe, 2010). Consequently, the field of critical pedagogy now represents a constellation of insights from other intellectual fields, including feminist studies, environmental studies, critical race theory, cultural studies, and Indigenous studies, for the purpose of becoming critically aware of how "the political and economic landscape" give rise to the "actual conditions of life in schools and how it is possible to remake schools on the ideals of justice, equity, and democracy" (Darder, Baltodano, & Torres, 2009, p. 3).

If the critiques and interventions of the second wave opened up and problematized underlying assumptions about the operations of power and oppression, ultimately leading to the inclusion of various forms of identity and difference, we have recently witnessed the emergence of a third wave of critical pedagogy that has returned to questions of class and capitalism. This does not represent a retreat, however, as this wave is—to varying degrees, of course—building upon and incorporating the critiques levelled during the second wave. Additionally, this form of "revolutionary critical pedagogy" emerged because of the domestication of critical pedagogy, its reduction to a *method*. The trajectory of this wave comes as a result of a resurgence of Marxist educational theorizing and is being developed in the recent work of theorists such as Peter McLaren and Curry Malott. One of the reasons for this return to class and the capital-labor relation may be the economic crisis of 2007–2008, which demonstrated once again the devastating ways that processes of capitalist value production (and the failure to *realize* those values) can make and remake our daily lives. The extent to which this wave of critical pedagogy remains entrenched in the structural/poststructural divide of the 1990s, however, remains to be seen. In navigating this wave, however, we might suggest that critical pedagogues look to activists to examine the ways in which various global social movements are negotiating different class and identity categories.

OVERVIEW

This volume can be seen as a first-hand account of the varying debates and struggles within and around the field of critical pedagogy. Again, we are excited to have diverse contributions from emerging and established critical pedagogues who truly convey the complexity and nuances of the field. There are, of course, common threads that run throughout each of the chapters of this book. A concern for issues of injustice, oppression, and exploitation animates each chapter. And this is no abstract concern. Instead, each contributor documents the intertwining of the personal and the

political, and how their life experiences came to shape their theoretical orientations and approaches to life and learning, and vice versa.

In the opening chapter, William Reynolds highlights how he started practicing critical pedagogy before encountering Freire or any other critical pedagogy literature. It was rather his experiences teaching in Upstate New York and his innate dissatisfaction with the banking method that prevailed at Romulus Central School. When he did come to read *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Reynolds says it "was like being in a completely dark room and someone turning on a bright light." He talks about the consequences that he and his students faced as they read the word and the world, which leads him to emphasize that critical pedagogy necessarily entails risk. He also reads his student comments in order to grapple with student enthusiasm and resistance to critical pedagogy. Finally, Reynolds insists on centering hope—and "practical hope" in particular—in resisting "this historical moment of free-market fundamentalism, micro-fascism, and right-wing mega church religion."

In the outset of his chapter, Wayne Au acknowledges the importance of his upbringing as a central foundation for becoming a critical pedagogue. His "dad's communism" facilitated collectivist political work and made him conscious of the need to personally challenge oppression within his own lived world. Next, the author pinpoints how his connection to hip-hop culture positioned him to reject being part of White, middle-class suburban surroundings in Connecticut, while simultaneously allowing him to "cling to his urban-ness." After discussing the role that his college experience played in his identity development as a critical scholar, Au links how the "tension between postmodern subjectivity and Marxist dialectical materialism" sparked his "activism and orientation towards the world." The author concludes his chapter by highlighting his work as a schoolteacher in Berkeley, CA, by explaining why he decided to study with Michael Apple at the University of Wisconsin Madison, and by detailing how his intellectual and personal development was connected to being an "academic-activist and public intellectual."

Sonia Nieto presents her life and work through the lens of language, and in particular her growing up bilingual and biliterate. As such, her chapter focuses on the intersections among language, literacy, and culture, and what these intersections have meant for her, and what they can mean for students who have been marginalized, neglected, or made invisible by traditional understandings of the role of education. Although not linked conceptually in the past, the more recent tendency to connect language, literacy, and culture gives us a richer picture of learning, especially for students whose identities related to language, race, ethnicity, and immigrant status have traditionally had a low status in many societies.

Noah De Lissovoy captures how his upbringing in Berkeley, CA during the 1970s and 1980s positioned him and many White middle-class families to rebel against "feel-good hippie impulses of the previous generation." Members from this community and social strata directed their alienation with mainstream US politics

to a form a politics of indifference, rather than building collectivist movements to challenge the structures behind the politics that fuelled their alienation. Next, the author pinpoints how he developed a deeper understanding of how larger social forces are responsible for racialized injustices. This occurred when he moved to Los Angeles during the 1990s. Here he witnessed firsthand "a drawn-out race war" launched by the state against Black and Latino(a) residents. The injustice experienced by oppressed racial groups in Los Angeles provided a learning experience for De Lissovoy. He notes the learning was "not always pleasant" since it involved "interrogating his White and middle-class sensibilities." However, this learning became the catalyst for becoming a critical pedagogue. De Lissovovy became connected with numerous critical scholars in the Los Angeles region and Peter McLaren became his doctoral adviser at UCLA. During his doctoral studies, he became versed in critically examining the impact of neoliberal globalization on schools, students, and the wider society. De Lissovoy concludes his chapter by detailing the central impulses of his work since he graduated from UCLA and how he engages in *communion* with his students in order to unpack the "limits of the imagination and in the boundaries of "reality" itself."

Curry Malott traces his journey to critical pedagogy, focusing on a significant element of his family's ethnic and class background and its connection to his own educational experiences from public schooling to university. Drawing on Marx's historical discussions at the end of Volume 1 of *Capital*, Malott traces his own German background to the transition from feudalism to capitalism in Europe and how that process was connected to the American colonies and the emergence of capitalism in what would become the United States of America. Malott argues that this historical discussion helps us better understand both the current neoliberal era of perpetual budget cuts and austerity measures, and the true class position of most workers who wrongly self-identify as middle-class. In the end, Malott's contribution works to advance a proletarian class-consciousness and the movement to transcend capital and its demands.

In her chapter, Jennifer M. Gore unveils "how aspects of childhood and experiences as both student and teacher guided my intellectual journey toward, through and since my initial engagement with critical pedagogy." In the opening of the chapter, Gore reveals that she witnessed her sister being mistreated due to having cerebral palsy. The societal prejudices emanating "against difference" were major factors in the formation of her critical consciousness. After the author articulates how her family's connection with the teaching profession made teaching an "honourable career option for her," she sheds light on how her graduate studies at the University of British Columbia and at the University of Wisconsin Madison honed her thinking about teaching, education, society, and inequality. Next, Gore acknowledges the watershed moment of her intellectual development, which occurred when she read Elizabeth Ellsworth paper, "Why doesn't this feel empowering?" The paper positioned her to become "passionate about what critical and feminist work might look like in

classrooms," and how she "could operationalise (her) commitments to social justice and human dignity in (her) work in teacher education." Gore concludes the chapter by detailing several strands of her intellectual work. Her work is imbued with "critical intent, aligning with the same principles for a more just world, more just lives for teachers and students."

Peter Mayo writes about the development of his interest in adult education and alternative educational routes more generally, and how this interest intersects with the necessity of political education. While Mayo was drawn into the radical and socialist tradition while studying sociology at Athabasca University, his passion for social justice was furthered by the radical developments taking place in Latin America during the 1970s. In addition to detailing how he came into the critical pedagogy tradition, and how he was encouraged to read Freire together with Gramsci, Mayo generates important insights into understanding contemporary educational and social problems, focusing on the repression of migrants.

David Gabbard focuses his chapter on providing a concise summary "of the evolution of (his) thoughts on education and compulsory schooling." In the introductory pages, the author notes why he believes education ought to be a continual "pursuing of answers that inevitably leads to more questions, leaving our answers always partial and tentative." Unfortunately, Gabbard's experience in higher education for almost 20 years illustrates that the vast majority of academics and students are not involved in this type of education. Rather, they are on a trek to earn a "piece of paper," gain tenure, or obtain a job. Next, the critical pedagogue captures the role Žižek's taxonomy of stupidity has played in shaping his development as a critical educational theorist. He concludes the chapter by "providing background information on the autobiographical experiences that gave rise to the questions" that he has "pursued over the past twenty-five years."

Domenica Maviglia's chapter is dedicated to capturing the intellectual and pedagogical legacy of one of the leading critical pedagogues in our generation, Joe L. Kincheloe. The author begins the chapter by providing cultural and biographical remarks surrounding Kincheloe's upbringing, the scope of his research, and the trajectory of his administrative and cultural work. One of Joe's numerous legacies that he left scholars and practitioners was his creation of the *Paulo and Nita Freire International Project for Critical Pedagogy*. Before Joe passed away in 2008, the *Project* was responsible for forging an "international critical community" devoted to improving the world of schooling and society through research, teaching, and activism. Next, Mavigila captures the depth and breadth of Kincheloe's pedagogy. Along with impacting the world of critical pedagogy, Kincheloe impacted numerous debates in such intellectual fields, as "postformalism, critical constructivism, critical multiculturalism, critical cultural studies" and "critical social studies education." The author concludes the chapter by documenting the numerous merits of Kincheloe's critical pedagogy. His pedagogy is essential for challenging injustice in schools and society because it "recognises the crucial influence played by social relationships and

it denounces the paralysing burden posed by the power dynamics that characterise the educational experience."

Peter McLaren details his transition from a non-political child growing up in a conservative home, to beatnik-hippie, to liberal and, finally, revolutionary. The formative role that individuals—friends, teachers, fighters, and academics alike—played in this transition is documented. McLaren writes about his days at the University of Toronto and his combination of "arrogance and innocence" that initially led him into the work of teaching. In addition to this historical information, McLaren documents his theoretical trajectory, talking about the importance of Marxism and the centrality of the capital-labor dialectic in understanding and resisting oppression and exploitation. He also traces several of his current projects, which are increasingly becoming international in scope. Finally, McLaren delineates several aspects of the revolutionary critical pedagogy that he has played a leading role in developing over the last decade.

In his chapter, E. Wayne Ross testifies to his conversion "from believer, to heretic, to apostate." In his earlier life and career, Ross moved in between schools and the church, all the while struggling with authority and hierarchy. Ross' orientation toward critical pedagogy was influenced by life experiences, professors, and his teaching background. His interest in critical theory was cemented at Ohio State, through his study of curriculum reconceptualism. After completing his doctorate, Ross writes that the theories of Marx, Foucault, and Debord became increasingly useful for understanding the contemporary educational and political scene. Ross concludes his chapter by detailing some of his work, much of it collaborative. Of particular note is his notion of "dangerous citizenship," which "requires a praxis-inspired mindset of opposition and resistance, an acceptance of strategic and tactical stances."

John Elmore begins his chapter by exploring the roots of his political orientation towards schools and society. He reveals how his grandfather's production on his pig farm helped him "recognize that his toil was not only an act necessitated by basic sustenance, but also, and ultimately, an act in pursuit of freedom." He explains how he held an oppositional identity towards the schooling process, which lead him to opt for a GED and end his high school experience. The author details how his critical view of the schooling process is responsible for igniting his critical orientation towards the church's "psychological and theological" domination over the pubic. Elmore ends the chapter by elucidating how his scholarship has been shaped by his critical orientation toward to religion, schools, and society. He also makes a clarion call for other critical scholars to become intimately involved in administrative decision-making in the academy. He believes this step is necessary because "the enemies we face are powerful and well funded, but what is on the line for our students and, ultimately, the society we live in is more than worth the battle."

Ana Cruz's chapter focuses on her journey with Paulo Freire's work. She connects how Paulo's work impacted her own development as a critical scholar as well as captures the significant influence of his work on the field of critical pedagogy. The author begins the chapter by connecting her geographical roots to Paulo's birthplace of Brazil. Before being arrested and exiled to Chile in 1964, the reader learns that Paulo was raised in a middle-class environment, was deeply connected to the Catholic Church, and was the director of national literacy campaigns. Cruz illuminates the myriad ways Freire's work has impacted the world of critical pedagogy. She also reminds us that one can only comprehend Freire's work if she or he is "being cognizant of the background and realizing the context within which the individual work was produced." The author concludes the chapter by outlining the "eclectic body of work that" Paulo "embraced to construct his thoughts on pedagogy" and by establishing several central concepts Freire generated to transform the world. She also articulates how her journey with Freire altered her understanding of education, activism, and relationships with the 'Other.'

Michael Apple's chapter begins by capturing how Teachers College was an excellent fit for him to begin his doctoral studies during the 1960s. It allowed him to combine his "interests in politics, education, and the gritty materialities of daily life in schools." While at Teachers College, Apple worked with several progressive scholars, including Dwayne Hue and Jonas Soltis, who provided the foundation for much of his "work on the relationship among education, knowledge, and power." Next, the author captures why the University of Wisconsin Madison became a "special place, an institution where" he has "spent more than four decades." Apple then details the rich intellectual trajectory of his work and illuminates how his scholarship is dedicated to capturing the "significance of cultural struggles and of the crucial place that schools, curricula, teachers, and communities play in these struggles." After documenting "the extensive international work" he has been in engaged over the course of his illustrious career, Apple concludes the chapter by arguing that some radical scholar/activities have produced a "Freire industry." He argues that these scholars are connected to Friere's work for the purposes of creating "an illusion of political commitment while managing to make no sacrifices in one's goal of individual advancement and prestige."

Juha Souranta's chapter covers his journey from qualitative methodologist to critical pedagogue. Noting that critical pedagogy is still a marginal tradition in Finland, he writes that sufficient groundwork has been laid for the field in the country and, more significantly, that critical pedagogy today comprises an international community of radical educators and activists. A large portion of this narrative documents Souranta's underground life harboring a young Afghan who was due to be deported to Greece. As a tenured professor, Souranta's first immersion into activism—and a radical immersion at that—occurred because, he writes, "I was struck by a social problem, a previously unknown antagonism in my own neck of the woods, and I needed to do something, I needed to intervene."

Lisa Y. William-White uses poetry and autobiographic performance to frame the intersection of her personal and political life. This poetic telling begins before William-White, as she discloses the struggles of her foreparents and the Civil Rights movement in the U.S. This is a struggle that she would inherit and inhabit, one that would lead her to a permanent investigation into "the structural/and cultural forces that/shape me."

Suzanne SooHoo offers us her "Asian ontology, critical incidents, and critical friends" that brought her into critical pedagogy. As education is so often a site of constant babbling, SooHoo writes about the productive and disruptive role of silence in her life, her thought, her teaching, and her political action. She relays a brilliant story about her time as a school principal and her efforts "to make a long-term commitment to that school to honor teachers as professionals and respect students for their rich inherent abilities and acquired talent." While critical pedagogy has been critiqued as being too certain, SooHoo presents us with a chapter that cherishes the unfinished and the "humility of not knowing."

In her afterword to the book, Sandy Grande makes a timely plea for understanding the current round of education "reforms" as a form of low-intensity warfare that is aimed at protecting and advancing racist, capitalist, and settler-colonialist power structures. Noting that, while the field is still largely white and male, the diversity of contributors to this volume evidences that this is changing. Grande then provides her own mapping of the field and reading of the book's chapters, making explicit common threads and concerns. At the end of her afterword, Grande presents an understanding of the ways in which the colonial settler state "has relied on identity and cultural politics for its reconsolidation, requiring and soliciting certain ways of being, desiring, and knowing at the same time it destroys others." As an example of this, Grande calls our attention to the (attempted) cooptation of #BlackLivesMatter by #AllLivesMatter. This is a form of erasure and that signals the dead-end nature of liberal politics. The task, then, is to move critical pedagogy "beyond the horizons of democracy," which entails "nothing short of a remaking of the nation state through Indigenous repatriation and sovereignty." We couldn't think of a more pressing call for the international critical pedagogy movement to take up.

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WILLIAM M. REYNOLDS

1. CRITICAL PEDAGOGICAL PRAXIS

Risk and the Hopeful Struggle

> The idea that hope alone will transform the world, and action undertaken on that kind of naïveté, is an excellent route to hopelessness, pessimism, and fatalism. But the attempt to do without hope, in the struggle to improve the world, as if that struggle could be reduced to calculated acts alone, or a purely scientific approach, is a frivolous illusion. To attempt to do without hope, which is based on the need for truth as an ethical quality of struggle, is tantamount to denying that struggle is one of its mainstays. (Freire, 2002, p. 8)

> Hope is alive, but it must be a practical and not a naïve hope. A practical hope doesn't simply celebrate rainbows, unicorns, nutbread, and niceness, but rigorously understands "what is" in relation to "what could be" – a traditional critical notion. (Kincheloe, 2008, p. x)

INTRODUCTION

> Existence is not despair, but risk. If I don't exist dangerously, I cannot be. (Freire, 1985, p. 130)

This chapter will discuss one pedagogue's lived experiences in attempting to define, initiate, refine, and develop critical pedagogical praxis in his classes over the last 35 years. It is significant that this development has taken place in a number of different geographical locations (Upstate New York, Northern Wisconsin, Oklahoma, Indiana, Illinois, Southeast Georgia, Quebec, and Calgary, Alberta, Canada) with hundreds of students. Students in public high schools, at an Ojibwa Reservation school, and at various university classrooms in the United States and Canada at the undergraduate and graduate levels have all engaged in the struggle to move from schooling that deposits to an education that strives to dialogue and works toward critical consciousness. Of course, the discussion of these experiences is limited by the constraints of a chapter. The socio-political situation(s) have changed during those 35 years and that is an important context in this personal/political narrative. The following sections are placed within a brief discussion of the socio-political context of that historical period. This struggle becomes increasingly more difficult as the times become darker, crueler, and more repressive. The struggle to work toward an education of critical consciousness becomes more difficult as hegemony

B. J. Porfilio & D. R. Ford (Eds.), Leaders in Critical Pedagogy, 1–15.

becomes more entrenched. The risks for the pedagogue who is attempting to work in critical pedagogy, without the naiveté that education is the single tool of transformation toward democracy and social justice, have increased during the past thirty years and particularly as we move through the 21st century (see Reynolds, 2013). As pedagogues and their students attempt to create a critical space to dialogue and move toward critical awareness, their efforts do not go unnoticed by those who are immersed in and profit from the neoliberal agenda in education. That neoliberal agenda has become pervasive in public schools and universities. Educators and students who refuse the agenda become visible and vulnerable as a result. Historically, it has been my experience that this visibility and vulnerability have consistently been the case. These current dark, nightmarish, neoliberal times for education and the larger society make resistance and critique increasingly risky. Certainly, they have always been against the grain.

> Your challenge now makes you individually more visible and thus more vulnerable. If you are in the opposition instead of safely inside the established consensus (the official curriculum), you risk being fired, or not getting a promotion, or not getting a pay raise, or not getting the courses you want to teach, or the schedule you want, or the leave you apply for or even in some cases you become the target of ultra-conservative groups. (Shor & Freire, 1986, p. 54)

PUBLIC SCHOOLS

I began teaching in public schools in Upstate New York in 1975. It was a time of teacher-proof materials, pre-packaged teaching kits, career and back-to-basics education.[1] This was the Nixon agenda in education; it was designed to counteract the critical questioning of the 1960s. The idea underlying the Nixon agenda was that if students became career focused (certainly in place today as students currently are obsessively job focused) and worked hard on the basics, there would be no time for questioning the taken-for-granted or anything else.

> Curriculum was tilted in the direction of work discipline and job-training. Perhaps that would cool the ardor of youth. If not careerism was followed in the mid-1970s by a "Literacy Crisis" and a back to basics movement. Perhaps those programs would put some noses to the grindstone. (Shor, 1986, p. 4)

I was hired at Romulus Central School to teach high school English and particularly grammar. Romulus was a rural school in the Finger Lakes region of Upstate New York with an average graduating class of approximately 85 students. I had been educated as a teacher to transmit knowledge to students. I stood behind a wooden podium and lectured daily on everything from Shakespeare to diagraming sentences. Students seated alphabetically in rows memorized passages from Shakespeare and did countless grammar exercises. I remember I was very satisfied that the

classes were making rapid progress through the *Warriner's English Grammar and Composition: Third Course Grade Nine* (1958). I was teaching in the manner I had been taught to teach. The more information you could pour into the students' heads the better. All the course work I had taken and was taking in teacher education was providing me with the latest methods that would make those transmissions more effective. The course work in undergraduate and graduate education courses fostered a type of methods fetish. Reading fiction was also about plot analysis and character development.

The principal was very satisfied with the job I was doing and the students appeared to enjoy the classes. I felt, however, that something was missing from this education. Somehow it felt empty. The first year I taught I had a class that was oddly labeled on my class list as English 9–12. I asked the principal about the odd classification and his response was "Keep them quiet and out of trouble." This did not help inspire any confidence for me. This class was instrumental in transforming my pedagogy from depositing to dialogue. But it was before I read Paulo Freire or any other critical perspectives on education. There were seven students in the class. All of the students were white males ranging in age from 17–20. The 20-year old was trying desperately to graduate with a certificate of attendance. All of the men were from low-income families and all of them were volunteer fire fighters. All of them could barely read if they could read at all.

At first, I tried all the methods that were recommend by mainstream educational wisdom, particularly the use of so-called high-interest, low-level vocabulary books. These materials were horrible. They were certainly not "age appropriate" and they were just another reason for these students to hate reading and education. I remember staying up late one night and trying to figure out what to do. I finally decided never to use those materials again. I decided that we would read books together. Since these men had never read or been read a book in their entire lives, this was going to be a challenge.

The second step was finding a book that would be interesting, relevant, and could generate some discussion about their everyday lived experiences. I found the book, *Report from Engine CO. 82* (1973). I am sure this was not on any recommend reading list in the United States. I bought each student a copy so they would have their own book. I read the book to them. I would read a section each day and then we would talk about the differences between fire fighters in rural New York and fire fighters in New York City.

Some would criticize simply reading a book to students, but reading and dialogue that did not demand a response that was pre-determined by the teacher was something these students had never experienced before and they loved it. The class and I read 7 books that year. Initially I chose the books, but eventually they chose books. This community (class) of honest, open dialogue led me to open dialogues with all my classes concerning novels, writing, and speech. This was before *Literacy: Reading the Word and the World* (1987) was written. But, it seems to me it was moving in that direction. The struggle to work toward a different type of education was difficult for me because I knew that this was the right thing to do, but I was acting/teaching in a

type of isolation. I want to emphasize that I am not the hero of my story. The students and I worked together to transform the educational experience. It was not about the "methods" I employed. It was about the community we attempted to create. I am still in contact with some of those students, even 38 years later.

I can't remember how I came to read *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970). It was probably suggested by someone in one of my master's classes. I read it in 1977. The experience of reading Freire's book was like being in a completely dark room and someone turning on a bright light. I read it with a pen and a highlighter. There were countless highlights and marginal notes. There in those words was what I had been feeling and thinking about for years. After reading the book, I began to have a language to discuss the ideas and a way to explain to others what I was trying in the classroom and most importantly why. It gave me a philosophical framework for what I was attempting in my classrooms. Of course, critical pedagogy is not a method and many of my colleagues and students to this day want it to be. If only there were a critical pedagogy method book or a video capable of transforming the world!

The other focus of this pedagogy is the world. A critical pedagogue cannot preach about social transformation and social justice without working toward those ideals inside and outside the classroom. If students observe you as the teacher discussing the need for social change and do not see you acting on that then they can discount the talk. There will more on this later in the chapter.

Another book that helped to shape my early critical framework was Richard Ohmann's *English in America: A radical view of the profession* (1976). I read this shortly after reading Freire (1970). Ohmann placed teaching English into a political perspective that was crucial to my personal and political understandings.

> Here a general principle of ideology is helpful: a privileged social group will generalize its own interests so that they appear to be universal social goals ("What's good for General Motors…"). In America, in the fifties, the bourgeois intellectual needed assurance that his privileges were for the general good. For example, a critic and teacher of literature whose work is fun and respectable, but who sees little evidence that he is helping to ameliorate social ills, or indeed serving any but those destined to assume their own positions in the ruling class–a teacher in this dubious spot will welcome a system of ideas and values that tells him that politics and ideology are at an end, that a pluralistic society is best for all, that individual freedom is the proper social goal for rich and poor alike, and that the perfection of self can best be attained through humanistic intellectual endeavor. (Ohmann, 1976)

This began to put my profession in critical perspective. How it was about reading the word and not the world. I had to rethink my notions of expertise, knowledge, and pedagogy.

In 1979, I moved from Romulus Central School to Red High School (approximately 321 students). Red Creek was an economically depressed area in Upstate New York

located a mile from the shore of Lake Ontario. The school district was comprised of two towns, Red Creek and Fair Haven. While Red Creek was a low-income area, Fair Haven had wealthier families living in lake front homes. So in my English classes, there was a spread of economic backgrounds. As I assumed the responsibility of teaching 11th grade English, I was confronted, on the previous teacher's bookcase, with an entire year's Scholastic packaged curriculum, *Scholastic Literature Units 5100* (Dunning, 1973). This Orwellian curriculum contained in four loose leaf notebooks: scripted lessons for each day for 40 weeks, quizzes for all lessons, unit tests for all material, teacher synopsis for all readings and various suggestions for additional activities. These were the epitome of teacher-proof materials.

Upon my arrival, I promptly sent these notebooks to the storage room. These were certainly not consistent with any attempts to work with the students on moving toward critical consciousness in a critical community. The five years attempting to do this at Red Creek taught me some lessons about critical pedagogy. In high schools in the late 1970s and early 1980s, critical pedagogy had consequences. As the teacher, I was not prepared for those consequences nor did I prepare my students for the consequences of developing a critical consciousness. The consequence for me was a type of anger/alienation from other teachers. Students who were free to ask questions and challenge me in classes began to expect that from other teachers and that simply was not going to happen. When the students were asked where they got the idea that they could ask questions, they responded that they could in my class. That brought other teachers to confront me about what I was doing. I suggested that they read Paulo Freire, but there was immediate resistance. More concerning than my position was the manner in which students were demeaned and received poor grades from other teachers for their critical perspectives.

In one case, a female student was assigned in her 11th grade social studies class to write a term paper on racism. She was a very bright student and asked me if I thought that writing about her history textbook being racist was a good idea. I immediately responded that it was a great idea. She wrote the paper and had me proof read it. It was an excellent paper. I was very pleased with the ways in which she had critically analyzed questions of racial representation in the textbook. She turned it into her social studies teacher, who was a traditional banking teacher and the result was a grade of F. The only comment on the paper was –How Dare You Criticize My Textbook. After many heated arguments, the grade on the student paper remained an F. This experience taught me that as a critical pedagogue, it is not only necessary to develop critical consciousness[2] with students but also to discuss the politics of employing critical consciousness in specific situations. Those involved in a critical education must be critically aware that there are always consequences to critiquing the status quo. If you do not question the taken-for-granted and remain asleep and not wide-awake (Greene, 1978), there is no risk and as a teacher or student you will have little to fear. On the other hand, my experiences with critical pedagogy and critical consciousness have mostly been about risk and struggle.

As I was working with high school students toward critical consciousness, I was pursuing a doctoral degree at the University of Rochester. I wasn't aware of it at the time, but I was fortunate to be there. I had not investigated scholars in the field, but I decided to attend the University of Rochester because of its proximity to my job. Looking back now, especially, I realize how very lucky I was. William F. Pinar, Madeleine Grumet, and Philip Wexler were all at the same place at the same time, and I was able to study with all of them. The work in this program allowed me to read widely in critical literature (see Reynolds, 2003). It was the intellectual safe place where I read and discussed the political. I have come to realize in the last year that I have been writing about curriculum as a political text for more than thirty years. Certainly I see critical pedagogy as political act. It was the preparation I needed to leave public school teaching and move to university teaching.

UNIVERSITIES

I left public school teaching in 1985 and moved to Menomonie, Wisconsin to teach at the University of Wisconsin-Stout, a technological institution whose major purpose historically has been and continues to be career preparation. This was during the Reagan Administration. My first attempts at developing a type of critical practice were at best haphazard. There were few colleagues with whom I could discuss critical pedagogy, and at the time, there were few volumes that discussed it; even my best accomplishments were often unplanned. It was relatively easy to return to a "banking" (Freire, 2006), or an autocratic type of pedagogy that manipulated students. If the students did not understand or comprehend then they were just not intelligent enough and were incapable of understanding. During the first few semesters of my six years at UW-Stout, I did revert to a type of banking lecture periodically at both the undergraduate and graduate level. Although I was tempted to pursue that pedagogy much more than I did. I recognized that the students would find all the material we discussed difficult, foreign, and in their words, "too theoretical."

I arrived at Oklahoma State University in 1992 to work exclusively with doctoral students. Russell Dobson, who has remained a friend and an example for me as a worker in this academic life, recruited me. The move to Oklahoma coincided with the beginning of the push for a nationalized curriculum and state testing in the guise of outcomes-based education. I witnessed the insidious return to the discourse of *A Nation at Risk* (1983) and social efficiency education. I was worried that teachers and students were being duped, once again, by business ideology and what McLaren (2000) called in another context "bargain basement" programs. I had worked with critical pedagogy with high school students, undergraduate students, and master's students. I was, at this point, ready to engage with doctoral students in critical pedagogy in a curriculum theory program. While at OSU I attempted to engage in critical pedagogy in curriculum studies classes, trying to develop critical curriculum

studies. During those three years the dialogues sometimes were difficult, especially when conservative Christian beliefs entered the complicated conversations, but having an open discussion about those beliefs and their relationship to education and politics helped our understandings. While at OSU, the graduate students and I produced a journal, *The Journal of Curriculum Discourse and Dialogue*. The articles from graduate students and international scholars reflected many of the critical dialogues we were having in classes. In 1995, I was asked to join the faculty at Purdue University.

When I started teaching at Purdue University in 1995, I was asked to develop the curriculum theory specialization in a curriculum and instruction program. There were outstanding students in the program and the critical pedagogical orientations of my seminar continued. Purdue also allowed me the opportunity to work with students from a variety of fields inside education and from various disciplines across the university. Indiana is a very conservative state and in some cases the dialogue in classes raised some uncomfortable issues for the students. But the community of conversations in the classes, I think, in many cases moved through the stages of developing critical consciousness.

I left Purdue University in 1997. I was recruited to be a member of the faculty of a new and exciting program in curriculum studies at Georgia Southern University. The issues of critical pedagogy remain in this institution as the grasp of the neoliberal agenda is stronger. At Georgia Southern, I have had the opportunity to teach undergraduate, masters, and doctoral classes. One of the questions I hear quite frequently for all level of classes is: Why haven't I heard about any of this critical pedagogy, or cultural studies before now? It is an important question and indicates the entrenchment of not only banking education, but the corporatization of education. Undergraduates beginning teacher education programs indicate that they have never even thought about the ways in which their public or private school experiences were locked in this type of education and we dialogue about their experiences with standardized testing and how meaningless they found it. Graduate students, many of whom have had several years of teaching experience in schools, reflect on their teaching experience and decide that they have been somewhat complicitous in the neoliberal agenda. Both groups become angry with the education they have received.

In our dialogues, we attempt to turn that anger into productive alternatives all the while discussing the risks and rewards of doing so. Both groups are aware that the challenging of such an entrenched system is precarious to job security. In many cases we discuss how to negotiate that rough terrain. After 17 years of teaching at this institution the complicated, critical conversations continue. There is always more critical work to do. The students and I try to develop new ways to enhance critical perspectives. Again, I emphasize with the students that it is not enough to simply discuss social justice and equity in the classroom, but efforts must be made to be a voice in the larger community outside the schools. I try to demonstrate that in my activities outside academe.

LAC COURTE OREILLES OJIBWE SCHOOLS

> One cannot expect positive results from an educational or political action program which fails to respect the particular view of the world held by the people. Such a program constitutes cultural invasion, good intentions notwithstanding. (Freire, 2006, p. 95)

> Such a history leaves significant questions at the turn of the twenty-first century. First and foremost, how can schools – which are deeply embedded in the exhaustive history of colonization – be reimagined as sites of indigenous sovereignty and self-determination. (Grande, 2004, p. 47)

While teaching at the University of Wisconsin-Stout, I had the opportunity to work with Native American teachers at the Lac Courte Oreilles Ojibwe High School in Hayward, Wisconsin. It was an approximately 210 mile round trip. I was the director of a program that delivered course work for a Master's of Education degree to the teachers at the school. It was an amazing opportunity to engage in this program. I agreed immediately to take on the responsibility. Then, I realized there were so many issues involved. This experience was in 1988 and this is the first time I have written about it, because of the issues involved. I am a white male. I grew up in a working class suburb in Rochester, New York. All of my teaching experience up to that point had been with white students in predominately white schools. The university had changed this experience some as I had the opportunity to work with students of color from the United States and other nations. But, Northern Wisconsin is white. The demographics demonstrate this. The current population of Menomonie is 91.9% white, 0.8% African-American and 0.5% American Indian (United States Census Bureau, 2010). What on earth did I know about Native Americans, their culture or their lived experiences? I certainly did not want to engage in the type of malefic generosity or cultural invasion that Freire described.

> Accordingly, these adherents to the people's cause constantly run the risk of falling into a type of generosity as malefic as that of the oppressors. The generosity of the oppressors is nourished by an unjust order, which must be maintained in order to justify that generosity. Our converts, on the other hand, truly desire to transform the unjust order; but because of their background they believe that they must be the executors of the transformation. (Freire, 2006, p. 60)

Pursuing critical pedagogy at a Native American school during the legacy of the Reagan budgets cuts to the Bureau of Indian Affairs and the beginnings of the George H. Bush agenda did not help. I was aware that no pedagogy is inherently liberating. Was I going to be another in a series of white men engaging in colonizing a Native American tribal school? The question for me as a critical educator was how to understand and not perpetuate this dilemma. I realized that critical pedagogy could be just as colonializing as any other. I understood the history of the establishment of

the school. The tribe's students were mistreated in many ways in the public school. In many cases they were being forced into physical fights with white students. Finally, the students had enough and collectively walked out of the public school and the Lac Courte Oreilles Ojibwe High School was formed in 1976.[3]

I remember clearly my first ride up to the school. A colleague of mine, Daniel Paulson, rode along with me and we discussed many issues about this endeavor. I had decided not to come in as the expert white man telling the Native Americans what needed to be done in their school. I decided the best thing to do was listen. So, after greeting the eight teachers, I asked them to talk about themselves and in an open discussion asked them what were the issues that they would like to discuss. The reaction initially was silence. Oh yes, I thought, trust. I next asked them to tell me the history of the school. They were all willing to contribute to the story of the establishment of the school. They said that teachers hired at the Lac Courte Oreilles Ojibwe High School were given rankings for hiring. Tribal members were given first priority. Native Americans from other tribes were given second priority and all others came third. I found it interesting that at that time all of the teachers were Native American, but the principal was white. As the semesters progressed the conversations became much more open. They talked about how the students were resisting the curriculum. It was still a white curriculum. The high school students would tell these teachers that they didn't have to do any of this schoolwork because eventually they would go on the "dole" like their parents. We talked about the possibilities of creating an indigenous curriculum and what that would look like. I mostly listened. Eventually they invited me to come and visit their classes. This was a big step in developing our community. I was spending a great deal of time on the reservation. I would attend their classes and we would use those observations as discussion points. Issues such as discipline and motivation were mainstays of the conversations. I was eventually invited to attend the weekly Friday Pow-Wow. This was an incredible honor and I remember those Pow-Wows vividly. There the traditions of the tribe and the tribal elders were presented in story, song, and dance. I observed students who were not interested in the least in the class offerings were riveted by the traditions of the tribe. It was extraordinary. I discovered in conversations with the elders that their Ojibwe language had been stripped away from them. The white man had come on the reservations and took the children to boarding schools to learn the white culture. Part of this process was the stripping away of their language and culture. Their fear was that when the elders passed away so would the language and the culture. The Pow-Wows were one way of keeping the old ways alive. The conversations with the elders also made their way into the conversations of the classes.

I spent three semesters delivering a course each semester to the teachers, observing their classes, attending the Pow-Wows, and traveling through the reservation. I am not sure whether critical pedagogy or dialogical education made much of an impact. The program was cut the year I left UW-Stout. It was for me a life changing experience in many ways. I regret that I did not get to spend more time with the teachers and students there.

STUDENT REACTIONS TO CRITICAL PEDAGOGY

Student reactions to my many attempts at critical pedagogy over the years have been varied and interesting. During my experiences in critical pedagogy, there have been basically three types of reactions exhibited toward my attempts at critical pedagogy; the same reactions were reported in personal conversations and in written form by numerous scholars who have attempted to pursue critical pedagogy in their classrooms and daily lives (Freire & Shor, 1987; Shor, 1987; Giroux, 1988; Hooks, 1994; McLaren & Kincheloe, 2007; Kincheloe, 2008; Duncan-Andrade & Morrel, 2008; Darder, Baltodano, & Torres, 2008; Macrine, 2009; Giroux, 2011; DeLissovoy, 2011; Kincheloe, Hayes, Steinberg, & Tobin, 2011, ; Porfilio & Viola, 2012).

The first type of reaction is a very positive one. The students think that our attempts at critical pedagogy/dialogue education are the best type of education that they have experienced in their lives in educational institutions. Comments that were written (anonymously) at the end of course throughout the thirty years reflect this.

> This has been the best course I have ever taken; all of us looked forward to it a great deal. We were treated as individuals and able to dialogue as soon as we got a base of knowledge, which I feel is important. (Graduate)

> While Black teachers and administrators assisted me in navigating and surviving white schools it was Dr. Reynolds a white male teacher who first validated my blackness in an educational setting. (Graduate)

> The course examines many aspects of critical pedagogy and literacy thus allowing students from many different backgrounds to collaborate in class discussions, while drawing from each their personal/professional experiences. The manner in which theory and content were integrated into the lessons this stimulating class discussion (a dialogue format), the passion and enthusiasm with which the course material was discussed and the excitement with which our comments and suggestions were addressed was conducive to a vigorous yet relaxed and truly liberating learning

> I loved how we were encouraged to discuss topics that we enjoyed and that were relevant to what we were learning in the field. I feel that we were encouraged and praised for asking questions. Discussions were always participated in. (undergraduate)

These student comments illustrate responses with a new attitude. The students are also likely, as Shor and Freire (1987)[4] state and as I experience, to inform relatives and friends of the discussions and the class. I have always felt that was the best indicator of whether critical pedagogy was being somewhat successful. That is when the conversations continue on outside of class with others. In some cases, students even brought those relatives and friends to the class to participate in the dialogue. This is the type of reaction and response that all of us engaged in critical pedagogy hope will happen.

The second type of student response, somewhat less enthusiastic, comes from students described by Shor and Freire (1987) as "students who showed not much participation and not much resistance but they would come back for another semester or two, to be around an atmosphere that appealed to them (p. 25). These students, to a certain extent, appear to withdraw after the first few class sessions in the dialogical classroom. They were unresponsive in class and did not contribute. I thought they were either not understanding what was transpiring or choosing not to participate or both. Their comments were interesting, but brief.

Most of this is too theoretical and can't be applied to the schools. (Graduate)

There was too much information. (Graduate)

The content was pretty heavy. (Graduate)

Too many readings, books were too difficult to read quickly. (Graduate)

I thought this was an education course! (Undergraduate)

Very opinionated material. (Undergraduate)

These students I found to be the most problematic. I continually seek through dialogue and through personal discussions to reach them. At times these students tell me that they are so used to classrooms of silence and memorization that it just "takes time" to get used to a class where it is ok to say what you think and feel without fear of being silenced. These students certainly indicate the lasting impact of the banking system.

The last type of reaction Shor describes accurately: "Still others were actively hostile, challenging me in ways to stop the critical thrust of the class. They were committed to tradition and saw the class as a threat to their established values" (Shor & Freire, 1987, p. 25). Some students, through the years, have been actively hostile to what was happening in my classes. Most of the resistance comes from students of privilege, both white students and students of color. These students saw the dialogue about social issues, capitalism, and banking education as a threat to their established values. In particular they saw these ideas as an assault on their common sense. Their response usually manifested itself as some variation of "that is just the way things are or it is what it is." They also accuse the writers they read of "reading too much into these situations."

Too many radical and liberal beliefs and opinions in the class. (Graduate)

I learn absolutely nothing in this class. (Undergraduate)

It could be more relevant for new teachers…as new teachers we cannot do these things w/o getting into trouble. (Undergraduate)

There were more productive things I could have been doing. (Graduate)

One male graduate student early in my university teaching career wrote a telling criticism. I simply dismissed it at the time, but over the years I have thought about it. It may be one of the most telling comments made.

> What are you trying to do? It seems like you are trying to make the class a sewing circle. Are you doing this to discuss criticism and alternatives to the nation's schools? Why do we discuss all this personal crap?

The allusion to a sewing circle is in actuality quite astute. The student, I believe, meant this comment in the most sexist and negative way possible. Implicit in the comment (sewing circle), I am sure, was the fact that the student perceived the class to be like a "bunch of women sitting around talking and wasting time" (comment made in class). But the student pointed out a crucial aspect of the experience of critical pedagogical praxis. These dialogically oriented classrooms, where lived experiences are shared and discussed in their relationship to education, society, oppression, racism, sexism, and homophobia, begin to break down walls of authoritarianism, which across the years have become entrenched in schools and universities as they have become corporatized and the neoliberal curriculum(s) have continued to be instrumentalized.

Despite the ever more perplexing, cruel, and nightmarish times, students and I continue to work together to create a more dialogical, democratic classroom. The additional works on critical pedagogy have contributed a great deal to its progress, but the work must continue especially at this point historically, as the schools and universities struggle against the neoliberal, corporate curriculum of skill, drill, and test (Reynolds, 2014). As the work continues it must allow for additional conceptualizations. For me, the addition of critical media analysis has helped to engage students in the dialogue (Macedo & Steinberg, 2008; Ibrahim & Steinberg, 2014). Present day students are savvy concerning popular culture, particularly technologies. This allows initial and continuing dialogue about lived experiences with students. We should dialogue, discuss, present, blog, Facebook, tweet, and participate in social action. Action is imperative or our efforts degenerate into a type of slacktivism (posting radical messages online). Posting is important but not sufficient. All these of these activities should be with colleagues, students, practitioners, and communities to enable numerous voices to be heard. Therein lies hope.

HOPE

> One of the tasks of the progressive educator, through serious, correct political analysis, is to unveil opportunities for hope, no matter what the obstacles may be. After all, without hope there is little we can do. It is hard to struggle on, and when we fight as hopeless or despairing persons, our struggle is suicidal. (Freire, 2002, p. 9)

I know that many colleagues think it is foolishly naïve to have hope in the present historical moment. I have been in heated arguments about the having of hope. It

may well be one of the last vestiges of my Eurocentric mind. Yet, I could not pursue critical pedagogical praxis without hope. What would be the point? It is part of our language of possibility (Giroux, 1988). It is practical hope.

Practical hope rings with possibilities and can assist in restoring educators from the dim recesses of disillusionment. That disillusionment can end in immobility and surrender. Practical hope also moves educators to more activist positions despite the risks of visibility and vulnerability (Reynolds, 2013). The discourse of practical hope and critical pedagogy in this historical moment of free-market fundamentalism, micro-fascism, and right-wing mega church religion (Reynolds & Webber, 2009) must orient itself to the struggles of everydayness in the face of such overwhelming obstacles; "This means recalibrating the discourse so that it "speaks" to the immediate problems of workers and others who struggle under the daily grind of time edicts, low salaries, disrespectful work environments, etc…" (McLaren, 2007, p. 75)

The stubborn persistence of hope operates within a context of radical love. We can only hope for those we love not in a romantic sense, but in the sense that we must, as educators entrusted with the welfare of children, work as rigorously as we can to make a better world and in doing so provide youth with critical capacities that enable them to ask the difficult questions concerning education and the larger society. That rigorous work demonstrates not only radical love but hope. Radical love dwells in hope and likewise hope dwells in the context of radical love. Radical love and hope are about the project to end human suffering through the critical awareness of the businessification, militarization of education and a socially unjust society.

The struggle with and for a critical pedagogical praxis that speaks to the immediate educational, societal, economic, political, class, race, gender, and sexual preference issues we face is the hope we can have for creating a more humane world and in that attempt to alleviate human suffering.[5] I continue to work with students and others toward those goals with hope.

NOTES

[1] Portions of this chapter have appear previously in – Reynolds, W. M. (2003). *Curriculum: A river runs through it*. New York Peter Lang (pp. 14–20).

[2] I have discussed critical consciousness in the context of liberation theology. Reynolds, W. M. (2013). Liberation Theology and Paulo Freire: On the side of the poor In R. Lake and T. Kress (Eds). *Paulo Freire's historical roots: Toward historicity in praxis* (127–145). New York: Bloomsbury.
Freire discussed three levels of conscious (Fritz, 2010, p. 2) that people move through as they progress toward critical consciousness. The first level is that of magical consciousness or thinking. In this state people are silent and docile and live in the taken-for-granted. Events are explained by way of some superior, mystical or magical force (Fritz, 2010, p. 2). It is beyond their ability to remedy so they accept. Of course, religion plays a part in perpetuating this type of consciousness and was one of the objects that a conscienticizing evangelization was trying to change. Whether Freire influenced this movement or whether this movement influenced Freire concerning magical thinking is difficult to determine. The next stage in this development of a critical conscious is naïve consciousness (Fritz, 2010, p. 2). In this stage people become aware of problems but the notion of changing those problems becomes individualized not put into a larger socio-political context. In this stage for example in

education teachers might blame an individual administrator or fellow teacher for their problems or students blame an individual teacher for how awful the schooling experience has become. In terms of the church a member of the congregation might blame an individual priest for the problem of poverty or the sad state of things. The result, of course, is the very system that causes the problems is never questioned and remains in place. Many get stuck in this stage of consciousness. The final stage is critical consciousness (Fritz, 2010, p. 2) in this stage people start to see issues as systemic problems. They begin to see their positionality in terms of class, gender, race, and so on. They also become conscious of repressive social structures and arrangements. As Freire cautions, however, critical conscious must be a collective process not a top down interventionist strategy. It also needs to move beyond interesting debates about this theoretical perspective or that perspective or building castles in the air (p. 139).

[3] See Lac Courte Oreilles Ojibwe School retrieved from: http://www.lcoschools.bie.edu/ and Peacock and Wisuri (2002).

[4] These reactions are described in Shor & Freire, 1987 (pp. 24–30).

[5] Portions of this section have appeared previously in—Reynolds, W. M. (2013). The stubborn persistence of hope. In T. M. Kress & R. Lake (Eds.), *We saved the best for you: Letters of hope, imagination and wisdom for 21st century educators* (pp. 33–36). Rotterdam, The Netherlands: Sense Publishers.

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WAYNE AU

2. JUST WHAT THE HELL IS A NEO-MARXIST ANYWAY?

A Political and Intellectual Biography

When asked to write my intellectual biography and how and why I came to enter the field of critical pedagogy (to the extent it can be called a "field," see, Apple & Au, 2015, for further discussion), a large part of me wants to give the short answer: For as long as I can remember, my dad has been a communist. Now that answer is simplistic and incomplete, but it does speak to some things that were foundational in my development as a child and into my adult life. For instance, I have strong memories of participating in many a May Day rally and march either in Seattle or in the San Francisco Bay Area. One of those early memories includes a decision by marchers to swarm through the Nordstrom's clothing store in downtown Seattle. As we wove our way between the clothing racks and perfume counters I distinctly remember looking around and wondering to myself, "You mean we can just do this and not get into trouble?" Quickly followed by the realization that, "Wow. When people are together like this, we're kind of powerful."

There are other memories connected to my dad's communism that were important too. My folks were divorced for a lot of my life, so I often spent a month in the summer staying with my dad, usually in the San Francisco Bay Area. One summer in the 1980's when I stayed with him was during the height of the anti-South African apartheid divestment movement at UC Berkeley. My sister, who was also very politically involved at that point, had been organizing and agitating amongst the shantytown that student and community activists had symbolically constructed to occupy the campus square there (facing police brutality in the process). Telegraph Avenue, a street which runs almost directly into the campus square, was also a site of protest, and as part of an anti-apartheid march and rally I had a blast gleefully tossing toilet paper rolls through the signs and trees along the street as a part of the protest.

These are just a couple of memories, and they can't be tied directly to a specific intellectual tradition (I certainly didn't consciously have those traditions in mind as I tossed toilet paper along Telegraph Avenue), but they oriented me towards injustice and they taught me from very early on that people got together to fight against that injustice. I also feel very deeply that my early experiences in these kinds of protests allowed me to glimpse what moments of what it meant to *feel free* in some sense.

B. J. Porfilio & D. R. Ford (Eds.), Leaders in Critical Pedagogy, 17–35.

I may not have understood what exactly I was feeling free from, but I definitely felt it. And it was something I came to feel again and again later in my life.

There are other more general political things that came along with my dad, some overtly connected to his communism and some not. I would wager, for instance, that very few young boys grew up as I did, getting regularly lectured to about women's oppression and my duty, as a boy/man, to struggle against it incessantly. There were also the political meetings at our house and at the houses of others, and the "war stories" of fighting with the cops at a protest here, or fighting the conservatives on the shipyard docks while trying to organize workers there. Additionally, despite what I see as his lack of self-interrogation of his own racial identity, my dad did contribute to my own identity development in some key ways. Whether through the simplicity of food, his tai chi, and, of course, stories about our family history (Chinese American via Hawai'i as early as the 1880s, as well as his own father's communism), I was learning about what it meant to be mixed, to be a part of the Asian American and Chinese American diaspora, and what differentiated me from the predominantly white family members and communities I was living amongst during my formative pre-and-early adolescent years.

Coinciding with the above-mentioned move to a predominantly white community to be nearer to my mother's family, it is important for me to add another critical, foundational aspect of my intellectual autobiography: hip hop. I had moved from a very diverse, urban, and working class community in West Seattle to a generally affluent, mostly white suburb in Connecticut. It was shocking to me in many ways, a shock that included being called a Chink on the bus ride on my first day at my new elementary school. It is amazing how much being "mixed" is in the eye of the beholder, and in that new, less diverse context, I was easily marked as different.

When I reflect back upon this time period, I feel pretty clear that my embrace of hip hop music and culture was in part my rejection of my new, white suburban surroundings (and the cultural norms that came with it) and in part a clinging to the urban-ness I remembered from my old neighborhood. In Connecticut I went to schools that usually had 2–3 African American students total and usually no Asian American students at all (and no Latinos and no Native American kids either). I wasn't conscious of it at the time, but now it makes perfect sense to me that I became close friends with several of the African American kids, and one of our shared loves was hip hop music and the growing b-boying (aka Breakdancing) and graffiti scenes which at that moment had entered pop culture and were being mass marketed for the first time (Chang, 2005). Once in Connecticut I could stay up late on the weekend nights fine-tuning my boom box radio to catch and record New York City deejays cutting up the latest hip hop records. So an identification with hip hop culture, and by a limited extension, Black culture, became important rudders for me as I navigated the cultural politics of overwhelming whiteness, and I carried these sensibilities with me through the rest of my life (I still do).

Flash forward to high school, where, after a return to Seattle, I attended Garfield High School – historic home of Quincy Jones, Jimi Hendrix, and the Seattle chapter

of the Black Panther Party. Always negotiating the fluid and messy mix of whiteness, being Chinese American, identifying with hip hop culture (and by extension, some amount of Black culture too), and attending Seattle's historically Black high school, I continued to make my own political way. This was the time of a highly politicized movement in hip hop music (Chang, 2005) and I immediately took political education from listening to the likes of Public Enemy, Boogie Down Productions, N.W.A. and Queen Latifah, an education that continued into my college years through emcees like Paris, the Poor Righteous Teachers, and Ice Cube.

At Garfield High School I engaged my friends and peers on issues of culture and race politics through hip-hop music. I also was lucky enough to stumble upon two courses at Garfield that took up an African and African American-centric orientation to curriculum—a course on the Harlem Renaissance and a world history course, both taught by Mr. Davis. Those classes were critical to my political and intellectual development. I was only one of two non-African American students in each class, and certainly the only Asian American. Through Mr. Davis' curriculum we entered into incredibly important conversations and arguments about history, culture, race, and racism, and through those conversations and arguments we also developed meaningful relationships (Au, 2009a).

When I think back on that time now I feel like those courses served three purposes for me. First, it was a time where I existed in a space that was decidedly Black, full of a wide range of African American students expressing a range of perspectives on Black experiences and Black culture in Seattle, in education, and in general. Second, that space allowed me to hone and shape my own political analyses. I brought my own set of politics to that space, politics that were guided by a then-unnamed Marxism and my own scrambled identity, and I was politically sharpened through those conversations and arguments. Third, by that time I had already decided that I wanted to be a teacher, and I learned about how a powerful curriculum can make a real difference in the consciousness of students. There are, of course, many other things that contributed to my high school experience. My communist father was still in the mix, supporting my love for science and science fiction by giving me science books by radical evolutionary biologist Stephen Jay Gould and politicized science fiction books by Ursula K. LeGuin, for instance. However, when thinking about my high school experiences, Mr. Davis' classes loom large in my mind's eye.[1]

My intellectual and political autobiography continued into college, of course, where I was drawn to more "alternative" universities that didn't rely on letter grades and instead focused on narrative evaluations for assessment. I attended the University of California, Santa Cruz (UCSC) for the 1990–1991 academic year, splitting my time between looking at being a Marine Biology major or an American Studies major. In the end, the American Studies courses won out. Suffice to say I was drawn to history courses and my first-year core course that focused on politics and culture in the United States, where, for instance, I had the chance to first view the film *Who Killed Vincent Chin?*, which explored the race-based, premeditated murder of Vincent Chin by two white auto workers in Detroit who beat Chin to

death with a baseball bat. Both of the killers were found not guilty, and this film left an indelible mark on my understanding of race, racism, and Asian Americans in the United States. Also critical at this time was the fact that the first U.S. war against Iraq began in January of 1991. As soon as news of the U.S. bombings broke, I joined other UCSC students in a protest march against the war that wound its way through Santa Cruz and eventually shut down highway 17 for a number of hours. I later traveled to my father's house in the nearby Bay Area to take part in demonstrations, including a massive rally and march of 100,000 protestors through the streets of San Francisco as part of a global day of action (not knowing, of course, that I would return about 10 years later for an even larger protest of Gulf War II).

Frustrated with the cost of being an out-of-state student in California, I transferred to The Evergreen State College (TESC) in Olympia, Washington, just over an hour's drive south of my hometown Seattle. TESC proved pivotal in my intellectual and political trajectory. It was there that I found the space to work through much of my identity development as someone who is mixed race, Chinese and white. TESC also gave me time to work on my political identity. I was able to take full time programs in Marxist theory, U.S. and world history, and cultural politics. I was afforded the flexibility to do independent study work both to prepare to become a social studies teacher and to spend time in Hawai'i living with my Chinese family there. The Los Angeles rebellion after the 1993 beating of Rodney King by the Los Angeles Police Department took place while I was at TESC, as did the national uproar over Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas' sexual harassment of Anita Hill. It was such a heightened moment of political awareness for me that these national incidents and conversations only fed the development of my understanding of the politics of race, class, gender, and sexuality.[2]

Being at TESC during this time period profoundly influenced my understanding of race and education, particularly relative to indigenous politics. Nineteen-Ninety Two was the quincentennial of Christopher Columbus' first genocidal contact with the indigenous peoples of the Americas. As such there was an explosion of art and political work being done around issues of Native sovereignty, colonization, and indigenous resistance. It was at this point that I had my first encounter with *Rethinking Schools*, specifically teacher, editor, and author Bill Bigelow, who was touring the country doing workshops on the portrayal of Columbus in kids' books and the rethinking of how this important history might be taught from a native point of view. As I discuss later in this essay, *Rethinking Schools* proved to be critical to my development relative to critical pedagogy. My ongoing understanding of indigenous issues and sovereignty also continued to grow while I was in Hawai'i studying my family's history. My trip to the islands coincided with the 100 year anniversary of the illegal overthrow of the Hawaiian kingdom, and I was mentored by one of the leading Native Hawaiian sovereignty activists of the time, Haunani Kay Trask (1999).

My undergraduate years at TESC were particularly critical to my intellectual development. This time period (early 1990s) saw the rise of postmodern identity

politics – a set of politics focusing on the subject positions of our identities as being central to our ways of knowing and understanding reality. These identity politics contributed to my own identity development in making sense of my mixed-ness, my identity of being from a radical family, my identification with hip hop culture and, to a lesser extent, Black culture, and understanding myself as Asian American and a part of the Asian diaspora. While all of this was important to me, I was simultaneously pushing back on postmodern identity politics at this time as well. I was starting to more strongly identify as a Marxist, in part through my ongoing discussions with my communist father, and in part through my own exploration of Marxism relative to the clear inequalities produced by capitalism.

Between my discussions with my father, my campus activism, my own personal study, and my course work, I was developing an understanding of dialectical materialism, which I grew to know as the core of Marxist theory and practice (an understanding which I still hold to today). It was here that my concerns with postmodernism arose, where I saw direct parallels between postmodernism's focus on subjective reality and Kant's own subjective idealism. While I understood postmodernism's rightful resistance to the philosophical positivism which had dominated academic study, mainstream politics, and the sciences (including the social sciences), I also had concerns about how the reliance on a completely subjective reality placed limits on knowledge existing only through experience (ironically taking a play from empiricism, the philosophical and epistemological cousin of positivism), a position that I felt left us nowhere in terms of actually changing the concrete realities that existed for the masses of the world. I was becoming a Marxist, dialectical materialist who both rejected power-laden positivist constructions of truth and objectivity that I saw supporting patriarchy and capitalist exploitation, and rejected postmodern overreliance on subjectivity that I saw as establishing reality as being our own little worlds each unto ourselves. I thought that a world did indeed exist outside of our immediate perceptions and experiences and that this world, because of its actual existence, not only could be changed to improve the lives of others, but also should be changed because it was made up of human relations in dialectical relationship with an objectively existing reality that shaped all of us (a position I still hold quite firmly today). In sorting through these foundational philosophical and epistemological issues, I essentially came to understand that I was rehashing the arguments that Lenin was making against Kant in his book, *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism* (Lenin, 1972).

I cannot emphasize enough how central this aspect of my critical, intellectual development was to my thinking as a teacher and a scholar. In many ways I've been sorting through this tension between postmodern subjectivity and Marxist dialectical materialism throughout my entire career, and it has helped me both in my activism and orientation towards the world. It helped guide me through my graduate studies, and today I still work from a base of dialectical materialism as I sort through what I see as overly subjective and overly positivistic tendencies in research, theory, activism, policy, and analysis.

One book I picked up later during graduate school that helped me understand this period of the 1990s and the rise of subjective idealism better was *Postmodernism: Or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (Jameson, 1999). Jameson's text helped me make a connection that I couldn't see and didn't understand while I was in the midst of it. The 1980s and 1990s saw the rise of neoliberalism as a major force for social and economic policy. Neoliberalism relies on Adam Smith's idea of the invisible hand of the free market as the guide to everything social and economic. In this model deregulation is key, unions and taxation are anathema, states/governments should be small or nearly non-existent (except in the support of maintaining the market by using authority to remove fetters to free trade), "public" is to be shunned in favor of "private," and people increasingly see themselves as individuals competing with each other in the marketplace of society (see also, Harvey, 2004). In simpler terms, neoliberalism signaled the rise of the "consumer society" in mainstream consciousness in a way that was deeply individualistic. This goes hand in hand with what Apple (2006) refers to as the "conservative modernization." What Jameson (1999) helped me see is that postmodern, subjective idealism is philosophically and epistemologically aligned with neoliberalism in a very fundamental way: In the same sense that postmodern subjectivity posits that the world is made up of individually competing realities (again, as a reasonable pushback against the oppressive norms of positivism), neoliberalism posits an atomized world view of individuals/individual products competing with each other as determinants to define market place reality. As Jameson essentially argues, the individual subjectivity of postmodernism is a logical and cultural parallel of late stage capitalism.

But I didn't come upon Jameson until graduate school. Back at The Evergreen State College several years earlier, as both an undergraduate and a graduate student, I continued to further my pursuit to become a teacher – with the explicit intent of becoming a radical teacher at that. As an undergraduate I began working with the Upward Bound program there, which provided support for students who were low income and the first generation in their families to attend college. Upward Bound was a study in reality and culture, and it only reinforced why I wanted to teach. Through the program I visited indigenous kids in their homes on various Native reservations around the South Puget Sound region. In the process I saw levels of poverty that I didn't know could exist in the United States, and I also learned about Pacific Northwest Native culture in some very deep ways. I also worked with African American, Latino, white, and Native students from urban schools and communities in Tacoma, Washington. Some of our students were on the edge of gang life. Some had experienced abuse in their homes. Some were dealing with drug issues either personally or in their families. All of them were poor, and all of them held vast potential. I loved those students, and I loved working with them. I still miss them today. At the same time they gave me an education on the concrete realities for so many in this country, they also gave me an education on why it was important to teach and change lives – and change society by extension.

After I graduated from Evergreen with my bachelor's degree, I immediately entered the Master in Teaching (MIT) program there to work towards my social studies and language arts teaching credential. My experience in the Evergreen MIT program was pivotal in my intellectual development in several ways. First, the Evergreen MIT program was constructed around the principles of interdisciplinarity, seminars, and team teaching. This meant that the MIT program attempted to model some aspects of critical pedagogy in form and structure, providing a valuable lesson for me to learn about how to structure my own teaching in the future: make it participatory and grounded in context. The second way that the MIT program profoundly influenced my intellectual development as a critical educator was that it introduced me to *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (Freire, 1974), which became my introduction to Freire and liberatory pedagogy. I remember reading the book, and I remember struggling with his prose style. I understood some of it, but had a hard time reconciling his theoretical density with my developing practice as a teacher. In reality I didn't feel like I understood Freire until I studied his work thoroughly for my Ph.D. preliminary exams. Regardless, the MIT program at TESC introduced me to my first scholar in critical education theory and practice, and as I'll explain in more detail later in this essay, Freire and his ideas have shaped my thinking, writing, and practice ever since.

The third way that the Evergreen MIT program shaped my intellectual biography is that it allowed me to take advantage of two important student teaching opportunities. One was the chance to student teach out of state with nationally known social justice educator, author, and long time editor at *Rethinking Schools*, Linda Christensen. Linda, and her husband Bill Bigelow were both teachers in Portland, Oregon, the hometown of my spouse/partner/wife, Mira Shimabukuro. Mira had been one of Linda's and Bill's star students, and her connection to them allowed me to spend time student teaching under Linda's masterful watch. There I worked with Linda on teaching about the politics of language, and I felt lucky to be in that space as I developed my master's project – which turned out to be a curriculum that taught critically about the racial, cultural, political, and historical issues surrounding Hawai'i. There I also started to cement my relationship with *Rethinking Schools*, as I had both Linda and Bill to mentor me in curriculum development and my writing about practice. My first *Rethinking Schools* article (Au, 2001, originally published in 1998) about teaching critically about Hawaii grew directly out of that mentorship. Both Linda and Bill are dear friends of mine today, and I feel indebted to them for being some of my writing teachers.

My other student teaching opportunity was with a Seattle Public Schools program for dropouts/pushouts called Middle College High School. It felt like an extension of my work with Upward Bound students, and it was a direct application of the Freirian (Freire, 1974) ways of understanding the relationship between education and liberation. At Middle College we taught a very politicized curriculum guided by the specific vision that these students, most of whom had been alienated from or tossed out of the regular school system for a variety of reasons, could become

more critically conscious agents in their own lives. Within this vision, books like Zinn's (1995) *A Peoples' History of the United States* and its purposeful and explicit siding with the historical and political standpoint of the oppressed writ large, were our textbooks. At Middle College I saw how the most marginalized students became excited by the knowledge that was being kept from them in more mainstream schools and texts, and to them it felt like they were gaining the key to understanding critically important aspects of their own existences. Upon reflection, and in retrospectively Freirian terms, I was witnessing how curriculum could help students feel like the subjects of their own lives, and not merely objects being acted upon by outside forces. It was here that I also really started to think about what "critical consciousness" really meant – a concept I still chew on today (Au, 2011a).

After I graduated from my teacher education program, I was fortunate enough to help establish a new Middle College program for dropouts for Seattle Public Schools, this one located at South Seattle Community College. I also continued to work for local Upward Bound programs, and generally saw myself building curriculum in the Middle College tradition of working towards critical consciousness. Amongst the myriad of students I remember fondly, and amongst the memories of powerful graduations and personal triumphs, there are two teaching units that I find most memorable from my years teaching at Middle College at South Seattle Community College. One was a mini-unit I taught on Marxism. I focused on two concepts for my mini-unit: historical materialism and surplus value. Historical materialism easily mapped onto our broader studies of U.S. and world histories, where we continued to use *A Peoples' History of the United States* (Zinn, 1995) for U.S history, as well as Galeano's (1998) *Open Veins of Latin America* as one text for our studies of the world. Historical materialism helped explain the major shifts in production and changes in regimes throughout the world. Similarly Marx's concept of the surplus value being drawn from the exploitation of resources (the planet) and people served the purposes of both explaining the rise in power of different classes and nations, and helped students understand contemporary economic relations that impacted their own low-wage lives.

The other teaching unit that was critical for me was the one my teaching partner, Alonzo Ybarra, and I did during the autumn quarter of 1999. That year was historic for Seattle and for the anti-globalization movement around the world because the World Trade Organization (WTO) was set to have its annual meeting in Seattle in November. In preparation for this Alonzo and I spent the entire quarter, in the context of our world history course, teaching about globalization, neoliberalism, and helping our students understand the politics surrounding the global exploitation of people and their resources. It was a great unit that saw our students produce a class book of essays, poetry, and art that critically analyzed the WTO and neoliberalism (Au, 2000). Even better was that, on November 30, 1999, there were massive protests in Seattle as huge crowds took over the streets and activists successfully shut down the WTO meetings. In the process the Seattle police functionally rioted against the

protestors and first amendment rights were squashed by the declaration of a protest free zone in downtown Seattle.

Of course Alonzo and I were at the protests, along with many other teachers, unions, and activist groups. And while ethically we could not and did not have a class field trip to the protests, many of our students voluntarily showed up to participate in the protests at varying levels. Seattle, the entire Puget Sound region, and the rest of the world, really, vibrated for days after protests, and the reverberations shook many of our students at their cores. The experience was transformational for all of us, teachers and students alike. In my mind's eye I can still picture my students' faces in the class days after the protests – vibrant and full of excitement about the history being made around them, and even the history they helped make themselves. Again I was feeling and seeing what it meant to be a critical educator.

In 2001, Mira and I moved to Berkeley, California. We moved for a number of reasons, chief among them to be in a more politically active area. The dust of the 1999 WTO protests had settled, and Seattle once again returned to its generally sleepy, passive-aggressive self. Using my *Rethinking Schools* networks, I had shoe-horned myself into a job at Berkeley High School where, amongst other courses, I was fortunate enough to teach ninth grade ethnic studies (then a district graduation requirement) as well as Asian American history and Asian American literature. Berkeley High has its well-documented issues, but there I learned about what I might call "curricular solidarity" as I worked closely with a cadre of social justice teachers in the development and sharing of our ethnic studies curriculum. Here, teaching was (and continues to be) an extension of my identity, and I was lucky to get to revisit these issues and teach about race and identity in very explicit ways.

A couple of key activities stuck with me and contributed to my political and intellectual development while teaching at Berkeley High School. The first was that just after our arrival in Berkeley, the September 11, 2001 attacks on the World Trade Center happened (I remember teaching school that day, or trying to at least). Once the United States launched its war machine on Iraq, I found myself amongst some of the largest demonstrations I've experienced – some 500,000 people marching in San Francisco. That was a powerful moment in and of itself, but I also appreciated the student activism that emerged as well. On their own, Berkeley High students staged a massive die-in, sprawling throughout the courtyard and with an informational kiosk set up in the middle so onlookers could educate themselves as to why these students were "dying" in the middle of school grounds. Some of my students wanted to participate, some didn't, so we all went outside and I took attendance as I tiptoed through the bodies laying in symbolic protest of the latest U.S. aggression into Iraq.

Another critically important moment for me at Berkeley High was more focused on organizing. My time at Berkeley High was marked by massive California state budget cuts to education, with simultaneous increases in state spending on prisons. I and several of my colleagues felt the impact of these cuts very viscerally because we had been laid off for two years running (California state rules require anyone

who *might* be let go due to budget reasons be told by mid-March, thus leaving us to spend the last two months teaching without knowing if we would have our jobs or not). That said, we also were upset about the political implications of cutting education to essentially fund prisons – a very concrete manifestation of the school-to-prisons pipeline. In response a group of Berkeley High teachers met, and began an organizing campaign called "Education Not Incarceration." We established connections with youth organizers, other education activists, parents, students, and prison activists (like Books Not Bars). Using these networks a core steering committee was organically established, and we met to plan our actions, media campaign, and build curriculum. In the end we had a very successful governmental education day at the state capitol in Sacramento where students met with legislators, and we also held a very successful rally and protest at the capitol. We generated a lot of media attention about the issue, and, perhaps more importantly, we essentially built an organization that survived beyond the event (Education Not Incarceration developed into a non-profit organization which lasted a few years after). Personally I feel like Education Not Incarceration also taught me a lot about organizing as a teacher, but with students, parents, and community members. It was a powerful lesson illustrating the role that education can play in shifting people's consciousness towards criticality.

I know I'm relaying a lot of my personal history here, but writing this essay has made it clear to me that I have a difficult time parsing my critical, intellectual biography from my own personal and political biography as well. I think this is the case because my politics have stemmed out of, grown, and developed from my personal and political experiences. This in itself is perhaps an important point to highlight, one that I think signals a particular truth of the postmodern subjectivity I so commonly critique: politics is identity, and identity is politics. In this regard I've always taken to heart the well-wornfeminist point that the "personal is political."

I also have to briefly mention something here. During my last year at Berkeley High, the 2002-2003 school year, an M.Ed. student from the University of Wisconsin, Madison contacted me and wanted to study my classroom and my practice. She was working with Gloria Ladson-Billings, and she wanted to come study how the teaching of ethnic studies impacted students generally, but with a particular eye to how the white students in class responded. I have to note this because, while I was thinking about going to graduate school to get my Ph.D., I had a very limited sense of whom I thought I wanted to work with. Originally I had only two people that I knew of that I thought would support me as a Marxist teacher who wanted to do something Marxist for my dissertation: Peter McLaren and Bill Ayers. I didn't find UCLA to be that inviting as an institution (based on incomplete knowledge, I now know), and Bill Ayers, whose brother Rick Ayers was a colleague at Berkeley High and who I had met through my work with the now defunct National Coalition of Education Activists, didn't return my email.[3] So it was this graduate student studying my classroom that introduced me to the name of Michael W. Apple at UW Madison[4]

and his work in critical education, and because UW Madison's teaching assistants are unionized, I applied to work with Apple and earn my Ph.D. as a Badger.

It is obvious to say, but attending the University of Wisconsin, Madison as a Ph.D. student working with Michael Apple proved to be critical in my intellectual development. I would say that the first question that arose for me when I got to Madison and was taking Apple's classes was, "What the hell is a neo-Marxist?" And I was serious in asking that question. I was a Marxist (and still am, for the record). I knew all kinds of Marxists and Marxist revolutionaries. My dad was a Marxist communist. I thought there were two categories: Marxist and non-Marxist. So what the hell is a "neo-Marxist"? So I learned from Apple and others about neo-Marxism, which was essentially a two-fold reaction to "Marxism" in a general sense. This turn was one part a *turn away* from perceived economic determinism within Marxism and a *turn towards* more cultural understandings of class.

I was very skeptical of much of the neo-Marxist turn in critical education, and rightly so. For instance, I found the general critique of Marxism being economic determinist to be thin, and often made by critics whom it appeared had not actually read much Marx. To me Marxist political economy was guided by dialectical materialism, and even the most basic understanding of dialectics would allow someone to know that Marxist economic analysis couldn't be determinist or mechanistic. Dialectical thinking about processes and relationships simply do not function in linear, simply causal ways. Within Marxism you couldn't have a simple deterministic relationship between the economic base and the socio-political superstructure. Marxism doesn't function like that (Au, 2006).

Similarly, and returning to my earlier intellectual arguments with postmodern subjectivity, I was critical of the neo-Marxist cultural turn as well. I saw much of this work (and today still see a fair amount of it) as a departure from materialism. Indeed, this was perhaps one of my deepest and earliest critiques of Apple and his work – one we've talked about on multiple occasions. It seemed to me that in some of his work he had shifted too far towards postmodern subjectivity (e.g. Apple, 1996), or at least to the point that I thought it contradicted the materialist philosophy that grounded so much of his earlier and later work (Apple, 1995, 2006). I wanted to figure this out for myself, and so I explored the neo-Marxist turn relative to Marxist dialectical materialism, and found neo-Marxism to be wanting on both of the counts of dialectics and materialism, discussed above. In particular I revisited how Marx and Engels (Engels, 1968a, 1968b, 1968c; Marx, 1968a, 1968b) themselves discussed the relationship between economic production, culture, and the functioning of the state, and I also delved into the work of Althusser (1971) and his conception of the state, and found all of their work, particularly that of Marx and Engels to be far more dynamic and non-deterministic than the critics were willing to recognize (Au, 2006). I even co-authored a chapter with Apple on this issue (see Au & Apple, 2009) where we parsed through our differences a bit and arrived at a general consensus surrounding the neo-Marxist project.

The other thing I saw in neo-Marxism was critical scholars essentially running from Marxism, either based on gross misunderstandings or fear of what their colleagues might think. So as I began reading and being influenced by various scholars, I began a personal and political project of essentially reclaiming what I saw as the Marxist roots of critical educational theory and practice, even if the field of critical education didn't seem to care to admit it. For instance, I took up a deep study of Freire. I combed through his texts, old and new, and within them I saw someone who very much embraced dialectical materialism. To me the textual evidence was all there if one actually read his books, particularly if one knew dialectical materialism well enough to see it in Freire's writing. In the process I engaged with several of Freire's prominent critics and found many of their critiques to be based in misunderstandings and misconceptions of Freire's work (Au & Apple, 2007; Au, 2007a, 2009b).

Lev Vygotsky's (1978, 1987) work in psychology has also proved to be of importance to me, and I also saw Marxist, dialectical materialism in his work. What was interesting to me was that I saw him cited regularly by mainstream and progressive scholars and practitioners for the concepts of "scaffolding" and his "zone of proximal development." When I read Vygotsky, his work was so clearly Marxist to me I felt as if these mainstream and progressive applications of his work either just did not want to admit it out of a fear of Marxism or they had no idea about his Marxist roots. I specifically remember reading Vygotsky's discussion of the relationship between "spontaneous" or "everyday" concepts and "scientific" concepts (Vygotsky, 1987) and thinking that I recognized that framing from Lenin's (1975) *What is to be Done?* and his discussion of what he termed "spontaneous revolts" versus more "conscious" and "strategic" actions. There are many more connections to be made between Lenin and Vygotsky, which I outline more fully in my paper "Vygotsky and Lenin on Learning" (Au, 2007b).

In a large sense, much of my early work on Marx, Engels, Freire, Althusser, Vygotsky, and Lenin was an effort to reclaim the Marxist, dialectical materialist roots of critical education theory, or at least defend the Marxist tradition against what I saw as simplistic and often erroneous attacks. Moving forward from that foundation I continued to explore both Marxist and neo-Marxist traditions, still sorting out my own thinking and looking for useful constructs for understanding power and the relationship between education and consciousness. In this specific regard I certainly carried forward the thinking of Marx, Engels, Vygotsky, and Freire (and Lenin, by extension through Vygotsky) with regards to the concept of "consciousness" itself, which I see grounded in a dynamic dialectical relationship between people and their surroundings (including other people) in my own dialectical materialist conceptions of both "critical consciousness" and "curriculum" (Au, 2011a).

It is important for me to note that despite my critiques, I did not reject more culturist analyses outright and I strongly embrace some for understanding how politics functions inside and outside of education. For instance, anyone who was one of Apple's Ph.D. students has to become familiarized with a few key theorists as part of their experience, particularly Gramsci (1971), Bourdieu (1984), and Bernstein

(1977), and all three certainly shaped my thinking about critical politics in education. All three have also influenced Apple's work greatly. Gramsci's (1971) conceptions of hegemony and commonsense/good sense are probably the most crucial of his, for they attempt to explain the kinds of alliances the powerful make in order to stay in power and influence the commonsense thinking of the masses through appealing to their good sense as a vehicle for advancing conservative agendas. Apple (2006) has made excellent use of this to explain the conservative modernization in the United States and the rise of education reforms like the No Child Left Behind Act. Both Bourdieu (1984), and Bernstein (1977) have been critiqued for being too culturist by some, more sectarian educational Marxists (see, e.g., Kelsh & Hill, 2006), a critique I'm sympathetic to given my own concerns about subjective idealism supplanting materialist philosophy. However, I have found Bourdieu's (1984) work useful for understanding how class locations become physically and culturally embodied not just in our identities, but in how we present ourselves and make our day-to-day choices.

The work of Bernstein (1977, 1990, 1996) has also been very influential to me. I felt like his analysis, however dense and at times confusingly written, helped provide a way for understanding how more macro social, political, and economic relations translated into the more micro level of classroom interactions vis-à-vis the politics of knowledge and the structuring of pedagogic discourse. In this regard I have used Bernstein's work to explain specifically how high-stakes, standardized tests function as an imposition of power relations external to schools (Au, 2008b, 2009c) as well how a class fraction of technocrats known as the professional and managerial new middle class have conflicted interests within systems of high-stakes testing (Au, 2008a). In my reading of Bernstein, I also found some of the critiques of his work being too culturist and not materialist (see, e.g., Kelsh & Hill, 2006) to be off base, for it seemed clear to me, based on his own words, that Bernstein was very clear about how culture, discourse, and the sociology of knowledge were an expression of materialist economic relations (Au, 2008b).

It is important to recognize that my use of Bernstein (1977, 1990, 1996) and Bourdieu (1984), as well as other important works that Apple introduced me to such as Fraser (1995) and her distinction between a politics of redistribution (economics) and a politics of recognition (identity) or Williams' (1977) *Marxism and Literature*, which attempts to establish the concept of cultural materialism, all reflect the fact that despite my resistance to identity politics and the cultural turn in critical educational theory/neo-Marxism, I didn't reject culture and culturist analyses per se. Indeed, I engaged them on my own terms and found several to be useful and not contradictory to my own Marxist analyses. Additionally, throughout this time, my own understanding of critical educational theory and practice continued to grow into more refined and complex analyses of gender, sexuality, and ability as well, some of which found its way into my book on high-stakes testing (Au, 2009c).

In moving into the portion of my biography that focuses on my Ph.D. work at U.W. Madison and growth in a specific set of "critical" politics, I have been a bit

remiss regarding other important aspects of my experiences there. For instance, when I entered academia, while I had a fairly easy time incorporating my identity as a Leftist and social justice educator, I immediately struggled with reconciling my own identification with Hip Hop culture, as well as my racial/cultural identity. One way I did this was to produce an article on how hip hop culture, vis-à-vis rap lyrics, functionally expressed a critical view of education from the perspective of working class Black and Brown youth (Au, 2005). This paper itself was an outgrowth of my work with Jim Gee, who was a professor at UW Madison at the time. I found Gee's (1996) work around discourse and the politics of cultural communities to be fascinating, powerful, and useful for critical analyses of power relations inside and outside of schools. Similarly, early on I was also influenced by Ladson-Billings (1995, 2006) and her work in the cultural politics of teaching, and more recently I've returned to her earlier work on critical race theory as well (Ladson-Billings & Tate IV, 1995) in my race-focused analyses of education policy. My time at Madison also influenced my political and intellectual development in another important way: Between the other Apple advisees from around the world and Apple's own work internationally, my understanding of the international politics of critical education grew tremendously and helped me think more carefully about how much context influences how we understand educational politics.

Also during this period I joined the editorial board of the social justice education magazine and publishing non-profit, *Rethinking Schools*. It is hard to over-emphasize the role *Rethinking Schools* has had on who I am as a critical scholar/activist today. The *Rethinking Schools* editorial collective contains some of the most brilliant and most politically committed educational minds I know. From my earliest relationships with Linda Christensen and Bill Bigelow, to working with the founding editors like Bob Peterson or David Levine, to seasoned *Rethinking Schools* vets like Stan Karp, to the most recent editions to the editorial board, my analyses of educational politics and practices have been sharpened constantly through the years. In many ways I had a perfect combination of working in the academy with Apple (and others) on critical education theory in conjunction with my participation as an editor for the practitioner-based *Rethinking Schools*. *Rethinking Schools* not only kept me grounded and sharp, it also was effective at reaching broader audiences than the academic work – making it a more activist educational project (Levine & Au, 2013).

And of course amidst all of this I did write a dissertation on high-stakes testing, which turned into my first book, *Unequal By Design: High-Stakes Testing and the Standardization of Inequality* (Au, 2009c). In many ways *Unequal By Design* stitched together a lot of the thinking and writing I had been doing, and I saw that project as an explicit expression of Marxist analysis of testing from various critical angles. Chapter One takes up the long conversation amidst critical scholars about the relationship between schooling and inequality, and I argue for a dialectical view of (re)production in an attempt to recognize that schools produce culture and resistance even as they reproduce inequality. Chapter Two is a historical materialist

analysis about the roots of standardized testing in the U.S. and its connection to the establishment of specifically race and class-based inequalities. Chapter Three provides looks at the political economy of high-stakes testing, outlining the corporate forces behind the tests as well as the gendered inequalities embodied within the political and bureaucratic education structures. Chapter Four is an empirical/materialist account of the impact of high-stakes testing on curriculum, instruction, teachers, and students, including particular attention paid to the racially disparate impacts of testing on communities of color. Chapter Five is an in depth application of Bernstein to the tests as a means of explaining how they operate as a vehicle for the reproduction of socio-economic relations external to schools, and Chapter Six, the conclusion, returns to considering the reproduction of inequality as well as the resistance to such reproduction.

As I continue my political and intellectual growth and development as a critical scholar/activist, I've noticed that there are two things that drive my "critical" politics. One is that I seek to uncover power relations in education and society – and not just along economic or political lines, but also along the lines of culture and identity more broadly. The more sectarian Marxists may or may not critique me, but mostly I could care less. I'm still a committed materialist, *and* I also understand that as human beings we express our material relations through the multiplicity of our identities. If I am pressed for a more Marxist analysis, I'd even go so far to say that we, as humans, *sublate* our material and cultural relations and then express them externally through our humanity. The other thing that drives my "critical" lens is a constant search for ways of dialectically connecting the macro to the micro, of understanding just how individuals are expressions of broader social, cultural, and economic relations.

All of these things undergird my earlier analyses of Marx, Engels, Lenin, Vygotsky, and Freire, and enter into some of my latest turns in critical analyses of curriculum and the politics of epistemology. In some of my recent scholarship (Au, 2011a, 2011b), I've drawn heavily upon the work of Hartsock (1983, 1998) and Harding (2004a, 2004b), who themselves drew upon Lukacs' (1971) work around class-consciousness, in an attempt to bring Marxist-feminist standpoint theory into education. In doing so I continued to work on a conception of consciousness and epistemology that recognized the relativity of perception from our subject positions while maintaining a firm grasp on the existence of material reality beyond those very same subject positions (remembering that dialectics, amongst other aspects, sees relations between things such that we can choose "both" instead of being forced into choosing between disconnected, atomized options). Hartsock's (1998) and Harding's (2004b) conceptions of "strong objectivity" are particularly critical here, for in opposition to positivistic notions of pure objectivity in research, they require us to explicitly vet our positionality relative to our knowledge projects in order to better understand the material reality under study.

My political and intellectual development has also continued to be connected to my identity as an academic-activist and public intellectual. I've always maintained

a line of research and critical analysis of education policy. This started with my dissertation on high-stakes testing and has since extended into critiques of charter schools as part of a broader critique of the entire anti-union, anti-teacher, and anti-public school, corporate education reform movement in general. I've been able to express this through more public and accessibly written critical analyses in the pages of *Rethinking Schools* (e.g., Au, 2008c, 2013c) and in academic discourse (e.g., Au & Ferrare, 2014; Au, 2013a). In my local capacity as a professor in the Seattle area, I've lent my expertise publicly to activists and campaigns against the charter school initiative that became law in 2012 (even becoming a plaintiff in a constitutional lawsuit against the initiative) and have been supporting teachers and parents in their fight against high-stakes testing (Au, 2013b). One of the most personally validating things that has happened in these recent local struggles is finding out that some of the teachers involved in organizing the Garfield High School teacher boycott of the MAP test (Hagopian, 2014) were directly influenced by my book, *Unequal By Design* (Au, 2009c). This helped remind me that, while it is true that academic work has smaller audiences, committed and critical practitioners can and do benefit from serious conceptual analyses of education and power.

In many ways I've been very lucky in my political and intellectual development as a critical scholar. Throughout my career thus far I've been surrounded by a wealth of critical mentors who have supported me from the beginning. Friends and prominent senior colleagues like Sonia Nieto, Bill Ayers, Antonia Darder, Zeus Leonardo, Jean Anyon, Ira Shor, E. Wayne Ross, David Berliner, Ron Glass, Diana Hess, Pauline Lipman, Pia Wong, Celia Oyler, Mara Sapon-Shevin, Gustavo Fischman, Doug Selwyn,Rico Gutstein, Michelle Fine, Bill Watkins, James Banks, and Angela Valenzuela, amongst others, have helped me intellectually and personally throughout the years. There is also a bevy of critical and progressive scholars who are my contemporaries—too many to list here—many of whom are dear friends and whose work I respect for its brilliance, sharpness, and power. I am also lucky to have the mentorship of education activists like my colleagues at *Rethinking Schools* (the entire editorial board and staff, past and present), and that of the now-defunct National Coalition of Education Activists – Linda Mizell, Debbie Wei, and Debi Duke in particular. Local education activists like Dora Taylor, Jesse Hagopian, and the Washington Bad Assed Teachers, continue to keep me grounded and contribute to my growth, and my spouse/partner/wife, Mira Shimabukuro has also been crucial in my ongoing development. I list all these names out of respect and honor, and also because I really do feel in my core that *I am all of my relations*.

As I've made clear in this essay, my intellectual biography is intimately intertwined with my political biography as well, and all of it is wrapped tightly by my identity as a critical scholar, academic-activist, and public intellectual. Finally, as patriarchal as it sounds, relative to my critical intellectual development, my communist dad was influential and certainly has been my biological and political father on one side, and Apple, who has been both incredibly supportive and influential in my thinking

and my career, has been my neo-Marxist academic father (and dear friend) on the other side.

NOTES

[1] For all the complications and problems associated with how desegregation has been implemented, including serious questions as to whether it was done to benefit African Americans,my experience at Garfield does illustrate the power of what can happen at the edges of desegregation.

[2] It should be noted that I also met my partner and spouse, Mira Shimabukuro, while at TESC. We worked through much of our identity development around race, gender, sexuality, politics, and culture together and in parallel. Indeed I wouldn't have become who I am today without our partnership, allyship, and mutual commitment to struggle.

[3] Note: Bill Ayers, whom I now consider a good friend, later confessed that he told Rick a year later, "You know I think I messed up. I never returned Wayne's email…" So I was perhaps an email away from being a student at University of Illinois, Chicago. Also I want to add that McLaren has proven to be a supportive colleague as well.

[4] Note to Mike if he's reading this: Sorry Mike. It may be hard to believe but I didn't know who you were until the year before I came to work with you, and yes, despite the widespread influence of your work around the world, not all teachers have read your stuff!

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3. LANGUAGE, LITERACY, AND CULTURE

Aha! Moments in Personal and Sociopolitical Understanding

This chapter focuses on the intersections among language, literacy, and culture, and what these intersections have meant for me personally, and what they can mean for students who have been marginalized, neglected, or made invisible by traditional understandings of the role of education. Although not linked conceptually in the past, the more recent tendency to connect language, literacy, and culture gives us a richer picture of learning, especially for students whose identities are related to language, race, ethnicity, and immigrant status and have traditionally had a low status in many societies.

One result of this reconceptualization is that more education programs are reflecting and promoting a sociocultural perspective in language and literacy. Such a perspective is firmly rooted in an anthropological and sociological understanding of culture, a view of learning as socially constructed, and an understanding of how students from diverse segments of society experience schooling due to differential access to literacy specifically, and to education more broadly. The context I discuss in this article is grounded in my own experience as a Puerto Rican second-generation immigrant—also called *Nuyorican* or, more recently, *Diasporican*—in the United States, although the implications for teaching and learning go beyond my own limited experience.

I am aware that multiple and conflicting ideas exist about these theoretical perspectives, but some basic tenets of sociocultural theory can serve as a platform for this article. In what follows, I explore a number of these tenets, illustrating them with examples from my own experiences to demonstrate why a sociocultural perspective is invaluable in uncovering some of the tensions and dilemmas of schooling and diversity.

SOCIOCULTURAL THEORY AND AUTOBIOGRAPHY

The language of sociocultural theory includes terms such as *discourse* [*à la* James Gee (1990), with a small "d" and a capital "D"]*, habitus* and *cultural capital* as defined by Bourdieu (1986; see also Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977)*, hegemony* as articulated by Gramsci (2012)*, power* and *privilege* as discussed by Foucault (1980)*, social practice* as defined by the New London Group (1996)*,* as well as *identity, hybridity,* and even the very word *literacy* (Janks, 2007). Today, these terms have

B. J. Porfilio & D. R. Ford (Eds.), Leaders in Critical Pedagogy, 37–48.

become commonplace, but if we were to do a review of the literature of some thirty years ago or so, we would probably be hard pressed to find them, at least as currently used. What does this mean? How have our awareness and internalization of these terms and everything they imply changed how we look at teaching and learning?

Let's look at some of the assumptions underlying literacy itself. It's generally accepted that certain family and home conditions promote literacy, including an abundant supply of books and other reading material, detailed conversations between adults and children about the books they read, and other such practices (Snow *et al.,* 1991). I have no doubt that this is true in many cases, and although I didn't have access to these things as a child, my husband and I made certain to provide them for our own children, as well as for our grandchildren. I hope we've made their lives easier and fuller as a result.

But what about the children for whom these conditions are not present? Should they be doomed to educational failure because their parents didn't live in the right neighborhood, weren't privileged enough to be formally educated, or didn't take their children to museums or to attend plays? Should they be disqualified from learning because they didn't have books at home? Unfortunately, the answer to these questions is too often "Yes."

I begin with my own story, not because I believe that autobiography is the only way to learn about language, literacy, and culture. My story is not unique, and my purpose is not to single myself out as an "exception," in the way that Richard Rodríguez did, intentionally or not, in his painful autobiography *Hunger of Memory* (1982). Rodriguez's perspective about being a Spanish-speaking immigrant is, in fact, directly counter to mine: while he concluded that abandoning Spanish was the price he had to pay for success in the United States, my conclusion is that there is no need to erase part of one's identity in order to be successful. On the contrary, I believe that having more than one language has enriched me both personally and professionally. Being bilingual and biliterate is a legacy that I cherish every day. I use my story simply to underscore the fact that young people of all backgrounds can learn regardless of the language they come to school with, and that they need not be compelled, as Rodriguez felt he had to, to abandon their family and home language for the benefits of an education and a higher status in society.

I was like the millions of young people in classrooms and schools around the nation who arrive at school eager to learn, to make friends, and to fit in. Unfortunately, too many of these children, because they do not yet speak English, end up as the poster children for the so-called "achievement gap" because the educational system does not understand the resources that they bring to their education. Because they come to school with a language – although it is not English – rather than "linguistically deprived" or "limited English proficient," these children are instead, in the words of Leslie Bartlett and Ofelia Garcia, "emergent bilinguals" (Bartlett & Garcia, 2011).

Given my background and early life experiences, it seems improbable that I would be an academic discussing literacy and learning. Conventional educational research would assume that my home and family situation could not have prepared

me adequately for academic success. My parents came to the United States as immigrants from Puerto Rico, fleeing the unique poverty of colonialism, and they quietly took their place in the lower paid and lower status of society. I spent my first ten years in a fifth-floor tenement apartment, and the next 3 years in another equally depressing neighborhood in Brooklyn, both of which were entry points for immigrants from around the world, including my parents, Federico Cortés and Esther Mercado. My mother did not graduate from high school, and my father never made it past fourth grade.

In my family, we never had bedtime stories, much less books, but while my father never really mastered English, he read *The Daily News* (in English) religiously every day. At home, we didn't have a permanent place to study, nor did we have a desk "with sufficient light and adequate ventilation," as our teachers suggested. We didn't have many toys, and I never got the piano lessons that I so desperately wanted from the age of five. We never went to summer camp, and we didn't have gymnastics, ballet, or tennis lessons. We never learned how to ride a bike, nor did we take part in any kind of sports. As a family, we didn't go to museums or other places that would give us the *cultural capital* described by Bourdieu (1986), thought to be a requisite to succeed in school. We spoke only Spanish at home, even though teachers pleaded with my parents to stop doing so. And when we learned English, my sister and I spoke a nonstandard, urban Black and Puerto Rican English.

In a word, because of our social class, ethnicity, native language, and discourse practices, we were the epitome of what are described in the United States as "children at risk," "disadvantaged," and "culturally deprived." Nevertheless, I was fortunate that I had a family who stressed the virtues of education, even if they themselves had not had the privilege of an education—or more likely, because of that fact. But they kept right on speaking Spanish, they still didn't buy books for our home, and they never read us bedtime stories. Yet my parents valued education and literacy: they told us funny stories about greenhorn Puerto Ricans (*jíbaros*) just arriving from the island, as well as the riddles and tongue-twisters they had learned as children back on the island.

My father worked in a delicatessen on Delancey Street in lower Manhattan for 20 years and when it closed, he bought a *bodega,* a small Caribbean grocery store in Brooklyn, with his savings. Although he could barely write, he could add a column of numbers in his head with dizzying speed. My mother worked in the *bodega* as well, and she too had many talents, such as the embroidery and handwork that she had learned on the island. Also, raising my brother, who has autism, took all the patience and skill she had as a parent. These skills, however, were never called on by my teachers; our family was simply thought of as culturally deprived and disadvantaged, another segment of the urban poor with no discernible competencies.

SCHOOLING AND THE FIRST *AHA! MOMENTS*

I attended a run-down ghetto school in Brooklyn just a few blocks from my apartment. My schoolmates were African Americans, as well as immigrants from Puerto Rico,

other places in the Caribbean, and Italy and Russia, among other European countries. One day in particular resonates in terms of language learning. I arrived at school as a fluent Spanish speaker but speaking no English. I guess I hadn't learned how to tie a bow yet. I wrote about this incident (Nieto, 2011) in a book titled *Words Were All We Had: Becoming Biliterate Against the Odds,* edited by Maria de la Luz Reyes. This book chronicles the many obstacles for those of us who entered school knowing Spanish but who did not yet speak English. I had just started school and there I was, a six-year old in a first-grade classroom in New York trying to tie my hat. I didn't have the words to let my teacher know that I needed help. I remember feeling mute. I stood there, gesturing and making sounds that made no sense to her, attempting to ask her to tie my hat. I felt helpless.

This scene is as vivid to me today as if it was yesterday. I suppose my memory says something about the tremendous vulnerability I felt at not being able to make myself understood, the sheer panic of not knowing English. Although I spoke Spanish, it was not the officially sanctioned language of school. By the end of that year, besides learning enough English to get along, as well as the rudiments of reading, I learned other valuable lessons, and this was my first *AHA! Moment*: I learned that reading would open up the world to me, that learning was exciting, and that education was the best hope for a better life. In other words, I learned that literacy was important for personal enlightenment, academic learning, and improved life options. But unfortunately, I learned other less sanguine lessons as well: I learned that it was a handicap to be Puerto Rican; I learned that English was the language of value and "culture." I learned that although Spanish was the language of family and love and nurturing, it was also a language of low status. I learned that school was where you learned things that were worthwhile and important, and that home was where you learned things that you never talked about in school. Most of all, I learned that to get ahead, you must speak, read, and write *only* English. The result was a tremendous wall between home and school. It was only after I became a teacher myself that I began to question why this should be so.

When I was 13 years old, we moved from our tenement apartment to a small two-family house in a more middle-class community in Brooklyn. In that neighborhood, I was able to attend an excellent junior high and high school. I didn't particularly like either, especially the high school. It was too big and impersonal, and as one of only three Puerto Ricans (my sister was another one) in a student body of 5,600 students, I felt invisible. In retrospect, however, I realize that it was there that my sister and I got the quality education that we needed to prepare us for college, a dream beyond the wildest imagination of my parents. Before then, we had attended a junior high school with few expectations for our academic success. Given the high dropout rate of Puerto Ricans at the time (and still now), we would have been lucky to even have graduated from high school.

This led to another *AHA! Moment*: My new address made a profound difference in the education that I was able to get, that is, my zip code guaranteed that I would receive an excellent education. In addition, because of the high school that I attended,

I learned Standard English, eventually dropping the "ain't" and the "mines." For a number of years, I also tried to hide the fact that I spoke Spanish.

TEACHING AND MORE *AHA! MOMENTS*

Although I didn't have many social relationships in high school, I was a good student, and I received a couple of scholarships. Accepted into a local college. I worked throughout college and commuted daily by subway. At St. John's University, I followed my dream to become a teacher, something I had thought about since I had been a child. In 1966, with a degree in elementary education, a student teaching experience in a mostly White middle-class neighborhood, and teaching certification from the New York City Public Schools, I began my teaching career in an intermediate school in an impoverished community in Brooklyn. Even though I had thought I would be the perfect teacher who would inspire my students and impress my colleagues, it became clear to me right away that I was facing greater challenges than I had expected.

The school was a sad place, with angry and disenchanted students, and tired and burned out teachers, some of whom were racist and dismissive of the students. Many administrators seemed to have given up, and some were just waiting for the day when they could retire. The students, all of whom were African American and Puerto Rican, lived in poverty, with few opportunities either in school or in the community. Classes were overcrowded and chaotic, and there was a palpable sense of despair in the school. There was also the problem of labeling: not only were my students labeled as "culturally deprived," lazy, or incapable of learning, but because I taught the so-called "non-English (NE) students," I too was labeled as the "NE" Teacher, even though I was perfectly fluent in English.

In spite of the fact that I loved my students and that many of them were capable and smart, I became discouraged. Although I believe that I became a pretty good teacher in the two years I was there, learning some useful strategies, developing more self-confidence, and forming close connections with my students, I realized even then that it was not enough. But it was there that I had my next *AHA! Moment*. I saw firsthand that societal structural inequality, brutal poverty, unrelenting racism, and other limiting realities, as well as the unjust policies and practices in schools, had more to do with my students' learning than what I did in the classroom. Given this situation, I began to wonder how much I could accomplish as a classroom teacher.

Two years later, an exciting opportunity presented itself: a call went out for bilingual teachers to staff a new, experimental elementary school in the Bronx. P.S. 25, the Bilingual School, which was to become the first public school in the Northeast, and only the second in the nation, to use students' native languages in instruction, while at the same time teaching them English. In spite of the fact that at the time there were already over 1,000,000 Puerto Ricans in New York City, in the two years that I had been in the system (and as a former student in that system), of the 55,000 public school teachers in the city, I had never met another teacher who

was either Latina or fluent in Spanish. They must have been hiding somewhere, because at P.S. 25, the principal was able to find and recruit about thirty of us as bilingual teachers, about half of whom were Hispanic, and the others were Whites and African Americans who were fluent in Spanish.

As a child, my teachers made it clear to me that speaking Spanish was a problem, and this idea was reinforced in my teacher preparation program. As a preservice teacher, I had been warned to keep my "cultural baggage" outside my classroom door. I had been taught that culture was peripheral to teaching and learning, and that it had nothing to do with intelligence or merit. My ideas began to change as soon as I started teaching at P.S. 25. I began to believe that language, culture, race, and ethnicity, both instructors' and students,' are inextricably tied to teaching, whether we admit it or not. At the Bilingual School, language and culture were cherished and affirmed, and they had equal status with English and mainstream American culture. Whereas my previous school had been a sad place, P.S. 25 was an affirming place, one where we could all—students, staff, and families—feel proud of speaking Spanish, something I had never before experienced, except in the company of my family. It was a place where nobody made excuses about being Puerto Rican or Cuban or Dominican, and where teachers used students' histories and realities as important sources for the curriculum. At the same time, I learned that when teachers bring their entire selves into the classroom, including their identities, they are being both true to themselves and honest with their students.

Being at the Bilingual School brought another *Aha! Moment*: it was there that I came to realize that the role of parent involvement in the education of their children is significant. When I was a child, my parents had stayed away from our schools, no doubt because of their own limited schooling and the fact that neither felt comfortable in a place where Spanish was not spoken (even though my mother was quite fluent in English). Culturally, school felt like an alien and unwelcome place to them. In contrast, at P.S 25, parents were involved in ways that would have astounded my own parents: not only did the students' parents join the PTA and volunteer in the classroom, but also they took part in hiring new teachers and in setting the overall climate of inclusion and advocacy in the school. As a teacher, I was expected to engage in family outreach, and I learned to do so with enthusiasm. I visited my students' homes, where I was always treated like an honored guest. I communicated with families through phone calls and letters as well (this was way before email), and I invited family members to my classroom and to their children's exhibits and performances. These activities made a difference both in students' attitudes and in families' acceptance and respect.

DOCTORAL STUDIES AND TEACHER EDUCATION: A DEEPENING CONSCIOUSNESS

After four years at the Bilingual School, first as a fourth grade teacher and later as a Curriculum Specialist, I secured a position as an instructor in the Puerto Rican

Studies Department at Brooklyn College in a co-sponsored teacher education program. I was thrilled to be working in higher education, something that my station in life and my cultural identity would not have predicted. There, I taught courses in the sociology of education, in the Puerto Rican child, and in methods of teaching in bilingual classrooms. It was there, in fact, that I decided that this was to be my lifelong profession.

At Brooklyn College, I learned about the importance of agency and the possibility that it could lead to social change. It was a heady time for ethnic studies, and political education was part of our daily experience. We had protests and take-overs every week, and it was during those actions that I learned to speak to large audiences, both at the Faculty Senate and also at the large demonstrations in the Quad. Although the administration wanted our department—which was seen as unruly and not quite ready to take care of its own affairs—we demanded self-determination as a department. After a five-day occupation of the Registrar's Office, I was arrested as one of the "BC 44." As a result of being steeped in the politics of the 1960s and '70s, I had another *Aha! Moment*: in the words of Frederick Douglass, the iconic 19th century freed slave and abolitionist, "Power concedes nothing without a demand. It never did and it never will" (Douglass, 1857).

Given my decision to pursue teacher education as a profession, I applied to and was accepted as a doctoral student at the School of Education at the University of Massachusetts, an institution that was also undergoing profound changes in curriculum and pedagogy. My doctoral studies were transformative. Not only did I take courses with professors from the School of Education who were doing groundbreaking work in multicultural education and social justice, but I was also able to take courses outside the School of Education that had a profound effect on me. For example, I took a class with Sam Bowles and Herb Gintis, just as their groundbreaking book *Teaching in Capitalist America* (1976) was being published. In their class, I learned that our society's structural inequality made it almost impossible for students of color and all students living in poverty to get a fair shake in education, something that I had seen firsthand but that was never spoken about in "polite" circles. Their research demonstrated that without a shadow of a doubt, privilege begets privilege, and conventional myth to the contrary, climbing up the ladder of success is no easy matter in an unequal society. Their research showed, also, that it is a father's income that makes the most difference in whether a child will get a good education and future opportunities. The ideas of meritocracy and fair play, I learned, were largely myths.

The research, as well as the theories, of other scholars such as Martin Carnoy, Michael Apple, Joel Spring, Maxine Greene, James Banks, and others, not only disabused me of the pie-in-the-sky myths about education being the great equalizer, but they also affirmed the significance of culture, language, and race in teaching and learning. Years later, Gloria Anzaldúa was one of the first Latina theorists I encountered, and it was riveting for me to read her words about the power of language and culture. She helped me understand why, as a Spanish-speaker in a

rigidly English-dominant society, and in spite of my many years of education and professional merits, I still felt like an outsider. She wrote: "So, if you really want to hurt me, talk badly about my language. Ethnic identity is twin skin to linguistic identity—I *am* my language. Until I can take pride in my language, I cannot take pride in myself" (Anzaldúa, 1987, p. 59).

Hegemonic language policies are not limited to feeling pride or shame about one's language. Hegemony goes much deeper than personal idiosyncrasies: it can keep people in positions of subservience and powerlessness, or elevate them to unearned positions of privilege and power. During my graduate studies and later, as a young professor, I was privileged to serve on a committee that hosted Paulo Freire for month-long visits for several years. I immersed myself in his theories, and they helped me discover another *Aha! Moment:* that *education is always political,* that is, that whatever pedagogy or practice we use inevitably says something about our ideology. In the words of Freire, "All educational practice implies a theoretical stance on the educator's part….It could not be otherwise" (Freire, 1985, p. 43). In other words, even those decisions that might seem innocent and natural betray what we believe, as well as our values and biases. These decisions include the books and curricula we select, the relationships that we have with students, our perspectives about their communities and identities, how we set up our classroom, the choices of which languages to use, or how to teach reading—all these decisions and more, whether large and small, are political decisions.

Given my experience as a teacher and later, a teacher educator, these theories were powerful and made a great deal of sense to me. Even though I was one of the so-called "success stories" that people like to point to, I knew that I was in a tiny minority among my Puerto Rican peers. I was luckier than most, and although I wish that I could say that education made all the difference, I cannot. I had the benefit of parents and others who loved me, opportunities that made a difference, and the good fortune to go to good schools as an adolescent. I have never given up on education, but I have learned that it has serious limitations.

In spite of the limits of public schooling, I continue to believe that what teachers do, although partial, is also significant. I have learned also that literacy is not just about teaching the mechanics of reading or imparting information to students; rather it is always either advocacy for or against the students whom we teach. Again, the words of Paulo Freire describe this point powerfully: "We are political militants," he wrote, "because we are teachers" (Freire, 1998, p. 58).

LESSONS FROM *AHA! MOMENTS:* PREPARING TEACHERS WITH CRITIQUE AND HOPE

I conclude this article with a few of the lessons I've learned from my *Aha! Moments*. Beyond my personal experience, I recognize that as educators we have to live with the contradictions of our work, while at the same time we need to prepare teachers with both critique and hope. A friend of mine has a sweatshirt that says, "Old age is

not for sissies," and in the same way, I say that teaching is not for sissies. Instead, teaching is for those with courage and a critical mind, and that's why *critique* is important. We also need *hope* because without it, we can become disenchanted, disillusioned, and burned out. Without both critique and hope, teachers are too often swallowed up by a system that is inequitable and hegemonic, that replicates power and privilege, and that rewards students according to their identities and postal codes.

In what follows, I use the words of some of the teachers and students with whom I've had the privilege to work to illustrate these lessons.

Relationships Are at the Heart of Teaching

When I was a Visiting Professor at the University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg, South Africa in 2012, I asked a group of students in an education class to tell me about teachers who had made a difference in their lives. The class was very diverse, and I found it intriguing that students of all ethnic backgrounds had more or less the same message: One after another, they talked about teachers who were patient, understanding, supportive, and who believed in them. Yet they rarely mentioned what the teachers taught, or even how they taught it. While content and pedagogy are important, these young people reaffirmed what we already know, that is, that relationships must be the bedrock of any learning. When asked about memorable teachers, most people, like the students I asked in South Africa, will most likely remember the attitudes, dispositions, and behaviors of teachers who made a difference, rather than the subject matter they taught. That's because teachers who are successful with students inevitably become *sociocultural mediators*, that is, they learn about their students, they help them to negotiate academic spaces, and they affirm students' identities while helping them to explore the world beyond their limited realities (Diaz *et al,* 1992).

Sociocultural mediation is important because literacy is not just about learning to decode; rather, it is a social practice that cannot be separated from the sociocultural and sociopolitical contexts in which it takes place. An example comes from Mary Ginley. When she was a graduate student in my program, she wrote in a journal that she kept for my class about what sociocultural mediation means in practice. She challenged the notion that being "nice" was enough:

> Every child needs to feel welcome, to feel comfortable. School is a foreign land to most kids (where else in the world would you spend time circling answers and filling in the blanks?), but the more distant a child's culture and language are from the culture and language of the school, the more at risk that child is. A warm friendly, helpful teacher is nice, but it isn't enough. We have plenty of warm friendly teachers who tell the kids nicely to forget their Spanish and ask mommy and daddy to speak to them in English at home; who give them easier tasks so they won't feel badly when the work becomes difficult; who never learn about what life is like at home or what they eat or what music they like or

> what stories they have been told or what their history is. Instead, we smile and give them a hug and tell them to eat our food and listen to our stories and dance to our music. We teach them to read with our words and wonder why it's so hard for them. We ask them to sit quietly and we'll tell them what's important and what they must know to "get ready for the next grade." And we never ask them who they are and where they want to go. (Ginley, 2010, p. 114)

This issue of *who they are* and *where they want to go* is a deeply political question because it acknowledges that literacy and teaching are about *whose story is told*. Asking these questions is what sociocultural mediation is about, because it is only when teachers become sociocultural mediators that they can forge strong relationships with their students

Teach Students to Question and to be Curious

While it's important to teach students the skills and competencies they need to negotiate the world successfully, teachers also need to teach students to be critical. It is necessary, in other words, to teach them to not only read the word, but as Paulo Freire said, to "read the world." This means teaching students to probe, to be curious, and to question. What does this look like in practice? A good example comes from Ron Morris, an African American student we interviewed over 20 years ago for a case study. Ron talked about the first class in which he had ever been interested, a class on Black history in 8th grade. Until that time, he had never learned anything about African American history in school, surely a terrible indictment of education in a nation with more than 40 million African Americans.

Except for that class, Ron had been known as a troublemaker, a child who was alienated both in and out of school. He had never connected to school, until school connected to him. This is what he said about that class:

> It was basically about Black people, but it showed you all people instead of just Black people. It showed us Latinos. It showed us Caucasians. It showed us the Jews and everything how we all played a part [in] what society in any country is like today. I'd sit [in that class] and just be like, I was just so relaxed. I just felt like the *realest person on earth.* (Nieto, 1996, p. 270)

What will it take until every young person feels like "the realest person on earth?" For one, it will take creating learning opportunities that are relevant to students' lives and respectful of their identities, while also teaching them to question everything, including their own assumptions, values, and even identities.

Understand that Teaching is Advocacy for Social and Political Change

Unless teachers understand that teaching is advocacy for social and political change, inequities will continue to exist. This necessitates asking what I have

called "profoundly multicultural questions" (Nieto, 2003), that is, questions that at first blush may not seem to be "multicultural" at all but that, in the end, are about ensuring that all students have access to a high quality and equal education. It means asking questions, such as "Who's taking calculus?," the kind of course that is often a gatekeeper to college access; or "Where is the bilingual [or ESL or special education] program? Is it in the basement?," a placement that says something about its relative status in the school; or "What are our children worth?" That is, why is more money spent on educating some children—generally the most privileged—while the most underserved continue to languish in schools that are under-resourced?" (see Nieto, 2003 for a more in-depth treatment of this issue).

An example comes from Hyung Nam, a high school social studies teacher in Portland, OR, who I interviewed for my recent book *Finding Joy in Teaching Students of Diverse Backgrounds: Culturally Responsive and Socially Just Practices in U.S. Schools* (Nieto, 2013). Teaching for 11 years, Hyung became involved with teachers from the organization Rethinking Schools (RS) almost from the beginning. He said he was amazed when he found them, because he had never before met a group of activist teachers. Indicating that he probably would have given up as a teacher if he hadn't found the group, Hyung said, "I feel inspired and really empowered and honored to be in a role where I could help students to question the world and expand their horizons and to see the possibility that they can be agents in the world to change the world to be a better place" (Nieto, 2013). In fact, Hyung took the advocacy function of education very seriously, saying, "I see part of my job is to agitate. You know, if we think about the kind of society, the dominant mainstream society that we have, that's kind of why I'm a teacher is to agitate and make people think and question things."

CONCLUSION

It would be easy to throw up our hands and say that education is too full of contradictions, that it preaches what it cannot deliver, that it's a utopian dream. Yes, all these things may be true. Yet, it is a teacher's responsibility to remain hopeful in spite of all these things. As Paulo Freire reminds us, "The educator's biggest problem is not to discuss whether education can or cannot accomplish, but to discuss *where* it can, *how* it can, *with whom* it can, *when* it can; it is to recognize the limits his or her practice imposes" (Freire, 2007, p. 64). The limits are real, but so is the power of hope. Living through the contradictions, although not easy, is an essential obligation of both teachers and teacher educators.

My *Aha! moments* have helped me understand not just my own reality, but also the realities and lives of others. This is why I believe that it's our responsibility as educators, and particularly as teacher educators, to engage teachers in serious introspection and reflection, the kind of reflection that demands an honest and rigorous understanding of their own position in the world, and of what it has to do with the profession they've chosen. When they do these things, they will be better prepared to connect in authentic

and caring ways with their students, because they will understand that sociocultural and sociopolitical understandings of the world are not just personal *Aha! moments*, but rather moments of transcendence and transformation.

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4. A COMPOUND CRITICALITY

BEGINNINGS

I sometimes feel as though I have lived several different lives, and I am not completely convinced that we can make sense of our mature identities on the basis of our past, or pasts. However, from a different perspective there are certainly crucial connections, which I will risk pursuing here—and it may be that the disjunctions reveal something as well.

Growing up in Berkeley, California, in the 1970s and 80s was a very specific kind of experience, and not the kind that most people usually imagine. The heroic moment of the Free Speech Movement and revolutionary optimism had passed—I grew up in the receding aftershocks and the trough of disappointment on the left that followed. This was also the moment of a counter-assault by the right, which was new at the time. I remember that people could not understand that it was possible that Reagan could be elected president. These were the first chapters of the story that we are in the thick of now—the emergence of neoliberalism and the new imperialism. For us kids, the mood was grim as the nuclear standoff loomed, and as the left-liberal project of our parents collapsed under the weight of its own contradictions.

My peer group of middle- and working-class White kids whose parents were former countercultural types shared in Berkeley's condescending dismissal of mainstream U.S. politics and culture, but the main target of our rebellion was the feel-good hippie impulses of the previous generation. We vaguely intuited the hypocrisy of this project, and opted for a punk ethic that celebrated the margins and the misery of both adolescence and the Reagan years. People often understand this moment in terms of anarchism but I think that it was much closer to an intuitive Great Refusal à la Marcuse—although later on punk culture was absorbed into the machine like everything else.

At Berkeley High School we became aficionados of the bloody movies they tried to scare us with in Drivers Ed, and climbed onto the roof to scare the pigeons. We explored all the shabby corners of the school—scandalously neglected in this supposedly enlightened and affluent community. We were more interested in creating our own experiences than in the official ones offered by the school. At the same time, for reasons of guilt and upper middle class habitus, I remained mostly diligent and eager to succeed academically. I remember that when a history teacher admonished me for hanging out with "a bunch of losers" I was astonished both that my brilliant comrades could be thought of in this way by anyone, and also that I wasn't grouped

B. J. Porfilio & D. R. Ford (Eds.), Leaders in Critical Pedagogy, 49–59.

with them in his mind. I realized much later that this was evidence of the school's deep capacity to respond to even subtle differences in class culture.

High school glaringly revealed the deep contradictions that run through liberal contexts in the U.S. The official commitment to creativity and free development of all translated in fact into a generalized neglect within which the privileged kids were of course properly taken care of in the last instance. The city's official racial progressivism tolerated an absolutely segregated school community in which White kids largely navigated around bodies of color as though around so many simple obstacles, and in which the absolutely warranted resentment of African American and Chicana/o students was experienced by school authorities as explosive and irrational. I later realized that my precociously jaded outlook of the time had more in common with what it rejected than I realized, and that I had understood little of what was going on around me with regard to processes of punitive class-determined stratification, White supremacy, and a generally pervasive bourgeois bad faith. My work has since sought to expose these contradictions at the heart of even left-liberal arguments and outlooks.

LOS ANGELES: AN EDUCATION IN ACTIVISM

The formative chapter in my development as an educator, activist and scholar was living and teaching in Los Angeles in the 90s. I ended up in education by accident. I began by teaching ESL part-time to support a career as a writer, but once I transferred from a private ESL school to the public Adult Division of the Los Angeles Unified School District and moved into a full-time tenured position my energy and interest were quickly absorbed in teaching and activism.

Los Angeles at this time was in the grips of what can retrospectively be called a drawn-out race war. This was the era of full-blown military style assaults by the LAPD and the Sherriff's Department on South-Central and East LA neighborhoods. This was the era of Propositions 187 (which aimed to deny services to undocumented immigrants), 209 (outlawing affirmative action in public institutions), 227 (outlawing bilingual education), and 21 (criminalizing youth and trying them as adults). This was the era of Daryl Gates and Pete Wilson. Early on, when I sent a letter to Sherriff Sherman Block protesting against the continuous unjustified killings of Black and Latino/a men by his officers, to my surprise rather than a form letter I received a very defensive and angry letter in response. I soon learned that it was going to take more than writing letters to change things.

Above all, this was the time of the LA Rebellion (1992), in which for a brief moment a state of exception to the larger carceral state of exception was felt. Moving with the crowds, I remember feeling the city powerfully unbound, open, on fire. One particular image stays with me of a woman on an overpass above the 110 Freeway downtown, waving a huge burning palm frond over the traffic. Living in Echo Park, I watched as a military encampment took over the parking lot of the Pioneer Market at Sunset and Echo Park Blvd. In the space of a few days, I learned in a visceral way

that has stayed with me ever since: 1) that the geography and governmentality of the normal can absolutely be radically prised open; 2) when it is, the state will spare absolutely no energy or force to restore its own order and control.

I became involved with movements for immigrant rights, against police brutality, to free Mumia Abu-Jamal, and for educational justice. I learned a tremendous amount from the different Marxist-Leninist tendencies, Black nationalist groupings, anarchists, and anti-imperialists that came together to organize a counter-assault on reaction. From my participation in these movements and from my own reading (I undertook a systematic study at this time, on my own, of *Capital*), I gained key understandings that have informed my work since this time of the centrality of race and racism to political and social life, of the necessity of an understanding and critique of capital for those who are serious about transformation, and that authentic politics is pedagogy and praxis from the ground up. This learning was not always pleasant, since it involved interrogating the White and middle-class sensibilities that had hid behind my initial unthinking progressivism; in effect, it was a fairly thoroughgoing remaking of identity.

I am not sure exactly what was at the root of this engagement. I think all critical educators and activists have some inherent need to struggle against suffering and oppression. For some, this comes from the direct experience of racism, marginalization, or exploitation in schools or elsewhere. For others, like me, perhaps it comes at first from other kinds of suffering and isolation. Freud believed that the sublimation of our inadmissible and antisocial unconscious drives was responsible for culture. But perhaps our personal struggles to survive—whatever those may be—can also be sublimated or universalized into a principled and public struggle against collective miseries of other kinds. In addition, in spite of the political contradictions that I mentioned above, my parents had been very active in the Civil Rights Movement and other struggles, and I was carrying on a tradition in my family of quite concerted activist engagement.

Teaching in the adult schools was a great privilege. I moved from ESL to teaching English Composition and Literature. Los Angeles had a massive adult division serving hundreds of thousands of students, which included a full high school curriculum. My students were almost all immigrants, mainly from Mexico, Central America, and Vietnam. I also taught concurrently enrolled kids from the regular high schools. The hegemonic common sense paints privileged students as the best and most deserving—but of course it is just the opposite, as the spectacular intelligence, determination and *sobrevivencia* of those who have been marginalized most deserves to be celebrated. My students were assiduous, gifted, and unflagging. Their disappointments and yet also prolific successes taught me the importance of a radical agency and also the outlines of what Chela Sandoval (2000) calls a decolonizing "methodology of the oppressed."

Under threat of closure from the district, students and staff at the flagship campus where I taught (Evans Community Adult School) mobilized to save the school. I was a union chapter co-chair, and my co-chair and I organized the troops. In this instance, and in other struggles, I learned the importance of teacher solidarity, of a militant

unionism, and of forging links between educators and community. I was part of the left caucus in the union, and we worked hard to connect teachers' concerns to the broader political context, and to bring struggles around working conditions together with struggles around curriculum and assessment. Some of the victories won during this time have lasted; others have not. But *la lucha sigue* nevertheless—and that larger context, of history and historicity, was one of the most important lessons.

ENTERING THE CONVERSATION OF CRITICAL PEDAGOGY

My activism in and around education brought me into contact with a network of critical teachers (the California Consortium for Critical Educators) led by Antonia Darder, several of whom became close friends and one of whom, Arcelia Hernández, is now my compañera. For all of us, Antonia was and is a crucial mentor, and through her and this group I was introduced to critical pedagogy. Learning from Antonia was transformative. In her writing and speaking, she made this tradition live, in all of its intellectual excitement and ethical commitment. Her sense of teaching as a political "act of love" (Darder, 2002) was especially powerful for me. Around this time I also fortuitously picked up a copy of Henry Giroux's *Schooling and the Struggle for Public Life* (1988) from the great radical bookstore Midnight Special (which no longer exists), and this book made a very big impression; Giroux's work remains indispensable to me. Critical pedagogy was a revelation. It both challenged me in my practice as a teacher, and opened up an intellectual project in relation to education that I had not known existed. It also exposed the terrain of instruction itself, which I had partly compartmentalized from other activities, as a political process.

These developments converged with a long-standing philosophical bent. I had always on my own been interested in theory of different kinds, and had pursued it in an undisciplined way—though I had by this time succeeded in educating myself to a degree in Marx's work and in the Frankfurt School. I had been given to producing more or less inchoate manifestos starting in college. The impulse to proclaim, denounce, and announce still animates much of my work; in a sense I am perhaps now simply writing and rewriting those manifestos in a more sophisticated idiom.

The convergence of these experiences resulted in my applying to graduate school, and happily I ended up at UCLA. This was an incredibly rich intellectual space. During my time there I undertook serious study of postcolonial theory, dialectics, Marxist sociology, feminist philosophy, and Critical Race Theory. Sandra Harding, Kris Gutiérrez, Doug Kellner, and Daniel Solórzano were all crucial teachers and mentors. I had decisive confrontations, intellectually speaking, with Hegel, Fanon, Guha, Anzaldúa, and Althusser.

The center of my graduate school experience was of course my work with my advisor, Peter McLaren. Peter's classes were great, but the real education was in hanging out with him and listening to his stories. Peter's office was itself an incredible museum of critical pedagogy and Marxism. While life in the academy is generally propelled forward by bureaucratic inertia and false decorum, Peter

was—and is—always about people. He is always glad to talk, always so generous and happy to be in dialogue. When I was working with him at UCLA, Peter was still in the earlier stages of his self-education in Marxist humanism. Raya Dunayevskaya, and Che of course, ruled the day (McLaren, 2000). It was a thrill to explore with him the open dialectic that he was articulating on this theoretical basis, and to think through the Marxist underpinnings of Freire's work. *Revolutionary Multiculturalism* (McLaren, 1997) had come out not long before, and this book's cultural-political analysis was also very important to me, though Peter had already moved away from its main concerns. The conversations we had were an education in themselves, and I will always be grateful for the great privilege of working with him.

Peter's enthusiastic support for and belief in my own development as a scholar was a great gift. He was unstinting in his good words; always excited about the projects I wanted to take on, and generous in his invitations to collaborate. This is the thing that most stays with me about my time as a student with him—his incredible enthusiasm for the work of all of us. I remember when a student did a presentation on the effects of globalization on immigrant communities in Los Angeles, and Peter said, "I challenge anyone anywhere to do a better explanation of globalization!" The presentation was indeed excellent, but most professors would have stopped short of such emphatic praise, out of—what? Prudence? Or stinginess? Peter was never stingy. I think this lesson from him is deeply important—not to allow the suspiciousness and elitism of the academy to stand in the way of the human connection and not to waver in support for students.

Studying with Peter set the stage for the confrontation with capitalist globalization, neoliberalism, and racism that has been at the center of my intellectual concerns. His turn to Marx deeply influenced my own scholarly trajectory, even if I have always wanted to put that tradition in dialogue with others. That recombinatory impulse of mine was partly set in motion by UCLA itself, with its potent mix of critical perspectives. From Sandra Harding, I learned to interrogate the politics of knowledge not only of dominant sciences but also of radical traditions themselves. Sandra was extremely generous in her support of my work. (She was also the mentor who guided several of us graduate students in the founding of *Interactions*, UCLA's critical education and information studies journal.) Critical Race Theory was beginning to take off at this time, and it placed the question of race front and center for anyone working in the critical traditions in education—a move that cohered with my previous political work and to which as a scholar and teacher I remain committed. And with folks like Jameson and Zizek making the rounds on campus, it was an invitation to put academic work in education in conversation with the cutting edge of critical theory.

THINKING HUMANIZATION AND EMANCIPATION

I won't try to calculate precisely how this ensemble of personal and intellectual experiences led to my central impulses as a scholar, though many of the connections

are clear enough. In the first place, I have been driven in my work from the beginning to read different standpoints and theoretical proposals together, and to press them into uncomfortable combinations—toward a kind of compound criticality. That was what the array of experiences I had as a teacher and activist in a sense had already demanded of me; graduate school gave me the chance to make this a deliberate project.

Second, I have aimed to look below or beyond the given, to expose forms of imposition and moments of resistance that have gone unremarked. Los Angeles was the original site for me of this impulse, and the city—in both its cruelty and its energy—stands for me as an expression, in the concrete, of this difficult juxtaposition. The analysis of "primitive accumulation" in Marx[1] and the notion of coloniality have been starting points for me in undertaking a deeper tracing of the violence that works through subjectivity and sociality in capitalism; on the other hand, ideas of the common, survival, and a Fanonian sense of human/humanist potential have been tools for describing the irreducible agency of youth and students.

Third, I have sought to build a notion of emancipation—in relation to the global and in terms of classroom pedagogy—that looks past the limits allowed by even the critical imagination. Local and global uprisings since the turn of the new century have been important instances of this in action. But in another sense it was my own personal journey through a succession of disparate experiences and identities that convinced me that the limits of the given subjective and objective reality could be suspended. I have wanted to imagine a kind of teaching that would open these possibilities.

The constant provocateur and interlocutor in all of this has been Paulo Freire.[2] If I have not focused on him until now it is really because the story leads up to him as to a clearing in the woods. How lucky I was to feel not just intellectually connected to him through my own reading, but even to some extent historically so through Peter and Antonia—and also through Joe Kincheloe and Shirley Steinberg, to whom Peter introduced me, and who were also great mentors. Freire presented the project and the problem—he set the terms and offered the essential tools. In a way I think that my work has been about figuring out how to remain faithful to his project in an intelligent way—in a way that remains *curious* (with Freire's "epistemological curiosity") about the world, and even about the impasses in his own thinking.

The horizon of the human and humanization—which is mostly out of fashion among poststructuralists, anarchists, and many Marxists themselves—remains indispensable to me. Together with Frantz Fanon (1963, 1967), who has been equally central to my thinking in this regard, Freire has provided me the background to work toward a new and what I want to believe is a more open and agentic sense of human being. While Freire's insistence on humanization has been a basic compass, Fanon posed the crucial problem of colonialism—at the interior of Eurocentric humanisms—and so exposed a set of contradictions that any fidelity to this idea has to overcome. On the basis provided by the work of these two thinkers, I have argued for a sense of the human determined against violence, and inhering and emergent

already in the seemingly "ingenuous" understandings of those who are oppressed or marginalized, as well as for an emancipatory pedagogy radically open with regard to its ontological and epistemological possibilities (2008b, 2010a).

ON AGENCY

How a commitment to a reimagined human agency confronts the difficult material and ideological conditions of contemporary society and schooling has been a central preoccupation of mine. The encompassing common sense of neoliberalism seems to narrow absolutely the horizon for critique; the drowning of pedagogy in the procedures of accountability seems to pre-empt any possibility for dialogical engagement. Reality itself is increasingly structured as ideological fantasy (Zizek, 2008), within which other alternatives are unimaginable. In my work I have sought to build a critical praxis for these new conditions, and have emphasized a fundamental reconstruction of the subjectivity of critical educators against these enclosures that seek to make capitalism coextensive with being itself (2010c). And against the pedagogies of stultification that accompany the accountability machine, I have argued for a greater faith in the agency of students and a more open praxis that builds from their autonomous interventions.

In this project, my impulse has been to try to get to the crucial scene of contest between power and agency. My instinct, in framing my ideas of emancipation, was that existing critical accounts were generally correct, but that they didn't trace the story deeply enough. I have always liked the *film noir* aspect of *Capital*—Marx's careful unpeeling of the layers of the onion that reveals the secret of the mystery of surplus value within the process of exploitation. Capital is a crime, everyday life itself is a kind of crime, and the criminal has hidden its tracks. Critical work in this way is detective work—exposing the traumatic event that hides under the surface of the normal. Scholarship for me needs to have this character of revelation.

In critical education, the great trope for this is the *hidden curriculum*. This idea is powerful, but I think an important driving force in my work is the sense that this hidden teaching still remains obscure to us. We have not yet calculated the depth of the regulatory force at work in classrooms, and we have also not quite seen the gestures of resistance that struggle against it—at a kind of subatomic level—under the classroom's familiar surfaces. I have tried to begin to expose this landscape (2012). The recent turn to agency in critical educational thinking needs to get to this level: agency not as some easy visible mobility of bodies through an already alienated space, but rather as the irreducible incandescence of being against injury.

GLOBALIZATION, RACE, COLONIALITY

The anti- or alter-globalization movements came into full swing during the time I was in graduate school, as well as the global movement against the 2003 Iraq War. The protests in Los Angeles at the Democratic National Convention in 2000 and

later on against the war, including an anti-war group that I and several other students founded at UCLA, framed my intellectual and political development at the time. It became increasingly clear that as activists and scholars we needed to think at the vertiginous scale of the global.

The year that I began graduate school (2000) was also the year in which the first volume (*Empire*) of Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri's influential trilogy was published. This work and their subsequent developments of its key theses had an important influence on my thinking, though I have also contested several of its central arguments. Hardt and Negri's *multitude* proposed a way of thinking about a political project at the scale of the global without erasing the particularity of diverse struggles. And their autonomist emphasis on the multitude's imagination as the decisive historical factor—strangely identical with both surplus value and revolutionary possibility—provided a way of approaching the problem of emancipation in a new way, even as they mistakenly overlooked the enduring importance of class-based struggle. Their notion of the common has been both inspiration and target for myself and my colleagues who came of intellectual age at this time. In this connection, an important part of my work—alone (2011) and also with Alex Means and Ken Saltman (2014)—has been to propose a *pedagogy in common* attentive to the context of the global.

The work of many critical theorists did not sufficiently address the racial and gendered logic of globalization. But my own experience and observations convinced me that these were central to the historical events unfolding at the time, and the writings of Chandra Mohanty (2003) and Saskia Sassen (1998) reinforced this sense. More recently, the work of decolonial theorists, and the theory of coloniality, have become crucial to my thinking in this regard. Walter Mignolo's (2011) notion of a global geography of reason, fractured by the "colonial wound," has been an important starting point for me for situating a critique of neoliberal globalization in the history of colonialism and the experiences of those who have been oppressed and marginalized within it. I believe that this broad sense of *coloniality*, in which capitalism and racism collaborate to construct the material, discursive, and epistemological conditions for subaltern populations, is directly relevant to students of color in the U.S., who have inhabited their own kinds of "periphery" within the U.S. itself, and I have described a *decolonial pedagogy* which might begin to confront these processes (2010b). A decolonial imaginary also insists on the legitimacy of alternative and indigenous standpoints. With colleagues and graduate students at UT Austin and elsewhere, the question of what and how other ways of knowing and being might come to ground teaching and curriculum has become a central concern.

In the context of U.S. schooling, remembering the problematic of coloniality means transgressing the subdisciplinary boundaries in education that separate scholarship on racism from work on capitalism (Leonardo, 2009). I have looked specifically at punishment in schools and society as an entry point for understanding the cultural logic of neoliberalism and the racial register of capitalism generally. In

the course of these investigations I have proposed the concept of *violation*, the deep logic according to which "power ceaselessly raises up and tears down, alternately developing economies, identities, and social meanings and then laying them low through abandonment or active destruction" (2012, p. 464). In schools, violation can be seen in the contradictory process through which students are simultaneously organized for insertion into the capitalist economy (within familiar processes of social reproduction) as well as injured and expelled from this very system. In this alternation between production and decomposition, neoliberalism's sociocidal tendencies can be seen; this is a system that profits from injury as much as from exploitation proper, and which feeds on its own decay.

Racism is the central axis along which violence has been made productive within capitalism—to this extent, understanding racism may be not only useful but in fact one of the central tasks in making sense of capitalism itself. Texas has provided fertile ground for me for these investigations. This state is a crucial exemplar that shows how neoliberalism's logics of efficiency and responsibilization work alongside a deeply racialized and punitive cultural logic. In this context, my colleague Anthony Brown and I (Brown & De Lissovoy, 2011; De Lissovoy & Brown, 2013) have worked toward a broader framework that brings together race-critical and Marxian analyses in the context of education, and which returns to the commitment of scholars within the Black radical tradition—especially W.E.B. Du Bois (1935/1998)—to attack the problems of racism and capitalism at the same time.

CONCLUSION

Teaching for emancipation means being sensitive to the complex organization of power and violation that works through society and classrooms. It means, "listening for the human," as I have described it, below the silences and hurts that set the limits for discourse and identity. I think the roots of this commitment for me, in terms of my own pedagogy, are in the transformative engagement I had with my own students in Los Angeles, but they have also been nurtured by the teaching I have done at the university level since that time. My undergraduate and graduate students, first in San Antonio and now in Austin, have so generously and creatively opened themselves to this dialogue.

I have always taught toward those moments of *communion*, as Freire puts it, in which collective investigation creates an opening in the limits of the imagination and in the boundaries of "reality" itself. Against the pathological certainty and enveloping mesh of procedures that characterize neoliberalism and neoliberal education, my instinct has been above all to create the space for thinking and being, without telling students where to go. Creating that space, though, means pushing back against violation; it means negating the domination that structures the given. The deepest roots for this impulse are doubtless in our own not always easy efforts to prevail in our own struggles. But recognizing those struggles as shared is what makes possible the hope that things can change.

Going forward I hope to participate not just in the project of exposing the limits of the given, but in building alternatives. I think perhaps that one thing that has distinguished my work, in regard to tone, has been its urgency. My impatience has not always been the "patient impatience" recommended by Freire, and in fact has sought to push past any easy faith in the good time of historical progress in favor of a more radically imaginative engagement (2008a), perhaps sometimes too precipitously. However, I do believe that the time has come to begin actively constructing a world beyond domination. Teaching has a crucial role in this process, and so too scholarship and activism in education. The crisis we inhabit demands a deep *delinking*—that we step past the limits of the practices and imagination that have led to it, and start to work from different premises and possibilities. Critical pedagogy is my name for this fundamental commitment against domination and for emancipation; I look forward to continuing to contribute to its practical and theoretical repertoire as it faces current and future challenges.

NOTES

[1] In addition, David Harvey's (2003) contemporary analysis of this process in terms of "accumulation by dispossession" has been very useful to me.

[2] Most important to me have been *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970/1996), *Education for Critical Consciousness* (1974/2005), and *Pedagogy of Freedom* (1998).

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5. COMING TO CRITICAL PEDAGOGY

A Marxist Autobiography in the History of Higher Education

Critical pedagogies emerge as direct responses to concrete material conditions and historical processes. For example, the word socialism first appeared in England in the nineteenth century as a socio-economic alternative vision to capitalism (Cole, 2008). Enslaved Africans in the southern region of what would become the United States forged a black liberation theology as part of the struggle to end slavery. Whereas *progressive education* in the United States was a liberal response to save capitalism from the economic crisis of the late nineteenth century, Paulo Freire developed what we know today as *critical pedagogy* during the 1960s in Brazil to challenge the illiteracy resulting from the impoverished social conditions stemming, in large part, from U.S. imperialism. My own experiences growing up in U.S. bourgeois society, relying on a wage to survive, led me to critical pedagogy. I believe this should be the case for anyone who is committed to the values of democracy but is forced to sell their labor capacity on the market as a consequence of not having direct, collective, access to the means of production. That is, the vast majority are forced to sell themselves because of the many ways humanity has been primitively accumulated from the soil to create the conditions for capital, which has been developing since the 16th century; from the Enclosure Acts beginning in England violently forcing former peasants from their lands creating the first proletariat, to the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade and the shameful legacy of *men stealers*, to the colonial expansion and conquest of the Americas and its First Nations, a process still being contested; to British imperialism subverting the cotton industry in India and the opium-induced instability that eroded Chinese sovereignty leading to the first waves of Chinese immigrants coming to California in the 1830s. However, coming to critical understandings and radical practices are not developments that happen all at once or immediately. In this essay I will discuss the experiences that led me to critical pedagogy and how my own understanding of social class has changed over time. First, however, and throughout the essay, I outline my own family history situated in the larger historical context of the development of capitalism and the role of higher education in that process.

HIGHER EDUCATION AND THE POST-WAR BOOM

The post-WWII boom in the U.S. provided the evidence for many baby boomers, including my parents, that capitalism, and bourgeois society more generally, was

B. J. Porfilio & D. R. Ford (Eds.), Leaders in Critical Pedagogy, 61–79.

delivering its promise of equality and freedom. For example, in the six years following WWII college enrollment "doubled its pre-war levels" (Cohen and Kisker, 2010, p. 195). Consequently, "the belief that everyone could go to college became firmly established in the minds of the American people; college was no longer reserved for an elite few" (ibid., p. 195). Underscoring the movement of working class people into colleges is reflected in the growth of public institutions. That is, "by the first decade after the war, expenditures for campus expansion in the public sector were running at least 50 percent higher than at the private institutions" (ibid., p. 200) boosted by the GI Bill and the more affordable tuition at state schools. Consequently, "public institutions rose from 35 to 44 percent of all colleges and universities, and public enrollments went form 49 to 79 percent" (ibid., p. 200). Reflecting this era's substantial growth trend it is noteworthy that between 1945 and 1975 college enrollments increased by more than 500 percent, from 2 million to around 11 million.

However, contrary to the popular belief that this "golden era" of higher education was marked by democratic commitments to equal access embodied in the first ever report on higher education, commissioned by President Truman in 1946, and that the corporate agenda for higher education did not emerge until the advent of the neoliberal era following the economic downturn of the 1970s, Truman's report, I am arguing that it was actually responding to capital's growing need for a larger supply of highly educated workers. The economic context of higher education is clearly a dominant theme in Truman's 1947 report, despite its eloquent title, *Higher Education and Democracy: A Report of the President's Commission on Higher Education*. Consider:

> As the national economy became industrialized and more complex, as production increased and national resources multiplied, the American people came in ever greater numbers to feel the need of higher education for their children. More and more American youth attended colleges and universities, but resources and equipment and curriculum did not keep pace with the growing enrollment or with the increasing diversity of needs and interests among the students…Enactment of Public Laws 16 and 346, the "Veterans Rehabilitation Act"…increased…numbers…far beyond the capacity of higher education in teachers, in buildings, and in equipment.[1]

While it is discursively clever to attribute growing college enrollments to the democratic will of the people rather than to capital's changing needs, the Report goes on to redirect attention back to capital. For example, the report identifies "science" as responsible for creating "new devices and techniques of production" thereby altering the necessary skills and educational attainment American capitalists required of many workers. Additionally, America's growing responsibility in world affairs after WWII, the Report argues, required that more Americans gain "a knowledge of other peoples," including economic, political, and cultural knowledge. We know, historically, that this has been central to colonialism, that is, to most

efficiently manage the affairs and influence the thinking of the people of other nations. William Blum's (2004) *Killing Hope* documents the role of U.S. military and CIA interventions in making the world safe for democracy in the post-war era, which, in reality, actually meant, and continues to mean, the opposite of democracy. That is, the process of ensuring the world would provide first world capitalists stable markets in cheap labor ruthlessly disciplined by their own U.S. supported/propped up dictatorships.

While the report is clearly situated within the context of the changing needs of U.S. global capitalism, its discourse celebrating the extension of democratic culture and minority access through "equal liberty and equal opportunity" invaluably served public relations campaigns in the Cold War. The competition between the United States and the Soviet Union for the hearts and minds of working people the world over surely provided incentive for the Supreme Court's overturning of Plessy in the 1954 Brown decision. Even though it has been argued that the Civil Rights era benefited from the context of the Cold War for this very reason, the sacrifice, courage, and tactical brilliance of Civil Rights leaders and activists should in no way be minimized. However, if capital's needs can be met, and citizens believe their interests align with capital's, hegemony can be achieved with minimal disruption or instability.

For example, both of my parents, in the post-war era, were able to go to college like millions of other mostly white working class youth, and achieve a degree of upward social mobility, which, in the brutally savage, classless, red-scare discourse of the Cold-War, was perceived not to be a way out of the working class, but, cynically, a way out of *ignorance* and into *enlightenment*. Both of my parents earned doctorates and became university professors at large state universities, Miami of Ohio and Oregon State University. Neither institution was unionized, which undoubtedly contributes to such schools' cultures, accommodating relationship to capital, and antagonistic history with the more *blue-collar* communities many new professors were coming from.

In reality, as indicated above, what working class people were experiencing was not the flourishing of democracy, but a temporary global advantage U.S. manufacturers had as a result of war, death, and destruction, leading to an equally temporary spike in U.S. corporations' need for a greater supply of highly educated workers; engineers, scientists, managers, and so on. Howard Zinn (1995) describes these people as *loyal buffers against trouble, those who are paid to keep the system going*. This is what we think of as the middle class. For the purposes of developing a critical, class-consciousness we might therefore say that this middle class is really just a temporarily elevated segment of the working class.

FROM FEUDALISM TO CAPITALISM AND THE CONQUEST OF OHIO

Contributing to the sense that this was more than just a dream for American working class youth, including my parents, especially those living in recently industrialized

areas, was the fact that many of their parents had arisen from abject poverty with the creation of factory jobs. Prior to 1945 higher education was still primarily an elite institution whose student bodies, dating back to the seventeenth century, came from the sons of the rising class of wealthy slavers as well as from Native Americans—educating *Indians* brought handsome donations and investments from Europe's bourgeoisie fascinated by Rousseau's *Noble Savage*. However, the education of Native Americans seemed to have been just a scheme for raising revenue, and was therefore never a serious intellectual endeavor beyond the most remedial basic instruction. Intimately entangled with the slave economy and the expansionist drive of an emerging global capitalist system, the Ivy league also became the place where arguments for slavery and compulsory assimilation were refined and refracted through the discourse of science (Wilder, 2013). The Ivy League student body also played a role as strikebreakers before WWII (Norwood, 2002). For example, in *Strikebreaking and Intimidation: Mercenaries and Masculinity in Twentieth-Century America* Stephen Norwood (2002) offers a case in point:

> In March 1905 Columbia University students deserted their classes en masse to help break a strike of subway workers against the Interborough Rapid Transit Company (IRT), the biggest strike New York had ever experienced… The IRT management was delighted that so many athletes had volunteered as strikebreakers, since it considered their physical prowess invaluable for the expected violent clashes with strikers and their allies…The IRT company also specifically appealed to students at the New York area's major engineering schools…to enlist as strikebreakers…Newspapers commented that the students regarded their strikebreaking as part of the frivolity of college extracurricular life…The collegians were surely not working on the subways out of any dire need for money, for observers were struck by the fact that many of them wore expensive attire. (pp. 15–16)

For those students coming to college from the working masses of unskilled labor in hopes of achieving some upward mobility, what a better way to show their loyalty to the capitalist class than to take up sides against the class they were coming from. However, since university was not a significant path into a higher social position until after WWII, most college strikebreakers surely came from the class they were supporting, as Norwood (2002) suggests. What a better lesson for the young, strapping sons of professionals and industrialists in disciplining their future employees than breaking their strikes while college students? Summarizing the role of students here Norwood (2002) notes that, "throughout the period between 1901 and 1923, college students represented a major, and often critically important, source of strikebreakers in a wide range of industries and services" (p. 16).

This *purpose of education* represents the class higher education primarily served prior to WWII. Consequently, for most European immigrants, since the first permanent, English settlement in Jamestown, Virginia in 1607, higher education has not been the means to escape poverty. Working hard and fighting for unionization

has been the working class route to upward mobility (Marsh, 2011). For example, my parents had a father and a stepfather whose employment on General Motors' assembly lines in southern Ohio represented, for them, upward mobility into the working class, an option available for far fewer non-whites. My mother's father in particular, of German, English, and Irish descent, came from the former homeland of Tecumseh's Shawnee Nation aggressively seized after the American Revolutionary War despite years of armed resistance and an attempt to forge a pan-Indian alliance toward these ends.

For example, in the towns of Chillicothe and Piqua alone, both in the current State of Ohio, the newly formed U.S. government, in a savage act of Westward Expansion (i.e. primitive accumulation) destroyed more than five hundred acres of corn and every edible vegetable they could find (Churchill, 2003). Similarly, in 1794, General Anthony Wayne and his troops "laid waste a huge swath through the Shawnee heartland…for a distance of fifty mile" (Churchill, 2003, p. 304) destroying vast tracks of cornfields and homes. Commenting on the continuation of one of the most barbaric practices of U.S. military aggression Ward Churchill (2003) notes, "in the aftermath, leggings crafted from tanned human skin again made their appearance, this time along the Ohio frontier" (p. 304). Reading these passages invokes the words written in the sixteenth century by Bartolomé de las Casas. Commenting on the bewildering atrocities he had witnessed in *History of the Indies*, de las Casas, Spanish missionary and former plantation owner gone staunch critic, offers a sobering account of the enslavement and subjugation of the Indigenous peoples of what is now Cuba:

> Our work was to exasperate, ravage, kill, mangle and destroy…Thus husbands and wives were together only once every eight or ten months and when they met they were so exhausted and depressed on both sides…they ceased to procreate. As for the newborn, they died early because their mothers, overworked and famished, had no milk to nurse them, and for this reason, while I was in Cuba, 7000 children died in three months. Some mothers even drowned their babies from sheer desperation. In this way, husbands died in the mines, wives died at work, and children died from lack of milk…and in a short time this land which was so great, so powerful and fertile…was depopulated…My eyes have seen these acts so foreign to human nature, and now I tremble as I write. (quoted in Zinn, 1995, p. 7)

The horrors that caused him to "tremble" as he documented them, of course, were premeditated. For example, in 1513 the Requerimento, written by jurist Juan Lopez, was promulgated by the Crown's lawyers ensuring Spain's dominion and title to Columbus' so-called discovers (i.e., gold, slaves, and land). The Requerimento is a message to not only European monarchies letting them know the Pope has dominion over the whole world and the *New World* was to be managed by Spain, but more importantly perhaps, it was a message to those who would come under the merciless sword of Spanish Conquistadors—America's First Nations. The Requerimento,

written on behalf of the King of Spain, the *subduer of barbarous nations*, Don Ferdinand, is claimed to be directly linked through St. Peter to God, creator of all the Earth and people, and therefore "the head of the whole human race, wherever men should live, and under whatever law, sect, or belief they should be" (Lopez, 1513, p. 1). The following excerpt from the Requerimento highlights its general tone and its premeditation for mass murder:

> With the help of God we shall use force against you, declaring war upon you from all sides and with all possible means, and we shall bind you to the yoke of the Church and Their Highnesses; we shall enslave your persons, wives, and sons, sell you or dispose of you as the King sees fit; we shall seize your possessions and harm you as much as we can as disobedient and resisting vassals…and we protest that the deaths and losses which shall accrue from this are your fault, and not that of your highnesses, of ours, or of these soldiers who come with us. (Lopez, 1513, p. 1)

The logic informing this requirement, that the Christian ruling class of Europe shall hold dominion over all non-Christian peoples, is the same logic informing the Puritan New Englanders in the sixteenth century. Making this same point Marx (1867/1967) comments:

> The treatment of the aboriginals was, naturally, most frightful in plantation colonies destined for export trade only, such as the West Indies, and in rich and well populated countries, such as Mexico and India, that were given over to plunder. But even in the colonies properly so-called, the Christian character of primitive accumulation did not belie itself. Those sober virtuosi of Protestantism, the Puritans of New England, in 1703, by decrees of their assembly set a premium of $40 on every Indian scalp and every captured red-skin…Some decades later, the colonial system took its revenge on the descendents of the pious pilgrim fathers, who had grown seditious in the meantime. At English instigation and for English pay they were tomahawked by red-skins. (p. 753)

It is predictable enough that the crimes referred to here by Marx, and the ones documented by de las Casas, are among the same class of horrors that led to the forcible removal of Ohio's Indigenous nations, and guided by the same logic of Christian dominion. It is this logic informing the Discovery Doctrine that provided the legal argument for the Indian Removal Act of 1830, which is still law in the United States, drawn on by the Supreme Court as recently as 2005. Consequently, the removal of Native Americans from Ohio, by 1831, was well underway. According to Robertson (2007), "a group of the Seneca Nation signed a treaty exchanging their lands in Ohio for fee lands west of the Mississippi; over the summer, other Ohio groups, including Shawnees and Ottawa, did the same, as did the Ohio Wyandots the following January. Removal was proceeding as planned" (p. 132).

During and after the barbaric process of *Indian Removal* the Ohio Country was being repopulated by, "New Englanders, Middle States people, and Upland Southerners, as well as smaller representations from the Tidewater. Quakers, Pennsylvania Dutch (i.e. Germans), free blacks, and escaped slaves added to the mix from the beginning of statehood" (Knepper, 1989, p. ix). However, Ohio Historian George Knepper (1989) goes on to explain that, "the German and Irish contingents" were "among the earliest and most significant" (p. ix). A great deal of this German and Irish immigration occurred after 1837 when the engineers working for the Board of Public Works approved the construction of the Erie Canal through Ohio. By this time in the history of the U.S. a permanent and stable market in labor had nearly been established, made possible by not only growing immigration, but an artificial inflation in the price of primitively accumulated Native American land. Making this point Marx (1867/1967) observes:

> Let the Government put upon the…soil an artificial price, independent of the law of supply and demand, a price that compels the immigrant to work a long time for wages before he can earn enough money to buy land, and turn himself into an independent peasant…The Government is…to import have-nothings from Europe into the colonies, and thus keep the wage-labor market full for the capitalists. (p. 772)

One example of what Marx is referring to might be the Land Ordinance of 1785 that "provided that land ceded by the states and purchased from the Indians be divided into townships six miles wide" (Knepper, 1989, p. 56). The violent subjugation and forced removal of Ohio's Native peoples outlined above renders Knepper's characterization of it as a benign financial transaction a grotesque apology to be sure. However, Knepper's description of the selling of Ohio Territory "with the minimum price set at one dollar per acre" and the minimum unit for sale being "640 acres" (p. 56) demonstrates how the vast majority of former peasant immigrants would be unable to access land, especially since "no land was to be sold on credit" (ibid., p. 56). What is more, "Congress…reserved out of every township the lots numbered 8, 11, 26, and 29 for future sale, anticipating that they would bring a higher price as those around them were sold and improved" (ibid., pp. 56–57). That is, if the minimum price of land was high enough to keep most immigrants in the labor market, surely these specially reserved lots only contributed to ensuring the soil and the means of production would stay in the hands of land speculators and industrialists. The immigrants themselves, the "have nothings," as Marx referred to them, with no ability to purchase land were the expropriated peasant-proprietors who were "chastised for their enforced transformation into vagabonds and paupers" (Marx, 1867/1967, p. 734) with the transition from feudalism to capitalism from one European monarchy to the next. Bringing attention to the contradictory legal cruelty surrounding the enclosures and the process of forcing the first working class into existence Marx (1867/1967) offers a telling historical analysis:

> The proletariat created by the breaking up of the bands of feudal retainers and by the forcible expropriation of the people from the soil, this "free" proletariat could not possibly be absorbed by the nascent manufactures as fast as it was thrown upon the world. On the other hand, these men, suddenly dragged from their wonted mode of life, could not suddenly adapt themselves to the discipline of their new condition. They were turned en masse into beggars, robbers, vagabonds, partly from inclination, in most cases from stress of circumstances. Hence at the end of the 15th and during the whole of the 16th century, throughout Western Europe a bloody legislation against vagabondage. The fathers of the present working-class were chastised for their enforced transformation into vagabonds and paupers. Legislation treated them as "voluntary" criminals, and assumed that it depended on their own good will to go on working under the old conditions that no longer existed. (p. 734)

What is perhaps most striking about this passage is Marx's allusion to the role of ideology in transferring the cause of deteriorating social conditions from the transition from feudalism to capitalism to the individuals forced into dependency and thus into the working class—what amounts to a classic example of *blaming the victim*. Former peasant-proprietors, forced from the soil, were thus criminalized and demonized and blamed for the conditions they were forced into, a use of discourse the ruling class continues to rely heavily upon—countless examples come rushing forward. It was this class of criminalized, former-peasant, European beggars whose labor power was put to use in North America in the most brutal and savage ways, as described above, expanding the social universe of capital westward. Who are the most suited to attack the humanity of others than those whose humanity and self-esteem had already been degraded, and those whose consciousness had been shaped by religious dogma to blindly accept an unquestionable universal hierarchy of civilizations with the plunderers at the top?

Of course, I, like millions of white Americans, am descended from these former peasants, who, like the English peasant-proprietors of the sixteenth century, were both victims of primitive accumulation expropriated from their lands, and then employed as the savage mercenaries of capital's global expansion. A self-awareness of this dual role as both the oppressed and the labor power of oppression coincides with Howard Zinn's (1995) insistence that those who join the movement for a more just future and become revolutionaries have both empathy and self-interest, collectively conceived, and, I am arguing, it is Marx who best provides the socio-historical foundation for this level of critical consciousness. That is, all workers (including future, current, and unemployed) have a direct interest in fundamentally transforming the labor-capital relationship and therefore uniting, globally, with all those who rely on a wage, or less, to survive, to collectively reclaim the land/the means of production/the Earth's natural capacity to support its life-systems. For me, this is key for avoiding the debilitating consequences of white guilt and anger that lacks a critical focus. In other words, while I am descended from the

German and Irish hoards who were victims of the historical development of capital and then consequently employed to commit unspeakable crimes against humanity in exchange for a common meager existence, it is, again, the one-sidedness of capitalism that creates the necessary conditions of dependency whose polluted ground sows the seeds for such atrocities. Rather than feeling guilty or cynical for past and present injustices, the correct response is to better understand one's own relationship to capital and join the push toward a post-capitalist, more democratic, and socially just future.

Again, the criminalized, dehumanized, and uneducated immigrant hoards were largely unable to gain direct access to the American soil, and were therefore forced to sell their labor as soldiers and farm hands occupying primitive shacks on the small scraps of backwoods hills. In *A Call to Action* (Malott, 2008) I explore the tensions and complexities of what have historically been articulated as competing goals for a more just North American future. That is, settler-state labor fighting the settler-state capitalists for control over the means of production, which are lands that were appropriated from Native American nations through the breaking of treaties, genocide, trickery, and every other means condemned by international law. Native American tribal nations, on the other hand, at their best, have been committed to restoring their sovereignty and therefore regaining occupied tribal lands (i.e. the Americas).

The Party for Socialism and Liberation (PSL), in *The Program of the PSL* edited by Andy McInerney and Ian Thompson (2010), argue in their outline for "A New Government of Working and Poor People," that it "shall honor all treaty obligations with Native nations, and shall provide restitution for land and resources stolen by the capitalist U.S. government" (p. 19). The ethic of respect for indigenous sovereignty informing this commitment seems like a positive place of departure for a socialist alternative. Winona LaDuke (1992), speaking from an Ojibwe Native American perspective, has addressed this issue situating the solution within a process of collective relearning and collaboration:

> I would argue that Americans of "foreign" descent must become Americans. That is not to become a patriot of the United States, a patriot of the flag, but a patriot to the land of this continent…You were born here, you will not likely go away, or live anywhere else, and there are simply no more frontiers to follow. We must all relearn a way of thinking, a state of mind that is from this common ground…If we are in this together, we must rebuild, redevelop, and reclaim an understanding/analysis which is uniquely ours. (p. 1)

Rather than viewing the settler state and Indigenous nations as completely separate and distinct, LaDuke alludes to a common interest compatible with today's calls for international solidarity echoing a central commitment of Marx. Of course rethinking our world views is not an easy challenge, however important it is, due, in large part, to the ideological indoctrination, from religious, governmental, mass media, to educational institutions, much of the world's working class is subjected

to from the cradle to the grave. However, a change in ideas is not all that is needed. A fundamental transformation in bourgeois society, including the basic relationship between labor and capital, is required. The alienation, exploitation, negative ideology, and environmental destruction are examples of a few points that can draw all non-capitalists together against our common capitalist class enemy, which can offer a safeguard against social movements that devolve into more privileged workers attempting to do less privileged workers paternalistic favors.

We might therefore note that throughout the process of North American repopulation and the establishment of capitalism, destitute immigrants frequently squatted on former Native American farm lands, but were driven off and eventually forced to take their labor capacity to the market ensuring the necessary conditions for capitalism to take hold were present, namely, a stable market in labor, a working-class of dependents. Being born into an isolated world with no running water, electricity, money, or hope of establishing an independent existence, selling one's labor into the grueling life of endless, mind-numbing factory work came to be perceived as not only their only option, but it represented a substantial improvement from scratching out of the woods a crude existence. It is not surprising that middle class educational, moral reformists like Horace Mann (1853) preached and lobbied against "the danger arising from the great influx of ignorant foreigners." Mann seemingly knew that immigrants alienated and criminalized from the processes of primitive accumulation were not socialized for so-called *civilized* life. That is, they needed to learn obedience and passivity to be suited for routinized, assembly line, poverty-wage, industrial labor.

Further compelling destitute immigrants to seek out factory jobs was the fact that these opportunities (i.e. the opportunity to be exploited by selling ones capacity to labor for a wage) were not as readily available to all Americans and white privilege was certainly creating very different experiences for African Americans in particular. For example, even though Ohio supported Abraham Lincoln, African Americans fleeing slavery and then, after 1865, from the former slavers and the new penal codes of the South, were "kept in their place" (Knepper, 1989, p. 204) with the same white supremacist, bourgeois terrorism and discrimination plaguing the south. White privilege serves to not only keep the working class divided and unable to unite around their common class interests, but it turns white workers into the violent, disciplining force of the bosses, something Marx was well aware of and worked tirelessly against.

THE 21ST CENTURY AND THE NEED FOR A MARXIST CRITICAL PEDAGOGY

Today the general trend of upward mobility within the global capitalist settler-state, however unequal, has nearly ground to a halt with little to no prospects of reversing it leaving the current generation, the grand kids of the baby boomers, with very little to look forward to in terms of jobs, opportunities, or a democratic culture marked by public institutions such as schools and universities.

However, many of the sons and daughters of the working class baby boom generation, my generation, have managed to find a place within the academy or some other professional career. Most, however, have returned to the grueling lives of their grandfathers, but usually not in factories, but rather, in the service industry earning below subsistence wages. Perhaps due to my own white privilege I am one of the lucky ones. Yes, now I am among the ranks of the professoriate myself, but, unlike my parents, I am a union member and benefit from the advantages of collective bargaining, but rather than labor, professors tend to view themselves as professionals and experience little unity or solidarity with other trades. As I argue below, this is a deadly mistake, making the existence of this one last area of relative, intellectual freedom increasingly tenuous.

Indeed, this is a major change. The public university, while it has always been designed to serve the interests of capital except when education workers can do otherwise, is not the public university it was just twenty years ago. Today it is nearly completely sold off or privatized, making the ability to engage in counter-hegemonic work, especially in teacher education, increasingly difficult. By the time the current generation comes to age, the public school might be completely gone, unless we can either stop privatization by ending capitalism or slow it down enough so as to extend its life so our kids can experience it before it is finally laid to rest, or saved, and along with it, humanity and the possibility of a life after capitalism. Of course the top elite universities, the Ivy League institutions, who serve the kids of the capitalist class, will undergo very little change while the universities of workers perish under neoliberal privatization.

CHILDREN OF THE BABY BOOM WORKING CLASS: MY OWN ROAD TO CRITICAL PEDAGOGY

My own particular road to the academy, however, was not, at anytime in my life, certain, despite the divisiveness of white privilege. For example, because I was subjected to a *special education* for an apparent learning disability I was diagnosed with in Oxford, Ohio, which followed me all the way to Corvallis, Oregon, I was tracked for manual labor. In special education my classmates were always the poorest kids in school. None of us seemed to like school, and most did not graduate from high school. I was an exception, but just barely. Going to school, before high school in particular, was always embarrassing, humiliating and degrading. While it is widely understood that the lack of available resources and funding prevents many special education teachers from providing the individualized instruction to students the IEP model is based upon, in my experience, the very label of special education itself degrades self-esteem to such an extent that, for some students, no amount of funding or individualized instruction can correct the deep psychological damage. As most of the kids went to their normal homerooms, I had to go to the "retarded" class. This experience played a huge role in my own desire for, and therefore openness to, critical analyses and ultimately, critical pedagogy. For far too many youth, however,

special education is highly destructive and debilitating, crushing whatever self-esteem is left, especially for those students already damaged by racism and/or the perceived lack of intelligence associated with poverty. This is especially troubling since minoritized youth and ESL students are over-represented in special education.

When I got to high school, a high school (Crescent Valley High School) that would be considered largely middle-class, I was main streamed. Special education in that context was just for those with severe disabilities. I therefore spent high school in the limited vocational track with my old special education colleagues. Everyone I knew in this lowest, working class track, including myself, never took the SATs and were never encouraged to by any school official. But social class was never something that was discussed, at home or at school, so I, like all the classmates that I knew, never developed, as far as I could tell, a class-consciousness, and thus never considered our own often contradictory class position. Growing up during the 1980s citizens were just individuals and one's economic position reflected only the quality of the individual—a necessary diversion because the upward trajectory of the post-WWII boom was fast on the decline.

Coming of age during this time, alienated from school and society as a direct result of my educational experiences, I gravitated toward punk rock and skateboarding, which, during the 1980s, were expressions of primarily working and middle class white and Latino youth resistance mediated through the hyper-individualized context of Reagan and Thatcher. At its best, punk rock was a new social movement advancing a sophisticated class analysis and understanding of race and gender in bourgeois society. However, in my experience in Oregon the skate-punk-scene was little more than a drop out culture existing on the margins against society, but lacking a coherent theory or understanding of why and how to enact a more critical praxis.

Working endless hours in restaurants and as a maintenance man at a nursing home after high school, barely earning enough to pay rent and buy food, my mother, wanting the best for her son, encouraged me to attend community college. With a tuition of around two hundred dollars a term in 1990 I was able to attend Linn-Benton Community College in Albany Oregon until 1992 when I transferred to Miami of Ohio where my father was a professor, which enabled me to attend tuition-free, as it should be for everyone interested in studying. My first semester at Miami I had a general education composition class with a Native American graduate student, Malea Powell, who had us reading essays about the American Indian Movement's occupation of Alcatraz Island from 1969 to 1971 and many other genres of writing about Native American experiences. A characteristic passage that reminds me of that experience comes to mind:

> The second half of the 1960s saw the growth of a strong and steadily more effective movement toward national liberation among the native peoples of North America. In the U.S., traditional forces joined forces with younger militants to engage in an extended series of confrontations, some of them armed, with federal authorities. These were highlighted by a protracted

> fishing rights campaign in Washington State (1964–69), the thirteen-month occupation of government facilities on Alcatraz Island (1969–70), the seizure of BIA headquarters in Washington, D.C. (1972), and the 71-day siege of the Wounded Knee hamlet, on the Pine Ridge Reservation (1973). (Churchill, 2002, p. 63)

In addition to studying the North American indigenous movement against the settler-states' illegal occupation of millions of acres of land (i.e. the means of production), that semester I also had a class called African Americans in Sports taught by Othello Harris, an African American professor steeped in the critical black tradition. In that course the work of Harry Edwards introduced me to the ways in which schools, the media, and sports serve to perpetuate the view of African Americans as *of the body*, and therefore not *of the mind*, a stereotype that worked to legitimize the extreme economic exploitation of slavery, which continued to operate in very similar ways after the Civil War, and into the contemporary era. That semester was my introduction to academic criticality, and it changed my life forever. Both classes made so much sense to me as a white youth educated in the 1980s in the United States to be a low-level wageworker. Offering frameworks for critical analysis this course work put me on the long path of making some coherent sense of my life and experiences, and joining and starting struggles challenging the hegemony of bourgeois society.

MARX'S CONCEPTION OF CLASS AND A MARXIST CRITICAL PEDAGOGY

Attempting to make sense of my complicated class position later in life I began self-identifying as both working class and middle class situated in the context of white privilege. However, this perspective is informed by a Weberian conception of social class characterized by an obsession with categorizing social classes based upon a wide gradation of consumption patterns. Two essays played a central role in shifting my thinking away from the Weberian conception of social class that dominates critical pedagogy and multicultural education. The first essay is "After the Box People" by Paula Allman, Peter McLaren and Glenn Rikowski (2005). The other important essay, "The Culturalization of Class and the Occluding of Class Consciousness" by Deb Kelsh and Dave Hill (2006), offers an enlightening comparison between Marx and Weber. Kelsh and Hill (2006) begin their investigation noting that for both writers "class determination involves property" (p. 5).

However, Marx's conception of how property determines class position is based on the realization that those who do not own property or the means of production are forced out of necessity to sell their labor for a wage while those who do own property live off the profit or surplus value extracted or exploited from labor. In other words, Marx demonstrates that at the heart of capitalism is a contradictory, internally related relationship between the sellers of labor power, workers dependent upon a wage to survive, and the purchasers of labor power, capitalists whose wealth comes from surplus or unpaid labor hours. Weber, on the other hand, does not connect his

theory of property to capital, but to consumption patterns and culture (Kelsh and Hill, 2006).

We might therefore say that unlike Marx's theory of class Weber's is not relational. That is, Weber does not situate class in the context of one's relation to private property. Making this point Kelsh and Hill (2006) conclude that, "Weberian-based formulations of class serve the interests of the capitalist class…insofar as they erase both the proletariat and the capitalist classes as antagonistic entities unified in the contradictory and exploitative social (property) relations of capitalist production" (p. 6). Failing to grasp the root of inequality under capitalism, Weberian approaches only appear radical because they mention class and *transforming* capital. However, to transform does *not* necessarily mean to transcend or overthrow.

Following these insights it seems reasonable to argue that the major limitation of multicultural foci on white privilege and consumption patterns resides within the fact that they are informed by a Weberian conception of social class, thereby treating capitalism as something to *equalize access to* rather than something to *overcome*. While I certainly support reforms designed to equalize, they must also be guided by the larger need to transcend. Reflecting on my life experiences from a Marxist conception of social class has resulted in much deeper understandings and a radical class-consciousness.

For example, I never considered the significance of the obvious fact that from the fifth grade on myself, my two sisters, and my mother were thousands of miles from our family because we needed a wage to survive, and Oregon State offered one that supported us. I also never considered the fact that wage existed not because of democracy or white privilege but because of capital's need for a highly educated work force, and that white privilege offered the least alienating and exploitative jobs mostly to whites, ensuring the continuing existence of a racialized inter-class division. We might therefore say that through graduate degrees my mom gained some autonomy over her own labor, eventually made a wage significantly above the poverty line, and realized a growth in social status as a professor and even more as the Dean of the Graduate School at Oregon State. According to many neo-Weberian demographers, my mother would be considered to have gained middle-class status.

However, my mother, like other professionals,while they are supposed to be the loyal, middle class, buffers against trouble, nevertheless rely on a wage to survive, situating their relationship to capital no differently than the factory worker, who also sells her labor for a wage out of necessity. That is, her wage does not come from the unpaid labor hours of others. On top of that, public university systems, since the Morrill Act of 1862, and the subsequent creation of the Land Grant Universities, have historically played a central role in the technological advancement of capital rendering the (im)material labor of professors *value creating*, and thus *productive*, in the capitalist sense. Charged with educating future workers our labor is also indirectly value-creating. Consequently, professors, especially those outside the most elite institutions, from the perspective of capital, are not viewed as equals or special, but as sources of direct and indirect value, and therefore

no less disposable than the factory worker or the schoolteacher. The working class university has only had democratic tendencies because of academics and their unions struggling for intellectually rigorous education, academic freedom, tenure, and self-governance.

The neoliberal assault on the non-Harvards of higher education has attacked all of these worker-created foundations of democratic culture by undermining the professor herself. That is, contingent, relatively powerless, adjunct professors now make up somewhere between forty and sixty percent of all professors. The push back against these movements has been limited, I am arguing, by Weberian conceptions of social class and the middle class culture of education workers. Part of the push back against neoliberal policies, from my point of view, is thus a need for the class-consciousness of educators and the necessary engagement with Marx it demands.

Yes, we are relatively privileged as compared to many other wage workers, but no, our own interests do not align with capital. Radical professors are often looked upon with confusion as if our very existence as paid scholars confirms the legitimacy of free market ideology. From this perspective, why would professors or teachers have any interest in challenging capitalism? The rise and fall of the initiative to increase the supply of highly educated laborers represents not only the ebb and flow of workers' democratic culture, but it represents the changing needs of capital. Professors and teachers, outside of elite institutions, must realize their existence, like the existence of billions of workers around the planet, is not secure, it is not guaranteed. Aligning our interests with capital is a grave mistake. We need to realize that our interests are with all others who also rely on a wage to survive. That consciousness is needed to help link the university struggle to larger alternative visions to capital.

This is not an easy task knowing that there exists in the U.S. a crisis of class-consciousness. There is a perception that if you are not living in abject poverty or if you do not work in an industrial factory, then you are middle class. Consequently, millions of working class people believe they are middle class. What is the consequence or implication of this? This belief thwarts proletarian consciousness and revolutionary movement against capital in an age of growing immiseration and insecurity from line cooks to professors (Malott, Hill, & Banfield, 2013). Similarly, in a recent interview Noam Chomsky (2013) notes that, "we don't use the term "working class" here because it's a taboo term. You're supposed to say "middle class," because it helps to diminish the understanding that there's a class war going on."[2] In the US, as Chomsky (2013) comments, the capitalist class "runs the show," and the bottom seventy percent of the population basically have no influence over policy and politics beyond the local level.

What is more, the so-called middle class, according to mainstream, neo-Weberian demographers, is currently about half the size it was during the 1970s. The term middle class is therefore an increasingly outdated category. In Volume One of *Capital* Marx (1867/1967) makes a similar point in the context of explaining how the capitalist expands his or her capital through the consumption of labor power noting that, "the

distinction between skilled and unskilled labor rests in part on pure illusion, or, to say the least, on distinctions that have long since ceased to be real, and that survive only by virtue of a traditional convention" (p. 197). Because the term middle class suggests that such people should feel like they have no right to challenge capital due to their privilege, and thus feel a closer affinity to the capitalist class, rather than to the class to which they actually belong, the working class, perhaps it should be reserved for just those elites who are not quite capitalists since no real distinction exists between skilled and unskilled labor in terms of their relationship to capital.

Henry Giroux often speaks of the need for a new language, but as a Marxist, part of the struggle is to refuse to let go of the powerful language we already have, if for no other reason than, "society as a whole is more and more splitting up into two great hostile camps, into two great classes directly facing each other: Bourgeoisie and Proletariat" (Marx & Engels, 1960/1848, p. 109). This statement rings unpleasantly true when we consider that approximately 80% of the U.S. population lives near or below the poverty line.[3] Globally, the situation is equally grim. As I have argued before, our struggles for social justice within capital must therefore be informed by a vision and commitment to achieving social justice beyond capital.

This, in itself, demands a much deeper understanding of capitalism than currently tends to exist within the educational Left. For example, it is commonly believed that the universal, final goal of a socialist revolution would be to redistribute wealth equally. For some socialists this is certainly true. Other socialists argue that while redistributing wealth might be a good short-term goal because it will reduce human suffering, if production relations are not fundamentally altered, then the dehumanizing process of value-production unique to capitalism and its internal logic that propels it forward toward ever-deepening crisis will remain in place. To explain what this means within the historical theme of this essay we would need to go back to the transition from feudalism to capitalism starting with a few theoretical generalizations exploring what it was about feudalism that led to capitalism. While this investigation is beyond the scope of this essay, which I am now at the end of, I will leave you with a few passages from Marx to consider:

> The starting point of the development that gave rise to the wage laborer, as well as to the capitalist, was the servitude of the laborer. The advance consisted in a change of form of this servitude, in the transformation of feudal exploitation into capitalist exploitation. To understand its march, we need not go back very far. Although we come across the first beginnings of capitalist production as early as the 14th or 15th century, sporadically, in certain towns of the Mediterranean, the capitalistic era dates from the 16th century. Wherever it appears, the abolition of serfdom has long been effected, and the highest development of the middle ages, the existence of sovereign towns, has been long on the wane…The expropriation of the agricultural producer, of the peasant, from the soil, is the basis of the whole process. (Marx, 1867/1967, pp. 715–716)

Clearly for Marx the exploitation of people based on social class not only predates capitalism, but represents the developing relation between the bourgeoisie (that existed as a class within feudalism) and the laboring classes that would come to define the entire capitalist process of perpetual value-expansion. However, unlike in capitalism where the capitalist owns the means of production, under feudalism, was "characterized by division of the soil amongst the greatest possible number of sub-feudatories. The might of the feudal lord…depended on…the number of his subjects… [being] peasant proprietors" (Marx, 1867/1967, p. 718), and by the 15th century the English population was upwards of four fifths peasant proprietors. Consequently, because the peasant had direct access to the means of production and thus directly consumed the product of his own labor, he was not completely alienated from his own feudally-predetermined labor, and was also not at the mercy of the capitalists' wage who would have his existence reduced just to what is socially necessary, even though his product was heavily taxed or exploited by the Feudal Lord. Again, while rare forms of wage labor did exist during feudalism, segments of the peasant population enjoyed too many entitlements or direct access to life's most vital use values, which presented a barrier to the possibility of establishing the basis of capitalistic wealth. In other words, a fundamental requirement or condition for capitalist production relations to solidify is an ever-expanding pool of dependent wage laborers who have no other option to survive but to exchange the use-value of their own labor for exchange value, for a price, for an equivalent (i.e. money) that can be exchanged for any other product of labor, especially food, clothing and shelter (Malott, Hill, & Banfield, 2013).

In Peter Hudis' (2012) provocative text, *Marx's Concept of the Alternative to Capital*, he challenges the too often taken-for-granted assumption that the strength of Marx resides only in his explanation of capitalism offering very little in the way of an alternative vision. Hudis (2012) argues that throughout Marx's many critiques of capital one can find signs pointing to possible directions toward post-capitalism, not necessarily explaining what it would look like, but by outlining what it would not look like (Malott, Hill, & Banfield, 2013). Hudis (2012) therefore summarizes Marx's concept of a new society as being based upon "the *replacement of the dictatorship of abstract time with time as the space for human development*…" (p. 191). In a new society a market where products of labor are equally exchangeable ceases to exist because "there is no substance that renders different magnitudes qualitatively equal" (Hudis, 2012, p. 192). In the highest stage of socialism, for Marx, individuals no longer learn to produce for production, but that the development of the human species is an end in itself.

> For Marx, a new society can only be born from the womb of a preexisting one therefore only gradually shedding the traces of the old social relations. In this respect Marx identified two phases of a new society. From the outset, however, for Marx, the central defining feature of capitalist production must be abolished, which is the subsumption of actual labor time with socially-

> necessary labor time. Socially necessary labor time, or a generalizable average dictated by technology and consumer markets, is therefore distinct from actual labor time, and comes to dominate concrete labor by serving as the universal standard allowing different products of labor to be mutually exchangeable. (Hudis, 2012, p. 190)

NOTES

[1] http://courses.education.illinois.edu/eol474/sp98/truman.html
[2] http://www.alternet.org/economy/chomsky-business-elites-are-waging-brutal-class-war-america
[3] http://politicalblindspot.com/us-poor/

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6. MY STRUGGLE FOR PEDAGOGY

It was Christmas Day, 2002. I know this because the date is written on the inside cover of the book Mum's sister, Sally, handed me. I recall her apologising in advance for what she described as a rather odd gift. Intrigued, I tentatively uncovered the title *Siblings: Brothers and sisters of children with special needs* (Strohm, 2002) and wondered if I'd ever read it. As other gifts were exchanged in this annual family ritual in my parents' small living room, I read the book's dedication: *For Helen—next time, together, you and I will sing and dance with the fairies.* I wept silently, uncontrollably, a deep sadness borne of the difference between the way things are and the way they could be. Tears, not just for myself, but for my sister, my brothers, my parents and for many others.

Critical pedagogy as a field confronts this gap between what is and what could be and all of the social inequalities that produce it. In this chapter, I explore how aspects of my childhood and experiences as both student and teacher guided my intellectual journey toward, through and since my initial engagement with critical pedagogy.

I was honoured to be invited as a contributor to this volume, perhaps even a "leader" in critical pedagogy, especially given the impact on the field of the other authors in this volume and the many other esteemed colleagues who have addressed issues of equity and social justice in schooling and beyond. Indeed, I was somewhat surprised to be asked, often having felt that my location in critical pedagogy was somewhat peripheral. As I wrote in the introduction to *The Struggle for Pedagogies* (Gore, 1993), in which I analyse critical and feminist pedagogy discourses as regimes of truth, there was a risk in distancing myself enough from the field to be able to objectify it that I would be distanced by those within. The possibility of exclusion took deeper hold a few years ago when a colleague informed me that my article in *The Critical Pedagogy Reader* (Darder, Baltodano, & Torres, 2003, 2008) had been removed from the second edition. Always sensitive and keen to please, apparently common qualities among "siblings," I wondered what had led to the exclusion of my chapter and feared that the kind of contribution I had to make to critical pedagogy had been ruled illegitimate.

But I am ahead of myself. Despite a slightly fractured sense of belonging to the field, I was interested in this opportunity to trace how I came to critical pedagogy and to explore "my struggle" with and for pedagogy, a consistent thread throughout my academic life.

B. J. Porfilio & D. R. Ford (Eds.), Leaders in Critical Pedagogy, 81–91.

EARLY INFLUENCES

My "Helen" was my younger sister, Meredith, born with the umbilical cord around her neck, damaged at birth, later diagnosed with cerebral palsy. With her birth, there were four of us under four years of age: my older brother, 16 months ahead of my twin brother and me, and our baby sister, two years younger. Mum was 23.

Merry was assessed as having the capacity of a three-year-old. She is now 53. In hindsight, I'm convinced my childhood experiences of her mistreatment as a result of societal prejudices against "difference" were a major factor in the formation of my critical consciousness. Merry looked fairly "normal" when she was young but walked awkwardly, spoke unclearly with limited vocabulary, and threw regular tantrums, well into her forties. The taunts and stares and glares of others, directed at Merry or Mum or my siblings, hurt, although Mum's kindergarten teacher refrain that "sticks and stones may break my bones but names will never hurt me" became a comforting (if exaggerated) mantra.

As I matured and my social embarrassment at having a "retarded" later "handicapped" now "intellectually disabled" sister waned, her unfair treatment was more acutely felt—especially when she came home from most outings (to the shops or the local pool or wherever) upset and saying, in the speech that only her family and others who tried hard enough understood, "boys stared at me." In early adolescence I developed a defiant capacity for delivering a steely stare right back at those boys, and girls and grown-ups; a capacity that may have served me well in my early days as a physical education teacher.

Growing up in a family of teachers was the other major influence on my path toward critical pedagogy. My mother, aunt, and grandmother were all teachers. So was Mum's cousin and his wife. Later my brother and his wife became and still are teachers. Before us there were others—the great grandfathers of both of my parents as well as Dad's great-great-grandfather, William Owen, who died in 1886. I suspect there were even more pedagogues who my father was unable to track down in his meticulously documented family tree.

With this pedigree, it's not surprising that I developed a deep respect for teaching and a heightened empathy for teachers as they negotiated the institutional and political minefields that challenged their daily work lives. I think this upbringing also developed a pedagogical disposition, a desire for the kind of clarity and precision that enables knowledge to be shared and a feeling for the power relations that are inherent to the enterprise. I still remember "playing school" with neighbourhood friends and wanting to be a "nice" teacher, not the kind who instilled fear in small children. The centrality and practicality of teaching during my childhood ultimately contributed to the questioning of critical (and feminist) pedagogy that underpins my key contribution to the field, *The Struggle for Pedagogies*.

Teaching was always an honourable career option for me. From a young age, even though I couldn't articulate it, I admired my mother's deep commitment to her work as a kindergarten teacher—making flash cards and countless other resources

at home, spending at least part of every weekend in the classroom, preparing for the week to follow, cleaning tables, hanging art work, sharpening pencils, and no doubt a vast amount of intellectual and conceptual work unrecognised by me. Every Christmas at the end of the Australian school year, she came home with a basket full of small gifts and cards from the children she'd taught that year and their parents or carers. It became my job, my joy, to unwrap and sort these gestures of gratitude. I recall vividly the moving tributes from parents so grateful for Mum's impact on their children's lives, for making a difference.

I was one of those kids who always wanted to teach—first primary school and later, as I encountered teachers and subjects I liked, math, biology, history and, where I finally settled, physical education. Not because I was a great athlete, but because I sought the less authoritarian relationship my PE teachers appeared to have with their students.

Near the end of high school, my English teacher said it would be "a waste" for me to follow my desire to teach—that instead I should be a lawyer. This precise moment cemented my childhood aspiration. Unwittingly, her supportive view of my capacities triggered a defiant commitment to making a difference through teaching. Despite fundamentally being a good girl, conscientious and compliant (apparently other qualities of a sibling striving to make up for her disabled sister), I've always had a deep sense of injustice about judgements that treat some groups of people as less than others—Meredith as less than me, women as less than men, Aboriginal people as less than non-Aboriginal or, in this instance, teachers as less than workers in higher-status occupations. This is why Taylor Mali's (2002) poem "What Teachers Make" moves me each time I read it to student teachers or teachers in professional development seminars. Here's an excerpt:

> You want to know what I make?
> I make kids wonder,
> I make them question.
> I make them criticize.
> I make them apologize and mean it.
> I make them write.
> I make them read, read, read.
> I make them spell definitely beautiful, definitely beautiful, definitely beautiful
> over and over and over again until they will never misspell
> either one of those words again.
> …
> I make a goddamn difference.
> What about you?

Not particularly political in a macro-societal way and yet, every time I recite it, I see tears well up in the eyes of educators; I suspect because the poem captures so evocatively the passions and ethics of teachers, the unjust way they/we are positioned in society, and the many gaps between what is and what could be.

THE PATH TO ACADEMIA

Through personal circumstances, rather than design, I undertook a Master of Physical Education degree at the University of British Columbia in 1983. It was at UBC that my intellectual interest in pedagogy was ignited, especially through my interactions with Hal Lawson and Alison Dewar, who stimulated my thinking about how teachers come to be the way they are, and Gary Sinclair, who supervised my thesis on research into teacher effectiveness. Physical education, at this point in my career, became the context in which my interests were fundamentally about teaching and teaching well.

Returning to Australia in 1984, I had opportunities to engage with members of the now famous and highly influential "Deakin group" (Tinning & Sirna, 2011), especially Richard Tinning, Jane Kenway, Lindsay Fitzclarence, Fazal Rizvi, Jill Blackmore, Richard Bates, Stephen Kemmis, Robin McTaggart, and Barbara Kamler. Colleagues at the University of Queensland where I worked in 1984 and again in 1986–87—especially David Kirk, Jim McKay, and Stephen Smith—and at Newcastle in 1984–85—especially Terry Lovat—all expanded my thinking, introducing me to a host of theoretical perspectives, including ideas from Gramsci, Bourdieu, Habermas, feminist theory, and phenomenology. These were heady times as I transitioned from teaching in schools to teaching in universities and began to dabble in academic writing.

My first publication provided a critique of an approach to reflective teaching that privileged technical rationality and excluded critical concerns (Gore, 1987). Soon after, I explored the notion of pedagogy as text to address the complex intersection of discourses and subjectivities in my own teaching (Gore, 1990a), and wrote with McKay and Kirk a polemic piece on technocratic rationality and critical perspectives in physical education (McKay, Gore, & Kirk, 1990). It is surprising to me, on re-reading some of these early publications, that the traces of my ongoing quest to use critical theoretical perspectives in order to better understand and enact pedagogy were so clearly evident from the beginning.

It was my decision to move to the University of Wisconsin-Madison in January 1988 to start a PhD with Ken Zeichner as my adviser that had the most profound influence on my intellectual interest in and commitment to critical pedagogy. Important visiting scholars to campus during my three years there included Raewyn Connell, Nancy Fraser, and Pierre Bourdieu. What a thrill for a girl from Adelaide, daughter of a public school kindergarten teacher and highways department land surveyor, descendant of a long line of teachers!

In Madison, I had the privilege of attending graduate classes taught by Michael Apple, Tom Popkewitz, Ken Zeichner and Liz Ellsworth, a summer course taught by Leslie Roman, and some classes in Women's Studies, all of which introduced me to new theories on education, society and inequality in ways that sharpened and challenged my thinking. During this time, I had enviable opportunities to work on such tasks as: supporting teacher education students on their weekly return from practicum, helping to write a chapter on teacher socialisation with Ken Zeichner

for the *Handbook of Research on Teacher Education* (Zeichner & Gore, 1990), working on the *Women of Color in the Curriculum project* with Tom Popkewitz, and managing a section of Division K for the 1989 AERA annual meeting with Ken and Carl Grant. To subsidise my studies, I also worked as a gynaecological teaching assistant in the medical school, in a wonderful program underpinned by a feminist view that women should feel empowered even during the most vulnerable of medical examinations—a tale for a different biography.

My doctoral studies in Madison also enabled opportunities for sustained interaction with Carmen and Allan Luke and Andrew Gitlin which led to subsequent joint research or writing projects (Luke & Gore, 1992; Gore & Gitlin, 2004). But it was the social, emotional and intellectual support of fellow graduate students, especially Marie Brennan, Susan Noffke, Cameron McCarthy, James Ladwig, and Bruce King, that made doctoral study so rewarding and made academia seem such a desirable pathway.

I mention these scholars who impacted on my development not as a name-dropping parade of connections made, of scholars many of whom became colleagues and friends, but rather to convey how lucky I felt, how lucky I was, to study in this rich, diverse, and stimulating environment. I often worry that my own graduate students, in the Australian doctoral system, have fewer opportunities for such diverse intellectual interaction and inspiration.

THE STRUGGLE FOR PEDAGOGIES

The watershed moment in my intellectual development, however, was the class I took with Elizabeth Ellsworth and subsequent engagement with her field-changing paper, "Why doesn't this feel empowering?" (Ellsworth, 1989).Between my two postgraduate degrees I taught in universities for four years (1984–87). During that time one student memorably scrawled "I'm not into this regimented reflective stuff" in response to my (then-naïve) course requirement for students to submit journals. This moment bubbled to the surface as I reflected on Ellsworth's piece. Coupled with post structural insights gained in classes with Tom Popkewitz, and especially excited by Foucault's (1980) analyses of power-knowledge, I started to clarify the direction of my doctoral dissertation. I became passionate about what critical and feminist work might look like in classrooms, and how I could operationalise my commitments to social justice and human dignity in my work in teacher education.

I came to critical pedagogy as a teacher educator, part of whose role was to help others understand what it means to teach. I had been struck, frustrated even, by the instrumental/utilitarian impulse of students just wanting to know what to do. And yet, at least in part, I shared their yearning for answers. I wanted to go beyond critique to a positive thesis, beyond the "critical intellectual" to the "transformative intellectual" (Aronowitz & Giroux, 1987). I wanted to ensure that as a critical educator I wasn't just raising questions that might paralyse new teachers or worse still, prepare talented, committed,and passionate graduates who would too quickly

leave the profession because they couldn't/didn't know how to make the kind of difference they had come to believe was their responsibility.

Increasingly critical of an underlying arrogance in claims that critical pedagogy could empower teachers and students, I sought to better understand the functioning of power. Recognising since childhood that pedagogy is always already imbued with power relations, Bernstein's (1990) argument that pedagogy is more than a relay for power relations external to itself resonated strongly, as did Foucault's (1977) analyses of disciplinary and bio-power. My first publication addressing these issues, "What we can do for you! What *can* 'we' do for 'you'?: Struggling over empowerment in critical and feminist pedagogy," was fundamentally a manifestation of this analysis and expression of a deeply felt frustration with theorists of pedagogy who did not address implications for the classroom, except abstractly. It was an articulation of my struggle with how to do critical work in teacher education and how to help my students do it while learning to teach. First published in *Educational Foundations* (Gore, 1990b), this piece was subsequently included in the volume edited with Carmen Luke on *Feminisms and Critical Pedagogy* (Gore, 1992) and then in *The Critical Pedagogy Reader* (Gore, 2003).

The Struggle for Pedagogies (Gore, 1993), the book version of my doctoral thesis, was an elaborated articulation of my contention that the style of pedagogical argument in much critical and feminist pedagogy work was at odds with the pedagogy argued for, and that awareness of the functioning of these discourses as regimes of truth was important if they were to support teachers to do powerful pedagogical work. Although worried that it might be interpreted by some of the field's most esteemed theorists as an attack on the field, with more than 1000 citations (Google scholar) the book appears to have had an impact beyond what I ever anticipated. In scanning some of those citations, the argument seems to have resonated particularly with others who wanted help in translating the ideas of critical pedagogy into instructional strategies or were worried about the realities for teachers trying to implement critical pedagogy (e.g., Breunig, 2005; Fecho, 2001; Keesing-Styles, 2003; Morgan, 2000; Tinning, 2002). Others seem to have appreciated the argument that reflexive approaches are important in relation to our own teaching and theories (e.g., Cook-Sather, 2006).

In preparing to write this chapter I made contact with Antonia Darder, curious to learn about the exclusion of my article from the second edition of *The Critical Pedagogy Reader* (Darder et al., 2008). She generously explained the publisher's requirement for a substantial proportion of new content, costs of permissions, and overall size of the volume as key considerations behind the "incredibly difficult" task she and her co-editors faced in deciding which pieces should be replaced. Moreover, she assured me that she had used my book often over the past two decades in her own courses on critical pedagogy and issues of diversity in education. I found comfort in her reply—perhaps the sibling in me again, needing approval and seeking acceptance, or perhaps just responding like most of us in academia who are continually evaluated and assessed with little explanation.

Of all the feedback on *Struggle* I have received over the years, often from graduate students and emerging scholars who found it useful for informing their own inquiries, it was the comment of a former undergraduate student that mattered most to me. She said she was grateful for the way in which my analysis had released her from a paralysis she experienced as a school teacher, trying to enact critical pedagogy but never able to reach her ideals. We agreed that this didn't mean ceasing to try, but doing so with a better understanding that the critical pedagogy *telos* was always a challenge in the context of institutionalised schooling. In looking over some of my earlier publications, I have just realised she is the student referred to as Sandra in "Pedagogy as text" (Gore, 1990b). Today, she is Professor Bernadette Baker (see Baker, 2001, 2009, 2013) whose award-winning scholarship in curriculum history and theory has made its own mark.

FINDING A WAY FORWARD

At my doctoral defence, I was asked how I justified doing this kind of theoretical work when people were starving on the streets. Taken aback, I replied rather boldly to the professor who asked, that there are many ways of doing political work and that if any of us believed our greatest impact or contribution was in helping feed hungry people then none of us should be in the academy. I wondered fleetingly if I might have been a good lawyer, after all!

Nonetheless the question had at its core a concern for making a difference about something important. A critique of critical and feminist pedagogy discourses as regimes of truth was unlikely to do that and could be seen as a performative contradiction—a critique of scholarship through scholarship. Indeed my father, who surprisingly read my thesis upon my return to Australia at the end of 1990, reduced the argument to one sentence and jokingly, if a little hurtfully, asked why I didn't "do something useful, like in special education." In my defence, I had to understand the critical and feminist pedagogy work that had attracted me if I was to figure out how to translate it into my own practice or the practice of others.

While I don't typically claim the label "critical pedagogue," I believe critical pedagogy takes many forms. I see my work as having critical intent, aligning with the same principles for a more just world, more just lives for teachers and students. Having argued that there had been a neglect of pedagogy in critical and feminist pedagogy discourses, my academic struggle since then has focused on developing the pedagogy in critical pedagogy and has moved in two main directions.

In the first strand of work, I have sought to understand the functioning of power relations in pedagogy, inspired in part by the Foucauldian lens through which I analysed critical and feminist pedagogy discourses and also by D. H. Lawrence's (1915/1921) *The Rainbow*, in which young teacher Ursula learns "it was power, and power alone that mattered" (p. 356). I studied the functioning of power in pedagogy in four sites: a school classroom, a teacher education classroom, a feminist reading group and a women's group. In examining the functioning of micro-level power

relations such as surveillance, normalisation, totalisation, and regulation, I included an examination of how race, class, gender, and sexuality were being addressed in these sites and how they intersected with a broader disciplinary power as described through the techniques of power as I operationalised them in this study (Gore, 2002; see also Gore, 1997). Through this work, in particular, I strengthened my embrace of the view that everything is dangerous, but also the view that we always have something to do—a liberating rather than paralysing recognition.

The regime of truth analysis I undertook in relation to the functioning of pedagogy discourses has been a useful lens for exploring the functioning of other discourses with my colleagues and/or students. It has been applied to analyses of: the impact of power-knowledge in processes of teacher induction (McCormack & Gore, 2008; Williams & Gore, 2011); the (mis)treatment of management in teacher education (Gore & Parkes, 2008); and, most recently, with Honours student Debbie Drew, how measurement regimes in primary PE classrooms impact on student subjectivities (Drew & Gore, in press).

The "methodology" I developed for analysing regimes of truth and techniques of power was described by Philip Wexler (he said in a complimentary way) as "taming Foucault." While some scholars would be horrified at such a critique, associating taming with domesticating or reducing complexity, I embrace the description, probably because it aligns with my pedagogical disposition; seeking clarity, to be able to use complex ideas and share them with others.

In the second strand of work the focus is directly on pedagogy and has taken the form of ongoing attempts to specify what counts as good teaching, working from the premise, empirically informed, that what is good teaching for disadvantaged or marginalised children/young people, or the reverse, what is good teaching for the privileged, is actually good teaching for all. These efforts are not focussed on technical skills of teaching but on principles of practice, including principles fundamental to increasing equity. The purpose of this work is to help guide the efforts of student teachers and inform the work of practising teachers, including in some of the most difficult contexts.

A key element of this work has been identifying the importance of intellectual quality, a quality learning environment, and making learning significant to support student learning. Our research into "Quality Teaching" (Gore, 2007) has found that when these conditions are met, there are improved outcomes for students including the narrowing of equity gaps for those groups of students who historically have not succeeded in schools (Amosa, Ladwig, Griffiths, & Gore, 2007; Ladwig, Smith, Gore, Amosa, & Griffiths, 2007). Moreover, our related approach to professional development that we call "Quality Teaching Rounds" is giving teachers hope in a way that exhorting them to teach better, often under extraordinarily difficult conditions, cannot (Gore, in press).

For some leaders in the field of critical pedagogy, including scholars in this book, theoretical explorations and/or political activism have secured their impact. The more practical/pragmatic focus of my recent work may not be readily recognisable

as critical pedagogy and yet it is supporting the work of those who teach and teach teachers. It is contributing to the formation of teachers who are aware of their ethical and political responsibilities to teach all children well, committed to both equity and quality, and confident in their capacities to positively impact students' lives.

It is in this most recent decade of work on pedagogy (especially work done in association with colleagues James Ladwig, Wendy Miller, & Julie Bowe) that I have had the greatest sense that my scholarship is making a difference for teachers and students. This is why I wanted to teach, why I rejected law, how I honour the memory of my mother and all the great teachers before and since her who daily strive in classrooms the likes of which many of us would no longer survive, if we ever would. My steely determination to make a difference with and through pedagogical reform remains my unfinished struggle—to narrow the gap between what is and what could be, for Meredith, for my two beautiful daughters, and humbly, in the interests of everybody's children.

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7. A VIEW FROM SOUTHERN EUROPE

EDUCATIONAL STUDIES

Born in the Mediterranean island of Malta with a population of around 400,000 inhabitants and a land mass of 316 km^2 (122 sq mi), I was immersed in a postcolonial situation. I sharpened some of my knowledge of this field when holding a part-time job as correspondent for an Arab financed newspaper. I eventually moved into teaching, taking up a teacher preparation programme on a full-time basis at our only university, the University of Malta which traces its origin to a Jesuit degree granting college set up in 1592.

Having studied both as a full-time university student (University of Malta) and as an external student (with the University of London) I had, from the first days as an undergraduate, been fascinated by alternative routes to learning. I felt that opportunities for learning, especially at the university level, should be made available to all, including those holding full-time jobs.

CANADA

Later, when studying for a Master's degree in Sociology of Education and serving as a Commonwealth Scholar in Edmonton, Alberta, I became determined to carry out research in the area of sociology of adult education. My initial view of adult education was quite a liberal one. I originally toyed with the idea of carrying out research focusing on the province's open university – Athabasca University. It so happened that my sociology studies – I took courses at the graduate level in social theory from the University's Sociology Department – began to draw me closer to writers in the radical and socialist tradition. My interest in this area was fuelled further through my contact with a host of brilliant scholars such as Raj Pannu – later to become Leader of the NDP in Alberta – the late Kazim Bacchus, the inspirational Carlos Alberto Torres (who was a Killam Fellow then and subsequently moved to UCLA), Raymond Morrow, Derek Sayer, and many others, too many to mention in the chapter. Needless to say, my exchanges with some really brilliant graduate students such as Daniel Schugurensky, Gordon Hay, Robert Runte, Elizabeth (Beth) Lange, and Susan Belcher El Nahhas continued to highten my interest in the area and in the politics of education.

The left wing radicalism in the home department, coupled with my struggles with the writings of authors such as Marx, Weber, Mannheim, Nyerere, and authors from

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the comparative education fields peaked my interest in the Latin American popular education tradition. The presence of Latin American scholars, such as Carlos Torres and Daniel Schugurensky, as well as our Guatemalan neighbours in the graduate family residence quarters increased my interest in the area. But I did not confine myself to an ideological church. I was fascinated by sociological ideas and open to different ideas and perspectives. Max Weber and Karl Mannheim were of particular interest to me. I also developed an all consuming passion for the writings of Antonio Gramsci and Paulo Freire. I had obviously heard about both scholars during my undergraduate full-time studies at the University of Malta.

Gramsci was "big" in nearby Italy in the turbulent and violent 70s. His name was bandied about by the few left wing gurus who made their presence felt in Malta at the time. It was however in politically conservative and geographically far away (from a Maltese perspective) Alberta that I started engaging seriously with his writings and the numerous books developed by Freire. This was very revealing and powerful stuff for me. Much of the social theory material was new to me. In the preceding years I was immersed, while teaching in Maltese schools on a full-time basis, in English literature. By the time I had finished my studies in Edmonton, my perspective on education, society, and politics had changed drastically. Luckily, when I returned to Malta and lectured part-time at the local university, while administering adult education in what was then the Education Department in the Ministry of Education, I was fortunate to work with people such as Ronald G. Sultana, Godfrey Baldacchino, and Mary Darmanin, who shared similar perspectives on education, power, and society. Later, I would meet Carmel Borg. We were graduate students at OISE at the University Toronto, where we forged a writing partnership and a strong friendship.

My Ph.D studies in Sociology in Education at OISE/University of Toronto continued to sharpen my knowledge of the area of studies. I was lucky to work with David W. Livingstone, who was my thesis supervisor, and with a number of top notch scholars from the OISE faculty and from the graduate student body. The writers whose work proved insightful to me were Michel Foucault, Edward Said, Myles Horton, Henry Giroux (I had read his early work when at Alberta), Stanley Aronowitz, Peter McLaren, bell hooks, and the recently deceased Roger I. Simon. I was also exposed of postmodern literature at OISE, although I confess that I never took a particular liking to it. I found some of its strands to be nihilistic and paralysing.

Toronto was a great city in which to live and learn. There was a buzz about the place and I was lucky to come in contact with a number of people who were not only very good scholars, but also fully committed social activists. I fondly recall my meetings and conversations with popular educators Chris Cavanagh, who subsequently directed the Catalyst Centre for Popular Education in Toronto, and Bob Davies, who was very much involved with CAN (Canadian Action for Nicaragua). I also relished my visits to and collaboration with people from the International Council

of Adult Education whose main office was situated at walking distance from OISE. This enabled me to do book reviews for *Convergence*, thanks to the promptings of its then Editor, Karen Yarmol-Franko. One of my teachers and good friends at OISE was Budd Hall who, during my first semester of studies, was still Secretary General of the ICAE. More recently, I studied the work of the Italian educator, don Lorenzo Milani, another important influence on my educational thinking and the subject of my most recent book (authored with two Italian colleagues, Federico Batini and Alessio Surian). Other influences include Ngugi, Bauman, Dolci, Žižek, Bourdieu, Capitini, and writers from the critical theory tradition.

CRITICAL PEDAGOGY AND THE RADICAL TRADITIONS IN EDUCATION

At the University of Alberta, and also later at OISE, the influence of Paulo Freire was enormous. Equally influential was the school of critical pedagogy. Raymond Morrow, an inspiring professor, encourged me to read Henry Giroux's *Theory and Resistance in Education* as part of my preparation for the term paper for one of my courses. Professor Morrow nudged me to compare Freire – whose works I had been reading for another course – and Gramsci in light of Marx's writings on ideology, consciousness, estranged labour (alienation), the "base-superstructure" metaphor, etc. He felt that Giroux's work would also provide me with a sense of the debates that characterised the critical field of sociology of education since the 70s.

This was the first time I grappled with Gramsci and Freire as part of a comparative study. At the time, I was a neophyte in these areas, and more so in sociological theory more generally, given that my previous studies were in English Literature. Little did I know at the time that I would take this preliminary and rudimentary study further and produce a Ph.D thesis and book a number of years down the road (I obviously stumbled on a very "marketable" topic!). The book, originally published by Zed Books, whose commitment to a social justice agenda I admire and share, was subsequently published in six other languages (Catalan, Portuguese in Brazil, German, Italian, Spanish and Turkish). I suppose reading Freire, Marx, and Gramsci (and Giroux, Apple) at the same time, helped develop my committment towards a radical and social justice oriented approach to adult education. At the same time, I was taking courses that provided a critical approach to sociology of education with their focus on theories of reproduction and resistance and beyond (scholars included Althusser, Poulantzas, Bowles, & Gintis; Baudelot & Establet; Willis, Apple, Dale, & Carnoy). I also enrolled in an another splendid course on Education in Developing Countries, taught by the late Kazim Bacchus, which brought me in contact with some very interesting and socially committed people. This course inspired me to read Freire. I recall that once I started reading *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (to which I was introduced by Kenneth Wain at the University of Malta), I could never stop and simply kept moving from one book by Freire in English to another. I also read Nyerere's writings for the term paper for this course.

I had been intrigued by Freire and Nyerere in Malta, without having had the chance to read them.

I seized the opportunity provided by these courses. All these readings and encounters were to have an important effect on my life. They developed my orientation to education and adult education from the course of my professional career. This orientation was strengthened by a splendid summer course I took from Carlos Alberto Torres, with whom I had become great friends, called the "Sociology of Adult Education." The course introduced me to the writings of Thomas La Belle, Jane Thompson, Robert Arnove, and Ira Shor among others. Ironically, last year, Carlos Torres (2013) published a book on the basis of the agenda outlined in that course and a related occasional paper.

The University of Alberta represents a turning point in my work and thinking as educator and activist. I would like to think that I always had left-wing leanings, but my studies in sociology there helped consolidate the theoretical underpinning for a coherent left-wing politics. I would also like to think that I consolidated all that I had learned there through my own teaching and community work back home, my further studies in Toronto, and most of the cultural work in which I have been engaged ever since. For instance, I learned much from the insights of participants in several community projects that I helped generate, such as the parents involved in a parental-school involvement project. The insights gleaned from the participants in this project became the subject of a paper that I co-wrote with Carmel Borg for the *British Journal of Sociology of Education*.

I was lucky to travel widely, over the years, on academic work. As a result, I made new friends, met new students and academics in the various seminars I taught/led at foreign universities – in Italy, Spain, Canada, Portugal, Cyprus, Turkey, Germany and most recently Poland, Scotland and England. I certainly learned a great deal from them. I also observed at close quarters some really wonderful experiments in social justice adult education. I also learned from several students with whom I worked in the Sociology Department, the EuroMediterranean Centre for Educational Research (EMCER), and in the Anthropology Program. In most recent years, and prodded by Henry A. Giroux during a conversation I had with him on the phone when I was teaching at UBC in the summer of 2010, I started writing for a broader readership than an academic one. Henry encouraged me to start writing for *Truthout* and *Counterpunch*. I took up the challenge and found this form of writing to be a rewarding experience.

To date, I have written twelve pieces for *Truthout* and six articles for *Counterpunch*. I collected a selection of these writings in a small book titled: *Politics of Indignation. Imperialism, Poscolonial Disruptions and Social Change* published by a relatively new British publishing venture, Zero Books that forms part of John Hunt Publishing. Other ventures which allowed me to reach a wide audience include the Italian reviews, *Gramsci oggi* and Gianni Mina's *Latino America e tutti i sud del mondo*.

I have also contributed occasional articles to Sunday and daily newspapers in my home country, besides occasionally appearing on the airwaves.

CONFRONTING THE CURRENT NEOLIBERAL DISCOURSE IN EDUCATION

It is common knowledge that the dominant discourse in education is underpinned by neoliberal concepts. It is all part of the discourse concerning lifelong learning which places the onus on individuals to take charge of their own learning and to pay for this learning if need be. There is an over-emphasis on education for work and more precisely for "employability," which does not necessarily mean employment, as Ettore Gelpi (2002) reminds us in one of his last works. Carmel Borg and I wrote two pieces on the EU's Lifelong Learning Memorandum, one of which was published in *LlinE* and the other in *Globalisation, Societies and Education*. After critically examining some on the ground best practice projects documented by CEDEFOP, we argued this type of adult education often serves as the vehicle for public financing of private needs and for promoting an easy correlation between the skills required at the workplace and the skills required in social life. There is an excessively economistic discourse about adult education that is worrying. It is all part of hegemonic globalisation. It is a discourse that projects the notion of citizen in two-dimensional terms: producer and consumer.

This is a far cry from the notion of lifelong education, a concept introduced by my former teacher and current colleague Kenneth Wain in 1979. Wain followed the UNESCO conception then, which was broader and more humanistic than the conception of adult education embraced by most adult education scholars. The contemporary discourse is different. As far as evaluation goes, there is an obsession with what Lyotard calls "performativity" – so called "quality" indicators which are always of a quantitative nature. They are exclusively concerned with narrow outcomes and not the "in depth" analysis of processes, with no claims to generalisation. One could feel the tension between the ideas of those who attributed a larger and more humanistic agenda to the education of adults and the dominant narrow economistic discourse often interspersed with some social democratic terminology. It is encouraging however to see prominent writers such as Bill Williamson (1998), Ian Martin (2001), Kenneth Wain (2004), and John Field, Rosa Maria Torres, and even Zygmunt Bauman (2005) criticise this kind of discourse, the first two offering an alternative conception of lifelong learning.

These scholars argue there is an alternative discourse rooted in praxis that we can find throughout various parts of the world. It emphasises the role of the citizen as social actor, and the role of adult learning as a vital activity within social movements, including labour movements. It involves experiments such as the "participatory budget" in Porto Alegre and Seville, community learning within the landless peasant movement (MST) in Brazil, and the various processes of adult learning which lie at

the heart of the work of the social organisations that have made their presence felt at the World Social Forum and the various regional social fora. These processes of adult learning, though part of a repressed adult education tradition, are in keeping with the concept of "globalisation from below" – "counterhegemonic globalisation" in Boaventura de Sousa Santos' terms – though' counter-hegemonic' is a term Gramsci (strongly associated with the concept of hegemony) never used, perhaps to avoid the sense of binary opposite between the two.

EDUCATION AND CIVIL SOCIETY

The term "civil society" is commonly used these days in relation to spaces for grassroots education. I recognise that the term has had different uses throughout history, not least, as I was reminded in a recent trip for a book event in Edinburgh, throughout the "Scottish Enlightenment" (see the discussion in Boothman, 2014). I prefer to use Gramsci's notion of civil society, which refers to the complex of ideological institutions that prop up the state and that serve to cement as well as provide spaces to renegotiate existing relations of hegemony. This is a far cry from the romanticised notion of civil society as it is used today. It is romanticised in the sense that people seem to conceive of it as some kind of democratic and progressive force. However, people fail to recognize that civic spaces include reactionary, right wing forces such as religious fundamentalist groups related to all the major monotheistic religions, racist organisations, anti-immigrant groups, etc.

Following Gramsci, I conceive of civil society as a site of struggle in which relations of hegemony are consolidated or challenged with a view to renegotiation. While civil society should not be romanticised, neither should it be regarded as monolithic. Hegemony is never complete; there exist spaces where action for social change can take place. Adult education of the social-justice type can constitute one of the many spaces in which action for change can occur.

Internationally, the best traditions of education, including adult education, oriented towards generating greater social justice, have emerged in those social and political movements which have struggled to promote and realise the idea of a society not as it is now but as it should and can be. Their efforts in promoting adult education are motivated by a concern for social justice, ecological sensitivity, and the strengthening of democracy. This is based on valuing social difference and biodiversity. Their efforts also involve an engagement in the struggle to recuperate public spaces – these public spaces have been shrinking over the years. They have often been the target of corporate encroachment and have often been commodified.

THE MIGRATION ISSUE

Of major importance for a genuine critical pedagogy today is the issue of migration. I have focused in a series of interviews on the part of the world in which I live

and operate: the Mediterranean. As a frontier island and country, Malta faces an influx of immigrants who, according to the Dublin II Regulation, are to have their asylum seeking application evaluated by the state through which they first entered the EU. They are, therefore, forced to remain on this very small island state, where they originally disembarked. Malta is a densely populated island and requires "responsibility sharing" (the Maltese government uses the term "burden" sharing, a term I reject for obvious reasons) with its fellow EU members. This has for the most part not been forthcoming. Not only this force, but the EU's fortress policy with respect to denial of visas and travel opportunities, is compelling immigrants from Sub-Saharan Africa and more lately from Egypt and Syria to the situation in their countries to pursue some of the most hazardous routes to Europe. Parallels with the Mexico-USA border situation are invited. While people from South and Central America use sewers to cross over to the U.S., best captured in the film *El Norte*, people from Africa are risking their lives by selling all their possessions to make the journey. Specifically, in the case of SSA migrants, across the Sahara to Libya and then be crossed over by unscrupulous "coyotes" (to use the term from the Americas) who apparently do not care a toss about human lives. And in both cases, immigrants are fleeing an unjust colonial/neocolonial system and structural legacy, which is mainly of the U.S. and Europe's own making (and now China has "got in on the act" big time!).

It is a case of the Empire striking back ("we are here because you were there" as the late Stuart Hall would say), certainly not on level terms given the subalternity and vulnerability of those involved; the vast majority are asylum seekers is need of protection (over 80% of arrivals in 2013 were granted a form of protection). Moreover, the North-South structural imbalances, which are a feature of a perennially colonial capitalist system predicated on uneven levels of development, lead to the shifting of populations in the South. It is a common feature of European imperial politics which persists till the present day: southern and oppressed populations can be moved at will to suit imperial interests. It happened with Africans during the period of slavery and the slave trade, with Palestinians with the 1948 "Nakba," and happened, for example, with Puerto Ricans during "operation bootstrap."

It continues to happen in modern history with people from Sub-Saharan and North Africa. This is standard European imperialist policy. The interests today are many, including the ready availability of an underpaid and grossly exploited reserve or alternative army of labour to accommodate Western imperial capitalist interests – depressing local wages and therefore labour costs. Europe is responsible for this situation, but has remained passive. Tragedies continue to occur at sea and elsewhere, not least when crossing Africa itself, as different forms of smuggling mafias emerge on both sides of the Europe-Africa divide. *The Guardian* reported on 3 October, 2013, that over 20,000 people died, during the last twenty years, trying to cross over from Africa to reach Southern Europe.[1] How many deaths will it take for an ostensibly myopic and fortified Europe to know that too many people have died? (with due apologies to Bob Dylan).

Anybody with a modicum of human compassion and who values human life dearly should be outraged by the events concerning migrants occurring at Europe's doorstep. Protesting is the least one can do in these circumstances, which call for a proactive politics of indignation targeted at something of which this human migrant tragedy is symptomatic –the current politics of human disposability. It was Zygmunt Bauman (2006) who used the term "the human waste disposal industry." This is what this situation regarding the hazardous shifting of southern populations represents. Therefore, the many protests taking place throughout Europe are thoroughly justified. I was lucky to be able to attend a rally at Trafalgar Square, London, last month against racism and fascism in light of recent statements by the BNP and UKIP. The groups scapegoated migrants for the country's perceived economic and social ills. Hopefully these protests will highlight the continent's shameful past with regard to the treatment of ethnic minorities and sensitize other Europeans to the danger of seeing complex global imperialist issues in myopic nationalistic and mono-cultural terms. Hopefully, they will sensitize other Europeans to the complex set of factors that compel people to leave the contexts in which they are rooted and possibly love dearly to seek a different life abroad. The reasons for doing this are many: civil wars fuelled by a Western-based arms industry and exacerbation of tribal conflicts often resulting in rape and being disowned by family; the attempt among women to avoid female genital mutilation, evading religious fundamentalisms; the negative effects on African farming of subsidies provided to farmers in other continents; the negative effects of climate change; an impoverished environment (the ransacking of Africa); and a colonial ideology which presents the West as the Eldorado and a context for the "good life;" structural adjustment programs; the quest for better employment opportunities. There is, however, one major global reason, namely the quest for low cost labor by corporations and other businesses alike which serves as a "push and pull factor" of global migration. As David Bacon (2008) argues, hegemonic globalization necessitates migration, but it is the same victims of this process who are rendered "illegal" and often criminalized. They often become victims of the "carceral state." By carceral state, I mean the state that punishes as part of its function in dealing with the excesses of hegemonic globalization, that is neoliberal capitalist-driven globalization or "globalisation from above." Detention centres such as those decried by international and local observers over here and Fabrizio Gatti in Lampedusa are institutions that reflect the presence of a carceral state, to borrow Henry A. Giroux's term.

I repeat: the criminalization of immigrants serves to fan the flames of racism and xenophobia. The marginalization of immigrants with no access to citizenship rights and social benefits, especially rejected asylum seekers, leads them to eke out a living at the very margins of society, in the "underworld" if need be. This furthers the construction of irregular migrants as prone to criminality, promiscuity etc. rather than being victims of a systemic oppressive and racist structures, which encourages abuse of their vulnerability. In the case of one specific country, Malta, the number of SSA migrants in the country is considerably smaller than that of other non-EU

residents whose presence does not lead to similar exaggerated reactions in the media. If anything, as stated earlier, the target of any anger, where vulnerable working-class employees are concerned, should be those unscrupulous employers who prey on a destitute "reserve army" to considerably cut down labour costs.

If one goes by hearsay, they often completely do away with these costs, at best paying the migrant a pittance. But unless these aspects of the migration issue are tackled systematically and backed by robust research, by those whose historical function was that of leading the working class, through a sustained process of an inclusive workers' education programme spanning different media and settings, we are more likely to see a swing towards the right. And by this I mean not only the emergence of right-wing parties, but also former leftist parties veering towards right of centre. It is these sort of arguments that would be at the forefront of a critical pedagogy in this day and age. They are the very arguments some colleagues and I have been advancing in our sociology classes for a number of years.

Historical and political economic perspectives need to be *taken* to demonstrate how neoliberal politics with their structural adjustment programmes in Africa and other parts of the "majority world" have exacerbated the disparities between South and North. Colonialism has not gone away, but has taken different forms. Many of which were highlighted when I detailed the many reasons why people flee their country. And as also underlined earlier, framing the whole discourse of migration within the context of "security" and the need to provide secure borders, as part of the war on terror and the threat to some kind of "national" culture and lifestyle, makes the right to asylum and mobility (ironically that same right exercised and encouraged within the EU and by globalization itself) difficult to exercise in a safe and straightforward manner. This manner applies only to the mobility of goods… and goods from certain countries. Ask Palestinians seeking to transfer goods from one part of Palestine to another? It does not apply to all people. Some are allowed to be, relatively speaking, more freely and comfortably mobile than others.

In my view, this is all part of a racist imperialist mindset. There is recent talk about providing the right conditions for "investment" in Africa not to compel people to move elsewhere. I can only greet this idea with a smirk on my face. First, Western forces ravage a continent and drain it of its resources (as shown in the work of the late Walter Rodney, 1973) and now they attempt to resuscitate it – a tall order indeed. I am also very suspicious of any proposal which has containment as its underlying feature. In fact, I detect racist overtones in this idea, namely that Africans are to remain in Africa and do not belong elsewhere.

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(by Suoranta) which appeared in the *Review of Pedagogy, Education and Cultural Studies* and the other (by Simicevic) in *Truthout* and the Croatian journal *H-Alter*.

NOTE

[1] http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/oct/03/mediterranean-migrant-deaths-avoidable-loss

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DAVID GABBARD

8. GO STUPID

A Letter to Aspiring Imbeciles

INTRODUCTION[1]

I have two contradictory reasons for being so happy to have the opportunity to write this summation of the evolution of my thoughts on education and compulsory schooling (two very distinct things) to this point in my life. The first is tied to a conversation that I had with my friend, Professor Madhu Suri Prakash one afternoon in the fall of 1984 during my post-doctoral studies at Penn State University. She and I were discussing our writing processes and the challenges of publishing within academia. Most of my memories of that conversation have long since faded, but I still vividly recall one specific question she posed to me: Whom do you write for? I'm not sure that I knew the answer immediately. I suspect that I did. I knew the answer, but without properly understanding it. Now that I have, after many years of feeling haunted by Madhu's original question, grown into that understanding, I feel no cause for hesitation in stating that I write for one person and one person alone. I write for myself.

This raises the question of why I write. For me, writing originates from questions that stem from our encounters and experiences in the world. The pursuit of answers to those questions captures the essence of what it means to be a student, what it means to study, and what it means to be educated, though this should never be regarded as a terminal destination. Pursuing answers questions inevitably leads to more questions, leaving our answers always partial and tentative.

We encounter or experience many types of things that can induce questions in us, including other texts – the outcomes of other persons' inquiries. Recently, I have encountered a number of texts that have forced me to rethink nearly everything that I have written. Better, these texts (primarily from Jacques Lacan & Slavoj Žižek) hold the promise of allowing me, not to reject, but to resituate my earlier thoughts within a more illuminating framework. For that reason, then, I am happy to have this opportunity to revisit the evolution of my inquiries and their origins to assist me in their reorientation as a whole series of new questions carries/drives me in new directions.

My second reason for welcoming this opportunity stands in contradiction to the first. Yes, I am writing this for myself, but I am also writing this for my students. Ultimately, it doesn't matter what level of student – undergraduate, Masters, or

B. J. Porfilio & D. R. Ford (Eds.), Leaders in Critical Pedagogy, 103–113.

Doctoral, but I am especially writing to my doctoral students, especially those seeking the license to pursue their questions professionally via a position in academia.

Anyone applying to the doctoral program in Curriculum, Instruction, and Foundational Studies here at Boise State University should know that I left my job at East Carolina University, where I had worked for 18 years, precisely because I wanted to work with doctoral students. You should also know that I will pose a minimum of two questions to you during the interview that forms part of our admissions process. First, I will want know what questions drove you to pursue a doctoral degree in education. Second, I will also want to hear about the autobiographical experiences that forged those questions. I believe that every search committee in higher education should pose these same two questions to the finalists, if not all candidates, for any faculty or academic administrative position. Far too often, I have encountered junior faculty who leave their doctoral programs without a clear idea of what they want to write about. They don't know what questions they want to pursue.

In 2012, I held a series of retreats in my home in Greenville, North Carolina for a number of junior faculty suffering from a lack of direction in their writing. Naively and presumptuously, I began the second of those retreats by asking them to take 30 minutes of reflective time to write in their journals about the questions that pushed them into higher education and the autobiographical experiences that gave rise to those questions. Shockingly, the majority of them reported not being driven to higher education/teacher education because of any internal conversation or questions, but for other reasons. Sally, for example, revealed that she had been encouraged by other teachers at the public school from where she retired to go into teacher education because it was the next logical step in her "career trajectory." Randall reported that he'd left his job at a private middle school to enter doctoral studies in hopes that it would garner him greater status in the eyes of his parents, who – to that point – had shown favouritism towards his sister because of the money she was earning as an accountant.

Hearing their stories made me seriously question the admissions and mentoring practices of doctoral programs. Sadly, it made sense to me that no one had thought or cared to pose questions to these people about their questions or the experiences that had shaped them. As standard practice, doctoral programs assign students to an initial advisor whom they will likely serve as a graduate assistant. Through their assistantship, they'll be tied to that professor's research agenda, eventually picking a piece of that agenda for their own dissertation. In the tradition of compulsory schooling, they experience the majority of their doctoral programs, including their comprehensive exams and dissertations, as ritual performances. They become exercises conducted for the sake of earning the piece of paper, whether the doctoral students have any authentic, sustainable interest in it or not.

In never learning to pose and pursue their own questions, they never learn to write for themselves. Even once they graduate, writing for publication becomes its own ritual performance for the sake of earning tenure. Once they secure tenure, many of them stop writing and stop publishing. It was all only part of a game, a game whose

most rudimentary rules they learned in elementary school when their teachers told them never to use the words I, me, my, or mine in any of their writing. The hidden message in this is clear: "no one cares what you think, just behave and do what you are told to do." In the end, the victims of this institutionalized learning come not to care about their own thoughts, or even the products of their own work. So long as it gets published and earns them tenure, it satisfies what they learn to perceive as the requirements – nothing more.

For me, it would be immoral not to ask you, as a potential doctoral student, about the questions that drove you into higher education. Once I hear those questions, I'm curious and intrigued to hear the personal stories of the life events that spurred those questions. And only once I hear their answers can I guide you in choosing the right member of our faculty to help guide you in the pursuit of your questions. If that person happens to be me, I can promise you a number of things. First, I will encourage you to pursue your own questions in order that you can learn to write for yourself. Second, I will pose questions to you about the assumptions contained within your questions, prodding you consider whether or not you are posing the right questions with pretending to know what those questions are. Third, I will push you to treat each of the courses you take as an opportunity to refine, rethink, and expand the scale and scope of your questions, even and especially to reflect more critically upon the very experiences that led you to formulate them. Finally, I can promise you that by the end of your program, the questions you pose and pursue in your dissertation will be your own, though they might not be the same ones that your brought to the program.

For me, then, coming to understand what it meant to write for myself meant recognizing that researching and writing represent my pursuit of questions that have emerged from my own experiences. It's difficult to know for certain whether we choose the questions we pursue, or whether they choose us. In either case, those questions emerge from a particular context. Autobiographical events trigger those questions as bi-products of our encounters with the world, including our encounters with other people's ideas formulated through their pursuit of their questions, which may bear similarities to our own. Through these complex series of interactions, our questions evolve. They change. In the process, we change. The basic core of our original questions may retain their essential qualities, just as we do, but as the complexity of our networks of interactions grows exponentially with our experiences and the number of our encounters with other complex ideas, our questions also grow and move toward greater complexity. In the remainder of this chapter, I will discuss the origins and evolution of the questions that I've pursued across an academic career than will have soon spanned more than a quarter century.

ORIGINAL STUPIDITY

To the best of our knowledge, the Big Bang precipitating the creation of the universe occurred approximately 13.8 billion years ago. I don't believe that our

minds can actually fathom time on such a grand scale – 13,800,000,000 years! We have even greater difficulty grappling with the size of the universe, or what we can observe of it. Astronomers measure great distances in light years. A single light year spans 5,880,000,000,000 (5.88 trillion) miles. The observable universe spans 46,600,000,000 (46.6 billion) light years, so to calculate the size of the universe in miles we must multiply 46,600,000,000 x 5,880,000,000,000. How do we fathom such a number?

The galaxy where we locate our solar system measures a mere 100,000 light years. Mere? In miles, that translates as 100,000 x 5,880,000,000,000. Our solar system (and our sun is merely one among an estimated 300,000,000 [300 billion] stars in our galaxy alone, and there are an estimated 100,000,000,000 [100 billion] galaxies in the observable universe) only stretches 178,610,000,000 (178.61 billion) miles, not even close to a light year. Attempting to think on these scales humbles us by revealing the limits of our cognitive abilities. As we have come to say in our contemporary vernacular, "we're not all that!"

Returning to our time scale, 13.8 billion years ago the Big Bang set in motion a whole series of events that evolved to form systems of greater and greater complexity. Initially, the heat from the explosion made matter and energy indistinguishable. Eventually, as this hot mixture cooled, the four forces of the universe emerged, and quarks – the component parts of atomic nuclei formed, leading to the creation of protons and neutrons. Electrons soon followed, but the first atoms (hydrogen and helium) did not form for another 380,000 years, but their appearance led to the emergence of the first stars 13.5 billion years ago. As those stars died, they created the conditions leading to the formation of all of the other chemical elements now represented in the periodic table between 11 and 12 billion years ago.

As those chemical elements spread throughout the universe and fell in the orbits of various stars, such as our own, they went through a process known as accretion. That is, they began bonding together and forming larger and larger and increasingly more complex objects. It took about 7–8 billion years, but eventually that process led to the creation of planets and solar systems. Our planet formed approximately 4.6 billion years ago. The unique chemical composition of Earth, coupled with numerous other factors, eventually allowed for the emergence of the first life forms 3.5 billion years ago, though our species didn't appear until about 250,000 years ago. Again, scale of these numbers humbles us, as it should. Without eliminating any of that humility, David Christian, founder of the emergent field of Big History, helps us grapple with the problem of scale by shirking the whole of the 13.8 billion year history by more than a billion. If we collapse the entire history of the universe into 13 years,

> our Earth would have been formed five years ago. The first multi- celled organisms would have evolved about 7 months ago. After flourishing for several weeks, the dinosaurs would have been wiped out by an asteroid impact about three weeks ago. The first hominines would have appeared about three

> days ago, and our own species about 53 minutes ago. The first agriculturalists would have flourished about 5 minutes ago, and the first Agrarian civilizations would have appeared just 53 minutes ago. Modern industrial societies would have existed for just six seconds. (Christian, 2008, p. 12)

Placing my self on this time scale would mean that I have been alive for about 1 second out of those 13 years. Most of my undergraduate students have only been alive for less than a half-second. Again, the humility to be gained from considering these numbers should not be underestimated in its psychological and philosophical importance.

On the one hand, situating myself on these scales leads me to ponder the "Goldilocks conditions" that allowed for my own creation. Not too cold, not too hot, things had to be just right. How many things had to fall in place for my parents to even meet, let alone marry and produce five children? Like most members of our modern society, I cringe at the thought of my parents copulating, but we should all learn to think of our parents' physical union as our own personal Big Bang moment. Sometime in November of 1959, my mother's ovaries happened to produce a particular egg that fused with a particular sperm cell generated by my father's testicles. With each gamete carrying its own unique blend of genetic materials, this fusion produced the zygote that would become my organism.

I understand that Big Bang moment of my conception, sometime in November of 1959, as marking my entry into a state of nature that Jacques Lacan describes as "the real." There I remained, developing in a condition of pure, primordial need, unable to separate or draw any distinction between my being and the world around me – throughout my prenatal development and for much of the first six months of my neonatal development. Gradually, however, my socialization into symbolic/social reality separated me from "the real," eventually closing me off from it forever as I entered into the signifying chain of language.

Two years ago, as I sat on the front porch of my home in North Carolina, something occurred to me. I was thinking about the appeal that religion holds for so many members of our species. I was born at a Point A. In my case, Point A was July 15, 1960. Somewhere out there on the horizon, I know there is a Point B. I know my life will end. Where was my consciousness before Point A? What will happen to it after Point B? We don't know at what point in the history of our species' cognitive evolution we developed the ability to form and pose these questions, but we can't deny the fear they stir in us. While religion offers comforting promises of a possibly blissful after-life, the only intellectually honest answer I can give to these questions contains three words that members of our species seem loathe to utter in response to almost any serious question – "I don't know."

Even after my initial investigations of Lacan's work, I am no longer sure of where to place my Point A. It seems that I have at least three choices. Point A1 could be my Big Bang, the moment of my conception. Point A2 could be my original Point A, the moment of my actual birth into the world beyond my mother's womb. Point

A3, could be the moment of my first memory as a conscious being. No matter where I locate that Point A, the answer to the original question remains the same: "I don't know." From this, I argue that we should replace the notion of original sin with the idea of our original stupidity.

I don't say this to shock or to try and be funny. Though we typically use the word stupid as an insult, its meaning relates to a certain lack in one's ability to know. Stupidity differs in this sense from ignorance. Ignorance refers to a lack of knowledge or understanding. Again, stupidity points to a lack of capacity to know or to understand. Returning to my questions regarding the pre-origins, origins, and fate of our consciousness, the response of "I don't know" corresponds to Lacan's characterization of the real as impossible. As symbolic animals, we have no choice but to leave it, never to return. Once we are pulled into the symbolic world of language, we lose our access to it, as well as any capacity to know it. Thus, the impossibility of the real, in Lacanian terms, renders us fundamentally stupid in our condition. There are things that we just lack the capacity to know, but knowing and acknowledging these limitations adds to the personal humility and the concomitant social empathy offered to us when we place ourselves on Big History's scales of time and space. All that each of us, all that any life-form has on this "pale blue dot" is our time between Point A and Point B, leaving me to wonder why we don't use this recognition as the basis of an ethic that would have us approach one another with greater humility and treat each other with greater empathy. Perhaps, we are too stupid to see our stupidity, which only exacerbates that stupidity further.

STAGES OF STUPIDITY

Žižek, in his introduction to *Less Than Nothing* (2013), lays out a kind of taxonomy of stupidity that I will use here to trace the evolution of my thought as a critical educational theorist, providing background information on the autobiographical experiences that gave rise to the questions I've pursued over the past twenty-five years. They began emerging during my four-year enlistment in the U.S. Army between 1983 and 1987. Yes, I volunteered to serve in the military, but not out of patriotism or any sense of duty. Very few of the soldiers with whom I served did that. The vast majority of us signed up either because we didn't have the means to pay for college, or because we couldn't find other work. I fell into the latter group.

Unlike most of the other soldiers, I had already earned my undergraduate degree. I was an English major, but I never gave any thought to teaching. I majored in English because those classes were the only ones I was passing in college, and because one of my American literature professors told me that he expected to see me in print one day. I was able to pass my English classes by writing papers that integrated my knowledge of rock and roll music lyrics with the study of classic works of literature and poetry.

Like nearly all the soldiers that I met while I was in the Army, I came from a working class family. Both of my parents were born in eastern Kentucky, one of the

poorest regions of Appalachia which has always been one of the poorest regions of the country. My father never attended a day of school in his life. He was functionally illiterate. As one of eleven children, he had to work to help support his family from the time he was old enough to use a shovel or other tools used on the farm. When he was ten years old, he went to work for a coal mining company. Child labor laws weren't enforced in places like McKee, Kentucky, not in the 1920s. For 25 cents a day, he used to be sent into a small dark hole in the side of a mountain on his hands and knees with a bucket and a shovel. He would fill the bucket with coal, bring it back out, and go back in. One day he broke his shovel, and the company men docked him a full week's wages to replace it.

He and my mother married when he was seventeen, and she was thirteen. When I was a child, she used to tell me that she went to school until she completed third grade. She would later tell me that she'd completed the eighth grade. She was so ashamed of who she was and where she was from. She used to lie to employers about her educational background, telling them that she'd earned a high school diploma, but the courthouse where her records were kept had burned down. So, she had no way of proving it, but they had no way of disproving it either.

She gave birth to my brother in 1940, just a few months before she turned fifteen. They lived in a one-room shack until they had the first of three daughters. Then, they moved in with her parents for a time. Eventually, along with many other rural Appalachians during that period, they moved north in search of work. Dad found jobs in the factories that lined the Ohio side of the Ohio River just west of Cincinnati. By the time that I was born in 1960, my youngest sister was already 14. It was like being raised by four very different mothers. My brother had joined the Marines by the time I was born. I didn't know him until after he was already married and living on his own.

My three sisters each had their unique but major impact on my symbolic universe. In the first place, they all read books to me, and they read to me frequently. Thanks to them, I knew how to read before I started kindergarten. Secondly, they all loved rock and roll and they all loved to dance. From the time that I was old enough to walk, they would take me to the basement where mom and dad kept the record player. They would play Chuck Berry, Little Richard, Elvis Pressley, and Buddy Holly records, and they taught me how all of the popular dances of the day.

When my oldest sister took a job as a flight attendant (they used to call them stewardesses) with United Airlines, she moved to Golden, Colorado, outside of Denver. A little later, my middle sister married a Jewish man who was working on his PhD in chemistry at Lowell Tech outside of Boston. I have made a point of thanking them repeatedly for their moves, but not because I was glad to see them move out of the house so that I could have my own bedroom. No, by leaving little North Bend, Ohio, they opened my awareness of a much bigger world out there. Travelling to visit them made me believe that another life was possible for me, and I wanted another life.

I hated school. Foreshadowing my interest in Michel Foucault's ideas, when I in the third grade I remember telling my friends how school was like a prison. The principal was like a warden, and the teachers were guards. We, the students, were prisoners, forced to be there against our will. As much as I loved learning and loved reading, I hated school. I learned that schools keep records of us that include more than just transcripts of our classes and our grades. They also contain teachers' observations of us, and notes from their conversations with our parents. Curious, I went to my high school, where I hadn't stepped foot for several years, to request copies of my records. I was shocked to find that my second grade teacher had written of me that I was "overly sensitive" and needed "a stronger male role model" to help me overcome my sensitivity. My earliest memories of school revolve around being bullied, beginning with my first day at the bus stop when some older boys took turns punching me on my upper arm. I did not conform to the symbolic order's norms for the category of male. I think this accounts, at least in part, for my shyness; I wanted to be invisible.

I also remember the teachers accusing me of lying about the places I'd been to and seen. They never confronted me about it, but they confronted my mother about my habitual lying. I would have loved to have seen the looks on their faces when mom told them that I was telling the truth. I had been there. I had done that or seen that. When she told one of my high school teachers that I'd been accepted into Centre College of Kentucky, this teacher told her that had she known I was going to college, she'd have never failed me in algebra my freshman year.

Given these kinds of experiences, I understand why I never wanted to be a teacher. These same experiences primed me well for the challenges I would later present to the symbolic order's representations of government schools as inherently benevolent institutions. Those thoughts, however, as I mentioned earlier, didn't germinate until I was in the Army. It deserves mentioning that I didn't just join the Army. When I enlisted, I signed a contract to join the 2/75th Ranger Battalion once I'd completed basic training and airborne school. Though a bad parachute landing during the Ranger Indoctrination Program (Yes, they really call it that) forced my transfer to a mechanized infantry unit in Kirch Goens, Germany, I was still at the Ranger battalion when the alert was sounded for the invasion of Greneda. We were all ordered to prepare to go. The Lacanian real, manifest in the fear of death, pressed very hard against me for the first hours of that alert. I ended up not having to go, but I've never forgotten that feeling.

The memories of that fear remained strong in me throughout the rest of my service. It made me think harder about my decision to enlist. What had I agreed to do? Die? Kill? For what? My encounters with young Germans after my transfer only deepened my reflections on these questions. They, along with many of the Latin American guys I served with, had a view of the United States government and its military that differed sharply from anything I had heard about in school or even college. This returns me to the theme of stupidity that I began with in this section.

Again, Žižek (2013) develops a taxonomy of stupidity, beginning with two opposing forms of it, morons and idiots. I will begin with his description of a moron. Within the framework of Žižek's Lacanian understanding of the human psyche, we can understand the moron as someone who identifies with, draws their identity from the "big Other." For Lacan, the big Other is the symbolic order – the rules and norms of society (Lacan, 1991a; Lacan, 1991b; Žižek, 2007). As the big Other constitutes part of the human psyche, each of us internalizes the symbolic order as it is manifest in language. While those rules and norms guide our actions and our interactions, informing what we come to know as "common sense," not everyone derives their identity from them, only – by Žižek's definition – morons.

Though Žižek does not make this connection, I think it is worth our time here to consider the pathology of the moron. What distinguishes the moron most from non-morons? In my view, if I understand Žižek and Lacan properly, the issue rests with the object of the moron's identification – the big Other – that shapes his or her subjectivity (Lacan, 1991b). We must contrast that with the object of the non-moron's identification. Identity and identification, for Lacan, lie in a domain of the psyche that is separate from but closely intertwined with the symbolic order, namely the imaginary order. In his theory of psychosexual development, he asserts that human beings exist in a state of nature from birth to six months; a period marked exclusively by our primal needs and our internal drives to satisfy those needs. In this stage of our development, we experience the full materiality of our existence in the world (the Real), and we have no sense of being separate from it. We have yet to form an identity outside of the world. There is no "I." As it germinates, the Real begins to dissipate (Lacan, 1991a).

The formation of an "I"-dentity occurs during what Lacan (1991a) terms the "mirror stage." Around the age of 6 months, we develop the capacity to recognize and identify with our image in a mirror. At the same time, this recognition of our self generates an awareness of our separateness from the world, leading to great anxiety and an impossible demand to recover our lost sense of holism, our original feeling of oneness with and our attachment to the Real. Typically, as we pass through our psychosocial development, we falsely recognize our image in the mirror as a stable, coherent self that can substitute for the self that is lost. The image becomes what Lacan refers to as our "Ideal-I" or our "ideal ego." As an idyllic construct, however, it serves only as a fantasy to be filled in later in life by some other object/mirror image with whom we come to identify. For non-morons, that object of identification from the imaginary order exists in constant interaction with but remains separate from the big Other of the symbolic order. For morons, however, there is no separation of the imaginary from the symbolic as the big Other becomes the object of identification through which they structure their subjectivity.

Idiots, on the other hand, manifest an altogether different and opposite form of stupidity. Rather than deriving their sense of reality and their sense of identity from the big Other of the symbolic order, idiots act in a manner that is oblivious to the big Other taken by others to be the dictates of common sense. Žižek is not suggesting

that anyone behaves as an idiot at all times. Typically, idiocy is confined to discrete situations such as the one he provides as an example, recounting a story from his first visit to New York when a waiter asked him: "'How was your day?' Mistaking the phrase for a genuine question," Žižek says, "I answered him truthfully ('I am dead tired, jet-lagged, stressed out…'), and he looked at me as if I were a complete idiot… and he was right: this kind of stupidity is precisely that of an idiot" (Žižek, 2013, p. 1).

For me, as a soldier to have qualified as a moron under Žižek's definition, I would have had to enlist with a zealous willingness to fight, kill, and die to advance the strategic interests of U.S.-based multinational corporations. As I have written frequently (Gabbard, 2007, 2008, 2008c, 2010, 2013, 2014a, 2014b; Gabbard & Ritter, 2014), our dominant values and beliefs stem from our dominant institutions – market institutions. I've never been that stupid. Neither were any of the soldiers with whom I served. Our stupidity was closer to that belonging to Žižek's definition of an idiot. We were oblivious to the interests that we, in our military service, would serve. Like too many critical educational theorists (see Gabbard, 2014), we had mistaken the identity of our society as a democratic one, remaining oblivious to the market-driven nature of the state. It was, in part, this idiocy that led me to blame my teachers, rather than the larger system of state-mandated, compulsory schooling for what I perceived at the time in deficit terms as my ignorance. My teachers were either ignorant themselves, or they had deliberately lied to me. Otherwise, I would have never enlisted in the Army, effectively agreeing to kill and possibly die for corporate profits, not for any great democratic ideals.

At the same time that I was reaching these conclusions, a number of national reports and books critical of schools began appearing. This was the mid-1980s. There was no Internet. Being stationed in Germany, *Stars and Stripes* – the military newspaper – was my primary source of information. We hadn't even heard of the internet, and I lacked the cultural capital to know I could have sought out the New York Times or different periodicals as alternative sources. All I knew was that other people had begun making criticisms of our schools, and I allowed this simple knowledge to ferment my own bitterness toward my teachers. I made the decision to pursue a Master's degree in education and become a teacher myself, imagining myself teaching *the truth* instead of reproducing the same lies to which I had fallen victim.

That vision died, however, on my very first evening in graduate school at the University of Cincinnati. I was fortunate enough to have registered for Joel Spring's History of Education course. After three hours of hearing Spring present his version of the colonial and post-revolutionary period in American schooling, I learned that the problem lay not with my individual teachers. The problem was far more systemic. That was the night I decided to pursue a doctorate and to go into teacher education. More teachers, I concluded, had to see and teach the truth in order to preserve and expand American democracy.

This was the battle as I perceived it at the time. I was still stupid enough, or addicted enough to my own idiocy, that I wanted to believe in the democratic character of American society. Our institutions may have been corrupted by corporate greed, but we could redeem them, and our schools could play a central role in that redemption. This kind of idiocy still permeates critical educational theory, which I why I wrote "Idiots!: Why Critical Educational Theory Isn't Critical Enough." And I have long felt a tension between my work and that of such figures as Henry Giroux and Peter McLaren. I attribute much of that tension to the influences of Ivan Illich (1971) and Michel Foucault (1995) in helping me challenge the pastoral power of schools – the notion that schools can lead the individual and/or society into some condition of secular salvation. Perhaps, I spent too many years as an agnostic to this belief. I wavered for a few years, before turning atheist in rejecting it.

CONCLUSION

None of this should be taken to suggest that I am not still stupid, but my stupidity has never fit Žižek's definition of a moron, and it hasn't fit his definition of an idiot for a very long time now. In addition to the "original stupidity" that I described earlier, I suffer from a form of stupidity that comes much closer to what he describes as proper to an imbecile. That is, I am aware of layers of symbolic order that surrounds me, but I don't trust it. More significantly, I'm too stupid to know what to do about it.

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DOMENICA MAVIGLIA

9. JOE LYONS KINCHELOE'S CRITICAL PEDAGOGY

CULTURAL AND BIOGRAPHICAL REMARKS

The son of ardent democrats, Joe Lyons Kincheloe (Kingsport, Tennessee 1950 – Kingston, Jamaica 2008) was always politically active, showcasing a personality that was so oriented towards autonomy and critical sense that at the age of twelve he was already renowned for his ability to unnerve teachers with his speeches in defence of the weakest citizens and against all forms of segregation.

Against the sincere advice of his high school guidance counsellor, who asked him to consider the possibility of attending a vocational school as he thought that Kincheloe could not possibly aspire to become anything more than a piano tuner – Kincheloe graduated first at Emory and Henry College, a small Methodist college in Virginia, then at the University of Tennessee. Subsequently, he completed a Master's degree in history from U Tennessee and, after reading the book *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* by Paulo Freire, he obtained first a Master's in education and, finally, a Doctorate in history of education.

Beginning his career in 1980, Kincheloe worked in a number of universities: he served as department chair of the education department at Sinte Gleska College on the Rosebud Sioux Indian Reservation in South Dakota, where he researched the disenfranchisement of Native Americans. Subsequently, he started a doctoral program in curriculum studies at the Louisiana State University in Shreveport (1983–1988). Following his work in Louisiana, he became a full professor at Clemson University (1989–1992), where he published his first book, *Getting Beyond the Facts: Teaching Social Studies in the Late 20th Century*. He also published his second book, now a classic in critical research: *Teachers as Researchers: Qualitative Inquiry as a Path to Empowerment*. In 1992–1994, he worked at Florida International University where, with his wife Shirley, he edited a new series of books, *Counterpoints: Studies in the Postmodern Theory of Education*, with Peter Lang Publishing. These books placed critical themes and voices at the centre of pedagogical discourse, which mainstream education had marginalised.

In 1994, he moved to The Pennsylvania State University, where he taught cultural studies and critical pedagogy for four years, and was then released for a 2-year leave to become The Belle Zeller Chair of Public Policy and Administration at Brooklyn College. Following this position, he resigned from Penn State and moved to the

B. J. Porfilio & D. R. Ford (Eds.), Leaders in Critical Pedagogy, 115–125.

CUNY (City University of New York) Graduate Center Faculty, where he was an instrumental architect of the new Urban Education Doctoral Program.

In January 2006, he was invited by the Prime Minister of Canada to join the Faculty of Education of McGill University in Montreal, Quebec as Canada Research Chair in Critical Pedagogy (Steinberg, 2011).

At McGill University, Kincheloe played a crucial role as founder and editor of the *International Journal of Critical Pedagogy* and, together, with Shirley R. Steinberg, he established the *Paulo and Nita Freire International Project for Critical Pedagogy*.

As Steinberg (2011) stated, "Kincheloe had many radical loves: his family, his students, and writing. His passion fuelled his struggles against inequality, oppression in all of its varied forms, and in particular against the stupidification of education."

Born in one of the poorest areas of Eastern Tennessee, Kincheloe grew up surrounded by ugly forms of classism and racism typical of the Southern United States during the 1950s and 1960s. However, this U.S. pedagogue developed a keen critical sense that allowed him to gain a perspective of the world as seen through the eyes of people suffering and how dominant power worked. According to Steinberg (2011), these experiences were at the basis of his research, his education, his activism, and his will to establish and open the *Paulo and Nita Freire International Project for Critical Pedagogy* on March 13th, 2008, in the Department of Integrated Studies in Education of the Faculty of Education at McGill University.

The Project was the product of the desires of important academics and contemporary critical thinking advocates in North America, both in the fields of pedagogy and sociology: Joe Lyons Kincheloe (promoter of the project), Henry Giroux, Peter McLaren, Shirley R. Steinberg (director of the project), Donaldo Macedo, bell hooks, Stanley Aronowitz, Lilia Bartolome, Ramon Flecha, Luis Huerta, Elizabeth Quintero, Marc Pruyn, Deborah Britzman, Philip Wexler, and John Willinsky, to name a few.

The Project was created to build an international critical community devoted to work, develop, and disseminate the research carried out in social, political, and educational fields in order to promote social justice and empower marginalized peoples in a variety of different cultural contexts. Following Paulo Freire's work in critical pedagogy, the Project was characterized by a deep commitment to the study of oppression in education, with the aim of highlighting how issues of race, class, gender, sexual orientation, and colonialism shape the nature and aims of education. The Project played a role in coordinating global research, focusing especially on the work of teachers and students, in order to improve the contribution offered by pedagogy to the theory of social justice and to the democratic quality of life.

In the spirit of Freire's work, Kincheloe's intention was to promote a form of ever-developing critical pedagogy ready to question itself with new theories relating to different cultures and, more importantly, with new and dynamic ideas that could shape the critical pedagogy of the 21st century.

The core research of the *Paulo and Nita Freire International Project for Critical Pedagogy* focused on issues relating to the foundations of critical pedagogy theory,

the correlations between power, justice, and oppression that affect the theory and practice of education. According to Kincheloe, this implies the development of wide lenses of interpretation that could ease the analysis and understanding of the nature of these correlations, besides helping in establishing the responsibilities that they have vis-à-vis education (Kincheloe, 2008, pp. ix–x). Yet, "critical pedagogy does not aim at providing universal explanations of pedagogical aspects, rather it proposes rigorous tools of analysis to explore the multiple manifestations of education in different contexts and cultures, delivering interesting theoretical and practical insights for primary schools, secondary schools, and universities" (Kincheloe, 2008, pp. ix–x).

Much of the work carried out by the worldwide network of scholars, professors, and students of critical pedagogy was filed in a multimedia database that collected, stored, analyzed, digitized, and circulated electronically the materials, documents, and multimedia resources regarding the history and recent developments of critical pedagogy and its impact on education. The virtual network featured a forum and a blog created to spread its projects and initiatives all over the world and to promote the debate concerning the events, accomplishments, failures, opportunities, and problems of the discipline. After Kincheloe's death, December 19, 2008, the Freire Project was renamed as The Freire Project of Critical Cultural, Community, Youth, and Media Activism (freireproject.org) and has been sustained as a virtual community by Shirley R. Steinberg and Giuliana Cucinelli.

According to Kincheloe, critical pedagogy has evolved in the 21st century as a cross-disciplinary field of study that tries to open new theoretical and operational stages (Kincheloe, 2008, p. xi). It is mainly for this reason that the research carried out by the *Paulo and Nita Freire International Project for Critical Pedagogy* and now, *The Freire Project* aims at exploring the possibilities of this evolution, focusing on the complexity of the multiple forms of knowledge, the varieties of research methodologies, and the objectives of current educational practices and the nature of their results, in order to promote the survival of a genuinely democratic school.

PEDAGOGICAL THOUGHT

Besides being acknowledged for his contributions to the research on postformalism, critical constructivism, critical multiculturalism, critical cultural studies, Islamophobia, research bricolage, and critical social studies education, Kincheloe is recognized as one of the most influential representatives of North American critical pedagogy.

The essence of his pedagogical effort is set in a descriptive and detailed pedagogical-educational framework that interprets critical pedagogy as an approach designed to develop a democratic critical consciousness, which is useful to identify and understand the impact, the correlations, and the subtle influences that the multiple and deceitful dynamics of the structures and processes of dominant power have on theories and practices of education, considering that the purpose of education is to

challenge and transform the social and oppressing conditions of those who, with easy resignation, almost fatalistically fall victims to them. Hence, his pedagogy is linked specifically to promoting social justice and the empowerment of marginalized peoples (Kincheloe, 2008, pp. 6–8).

In all of his astonishing number of publications, Kincheloe presented a shrewd and passionate analysis of the systematic *modus operandi* followed by the multiple and diverse masks that dominant power exploits to build identities and specific oppressive groups that shape and give rise to complex processes of racism, religious intolerance, despicable sexual labelling, and gender and social class discrimination.

Kincheloe brilliantly identifies the main topical issues of North American critical pedagogy through a historical analysis of what he defines as the "historical roots of critical pedagogy," the fusion of a number of theoretical traditions: critical theory of the Frankfurt School, the concepts of education and hegemony presented by Antonio Gramsci, the pedagogy of the oppressed of the Brazilian pedagogue Paulo Freire, the concepts of education and power described by Michel Foucault, and the concepts of education and democracy outlined by John Dewey. Kincheloe points out that North American critical pedagogy is composed both of pedagogical theory and educational practice, and that it is basically hinged on the analysis and critical explanation of the role that political and cultural power play in shaping consciousness. Kincheloe offered a new way to understand education by escaping from the general trend of adopting biased evaluation criteria, reviewing and reassessing with ideological disillusion contexts, forms of knowledge, and issues such as human dignity, freedom, authority, scholastic rigor, and social responsibility. The analysis of the American pedagogue focuses on the cognitive, socio-cultural, political-economic dynamics that characterise the context in which the teaching and learning processes are shaped, providing guidelines to understand all the elements that interact in the field of contemporary education. It is clear that the paramount aspect of his work is represented by the development of a pedagogical theory that characterizes itself in the field of education as a research activity based on social, political, cultural, and economic studies that refer to critical theory, feminist theory, Indigenous knowledge, post- and anti-colonial knowledge, and other theories and philosophical thoughts that have the purpose of analysing the multiple facets of dominant power that for centuries have built an empire based on marginalisation, discrimination, inequality, and injustice.

Starting from this premise, in the majority of his works, Kincheloe proposed a diagnosis of different societies, in particular the Canadian, American, Australian, New Zealand, and European ones, which often are too easily deemed to be democratic and free while instead, their individuals have been educated in relationships of social regulation and subordination, rather than in relationships of equality and independence (Kincheloe, 2008, p. 48). As a matter of fact, despite the ever changing social conditions and the powerful technological and digital progress that characterizes our age, the scholars of critical pedagogy have outlined a theory that is both socio-political and critical-pedagogical, with the purpose of reinterpreting

the political-economic and socio-cultural structure of our societies, and of designing new strategies and inquiry modalities to pull apart the phenomena through which power and oppression build a social system in which they often fully affect the life of every individual.

In this framework, critical thinking and the production of knowledge become fundamental categories of study and critical analysis, because they have the precise purpose of denouncing and exposing the deceitful and dominant forms of ideology that hide behind a false principle of objectivity and neutrality in order to take root and corrupt different social structures. Following this route, critical pedagogy scholars unmask and denounce the "mono-directional" vision of an Eurocentrism that nourishes a form of elitism that has grown deaf to the inequalities of the global system; inequalities that are accompanied and supported by different forms of hegemony and violence. According to these ideas, critical pedagogy might promote, through the use of a wide spectrum of socio-political-economic and philosophical-psychological theories, the opening of new spaces where it could be possible to build new forms of critical knowledge, besides new and efficient modalities of socio-pedagogical action, designed to counter the effects of a global system characterised by networks of power and deceitful forms of injustice.

In the current cultural framework of our society, the reflection on the conceptual issues at the basis of Joe Lyons Kincheloe's critical pedagogy might be considered as a "critical maieutic method" aimed at opening the mind of the individual to a condition of continuous questioning, which in its turn generates the sense and meaning of the "critical thinking procedure," a methodology that can lead to an area where freedom is truly enjoyed; a practice of *empowerment from*, *to have the freedom to*. It is a form of critical thinking that introduces people to a privileged place where the nature and character of what influences them is stripped to the bone, and that represents the basis of critical research in education, which has the purpose of promoting a socially just pedagogy through the integration of multi-methodologies, multi-theories, and multi-disciplines.

To some extent, through the reflection on the cultural and educational route and on the specific tensions and moral-political sensitivities, the discovery and study of Kincheloe's ideas represent an opportunity to review the dynamics of those varied forms of social marginalization that have affected entire generations of people all over the world. A phenomenon of marginalisation fed by the same institutions that should tackle oppression and inequalities, which instead too often support their survival through mechanisms that become more and more deceitful and complex. At the basis of Kincheloe's analysis, it is possible to find a fundamental theoretical-practical commitment to the political, social, and economic investigation of the educational system, or in other words, the study of the interplay between power, justice, and oppression that affects the theory and practice of education, and the possibility to transform it according to values linked to social justice, minority rights, and a specific interest in issues like diversity and marginalisation. Accordingly, the idea of individual empowerment is presented by Kincheloe as the key element

of every pedagogical project, his interpretation of critical pedagogy proves to be interested in the transformation of the power relationships in the different domains where it is possible to find experiences of human oppression. With Kincheloe, critical pedagogy highlights its value as a theoretical discipline and field of studies that considers pedagogy as the main engine of a transformation project seen as a "democratization of culture" for the development of a progressivist, creative, and democratic society, following a principle of active and pluralist citizenship.

With his proposal, Kincheloe decided, indeed, to commit himself and focus his research on the issue of the "false democratic value" of the educational practices that are systematically exploited by dominant power to present the practice of education as a democratically oriented process, while in fact it is only an ambiguous process characterized by numerous and subtle cultural practices that promote the silent reproduction of a totalitarian and oppressive regime that merely pretends to respect the value of democracy and justice.

In this educational process, as Kincheloe highlights, the main objective of the pedagogical action requires teachers and critical researchers to play a crucial and fundamental educational function that might be fulfilled only through a rigorous and thorough analysis of the wide networks that exist in education, and of the pedagogical effects of the phenomena existing in the socio-educational reality, with the aim of carrying out a democratic reform of education and improve all orders and levels of the socio-educational system. Critical researchers and teachers must, therefore, become intellectual-researchers. They must have the objective of promoting the development of a democratic, critical consciousness among their students in order to grant them social justice, transformation, and the empowerment of their lives in the contexts where they live (Kincheloe, 2008).

For Kincheloe, teachers cannot be simple transmitters of information or interpreters of a pre-established curricula; rather they must be accountable for the promotion of a critical way of teaching that, from different perspectives, draws on the concept of "cultural capital" proposed by Pierre Bourdieu, and follows up on the idea outlined by Juan Miguel Fernandez Balboa (2003), who stated that one of the first steps to helping people fulfil their potential is to convince them that their ignorance is not linked to their social status, but only to their easy resignation. This is why critical teachers have the responsibility of helping people labelled as "different" to understand what kind of important "personal capital" they represent. In other words, critical teachers must play the role of empowerment actors for those who come from a different socio-cultural context than those who define the dominant culture; people who normally are marginalised and who are considered unable to understand the codes of the cultural dominant capital. Hence, to develop a critical consciousness among students that might help them recognise and understand the masks of the dominant culture, critical researchers must be able to expose the interplay between the dynamics of power that supports the *status quo* and the ideological discourse that it produces, which normally tries to justify these fake democratic practices. In conclusion, critical teachers must support their students in the process leading

to the acquisition of a comprehensive critical vision of the educational reality and the elements that interact to cause its social implications, helping them to question themselves on specific paradigms, structures of values, and epistemological and political guidelines, with the aim of understanding different forms of knowledge, the relation between power and knowledge, and the ideological sub-trends that could even pervade the teaching methodology of teachers (Kincheloe, 2008).

It is clear that the figure of a critical researcher overlaps with the figure of a highly qualified teacher devoted to the discovery and understanding of the socio-cultural context and the needs of his/her students; a teacher who designs a curriculum that critically and thoroughly analyses the subjects tackled by the curriculum itself. On the one hand, this methodology might allow every student to appreciate the value of critical thinking, seen as the ability to reflect, analyse, interpret, compare and re-interpret; and on the other hand, it might allow teachers to trigger processes of deconstruction and reorientation of educational action and pedagogical thought.

In a number of his publications, Kincheloe points out that the task of critical pedagogy is to question the bonds existing between education and politics, between socio-political relationships and educational practices, between the reproduction of knowledge created through the revision of power hierarchies and the privileges that exist in the framework of social daily life, in classes, and in the institutions; proposing, at the same time, a program aimed at an educational transformation in which educators are trusted. In a first stage, with the responsibility of understanding the socio-political context of educational action and, in a second stage, with the responsibility of becoming actors of a radical democratic action both in educational places and in the wider social context. In this process, educators play the role of intellectuals who do not adapt but resist, challenging the dominant power through curricula, policies, educational policies, and pedagogical traditions (Kincheloe, 2008).

Critical pedagogy is interested in striking a delicate balance between social change and the acquisition of personal critical thinking skills. Even in a hostile environment, critical pedagogy has the potential to develop a rigorous education model suited to reach both objectives. In other words, critical pedagogy aims at:

> teaching, being critical thinkers, making individuals able to take on the duty of questioning reality and contributing to redefine it, change it, through the use of a productive, generative, and utopian thought that at the same time must be demystifying, releasing, and critical in the fullest meaning of this term. The most characterising factor of critical thinking – and therefore critical pedagogy – is its constant openness; its permanent ability to question the *status quo* with the aim of having a response that does not represent the truth, but only a stage on the road leading to the truth, because every answer is open to question; because the words and concepts used to formulate a question contain an infinite potential of meaning. (Fadda, 2009, p. 22)

Paulo Freire was always an advocate of the idea that pedagogy cannot avoid the struggle to change the world through the development of rigorous forms of analysis. Critical pedagogy is not solely interested in social change; it is also dedicated to cultivating the development of a critical awareness among all members of society.

In line with these guidelines, Kincheloe described critical pedagogy as an exercise of freedom; a freedom that in this framework becomes responsibility and even a moral obligation to gain (critical) awareness of all elements that influence us in the development of our theories or the implementation of specific practical choices. Critical pedagogy represents an opportunity to expose, question, study, and recognise the nature and the character of these influences.

CONCLUSION

With a strong criticism of U.S. imperialism and a passionate defense of Freire's methodologies, the description of critical pedagogy provided by Kincheloe draws a clear picture of the pedagogical framework in which North American post-colonial pedagogues work.

It is a pedagogy that praises the taxonomy of all forms of knowledge and non-conformist educational methodologies, and it is based on processes aimed at raising the awareness of the people it involves. In other words, it recognises the crucial influence played by social relationships and it denounces the paralysing burden posed by the power dynamics that characterise the educational experience. At the same time, Kincheloe's pedagogy is deeply committed to exposing the perverse influences of these power dynamics, with the purpose of activating processes of genuine cultural empowerment.

From this perspective, the dialogic relationship becomes a true asset in order to avoid the dependency of the individual to factors like cultural diversity, ethnicity, sexuality, religious faith, gender, and social class. At the same time, though, it represents an appeal for a responsible participation in the life of the community, calling for the concrete commitment of the individual in a dimension of solidarity and respect for the Other.

Kincheloe's pedagogical thought must be interpreted by taking into account the non-neutrality of culture and the supremacy of the fight against marginalisation, injustice, inequality, and human suffering. Kincheloe's pedagogy is deeply committed; it represents a form of resistance, without uncertain ideals and pretences.

On the one hand, the primary purpose of this strongly empowering and liberating approach is to put at the centre of the educational discourse the request of oppressed individuals to be recognised, while on the other hand, it triggers a global rejection of a development model based on liberal thinking, which is too easily associated with the main engine of capitalism, an association that often leads to its condemnation.

Kincheloe does not content himself with merely proposing the transformation of power relationships into relationships of intercultural respect and cooperation, but he argues that it is necessary to gain awareness of the different forms of direct

power-domination that have been established at a global level, because he believes that this empowering process would be unjustified without their condemnation.

It is clear that Kincheloe's critical pedagogy has numerous merits. It is of significant importance to accept his invitation to reflect, doubt, express, and openly question oneself; an invitation particularly addressed to those people who have an educational responsibility. The pedagogy also gives them the courage to wear the hat of the intellectual-researcher, one who is able to enhance every aspect and dimension of what is considered "different" or "unfamiliar."

The fact that Kincheloe did not consider people in a static or hierarchical way is also particularly important, since it implies the affirmation and legitimisation of the possibilities for exchange, dialogue, and interaction, which become opportunities of enrichment and personal or collective growth. The recognition and the value attributed to the attitudes, resources, and skills of every individual – without considering his/her cultural, ethnic, or social background – aims at raising a democratic critical consciousness, which is useful to identify and understand the numerous and deceitful dynamics of the power processes lurking in our societies.

In critical pedagogy, the purpose of education is not a historical and indefinite, but it consists in making every individual capable of recognising, facing, and transforming the actual social and oppressive conditions existing in the community, in order to promote social justice and the empowerment of marginalized peoples. Critical pedagogy insists that teaching is always a political act.

This strong request for justice and fairness brings Kincheloe and other critical pedagogy scholars closer to the position presented by the representatives of other forms of pedagogy committed to the reduction of inequalities and to the solidary opening to the *Other*.

Martin Buber (1959) is an example of this notion. The philosopher of the *I-Thou* dialogue starts from a different premise, but he equally addresses the themes of respect and acknowledgment of the *Other*, reaching the conclusion that in order to promote a genuine encounter with difference, it is necessary to stop thinking in terms of categories. By stripping different cultures to their most fecund core, even those of the most forgotten, marginalised, voiceless, and faceless people living in our world, Buber argues that the diversity and difference of their qualities and tendencies represent the biggest resources of human kind.

Working in the field of critical pedagogy means, therefore, to avoid getting stranded in front of the obstacles imposed by a unique way of thinking, and instead notice and respect the dignity of the *Other*. It means promoting the authenticity of the person, the originality of the individual, the diversity of human beings, asking everyone to improve and enhance his/her own humanity in an activity of continuous interaction, in which everyone is involved and held accountable in front of his/her own eyes, the eyes of the others, and the eyes of the world. An activity that raises everyone's awareness, breaking the shackles of fatalism and leading to the understanding that everyone's existence and self-realisation cannot be pre-established by other human beings, because – as Freire (1972) argues – without considering their geographical,

cultural, and religious origins, all individuals must have the possibility of becoming true masters of their own destiny.

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10. SELF AND SOCIAL FORMATION AND THE POLITICAL PROJECT OF TEACHING

Some Reflections

1966. At seventeen, I followed world events on my parents' old RCA Victor TV. For me, as for many Canadians, the world barely existed north of the forty-ninth parallel. It had been an interesting year: President Johnson ordered the first major bombing raids against North Vietnam; Mariner 4 transmitted the first pictures from Mars; Malcolm X was gunned down at the Audubon Ballroom in New York City; Cesar Chavez voted against Delano, California, grape growers; Queen Elizabeth made each Beatle a member of the Order of the British Empire for bringing home the megabucks from the United States and the colonies; electrical failure blacked out the Northeastern states, causing a sudden boom in the birth rate.

I rarely ventured beyond the confines of what was considered "normal" for a straight-laced kid growing up in the protective custody of the Suburban Dream. My T-shirts were so white that they rivaled Tide commercials. I had tennis shoes that squeaked. Strapped to my Austin Mini was a roof rack for the surfboard I was always talking about buying but never did. Secretly, however, I felt entombed in a world of routine banality, guilty for thinking thoughts darker than my beige chinos. My life was drifting laterally, waiting for something to happen. Anything. The future looked predictable and grim until the day I met Zeke.

That was the summer of 1966, after which the comforting veneer on my horizon was forever scraped away. He was sitting on a street curb under a willow tree, reading a Jack Kerouac novel. Beside him were a half-empty bottle of ninety-five cent wine and a huge battery radio. Zeke sat there with a Zen asceticism, stoically ignoring the passing traffic—a placid image despite his shock of neon red hair, electrical yellow shirt, navy blue industrial overalls, bottle-green rubber hipwaders supported by fuchsia suspenders, and wine-stained moustache.

I had seen him around the school. Everybody knew about Zeke. His eccentricity was strapped on like a codpiece; incessantly he stalked and challenged our cozy conventions.

For reasons I didn't yet understand, I wanted to know him.

When he noticed my gawking at him, he shifted from the lotus position and surveyed me intently through a homemade pair of glasses—like the x-ray glasses they used to advertise on the backs of Marvel comic books. As I approached him,

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he removed the glasses, stood up slowly, and stretched his arms. He was extremely tall, about six-four, and slightly Neanderthal. Brilliant red hair, a broad forehead, and fierce, tufted eyebrows dominated his other features: his eyes sanguine, grey-green, strange; his skin pockmarked and leathery. Though his appearance was imbued with confidence and just the slightest trace of haughtiness, he had an aura of premature decay, as though he were someone who had lived well beyond his nineteen years—an Ancient Mariner of Suburban Sidewalks.

"Have you read Pynchon?" he asked, holding up a tattered copy of *V.*

"I don't know him," I admitted.

"How about Genet? You must read *Our Lady of the Flowers.*" "I'm not into Catholic literature," I shrugged.

"Well," he said, breaking into a beatific grin. "I can see you're uneducated. We'll just have to do something about that."

Zeke was my first nonconformist friend; part scoundrel, part saint. He taught me Greek dancing in the evenings, which we practiced for hours, guzzling back ouzo to a scratchy recording of the theme from *Zorba the Greek.* In the fifties, he would have been a coffee-cup anarchist, reading his poetry in espresso bars or smoke-filled taverns, accompanied by bongos, double-drums, and a real live black person in Cuban shades playing stand-up bass.

Zeke lent me dozens of books filled with strange antics and antiheroes—*Catch 22*, *The Ginger Man*, *On the Road*, *One Flew over the Cuckoos' Nest*, and the poetry of Francois Villon. I began putting aside my homework. Each day I carried to school a copy of *Finnegan's Wake*, which I propped open in the cafeteria, trying hard to appear engrossed in the pages. Zeke considered pretension a fine art. He also valued the art of conversation. Even a brief discussion with Zeke was taking a chance on having your brain wrenched. He rarely talked *with* you—more often *at* you, trying to rearrange your thinking patterns in new ways. It could be a painful—or exhilarating—experience.

Though harassed on all sides by well-furnished, split-level suburban dormitories, manicured lawns, and parks with tennis courts, Zeke's place was my Greenwich Village, North Beach, Telegraph Hill, or Left Bank.

Bored by school, Zeke still attended regularly. For him, school was a stage—a burlesque ramp where he could intellectually strut his stuff. He liked to show up his English teachers—especially when it came to drama criticism—and put everyone on with his crazy antics. He both enraged and enchanted the staff by arriving late for class one day dressed in a black velvet opera cape with pearl buttons, wing collar, and large plump cravat, clutching his latest manuscript in a tattered manila envelope. A gilded walking stick hung from the crook of his arm. His cape billowing behind him, he swept into geometry class and gallantly saluted the teachers with a click of his hobnailed boots.

I had met no one like Zeke. His offbeat brilliance and Rabelaisian world view helped allay the anomie and restlessness of a suburban youth growing up in the electronic age, whose body and spirit had been put on hold by the morals of the

industrial age. Zeke belonged to a different world. He was always excited, his voice rising, hands waving in a state of continual incandescence. Zeke educated my senses, derailing the boredom of my daily existence, stirring me from my comfortable emotional anesthesia.

I soon found it impossible to keep up with my studies. It was too easy to put down a book or put off an assignment for the excitement of Zeke's company or of entering the renegade world to which Zeke had given me access. By comparison, school often seemed like an irrelevant intrusion that obstructed rather than furthered my education.

During the sixties, Toronto's Yorkville counterculture provided me with a strange and often bizarre reality. The maze of streets graced by old brownstone homes, the artists' lofts, the rooming houses, the cafes, the head shops populated with what sociologists referred to as "alienated youth," comprised what was, in a manner of speaking, my classroom away from school. I would often observe the street life from the Penny Farthing Cafe, a volume of Kafka or Beckett under my left arm and a walking stick hung from the crook of my right.

The perennial street crowd spanned all backgrounds; their movement was based not on social class but on the ethos of a generation. Poor kids from Cabbage town and rich kids from Rosedale dealt dope on the street corners in jeans and army fatigues; preppie girls threw away their knee socks and kilts to roam the streets in jeans, copies of *The Prophet* clutched in their hands; weekenders from Upper Canada College donned sandals, leather vests, and green felt Robin Hood caps and gamboled to Jimi Hendrix and the Doors in between algebra assignments; Kresge cashiers were transformed into beautiful and mysterious Midnight Madonnas, wrapped in shroud like medieval gowns, silver jewelry adorning their Pre-Raphaelite hair.

I spent considerable time with a variety of colorful and creative individuals whose lives bounced paradoxically between expressive rituals of emancipation and pathological rituals of self-destruction. Drugs became a part of many lives. For many, drugs seemed to serve as a symbolic medium to penetrate the contradictions between freedom and constraint in a society nourished by the myth that progress through technology is the only objective reality. Timothy Leary, the high priest of LSD, handed me a note at a concert: DIPLOMA, it read. YOU ARE NOW FREE.

I took a room downtown with Zeke and enrolled at the University of Toronto in 1968. Zeke made our "digs" a center of Dionysian excess. I often returned from class to find the record player blaring and the room a carnival of strangers: pushers, hookers, poster-makers, poets, mystics, draft dodgers, mimes, speed freaks, junkies, aesthetes, revolutionaries, jugglers, body builders, gardeners, go-go dancers, and university professors.

At sixteen I had ruled out ever working for a large corporation. My father had just turned fifty when the new owners of the electronics firm for which he was general manager decided to let go all executives over forty-five. I watched my father try one low-paying job after another; severe bouts of asthma and emphysema finally forced him into retirement and an early death. After that, I vowed always to stay clear of the

business world. I began to read Marx, Gramsci, Sartre, Lenin, Trotsky, and Marcuse. Something was fermenting inside of me.

During my senior year of high school, I had become disillusioned with lessons that seemed boring and pointless. I would imagine myself standing in front of a class and teaching the most impassioned lesson possible. With the arrogance of innocence and the inspiration of Zeke, I was sure I could become the consummate teacher.

I graduated from the university in the early seventies, hung up my love beads and my beloved fatigue jacket, festooned over the years with slogans and hand-stitched doves, and enrolled in Teachers' College.

My first job was in a wealthy village outside Toronto. Although I liked the students and enjoyed teaching, I felt expendable. These students, already favored with wealth and social power, would probably get by in the world in spite of their teachers; their affluent background almost assured them success in the system. I wanted to save working-class kids. Also, I wanted to enroll in graduate school in Toronto.

Like many young people growing up in Canada during the 50s and 60s, I felt increasingly like I was being swallowed up in some viscid mass of dull, mind-numbing convention, particularly my experience of being schooled, since I like to make a distinction between being schooled and experiencing an education. Education requires the cultivation of critique, or critical consciousness, and in my teenage high school years, being intelligent or able to conscript concepts into the service of sustained critique was not something that earned one a lot of attention with one's peers, and I was culturally shallow enough to want to be part of the popular crowd, so I would often hide my intellectual curiosity about life, mostly during moments of grinding loneliness, and expostulate with myself about why my life at school seemed so ruinously vacuous, why I was so interminably miserable, why acts of creativity, and why displays of ingenuity and wit seemed to be off-limits and treated by so many teachers as unjudicious, impolitic, an epistemological breach of impolicy.

I did have two wonderful and exceptional teachers my last year of high school—Dennis Hutcheon and Harold Burke. Mr. Burke would do dramatic readings in class. With lungs as unfillable as St. Peter's Basilica, he would bellow samplings from Shakespeare and contemporary plays, which he scrupled to be an indispensible part of a good education, and of course he was right. In his classes we made earnest, if not halting, attempts to fathom the doxa and paradox, the stereotype and the novation of everyday life. From Mr. Burke I would learn to appreciate the power of rhetoric, and often engaged in debates with a shameless extravagance. Such profligacy could be tolerated in a young sprat in those days, and the gasconade that flushed out of my mouth no doubt made me insufferable among many of my more learned peers. "Hutch" developed a course on Communication and the Media that examined the theories and ideas of Marshall McLuhan. He was also a Catholic convert and largely as a result of his influence I became interested in theology (although Hutch became a conservative Catholic in his later years while I ventured into the chilly hinterlands of the Jesuit mind to explore abstruse books deemed by the guardians of the faith as heretical, works by liberation theologians and apostates).

Wanting to join the priesthood, but not having much religious faith, I abandoned the idea, destining myself to live on the secular fringes of what was considered at the time the normal world (where the men no longer were required to wear fedoras, but where sterile office cubicles in some cold stone building became the bleak destiny of so many of my contemporaries). Often, I found myself lost in a world of reading – Nietzsche, Camus, Sartre, Hesse, Genet, Proust, Northrop Frye, Marshall McLuhan, and Harold Innis—where I tried in vain to dislodge myself from everyday life in the Toronto suburb of Willowdale, what was to me a Cimmerian land of gloom and despair. The work of Dylan Thomas, Vachel Lindsay, Leonard Cohen, Irving Layton, and then, of course, the Beat Poets, helped de-anchor me temporarily from my malaise but the intemperate despair of youth would inevitably overwhelm me.

I grew up in a conservative working-class family who had left its roots in farming communities of Ontario to travel to Hamilton, Toronto and other large metropolitan areas (where my dad landed a job as manager of Eastern Canada for Phillips Electronics and brought us temporarily into the middle class). I was told that my ancestors worked as riveters in the shipyards in the docks of Glasgow, but I haven't really gone into my family tree, all that I remember are pictures of my great uncle on the farm, photos of my maternal grandfather in a kilt and uncomfortably brandishing a riding crop, and photos of my paternal grandfather selling soap out of the back of a car. My paternal grandmother lived with my family until she died when I was about sixteen and I remember she could kick over her head well into her eighties.

An only child, who watched my father, a WWII veteran in the Royal Canadian Engineers, enter the reserve army of labor after he was fired from Phillips and my mother – a homemaker – venture out to work to support the family as a telephone operator when my father's emphysema made it impossible for him to continue working in part-time electronics stores, I grew up angry, suspicious of giving my life over to a corporation, or what we called "the suits." Prior to my dad's illness, our house was a fusty solarium of normalcy: television detective stories and westerns in the evening, televised hockey games, televised comedy shows; in short: televised happiness for a life unexplored (although I did long to travel, Kerouac-style, with Buzz Murdoch and Tod Stiles in the excellent Route 66 series, and later, down the long and lonesome highway with Jim Bronson in *Then Came Bronson*).

In the late 60s, I had joined the Yorkville Village hippie community as a part-timer, as what was called a "weekender" and Yorkville as I remember it was as much a state of mind as it was a cluster of streets downtown where we used to hang out, try every drug imaginable, and sometimes, if we were lucky, get "turned on" to good books and albums and meet Pre-Raphaelite-looking young women who knew members of the Toronto artist and literati circles and would invite us along to parties and gatherings where we would pretend to fit in. Yorkville was a place where, potentially, you could develop a more discerning eye for understanding the production of culture and sometimes come to recognize the coincidence between mass cultural production and the regression of one's own intellect, as bikers, greasers, hippies, teenyboppers, and sometimes political organizers, congregated in the coffee shops and flop houses,

or just hung out on the streets, all pretending that we were creating a new society free from the normative shackles of conventional morality and lifestyle, but basically we looking for drugs, sex and rock and roll and our twenty minutes of fame.

That I was living in the latest phases of capitalist globalization was not something that arrested my attention, even momentarily. It had not occurred to me that such an exploration of the "integral society" was important—or even significant—to fathom the means and ways that I was situated in the larger social order, immersed in an internally differentiated yet dialectically unified nation state called Canada, living in the fringes of a civil society consisting of an ensemble of practices and relations of power, dialectically interpellated by and integrated within the state. That was life before critical theory, sociology, anthropology, hermeneutics, and existential phenomenology. Life was lived as a crude binarism: We were cool and everybody else was suspiciously uncool, especially anyone over thirty. There was even an adversarial relationship at that time between youth-based politics and social movements advocating class struggle. Yorkville was more about lifestyle and counterculture as opposed to the political transformation of society, and the Maoists that you might infrequently encounter appeared to us as too militant or dogmatic to be taken seriously if one wanted to enjoy the bohemian lifestyle and that's what we were looking for in those days. I became politicized later on, mainly by Americans who had left the US as a result of the Vietnam war and ended up my professors at Waterloo University and the University of Toronto, although admittedly this was a New Left politicization, with identity politics, civil rights, and new social movements (feminism, gay rights, immigrant rights) displacing rather than integrating much of the previous class-based political formations.

I recall that there was a City Controller, Herb Orliffe, who suggested, ominously, in the spring of 1967 that Yorkville's hippies should be warehoused in work camps where they would learn a trade. I recognized that a desinence had arrived in the trajectory my life was taking, and that the Yorkville scene was dying and in 1968, I had come to the inevitable realization that a change in my life was sorely needed. How was any of this distinctly Canadian, I'm not sure because I didn't really reflect upon my Canadian roots until I ended up in the United States, which began as a desperate sojourn but what has lasted nearly 30 years, having lost my university teaching post in Canada due to my increasingly politicized teaching, and being rescued by Henry Giroux, who brought me to Miami University of Ohio and helped me figure out how to do political work and remain in the academy. There, I was often told by students that I reminded them of a Northern American, a decaffeinated American, rather than a Canadian, an observation, frankly, I found disturbing, and very telling about the US students and culture. While geo-specifically Canadian, and working within a coloniality of power that I often felt obliged to critique, I think my identity growing up in Canada was more mobile than nationalist, if not badly mangled, bleeding through the figurative membranes of its Canadian-ness, as something that was always already foreign to itself, as I really didn't have a sense of what it meant to be a Canadian but at the same time I tried to account for the people I met and the

ideas I encountered in the context of living a life in the service of something larger than one's nation state, trying to understand what it meant to be of service to society. I felt I belonged everywhere, and nowhere, everywhere an aberration, and nowhere did I feel remotely comfortable—I suppose I grew comfortable in my discomfort.

Moving away to the US, however, motivated me to claim a Canadian identity (as opposed to re-claiming an already well sutured Canadian identity) inasmuch as I grew to loathe the US political scene, its American exceptionalism, its imperialist wars, its phony democracy, its incipient and then blatant fascism—and I wanted to claim something outside of that, which at times I would label Canadian. Especially during my visits to Latin America, I highlighted my Canadian identity but, to be fair, I have been impacted in many ways by American activists and thinkers and I feel I am all the better for that. I am more interested now in a politics of solidarity and communalidad than I am in conventional identity politics. What drives me today is not narrating the many trajectories of selfhood as much as committing myself to a protagonistic politics, forging a united front against capital and its attendant hydra-headed antagonisms: racism, sexism, homophobia, ageism, speciesism, and the like. What I can tell you now is that I do feel much more comfortable among workers and the popular majorities than I do among the transnational capitalist class, the bourgeoisie, and that is the case in all the countries in which I am regularly privileged to spend time.

Life in the academy has always been difficult for me. I always feel more comfortable with professors and students with working-class roots, but that's not to say I haven't made very close friends whose class background was greatly different from mine. My classes at UCLA were mostly populated by students of color, who wanted to know, among many things, how they could enter the academy without selling out their commitments to their friends, their neighbors, and their values, and without forgetting the often hard lessons of their personal experiences and their histories. I enjoyed working within the diverse student body at UCLA but I always fought for the hiring of more professors of color, and regrettably, that battle was always a difficult one.

Occasionally I teach students who openly contest my leftist politics and I have always made it a condition of my classes to reject authoritarianism and not to pressure students to adopt or reflect my political values. I have always welcomed dissent and challenges to my various political positions, and I teach dialectically, which is why, perhaps, when I was placed on the top of a list by a right-wing organization with millions of dollars behind it (the list infamously became known as "the dirty thirty") for indoctrinating American youth into socialist values and encouraging them to hate America, that I was vigorously defended by conservative students that had taken classes with me (classes that I had offered periodically over a ten-year period in Fresno California). This right-wing organization offered to pay students a hundred dollars to secretly videotape or audiotape my classroom comments, and fifty dollars to produce notes of statements I was making in class. I was also defended by representatives from the Chavez government in Venezuela when I spoke at the

World Educational Forum in Caracas in 2006. That conservative students and leftist allies supported me, yet my "liberal" colleagues didn't rush to my defense, should be no surprise to readers of my work, especially to those who have been following over the years my critiques of liberal politics and academics. I have for years told people that I am not an academic, that I publish so that my work is widely read by various constituencies, education being the most important, and that my life embodies a political project which is fortunately compatible with the courses I am able to teach, and with the lectures I feel privileged to deliver to audiences worldwide on a regular basis. I am humbled by the opportunities that I am given to address so many different groups, many of whom have expressed an interest in my work with communities under siege. I am grateful that there is a place in the academy for the type of work that I do. But I am fearful that this type of role for professors might not always be there. With the privatization of education, with people like the Koch brothers making deals with universities (giving endowments with political conditions attached), and with so many business-university partnerships directing the goals of research, the academy might not be a place that public intellectuals on the left and social activists choose to make their home in the not-too-distant future. Speaking of the future, the last thing I want to do in my later years is to be bent over a table in a two-drink minimum waterfront bar, spilling my beer on a vinyl tablecloth while telling "remember when" stories about how great teaching was in decades past. I want to be talking about how good it is to be a teacher now. And for that to happen, we have to keep on fighting in the present for a liberated future for ourselves and our students.

As a Marxist educator, I look to Marx's writings and to contemporary Marxist scholars to help analyze the current crisis of capitalism. And within this context I try to understand the history of education, particularly in the United States and in my native Canada, but also educational trends worldwide, as part of the formation of the transnational capitalist class and the transnational capitalist state. Since 1987, I have had the opportunity to speak in approximately 30 countries (many of which I continue to visit, and some which I visit on a regular basis, such as Mexico and Venezuela), to academics, teachers, and social activists, and in numerous cases to form active alliances.

One of my projects has been to enlarge the scope of critical pedagogy into that of a social movement, a movement that I call "revolutionary critical pedagogy" (after British Marxist, Paula Allman) in order to underline its central aim: to work towards a social universe outside of capitalist value production. I work in the area of anti-capitalist struggle and in the arena of epistemology, educating against the coloniality of power, and trying to create a pluriversal approach to indigenous knowledges through a critique of Eurocentric knowledge production and through working with subaltern groups who have been victims of European and US imperialism. So I begin with a critique of neoliberal globalization, financialization, the autonomous functioning of the monetary economy, working-class standards of living being sacrificed at the altar of the enrichment of finance capital, the declining rate of profit (a number of my students at UCLA took classes with Robert Brenner), overaccumulation of capital,

and accumulation by dispossession as developed by David Harvey. But I also work within the analysis of the transnational capitalist class and the development of a global capitalist historical bloc composed of the transnational corporations and financial institutions, the elites that manage the supranational economic planning agencies, major forces in the dominant political parties, media conglomerates, and technocratic elites, as developed by William I. Robinson at UC-Santa Barbara. Here I am specifically interested in how the class practices of a new global ruling class are becoming condensed in an emergent transnational state in which members of the transnational capitalist class have an objective existence above any local territories and polities.

Epistemologically, I am very interested in decolonial pedagogy, and here I am starting to work within a framework developed by the decolonial school, whose exponents include Enrique Dussel, Ramon Grosfoguel, Walter Mignolo, Catherine Walsh, Nelson Maldonaldo-Torres, and others. Here, I expand the idea of what happened when las Americas were transformed by capital. I try to think of capital as more than the limited sense of an economic logic and as an integrated network of cultural, political, and economic processes that are all internally related. We need to account for the complex entanglement of gender, racial, sexual and class hierarchies within global geopolitical, geocultural and geo-economic processes of the modern/colonial world system.

We need to keep in mind the global racial/gender/sexual hierarchy that emerged with European colonial expansion and that continues to be reproduced in the modern/colonial/capitalist world system. We are trying to bring this perspective to the Marxist left in Venezuela, and this summer we will begin training cadres in the countryside in this decolonial perspective, as part of a project that we organized with the Ministry of Education. These multiple hierarchies or "heterarchies" are not epiphenomenal to capitalism, but are constitutive of capitalism, when we look at the historical formations that capitalism has taken, especially from the beginning of the conquest of las Americas right up to the present working of the coloniality of power, or the persistence of thinking within Eurocentric perspectives absent actual colonial administrations.

Now it is important when doing this work to keep the eyes on the prize—the abolition of capitalism and the creation of a democratic socialist alternative. And here I try to remain faithful to Marx's own writings, his criticism of the presuppositions and premises of classical political economy, and this causes me to be very critical of some of the formations of revolutionary organizations of the past and present. As Peter Hudis, Kevin Anderson, and other Marxist humanist scholars and activists have pointed out—and which has been supported by my own reading of Marx—Marx did not support control of society by a single state party, he did not endorse authoritarian regimes, nor did he support state control of the economy. Of course he criticized private property, but he also opposed the notion that economic life should be controlled by the state as in a centrally planned, state-run economy that supposedly counters the anarchy of the deregulated market. Both of these positions

were roundly rejected by Marx as expressions of alienated social relations. Marx identified the central problem of capitalism as the production of value.

What is value production? Well, it is different than the production of wealth. As Peter Hudis notes, value is wealth computed in monetary terms. It is the reduction of concrete, living labor—or "doing" directed towards satisfying real human needs—to abstract, alienated labor (the commodification of labor power) that operates to increase value as an end in itself, as in the drive to augment value through the creation of exchange value (i.e., the exchange of commodities as the universal medium of social interaction as in surplus value production). Capitalist social relations take on a certain form of value in which human relations take on the form of relations between things. It is this form that needs to be abolished and this can only be done through the abolition of value production.

Labor in Marx has a two-fold nature—useful labor or concrete labor (purposeful doing or conscious life activity) and abstract or alienated labor (which Marx argued was the substance of both value and surplus value). These forms of labor are in a dynamic and living antagonistic relationship due to the fact that capitalism requires the worker to sell her labor power to the capitalist for a wage. John Holloway identifies two forms of struggle here—the struggle of purposeful doing (concrete labor) against abstract labor (the struggle of doing against labor, or the struggle of workers against their own existence as a working class), and the struggle of labor against capital (as in the struggle of the labor movement against capitalist exploitation, i.e., wage labor and capital). We need to see these two struggles as being related. For instance, I am critical of labor movements and teachers unions for many reasons. But mostly because they define the struggle as that of labor against capital, when, in fact, they actually support abstract labor, or value production. They believe that value production can be made less exploitative, or that abstract labor can be reconfigured in less alienated ways. While this might be true in the short run, with redistribution from capital to labor, it will actually exacerbate the crisis of capitalism in the long run.

I am against value production, and believe the only way to create a new society is through the abolition of value production. We can't tinker with relations of distribution and circulation by bringing them under the control of the state and believe we can create a socialist society. We need to abolish the production relationship itself, or we will create an even greater despotism than the one that exists under free market capitalism. We can't abolish value production by altering the mechanisms by which surplus value is extracted from the worker. Real freedom cannot be won in a society governed by exchange value and value production. Even cooperative, non-statist forms of production will not lead to freedom if they remain tethered to exchange value, money, and value production. Here, workers only become their own exploiters. As Peter Hudis notes, such cooperatives have eliminated the need for the capitalist but have not eliminated themselves from the capitalist relation itself, a message that I tried to deliver convincingly to factory workers in Argentina, who were part of the occupied factories movement, and who invited me to speak at a

recuperated factory in Buenos Aires because they are setting up schools in these "recuperated factories."

Revolutionary critical pedagogy, as I have been developing it, can be understood through the following: 1) revolutionary critical pedagogy is rooted in a dialectical materialist epistemology that positions schooling in its larger social context of capitalist relations and production which, therefore, acknowledges through a dialectical analysis that an anti-capitalist education/existence can only be understood in relation to capitalism since the two are interrelated opposites; 2) as such, using dialectical reasoning initially developed by Hegel and refined by Marx, we make a distinction between "Understanding" and critical "Reasoning" toward meaningful knowledge in education that requires students gain an ability to analyze and critique—this dialectical reasoning illuminates how capitalism challenges the development of critical reasoning in students today; 3) and while the dialectical epistemology of revolutionary critical pedagogy provides us with a method for analyzing capitalism toward critical reasoning, it does not give us the tool to change the world—thus, we must also draw from critical praxis in order to transform that of which we gain a deeper consciousness; 4) such praxis must involve a certain axiology that recognizes the need to take action for the better of all and not only the self; 5) thus, revolutionary critical pedagogy recognizes the political and ideological contexts of schooling that are based in economic power structures that most often work against the interests of those students who are the most economically and politically vulnerable in society; 6) revolutionary critical pedagogy rejects banking education methods by taking up Freire's call for problem-posing education that, instead, engages students in considering learning within the context of their lived realities rather than divorced from their personal experiences; 7) revolutionary critical pedagogy focuses on making school a humanizing space that creates learning communities of classroom spaces by challenging the teacher-student hierarchy, valuing all students' out-of-school knowledge and home languages, and encouraging collaboration toward thinking creatively about how the world *could* be rather than maintaining how it already is; 8) revolutionary critical pedagogy advocates opposition to imperialism, war, neoliberal capitalist globalization, and the institutionalized violence wrought on the majority of the world's populations by engaging students in the discussion about how to address our world problems through democratic participation that challenges the minority who own all the wealth and who control our current development and production; and 9) revolutionary critical pedagogy sets as its goal the decolonization of subjectivity by recognizing the specificity of historical context and the diversity of experiences found in local communities and by questioning the Western-centric roots of US education systems that promote individualism over community, competition over collaboration, and technological advancement and mass-consumption over environmental protection and conservation. In this way, revolutionary critical pedagogy refuses to divorce political and ideological questions from pedagogical questions.

In my view, revolutionary critical pedagogy provides the much-needed backbone for rethinking education and for providing the schooling experiences our children deserve. Internationally, students, parents, and educators have come together to pick up revolutionary critical pedagogy's call for changing our schools today.

I am reminded of a story about Gandhi. In 1931, during a conference held in London, a British journalist asked Gandhi what he thought of Western civilization. "I think it would be a good idea," he replied. What a socialist civilization will look like is to be determined by those who are struggling for it. The struggle for socialism can always turn into its opposite. And this is precisely why we need to think critically about where we should be headed and how we shall get there.

One does not need to be thrown to the ground like Paul of Tarsus and blinded for three days to learn to live in accordance with one's conscience, taking full account of the biopsheric conditions of our planet fueled by an intensive agro-industrial model that has led to climate change and heralded the destruction of bio-diversity. We need to teach our students while at the same time recognizing the fate of our most vulnerable fellow human beings living in the midst of over-exploitation and dispossession and the appropriation of the earth's natural resources by investment firms and mega banks that comprise the global power complex responsible for deregulating national currencies and banking systems. These swindlers and high tech grifters that manipulate money and expertly alter the rules that impede financial markets while themselves producing nothing, who have transformed what was once a capital offense in the 17th century punishable by hanging—financial speculation—into a profitable practice of legal fraud leading millions of their victims into debt peonage, need to be overrun by local, regional, national and transnational movements that create conditions for people to take back the economy from the Superclass, as journalists such as Chris Hedges, and sociologists such as William I. Robinson and others, advocate. In order to muster a full-bore critique of education in the age of neoliberal capitalism, the field of critical pedagogy needs to become the province of teachers who refuse to let education be put on the shelf of scientific specialists, who give careful collaborative attention to the aggregate interests of communities and to ways of redressing the causes of our exploitation-dominated culture, who are prepared to narrow the gap between developmental sciences based on mathematical formulae and instruments of observation and evaluation grounded in our experiential understanding. We need critical educators who will support cognitive liberation from the culturally imprinted role structures of capitalist society, a true cognitive democracy freed from the limited production of knowledge with Eurocentric credentials (historically based on episodes of genocide and epistemicide, I might add). We need teachers who can instill a critical psychosis in our culture, that can help us shake the ontological foundations of our world that has become a pageant of inequality, imperialism, violence, torture—all naturalized by the excremental reasoning that tells us that we must give up democracy because we are fighting "terrorists." Perhaps we need some kind of pedagogically-driven Marsh Chapel experiment where instead of ingesting psilocybin educators and

students filled themselves with the spirit of comradeship in building a new world through community involved projects dedicated to combating the ravages of capitalism, patriarchy, racism, and homophobia. We need such intervention because being educated today constitutes a form of historically conditioned estrangement and alienation, as we choke on the effulgence of a pathological process we call schooling.

We need to learn as much today from agroecology trainers in Cuba as from the Frankfurt School of critical theorists. Critical educators today need a dose of Freire's positive utopianism and open futurity and a renewed optimism, which is difficult, I know, in the face of so much devastation. We need a reformulation of critical theory that develops concrete practices, and this means we need to break the division between pedagogy and theory. The elite do not designate the telos, an outcome already present in our pedagogies. We need to create for ourselves those conditions of possibility for *educating* students from the world of naïve consciousness and creating the pedagogical conditions whereby students can be *inducted* into a new vision for humanity, where students can meet the Dreamer who dreams them into existence and discover in the realm of human collectivity the harmony and spirituality of our planet. We need no longer abdicate our joy and happiness by adapting to this world if in fact we are committed to changing the world through socialist struggle. Armed with the idea that the dehumanization of our youth is but a brief parenthesis in the history of education, critical educators must believe that with a renewed optimism of the will, education will be overtaken by social justice. That is a lesson Zeke taught me.

> … Zeke and his younger brother, a brilliant musician, had remained my best friends throughout high school and into my first year of university. They, and my teachers Dennis Hutcheon and Harold Burke, had helped me navigate through the sixties counterculture and make it through my high school years. After my first year of university, I felt that I was ready for the struggle of making a difference in the lives of others, a positive difference, a difference that makes a difference. It was then that I learned that Zeke had hung himself while living in Paris. Shortly afterwards, Matt killed himself by slashing his wrists. I have carried their lessons into my teaching to this day. I am not sure why I survived and they didn't. Maybe I was crazy enough to believe the world that had been fashioned for us could be made more hospitable for the human and non-human world. To this day there are times that I feel guilty having made it this far…

Peter McLaren
Chapman University

E. WAYNE ROSS

11. DR. DEWEY, OR: HOW I LEARNED TO STOP WORRYING ABOUT WHERE IDEAS COME FROM AND LOVE CRITICAL PEDAGOGY

Authority, Hierarchy, and Me

Heterodox? No one had ever described me that way and it didn't help me feel any better.

To be fair, Jim Collins, my friend and departmental colleague, wasn't so much trying to make me feel better about being turned down by the School of Education tenure and promotion committee as he was describing the institutional circumstances. He is an anthropologist after all.

I had certainly challenged any number of established doctrines and institutional policies, but didn't think of myself as a dissident, rather as an active citizen. My scholarship was, at least on the surface, rather politically tame, grounded in Deweyan philosophy, highlighting the importance of agency and taking actions that encouraged democratic ways of thinking and living both within and beyond schools.

But, I had no compunction about behaving blasphemously. There was that time in a department personnel committee meeting I described a senior professor's comment about a Latina colleague's accent as "racist." And that meeting when I said something to the department chair that was so offensive to the power-broking professor, whose bidding the chair was doing, that he threw his Daytimer at my head from across the room, he missed.

Offering brotherly advice, one of my untenured colleagues at SUNY Albany said, "When I have something critical to say, I try to be honest, but I put a silencer on my criticism, but you just blast away like an Uzi." He's a dean now.

My scholarship has always attempted a reflective assessment and critique of society, schools, and teaching. Informed by John Dewey's radical conception of democracy and the neo-Marxism of Frankfurt School critical theory my early work was not as irreverent as I was personally, but it had its heterodox elements.

My life story traces a line from believer, to heretic, to apostate.[1] I grew up in the racially segregated South of the 1960s, in a fundamentalist, Pentecostal family. And trying to make sense of those experiences had a tremendous influence on the way I think and teach about the social world today. Perhaps not technically a total institution in Erving Goffman's (1961) sense of the term, our all-white Pentecostal

B. J. Porfilio & D. R. Ford (Eds.), Leaders in Critical Pedagogy, 141–155.

church nonetheless served a similar purpose, it was organized to protect the community against what were felt to be intentional dangers to it and to provide a retreat and training that served to cut off people from the wider community, at least culturally. As a youngster I felt I lived in a doubly segregated world. There was the pathological separation of Whites from Blacks on an everyday basis; and this segregation was intensified by a home life that was nearly inseparable from church life at a time when *de facto* racial segregation extended to churches to such an extent that Dr. Martin Luther King (1963) remarked that "We must face the fact that in America, the church is still the most segregated major institution … At 11:00 on Sunday morning when we stand and sing and Christ has no east or west, we stand at the most segregated hour in this nation."

My life within the church segregated me further from those I considered then to be "normal people." The Church of God (Cleveland, TN) sprang from the holiness movement, which places an emphasis on John Wesley's teaching of "Christian perfection," or the idea that it was possible to live life free of voluntary sin and with a total love of god and others. The Church of God in the 1960s emphasized what they called "Practical Commitments," which were intended to shape the social practices of its members, outwardly separating them from "the world." This was to be achieved by dressing "according to the teachings of the New Testament." The Church demanded modesty, forbade the use of cosmetics and ornamental jewelry, and regulated hair length (no short hair for women or long hair for men). In addition, it was taboo to participate in "mixed swimming," watch movies or television, go to dances or otherwise participate in "ungodly amusements." My dad was considered a "liberal maverick" among his peers because he sponsored church sports teams and had nothing against the judicious viewing of television. As I grew older I increasingly felt manipulated, controlled, and constrained by the teachings of the church and the not-so-subtle expectation that I serve as a role model for my peers. And, I also began to face the contradiction of loving my family whose lives where framed by a total institution I was beginning to call into question and would ultimately reject.

I have continually struggled with authority and hierarchy. At times I have been earnest in my submission (such as when I left public school teaching to work in the church), but the arc of my life and work has been toward freedom. The oppressive and inequitable consequences of authority and hierarchical organizations in social relations—the church, the state, and capitalism—have motivated me in my journey from conservative to liberal Christian, to Deweyan democrat, and onward to a concern for creating a society characterized by positive liberty. Such a society where individuals have the power and resources to realize and fulfill their own potential, free from the obstacles of classism, racism, sexism and other inequalities encouraged by educational systems and the influence of state and religious ideologies. It is a society where people have the agency and capacity to make their own free choices and act independently based on reason not authority, tradition, or dogma.

THOMAS WOLFE WAS RIGHT

My early career as a social studies teacher and teacher educator was marked by interests in critical sociology of teaching, social psychology, and questions about the relations of individuals and community, particularly as explored in the philosophy of John Dewey. These academic interests have roots in my work with Richard C. Phillips and Phillip C. Schlechty in the School of Education at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Phillips' (1974) approach to teaching social studies methods was decidedly non-technical. I don't even remember him mentioning lesson planning or classroom management. His approach was to get us thinking about possibilities and challenging our beliefs about social studies content, schools, students, and what it means to be a teacher. In addition to Dewey we learned systems theory, cybernetics, and social psychology in our methods course. Besides Dewey, our intellectual role models included Buckminster Fuller (1981) and Leon Festinger, of cognitive dissonance theory fame.

Schlechty (1976), a sociologist, and leading thinker on educational innovations and leadership, focused on the ways schools and school systems are organized, managed, and led and their affects on teachers and students in classrooms. He had me read Willard Waller's (1932) ethnographic studies of school, which added material depth to Dewey's philosophical approach to teaching, learning, and education. The influence was lasting and today I still describe my research interests as understanding how teaching and learning are affected by social, political, and cultural forces that exist beyond the classroom. Waller also taught me that while it might not be acceptable in some circles, you could hate schools while devoting your life to education.

After working as a substitute teacher for a year in Chapel Hill and Durham, NC, I taught secondary social studies at North Springs High School in Atlanta, Georgia. I taught anthropology, geography, economics, sociology and world history to students in grades 8–12. In every course I attempted, with varying degrees of success, to stay true to the critical thinking and inquiry approach I had learned in Phillips' methods class, which meant going off script, a lot. In the days before surveillance via standardized tests this was not too difficult and was often viewed as a positive sign of professional autonomy. I taught world history as a history of revolutions (cultural, economic, scientific, and political). I ditched the textbook "The Free Enterprise System in America" to teach comparative economics using a class set of *Comparative Economic Systems: An Inquiry Approach* (Coleman, Soens, & Fenton, 1968), which I found abandoned in the book room. In geography and anthropology, I pieced together courses from unused New Social Studies (Fenton, 1967) curriculum projects: The High School Geography Project and Man: A Course of Study. My use of MACOS put me on the radar of the John Birch Society. I received several mildly threatening, anonymous letters from these hypocrites who

tout "personal freedom" but abhor freedom of thought and, as they made clear to me, academic freedom.

After a couple of years teaching in Atlanta, I left for a job working at my father's church in, Charlotte, NC, where I assumed the title of Director of Education. I had been accepted to seminary after finishing my undergraduate work, but opted for a MAT in history at Chapel Hill instead, as I had some unresolved issues around the church and my personal beliefs. My primary intention in going back to Charlotte was to re-establish residency in the state and return to Chapel Hill for graduate school, though I was unsure if I would study education, counseling psychology, or law. But, for one year I was a diligent church worker and I engaged in a very serious study of primarily conservative Christian theology. I was most intrigued with Christian apologetics, the branch of theology that aims to present a rational basis for Christian faith and defend it against objections.

That year in Charlotte was tumultuous on several levels.

I had been raised in the church and literally lived beside it, in a parsonage, for most of my life. My dad was a respected and dynamic preacher and my mom a leader of women's ministries and my sisters committed Christians who found a place within the church, but after working for a year in the church and diligently working through question of intelligent belief and unbelief, I was traveling into new territory and in a different direction from my family.

I decided to pursue a doctorate in education, but my Chapel Hill mentors, Phillips and Schlechty, convinced me I should not return to UNC as planned, arguing I had taken most of what they could offer and that I would be better positioned for a career in the academy by pursuing a doctorate at a Big 10 school. I applied to a few Big 10 schools, but I was pretty hard headed about their advice and had also put a down payment on a house in Chapel Hill (the mortgage rate in 1982 was 19%). My wife, at the time, and I had a plan and we were going to stick to it and did, until I discovered she had hidden a letter sent to me by Ohio State offering admission and graduate assistantship. Irritated and intrigued, I decided to drive up and explore the possibilities.

During that visit Gail McCutcheon turned my world on its head. I was interested in curriculum development, but from a pre-reconceptualist perspective (Pinar, 1975). Over the course of an afternoon, McCutcheon opened my eyes to new ways of thinking about curriculum and previously unimagined possibilities. She had just published "On the Interpretation of Classroom Observations" in the *Educational Researcher* (1981), which drew on her ethnographic research in classrooms (McCutcheon, 1979, 1980) and it was easy to see how her work intersected with my interest in Waller's scholarship, but was of a different world altogether. I was also won over by her audaciousness. Her cheeky parting words to me were "if you don't come to Ohio State, you'll be sorry." On the drive back to Charlotte I realized she was probably right.

CRITICAL PEDAGOGY THROUGH THE BACKDOOR

At Ohio State, my studies of curriculum theory and educational research were immersed in the Frankfort School critical theory, an interdisciplinary approach to emancipatory social theory. I was particularly influenced by Jürgen Habermas's (1971, 1981) work on communicative action and knowledge and human interests. The former has been described as free and open discussion of an issue by all relevant persons, with a final decision being dependent upon the strength of better argument, and never upon any form of coercion. In my view, this admittedly idealized construction still has tremendous pedagogical power.

My study of curriculum theory and practice was essentially a process of ideology critique, critically examining the reflexive limits of various epistemological models. We continually asked whether a particular curriculum or research paradigm could justify its own presuppositions. McCutcheon had her students read widely within the curriculum field, but also in philosophy, psychology, sociology, and anthropology. Her curriculum theory seminar included readings by such disparate groups of thinkers as B. F. Skinner, George C. Homans, and Joseph Berger; Clifford Geertz, Charles Taylor, Peter Winch, and Gregory Bateson; and Pierre Bourdieu, Paul Willis, and Habermas.

McCutcheon had been a student of Elliot Eisner at Stanford and her research was informed by the exercise of artistry, connoisseurship, and criticism. Like Eisner, she was interested in how professionals "think in action." She had spent time at CARE (Centre for Applied Research in Education) at University of East Anglia and had a commitment to the principles in action research—field-based research aimed at improving policy and practice and enhancing democracy. I was particularly interested how these approaches challenged the dominant techno-rationalism in education and quickly took to the work of Donald Schön and Chris Argyris (1978) to which she introduced me.

The result was a confluence of ideas that united my interests in sociology of teaching (e.g., Schlechty, Waller), social psychology (Festinger, Schön, Argyris), and individuals, community, and democracy (Dewey). I was in a different department, but M. Eugene Gilliom welcomed me into graduate course work in social studies education and I became the first student from outside the department to complete the doctoral course work in social studies and teach the secondary methods course. Gilliom (1977) was my social studies education mentor at Ohio State, and his approach to social studies teaching epitomized a "theory into practice" ethic, with a direct connection to the Alan Griffin's (1942/1992) venerated dissertation, "A Philosophical Approach To The Subject-Matter Preparation of Teachers of History." Gilliom and Phillips, my social studies mentor at UNC, were different sides of the same coin.

Gilliom and Robert E. Jewett (Gilliom & Jewett, 2003), who had recently retired from the faculty, were crucial in my studies of Dewey and what has been called the

"Ohio School of Democracy." Jewett was a master of maieutics. I clearly remember sitting at the side of his desk, which was empty save for a framed photo of Dewey, thinking I had conjured the final piece of some philosophical puzzle only to have the rug pull out from under me by one of his incisive questions. Jewett introduced me to pragmatist philosopher Boyd H. Bode (1937), whom he described as the intellectual center of the Ohio State College of Education during his beginning years on the faculty. And between these two social studies masters I explored the work of H. Gordon Hullfish (Hullfish & Smith, 1961), Alan Griffin, Lawrence Metcalf (Hunt & Metcalf, 1955) and James Harvey Robinson (1921) all of whom influenced the ways I think about social studies in particular and critical, democratic education in general.

My time at Ohio State (1982–1986) exposed me to critical social thought, but could not be described as embracing critical pedagogy. The curriculum studies program included close reads of contemporary works that shaped what critical pedagogy became (or did not), for example: Michael Apple's (1979) *Ideology and Curriculum*, Paul Willis' (1977) *Learning To Labour*, Giroux, Penna, and Pinar's (1981) collection *Curriculum & Instruction: Alternatives in Education*, and Pinar's (1975) *Curriculum Theorizing: The Reconceptualists*.

Curriculum reconceptualists had opened the field to a very broad range of ideas, although neo-Marxist critical pedagogy was never truly embraced. The field was largely in retreat from both macro and quotidian politics of teaching and schooling since Pinar et al. declared the reconceptualization of curriculum had occurred. As Petrina (2006) points out, curriculum as a scholarly field remains a glass half full, consumed by a deschooled discourse and structured by material forms the field thought it had long abandoned.

By the time I was ready start my dissertation research my interests had swung back to a critical sociology of teaching, particularly questions about the influence of social, political, and institutional contexts on teachers' thought and practice and the implications for curricular experience of students in schools.

There were two notable entry points for my intellectual encounters with critical pedagogy. First, in my study of action research with McCutcheon, I discovered the critical approaches of researchers at Australia's Deakin University, particularly Stephen Kemmis, Robin McTaggart, and Wilfred Carr. The booklet *The Action Research Planner* (1981), which has been revised and expanded over the years,argued for a critical and participatory approach to investigating and understanding educational phenomenon by working collaborative for change informed by critical social thought, especially of Habermas and the Frankfort School. The Deakin School of Action Research embodies the philosophical principles of critical pedagogy, with a foundation built more on Habermas than Freire, but without excluding the later. Collaborative, critical engagement with real world issues and informed by critical social thought, this was a critical pedagogy that did not fit into the fictional version infamously critiqued by Elizabeth Ellsworth (1989).

My second entry point into critical pedagogy was the social science section of the SBX (Student Book Exchange) across from The Oval on the Ohio State campus. For many hours every week, I sat and read (and whenever possible bought) philosophy and critical social theory books, including *Marxism and Education* (Sarup, 1975), *Schooling in Capitalist America* (Bowles & Gintis, 1975) and perhaps most influentially the work of Brian Fay including *Social Theory and Political Practice* (1975) and later *Critical Social Science: Liberation and its Limits* (1987) *and Contemporary Philosophy of Social Science: A Multicultural Approach* (1996).

Fay's critical social science in combination with Dewey's notion of curriculum as experience and critical, participatory action research proved pivotal in the framing and writing of my first book project *Teacher Personal Theorizing: Connection Curriculum Practice, Theory, and Research* (Ross, Cornett, & McCutcheon, 1994). The mid-1980s were marked by serious challenges to the dominant, techno-rationalist approaches to curriculum, teacher education, and educational research. In addition to the curriculum reconceptualists, there were challenges to process-product research in teacher education, which was part of the larger "quantitative" versus "qualitative" research wars. Embracing intentionalist conceptions of social science and an extreme activist conception of human nature, interpretivism was adopted by education researchers in an attempt to uncover the beliefs and customs that are the foundations for human behavior, that made it possible for individuals to understand self and others. But interpretivists' exclusive focus on the insider perspectives presented problems, just as positivists' lack of attention to this perspective. Fay's critical social science was invaluable as we conceptualized teacher personal theorizing from a critical and practical social research perspective.

As we wrote in 1994,

> this type of educational research gives attention to both external and internal value constraints on research practice and requires a collaborative model of that practice. Research on teacher personal theorizing … reflects the conception of human nature and social scientific explanation characteristic of practical educational research. Teaching and curriculum making are viewed as complex, context-bound professional tasks. Teachers must select and organize multiple factors in ways that provide educative experiences for particular groups of students in particular settings. (Ross, Cornett, & McCutcheon, 1994, p. 14)

We characterized teaching as practical work carried out in a socially constructed, complex and institutionalized world of schooling that dialectically (not deterministically) shapes action and gives context to its meaning. Educational practices are the media of professional action in that world, and they involve more than simply behavior. Professional practices are manifest in behavior, of course, but they entail thoughts, interpretations, choices, values, and commitments as well. The aim was developing within teachers and their research collaborators and students

critical self-reflection, reevaluation, and explorations of the nested contexts of their work as well as their practical theories and the actions that they guide.

The idea of teacher personal theorizing gives attention to both internal and external value constraints, and operates on a collaborative research model that aims at making routine educational situations problematic and subject to interrogation. The focus is not concentrated on teacher actions or insider perspectives in isolation. The goal is to understand teaching and curriculum making as universes of activity influenced by personal experiences and interactions among individuals and contexts, as dialectical processes.

I still see a deeply rooted connection between Freire and critical pedagogy and teacher personal theorizing, which was at heart more than merely personal, but rather about making sense of the social, political, cultural circumstances where teachers and their collaborators find themselves. The practical end of such research is the creation of a creative-critical culture of teachers and students. This requires that teaching and curriculum making be considered as problematic situations, in Deweyan terms, which to me was not far from Freire's "reading the word and world."

DR. DEWEY STILL LOOMS LARGE, BUT SO DO MARX, FOUCAULT, DEBORD

After finishing my doctorate in curriculum studies at The Ohio State University, I landed at State University of New York at Albany, the most intellectually demanding workplace I have experienced in my career. SUNY Albany's main campus is a sea of impersonal gray, look alike buildings, lacking human scale. There are many rumors about the campus architecture—it was originally intended to be a military installation in the Middle East, goes one. In reality, it was just another project by Edward Durrell Stone, whom the *Los Angeles Review of Books* once dubbed "the most hated of architects." So when I left Albany for SUNY Binghamton, without tenure, it wasn't all bad. Indeed, my faculty job at Binghamton was the best (if most poorly remunerated) I've had. I was hired to help start a doctoral program, which had a very strong, and critical, social foundations component thanks to colleagues that included Wendy Kohli, Ken Teitelbaum, Joseph L. DeVitis, Larry Stedman, and Deborah Britzman.

At both Albany and Binghamton I taught social studies education, curriculum theory, and research methods and became a committed to building a career in social studies education. In social studies I have worked to sustain a tradition of critical social thought that has long existed on the margins of a profoundly conservative field. Through four editions, my edited collection *The Social Studies Curriculum: Purposes, Problems, and Possibilities* (2014) addressed various aspects critical pedagogy in social studies that draw from a wide variety of traditions.

The roots of my thought are easily traced to Dewey's radical reconceptualization of democracy, though Dewey is not a critical theorist (Bernstein, 2010). Dewey's notion of democracy cannot be found in the electoral democracies of capitalism.

For Dewey, the primary responsibility of democratic citizens is concern with the development of shared interests that lead to sensitivity about repercussions of their actions on others. Dewey characterized democracy as a force that breaks down the barriers that separate people and creates community. The more porous the boundaries of social groups, the more they welcome participation from all individuals, and as the varied groupings enjoy multiple and flexible relations, society moves closer to fulfilling the democratic ideal.

From a Deweyan perspective, democracy is not merely a form of government nor is it an end in itself; it is the means by which people discover, extend, and manifest human nature and human rights. For Dewey, democracy has three roots: free individual existence; solidarity with others; and choice of work and other forms of participation in society. The aim of democratic education and thus a democratic society is the production of free human beings associated with one another on terms of equality. Again, for me, there is an easy connection to be made between Dewey and the more traditional roots of critical pedagogy in Freire's work. Additionally, I see threads in these Deweyan roots of democracy that are in sync with at least some strains of anarchist thought, particularly opposition to authority and hierarchical organization in human relations and mutual aid and respect. I am not saying Dewey was an anarchist, he was far from that. But, as Noam Chomsky(2000; Ross, 2014) has pointed out, Dewey's conceptualization of democracy and democratic education can be understood as supportive of social anarchist principles. While Dewey's democratically informed education philosophy is quite familiar to folks in education, it has largely been influential only conceptually; its radical potential remains, in almost every respect, unrealized in schools and society and that is a challenge for critical pedagogues.

Marx, Foucault, and Guy Debord have also loomed large for me, as well as Chomsky's political thought and critique of capitalist media. I've learned much from Bertell Ollman's (1999) work on dialectics, alienation, class-consciousness, and ideology (not to mention radical humour). My colleague and collaborator, Rich Gibson, who is an emeritus professor at San Diego State University, has been a tremendous Marx mentor for me. Gibson has also extended and deepened my understanding of Paulo Freire's work. Gibson is the only critical educator I know of who has seriously engaged with Freire's work and come away with a highly critical assessment of Freire's contributions to educational thought. Gibson argues that a lack of criticism of Freire's theoretical foundation and social practice allows the internal contradictions of his work to be ignored.

> Freire invites educators to mix his intriguing 4-part formula of (a) literacy, (b) critical consciousness, (c) national economic development, and (d) revolution to create a new practice of democracy. Freire suggests we can see, judge, and act – and become nearly impenetrable to lies – if we follow the form and content of critical pedagogy he has conceived. People who apply this formula

> typically run into the fact that Freire is a paradigm shifter, willing to enclose postmodernism, Catholicism, Marxism, and liberalism, a person far more complex than many of those who appropriate his work.
>
> Freire is also reified. … [and] is rarely historicized, though some have noted his proximity to parts of John Dewey. A historical understanding would not only locate Freire through his life, in Brazil, Chile, the US, Switzerland, etc., but would also place him beside, for sake of close comparison, Mao Tse Tung, for example, whose earlier pedagogical and practical contradictions are remarkably similar.
>
> Worse, Freire's work is easily and often stripped of its whatever emancipatory political base it may hold and used as an rudimentary training method in, for example. (Gibson, 2006, p. 187)

Kevin D. Vinson and I have worked together for many years and our collaborative work is deeply indebted to the thought of Foucault and Debord, the Marxist theorist and filmmaker who was a founder of the Situationist International. Through Debord (1970), Vinson and I began to explore anarchist thought and its vast potential for critical educational work (Vinson & Ross, 2003). Our research interests focused, the influence of the educational standards and high-stakes testing movements on curriculum and teaching (extending the same general research interests I have had throughout my career). Investigating the surveillance-based and spectacular conditions of postmodern schools and society our aim has been to develop a radical critique of schooling as social control and a collection of strategies that can be used to disrupt and resist the conformative, anti-democratic, anti-collective, and oppressive potentialities of schooling, practices we describe as dangerous citizenship (Ross & Vinson, 2014).

Vinson and I argue that it is more important than ever for people to understand that birthplace, nationality, documents, and platitudes are not enough to fulfill the promises of citizenship—that is, for example, freedom. Freedom and the fulfillment of its virtues are unfinished, an ongoing dynamic struggle (Friere, 1998). Too often citizenship education implies docile, conforming, spectator behavior and thought. Contemporary conditions demand an anti-oppressive citizenship education, one that takes seriously social and economic inequalities and oppression that result from neoliberal capitalism. While we can build upon the anti-oppressive possibilities of established, officially sanctioned pedagogies, that is not enough. Our intent is to explore imaginaries that might serve as the basis for the creation of pedagogies of dangerous citizenship—what we call insurgent pedagogies. The pedagogical power of dangerous citizenship, resides in its capacity to encourage us to challenge the implications of own work; to envision an education that is free and democratic to the core; and to interrogate and uncover our own well-intentioned complicity in oppressive educational and cultural practices.

Dangerous citizenship requires a praxis-inspired mindset of opposition and resistance, an acceptance of strategic and tactical stances. The implication is that dangerous citizenship is dangerous to an oppressive and socially unjust status quo and to existing hierarchical structures of power. Practicing dangerous citizenship requires people, individually and collectively, to take actions that bring with them certain risks; actions that transcend traditional political or pedagogical maneuvers.

Dangerous citizenship is based upon a number of premises:

1. Capitalism is incompatible with democracy. There is contradiction between the ideals of democracy and what capitalist democracy actually delivers (e.g., spectator democracy).
2. Teachers and curriculum have been subject to ever intensifying policy regimes that attack academic freedom and discourage critical social analysis, that is a global education reform movement (#GERM), driven by neoliberal capitalism that seeks: marketization/privatization of education; human capital policies for teachers; regulation of what people know and how they come to know it.
3. "Civil disobedience is not our problem. Our problem is civil obedience" (Zinn, 1970).
4. We need new pedagogical imaginaries for teaching because traditional conceptions of "democratic" citizenship are bankrupt, perverted by capitalism's triumph over the interests of the public. Post-left, insurrectionist anarchism and politically inspired performance artists who aim to creatively disrupt everyday life offer models for creative pedagogies of resistance.

Dangerous citizenship can, for example, involve disguising our work in schools in ways that undermine demands of the neoliberal state for free, creative learning, al la de Certeau's *la perruque*, such as culture Culture jamming standardized curriculum and high stakes testing experiences along the lines of The Yes Men. Turning classrooms and schools into temporary autonomous zones—we don't have to wait for a revolutionary moment, rise up and create free, ephemeral enclaves of autonomy in the here-and-now.

Dangerous citizenship, like critical pedagogy writ large, is not a recipe for action as much as it is a political and pedagogical mindset that aims to disrupt and transform patterns of oppression and hierarchy. Borrowing Foucault's (1988) description of the nature and purpose of criticism, it can be said that critical pedagogy is not matter of merely saying things are not right as they are, it is a matter of pointing out on what kinds of assumptions, what kinds of familiar, unchallenged, unconsidered modes of thought, the practices that we accept rest. Critical pedagogy is a matter of flushing out that thought and trying to change it: to show that things are not as self-evident as one believed, to see that what is accepted as self-evident will no longer be accepted as such. Practicing democratic citizenship or critical pedagogy is a matter, firstly, of making facile gestures difficult.

CONCLUSION

I begin my pedagogical creed with the statement "education is a process of becoming" (Ross, 2015). In this sense, education is life, but not all experiences in life are educative. Experience is education when it is critically examined in relation to the past, present, and the future and when external conditions interact with the subjectivities of the person having the experience. An educative experience suggests the past is part of who we are now and that the present is important as a precondition for resolving major social contradictions in the future. These kinds of experiences help us construct personally meaningful understandings of the world and in the process to make change.

Studying how people (and things) change is the heart of social understanding and critical pedagogy. For me, perhaps the most compelling element of critical pedagogy is that active investigation of social and educational issues contributes to change. As Mao Zedong (1937) said,

> If you want to know the taste of a pear, you must change the pear by eating it yourself. If you want to know the theory and methods of revolution, you must take part in revolution. All genuine knowledge originates in direct experience.

Mao's position on the role of experience in learning is remarkably similar to those of John Dewey. Both of these philosophers, although poles apart ideologically, share what has been described as an activist conception of human beings, that is the view that people create themselves on the basis of their own self-interpretations. Although, as Marx points out, while people make their own history, they do not make it as they please, but under circumstances existing already, given and transmitted from the past.

The oppressive and inequitable consequences of authority and hierarchical organizations in social relations continue to motivate me in my work as a critical pedagogue. The fundamental principles that emerge from my study of critical pedagogy and that guide my practice are:

- Educators should seek to create conditions in which students can develop personally meaningful understandings of the world and recognize they have agency to act on the world, to make change.
- Education is not about showing life to people, but bringing them to life. The aim is not getting students to listen to convincing lectures by experts, but getting them to speak for themselves in order to achieve, or at least strive toward an equal degree of participation and better future.

NOTE

[1] In Ross (2014) I explore my early life—living in the racially segregated south, attending school in the first years of court ordered school desegregation in Charlotte, NC and particularly my experiences growing up and working in a fundamentalist, Pentecostal church—and how it shaped my scholarly work. Some parts of Ross (2014) appear in this chapter in slightly altered form.

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12. A MARXIST PIG FARMER IN KANSAS

John Sidney Lomax remains somewhat of an enigma to me. Although he was my grandfather and I spent my formative years investigating every square inch of his eighty-acre pig farm in Ottawa county Kansas, to fully understand the nuances of the man and to fully comprehend his political inclinations is now unattainable. He passed away just before my eleventh birthday in 1981. As a result, it is very possible that the confluence of my perceived experiences as a boy and the theoretical lens through which I now view those experiences as an adult, could be dismissed as a mere romanticized and convenient characterization of my long lost grandpa. However, regardless of my potential for inaccuracy in specifics, I do know with certainty that the way I saw him live his life, interact with his world, and deal with the people in it, has proved to be a major influence on the way I have lived my own. Having admitted my potential for embellishment, I will first explain my reason for discussing him at all.

As is the case with religious beliefs, many of us, if not most of us, inherit our fundamental political perspectives from our parents, and often these traits are no less unavoidable or permanent than the color of our eyes or the curls in our hair. When questioning students in my classes as to why they believe in a particular political ideology or hold a specific opinion about a politician, they often struggle. However, they eventually, although often reluctantly, admit it to be the same perspective as that of their parents. This, of course, is predictable given the extremely behavioristic tendencies of traditional child rearing in the U.S., not to mention the very uncritical and un-democratic type of schooling, which the vast majority of my students (and most U.S. students for that matter) have received. I once saw this as a weakness; a prophetic sign of just how uncritical and obedient my students were. But, one day a student asked me "so, where do your political perspectives come from Dr. Elmore?" Of course my initial thought, with a slight sense of pride, was that I certainly had no Marxist in my family tree (I'm pretty sure they hang those types from trees in Kansas); my political ideology was, therefore, all mine. My student seemed less than pleased with my rather sanitized and academic response and, in truth, so was I. So, the question stuck with me, and over the coming months I began an investigation of sorts with a goal of piecing together my "ideological heritage."

Of course, socialization within our family of origin is certainly not the only influence on the development of ideology, the material conditions in which the individual (and their family) exists plays a central role as well. For Marx (1846/1939),

B. J. Porfilio & D. R. Ford (Eds.), Leaders in Critical Pedagogy, 157–168.

it was the materiality of human production that directly influences ideology: "Life is not determined by consciousness, but consciousness by life" (p. 47). The social structure of a society, Marx argued, is formed in direct correlation with these lived experiences and is

> … continually evolving out of the life-process of definite individuals, but of individuals, not as they may appear in their own or other people's imagination, but as they really are; i.e., as they operate, produce materially, and hence as they work under definite material limits, presuppositions and conditions independent of their will. (pp. 46–47)

According to Marx, any given time period's ideology is most clearly revealed by revealing these material conditions and the relations of production. The development of our individual ideology, therefore, is fundamentally tied to the fact that "life involves before everything else eating and drinking, a habitation, clothing and many other things. The first historical act is thus the production of the means to satisfy these needs, the production of material life itself" (Marx, 1846/1939, p. 48). For me, my first comprehension of production was on my grandfather's pig farm, where I came to recognize that his toil was not only an act necessitated by basic sustenance, but also, and ultimately, an act in pursuit of freedom.

My first political memory was of my grandpa telling me "*whenever a republican gets elected president I go out and buy a new Nash … because I know in four years I won't be able to afford one*". He had been a farmer all of his life, first in Mitchell county, Kansas where he had been forced to sale his land to the government (for a price he continued to grumble about for decades) so that the Glen Elder Reservoir could be constructed, and then later, on the farm of my childhood on highway 18 in Ottawa, County. From our very limited interactions on the topic, I discerned early on that my grandpa was simply a Democrat – a rare thing in Kansas I would come to realize, but nothing too terribly exotic. I suppose my earliest interpretation of "us and them" was that Republicans were rich people and we most certainly were not rich.

My grandpa's aversion to the wealthy was not born out of petty jealousy – he never criticized someone for enjoying all the fruits of his or her labor – but out of the way that wealth was most often procured; off the sweat and toil of others. As Adam Smith (1776) declared, landlords "love to reap where they never sowed" (p. 60). This rudimentary partition of "us and them" stuck with me for many years before I finally began to realize that the Democrats support of the wealthy only differed in style and technique, not substance. I feel confident that my grandpa would have agreed fully in applying Vladimir Lenin's (1917/1932) assessment that regardless of which of the two corporate parties we pledge our allegiance in U.S. politics today, it is merely a matter of the oppressed worker being "allowed once every few years to decide which particular representatives of the oppressing class are to represent and repress them" (p. 34). But, at the tender age of eight, I was a Democrat just like my

grandpa and, following his example; I led the Carter campaign to victory in Mrs. Vernon's fourth-grade class mock election of 1979. Unfortunately for Jimmy his campaign didn't enjoy the same level of success with those outside my influence. In hind-sight, it's a bit ironic that the election of his opponent, Ronald Reagan, set in motion most of the social, political, economical, and educational policies and practices that I have spent so much of my adult life battling against. Given that the Democrats have now fully embraced Reagan's neoliberal perspectives on education (see Mr. Arnie Duncan), it may not have mattered… but if I had it to do over again I would have forgotten my classmates and went after their parents.

After much consideration, I began to consider the possibility that my grandfather was a Marxist or at least a Marxist in outlook if not in name. Given the times in which he lived however, I have very little doubt that he would have taken offense to such an accusation. And, of course, this would not be surprising given that a central goal of [dominant] ideology is to legitimize itself in a position of hegemony. It therefore tends to obfuscate the violence and exploitation that often keep a disempowered group in its place by making the very ideas, or even language – that might serve to illuminate to the exploited the true identities of their exploiters – vulgar and unpatriotic. This obfuscation inevitably leads to logical contradictions in the dominant ideology for the oppressed, which Marxism makes visible and central by constantly demanding a return to the critique of the material conditions of a society. Therefore, in spite of the discomfort such a charge may have brought to my grandpa, I believe my conclusion correct – as they say, "if the shoe fits."

First, my grandpa was a materialist, and very much in the sense prescribed to the term by Karl Marx. Marx's materialism, distinguished from that of Hegel, focused on the *real* economic and social life of human beings and the influence of that *real* life on his or her thinking and feeling. In contrast to Hegel's idealism,

> which descends from heaven to earth, here we ascend from earth to heaven. That is to say, we do not set out from what men imagine, conceive, nor from men as narrated, thought of, or imagined, conceived, in order to arrive at men in the flesh. We set out from real, active men and on the basis of their real life process we demonstrate the development of the ideological reflexes and echoes of this life process. (Marx & Engels, 1846/1939, p. 14)

For my grandfather, his prioritization of the material over the ideal was almost certainly a matter of practicality. He had a *real* farm to work and *real* people who depended on his labor to eat; he seemed to value nothing outside of this practical materialism. This was especially true in the case of religion. On Christmas Eve, when I was counting the seconds to open my presents, my mother would always force us into the car for the short drive (it felt much longer back then) down highway 18 to St. Paul's Lutheran church in Tescott, Kansas. It pained me greatly when my celebration of "Capitalistmas" was interrupted by something called Christmas. Whenever I did successfully argue my exclusion from such proceedings, I was

allowed to stay home with my grandfather, whom, in hindsight, avoided the church like the plague; he maintained a special distain for the Catholic Church, with all of its pomp and circumstance. He once told me that "nature is my church" and I grew up watching him worship in it daily; caring for animals, tending the garden that fed us, he was simply as "salt of the earth" as you get. My Grandpa would have most certainly agreed with Marx that men are "the authors and actors of their history" and not the gods that humans have been inventing and fetishizing for millennia (Kreiger, 1960, p. 362).

Second, my Grandpa was a dialectical thinker. His understanding of his world – and specifically his farm – moved beyond mere cause and effect. Like Marx, his dialectical view of his farm was that of a whole network of relations – a complete ecosystem – and one thing could not be altered or discarded without changing the whole system. According to Engels (1877/1947), the dialectical method attempts to explain our real – not ideal – interdependent world. Dialectics, Engels continued, "is nothing more than the science of the general laws of motion and development of nature, human society and thought" (p. 12) To this same end, my Grandpa always thought it useless to consider things outside of their context; outside of their history. Nothing on the farm was considered outside of its connection to the rest of the environment as a whole and I believe he viewed himself as part of that whole, which was ever changing due to his direct participation in it. According to Marx, this type of dialectical reasoning means that true comprehension of the whole of his world could not be achieved from outside by observation and reason, because that world (his farm) was a product of human labor changing it (his labor); the real world is changed and developed by people, and can only be understood by the practical struggle to overcome its inherent contradictions – in action, not thought. Once, when I was about seven, I discovered a rather large bull snake under our porch and my grandmother demanded that my grandfather kill it "immediately." When he refused to do so, I assumed it was merely out of humanitarianism (or "animaltarianism" I suppose) but as he slowly pulled the snake from its hiding place and carried it to the garden for release, he explained that the snake "had its own purpose to serve on the farm." This is undoubtedly a unique, if not simplistic, example of the dialectic but it had a deep impact on me nonetheless.

Finally, my grandpa was a humanist. I believe that his life on the farm was ultimately an act of freedom and a deep-seeded need for worthwhile and creative labor. Concern over real economic exploitation, actual lack of political freedom, and "the reunification of mental and manual abilities in the individual himself, the "all-rounded" individual is the body and soul of Marx's humanism" (Dunayevskaya, 1965, p. 73). Marx argued that religion was a way of distracting us from recognizing and overcoming that which limits our freedom and happiness. "Religion", Marx (1844/1959) wrote, "is the self-consciousness and self-esteem of man who has either not yet found himself or has already lost himself again. The struggle against religion is therefore indirectly a fight against *the world* of which religion is the spiritual *aroma*" (p. 175). Thus from Marx's perspective religion is an artificial creation of

the human mind, seeking to explain that which appears inexplicable, to justify that which is often unjustifiable, and to console those who seek consolation.

The purpose of religion is primarily to conceal reality in a veil of delusion. And when leveled on the people as officially sanctioned and absolute, the delusion serves primarily to mask and maintain the power of the dominant. To this end, my grandfather's disdain for religion came out of his desire to shake off any and all socially constructed chains and live as free as possible, hence the private little world I was privileged to grow up in. He despised any institution or ideology that sought to control, stifle, and repress what it meant to be human; self-determination, creative labor, and community. In fact, when my grandfather finally began to lose his battle with throat cancer and, as a result, we had to sell the farm and relocate to "the city," (although Salina, a town of 46,000, would hardly be considered a city by some folk's standards) it simply took the life out of him faster than the cancer had. I remember him waking up early in the mornings and wandering outside to "feed the hogs" only to find nothing but confusion and displacement. My grandpa not being able to die in peace on that farm is a regret I will always carry.

Regardless of what label he may or may not have assigned to his critique, domination and exploitation were what my grandpa desperately sought to avoid. He sought to avoid the mental despotism of religion and the physical despotism inherent to the system of capitalism. Independence and self-determination are what he valued, even when such values required much struggle and sacrifice he gladly chose them over serfdom. I remember riding with him to the sale barn and watching him unload his pigs – which must have seemed only one-step removed from selling his labor – collecting his feeble penance, only to drive straight back to the farm to start the process all over again.

His life as a farmer must have been a constant struggle, but a struggle he undertook with pride and dignity; he created and he produced, he answered only to himself and his family. If he were alive today to witness the huge corporate farms, having happily eaten up all of the bank foreclosures of his neighbors, dotting the Kansas horizon, he might very well be glad he got out when he did. Independent farmers reduced to factory workers, selling their labor to corporations that lack both respect and obligation to the land they exploit for their unbridled profit making, would have sickened him. Undoubtedly, as the previously stated quote attests, my grandpa loathed the Republican party because he saw then what we see even clearer today, they represent the core of what a capitalist system produces; good ol' authoritarian, hegemonic, imperialism and what Adam Smith (1776) called "the vile maxim." Although, I doubt my grandpa would have used any of those terms.

I carried my Grandpa's values of self-determination and freedom into my schooling experience and it wasn't until my fifth grade year that I became vividly aware of the fact that such values were not at all welcomed. Between the ages of eleven and twelve I had lost my grandpa and then my father, saw my mother re-married and made a painful move away from the farm of my childhood and into the "big" city. I felt a complete loss of control in my life and I found myself searching to

reclaim that sense of control and independence anywhere I could find it. The school quickly became my battleground of choice for waging war against petty tyranny. I began to give the level of effort I chose, when I chose to give it – choices that were typically driven only by the desire to frustrate, irritate, and confound my teachers and principals (and my poor mother!). If they said I hadn't learned something, I would ace the test – if they then applauded my success, I would flunk the next one. And so the game went until it had been so internalized, by both my peers and myself, that it became an unbreakable cycle of rebellion and failure.

To say I spent as much time in detention as in math, would not be overstating the case. By the time I had reached Salina South High School my distain for authority was deep-seated and infamous; teachers loved me one day, hated me the next. Eventually my record of chronic and manic underachievement had succeeded in digging a hole so deep that I opted for a GED and the merciful end of my high school experience. As I tell my students regularly, I have little doubt that I learned far more about our education system through obtainment of my GED than I did my PhD. Most of them think I'm joking of course, but I'm not.

There is perhaps nothing more ironic about my professional life than the fact that in spite of my absolute detestation for high-stakes standardized testing; it was a test score that was the sole reason I was ever allowed to go to college. At the time, Kansas Wesleyan University maintained a policy that allowed a person to enter without submitting a high school transcript – if the person could provide a GED and a high enough score on the ACT. I mustered both and so I was allowed the privileged opportunity of taking on massive student loan debt. What a poor working-class kid was doing enrolling at a private college is something I still shake my head about, but sometimes the young and dumb have their way. Beyond the astonishment that I ever graduated, my undergraduate career is note-worthy here only on one account; the fact that my critique of domination moved from the physical and social of the school to the psychological and theological of the church.

I had grown up attending St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Tescott, Kansas. I was baptized "in the name of God, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit" on December 1st 1974 and "confirmed and confessed" at Redeemer Lutheran in Salina, Kansas on June 2nd 1985. Like many people – if they are being sincere – I do not recall ever being a "true believer," church, like school, was just something I felt forced to endure. However, even with my lack of piousness the "wheels" being placed in my head were real nonetheless and they were certainly powerful, so the feelings of guilt and insecurity that were ignited when bringing them into question were very real as well. It wasn't until college that I moved beyond that manufactured fear and began to critique religion as the social and political force it has been, and continues to be, in human history – and, more specifically, in my own history (Stirner, 1963). Once again it was my hatred of authority and domination that tilted my critical lens in the direction of the church, but it has been my distain for hypocrisy that has fanned those flames to this day. And what could be more offensive than the manipulation and exploitation of a child's mind? I recognized then what I still see today; that our

society vehemently condemns the pedophile for luring in the naïve and innocent for the purpose of raping their bodies, yet applauds and rewards the churches, synagogues, and mosques with tax-exemption for raping their minds. As Dawkins (2006) states "isn't it always a form of child abuse to label children as possessors of beliefs that they are too young to have thought about? Yet the practice continues to this day, almost entirely unquestioned" (p. 315). Like my grandfather before me, I came to hate religion for the intellectual slaveholder that it is and like Karl Marx I've committed my career to "destroy capitalism and de-throne god."

As my ideology evolved, I became increasingly convinced that the bedrock upon which every repressive ideology and institution is built – whether theological, economic, statist, or otherwise – is the sectarian mind, born of a fanatical consciousness and a fear-induced need of absolute control and security. As explained by Brazilian educator Paulo Freire (1974) "sectarianism is predominantly emotional and uncritical. It is arrogant, antidialogical and thus anticommunicative" (p. 9). Lacking a reflective element – and seeing no need for one – the sectarian eliminates the potential for dialogue, questioning and agency, ultimately alienating the individual not only from others, but also first from themselves as historical and autonomous beings. From their absolutist position, the sectarian consistently views the "other" as an adversary because, from such a viewpoint, there can be only one truth, and that is his or her own. However, because the sectarian is typically formed from an anti-dialogical and authoritarian process, the absolute truth that they vehemently profess is rarely, if ever, actually their own; rather it is a truth that has been instilled by some perceived source of authority. Such a reactionary position is inherently exclusionary, and such disengagement from humanity is a necessary precondition to the development and perpetuation of discriminative systems. For me, religion was my "gateway drug" into the larger analysis of authoritarianism and its proponents within society. Religion has not only proven to be antagonistic to rationality and reasonableness, but outright dangerous to the maintenance and continuation of the human race. As noted by Harris (2004), it is "our most cherished beliefs about the world…leading us, inexorably, to kill one another" (p. 12). If human history has proven anything conclusive, it is that through offering pacification of fear, single-minded answers for the ambiguities of life, and a sense of order where the perception of chaos persists, religion fashions a mind that serves as fertile ground for the weeds of intolerance, hatred, and destruction. However, there most certainly has been, and continues to be, countless other sources of inspiration for the development of this authoritarian mind-set and the sectarian anti-citizen.

Because the development of the sectarian mind is a necessary ingredient to most systems of domination, any battle waged in the advancement of a more socially just and humanistic society, whether it is in reaction to capitalism, religious zealotry, or political despotism, requires the development of a critically conscious and, what Freire (1972) termed a "biophilic" citizenry. Without critical consciousness people are reduced to profits, thinkers are reduced to believers, and citizens are reduced

to consumers; and each of these degradations are fueled by the same perversion of human consciousness. As Proudhon (1851) so aptly described it:

> "Capital" … in the political field is analogous to "government" … The economic idea of capitalism, the politics of government or of authority, and the theological idea of the Church are three identical ideas, linked in various ways. To attack one of them is equivalent to attacking all of them … What capital does to labour, and the State to liberty, the Church does to the spirit. This trinity of absolutism is as baneful in practice as it is in philosophy. The most effective means for oppressing the people would be simultaneously to enslave its body, its will and its reason.

This is an argument I continue to have, even with some of my most "lefty" of colleagues; the centrality of this authoritarian mindset to most, if not all, of the social ills they seek to expose and remedy. I have attended countless conferences where I listen to well intentioned and passionate leftists rail against the horrible oppression and exploitation produced by capitalism, only to completely dismiss the millennia of oppression, exploitation, and shear horror produced by religion. In fact, in many cases I'm told that ignoring – or at least postponing a critique of – the impact of religion on the development of human consciousness and civil society is a matter of good strategy. I see such a strategy as the equivalent of feeding the alcoholic a steady diet of scotch in order to wean them off the vodka.

The enemy, as I came to conclude, was not merely the institution of religion, but any institution or ideology that promoted and benefited from the authoritarian personality. It wasn't until graduate school at Kansas State University that I began to take serious consideration of the similarities – in form, if not substance – between my religious indoctrination and my public education. Both seemed to value submission to authority over any other capacity or skill, both de-valued my capacities for logic and reason in preference for my willingness to absorb and parrot pre-ordained truths. I began to boil both experiences down to a single word: control. I felt then, as I do now, that if education was to ever serve as a true source of freedom – for the individual and for society – it would need to be openly and unabashedly set against any and all purveyor's of the authoritarian mind.

Marx believed that one of the primary purposes of education was to develop and exercise the practice of challenging assumptions so to fully comprehend the potential for self-determination; the capacity to not only understand his/her world, but to change it (Strike, 1989). This realization, Marx (1848/1967) argued, is especially critical for the teacher:

> The materialist doctrine concerning the changing of circumstances and upbringing forgets that circumstances are changed by men and that it is essential to educate the educator himself … the coincidence of the changing of circumstances and of human activity or self-changing can be conceived and rationally understood only as *revolutionary practice.* (p. 14)

Marx also argued that by such constant critique and engagement, the seeds of injustice and tyranny would be sought out and destroyed and the proletariat could "seek to rescue education from the influence of the ruling class" (Marx & Engels, 1967, p. 71). In a democratic society, it is far more important that students learn to identify and challenge conditions that oppress them than it is to learn how to accommodate themselves to those conditions. Therefore, a true democratic education must enlighten students to these critical ways of thinking and foster within them the confidence to seek out the tools to build a more just society. As McLaren (2000) questioned:

> Do we want to accommodate students to the existing social order by making them merely functional with in it or do we want to make students uncomfortable in a society that exploits workers, that demonizes people of color, that privileges the rich, that commits acts of imperialistic aggression against other countries, that colonizes the spirit and wrings the national soul clean of a collective social conscience? Or do we want to create spaces of freedom in our classrooms and invite students to become agents of transformation and hope? (p. 131)

To offer an education that coerces citizens into accommodating themselves to a society that marginalizes or ignores their voices is not preparation for democratic citizenry, it is preparation for submission. Such mental despotism promotes apathy, hopelessness, and a worldview in which progress is no longer necessary because we have achieved all that can be achieved. This domineering methodology is the result of an authoritarian philosophy of education in which success is defined in terms of the students' ability to accommodate to, rather than reconstruct, the world in which they live. As long as dogmatic training is substituted for education within schools we are virtually assured that education will continue to act as a tool of social reproduction rather than the "great equalizer" that Horace Mann sold it to be. At the core of this issue is the teachers that populate the classrooms of our public schools.

True liberatory education is only possible when educators are allowed the opportunity, and gain the tools, to transform their classrooms into laboratories of social justice (Giroux, 1988). And the preparation of such "transformative intellectuals" must take place in teacher preparation programs dedicated to such critical and revolutionary pedagogies. The transformative educator celebrates the true revolutionary character of education; one whose mission is firmly grounded in the words of Paulo Freire (1972),

> Education either functions as an instrument which is used to facilitate integration of the younger generation into the logic of the present system and bring about conformity or it becomes the practice of freedom, the means by which men and women deal critically and creatively with reality and discover how to participate in the transformation of their world. (p. 21)

For the transformative educator, much of this liberation stems from the promotion of "visionary pragmatism" within future citizens. It is visionary pragmatism, or the

ability to envision a future world more equitable and just then the one in which we now exist, which is fundamental to transformative education. Visionary pragmatism becomes the fuel for fire, igniting hopes and dreams in students, encouraging them to become critical democratic citizens, or what Giroux (1988) so aptly termed "agents of hope." Among many distinctive tendencies that these agents of hope maintain, is the fact that they see the world as an unfinished work and teaching and learning as an endless opportunity to not only comprehend the world but also reshape its reality. As Karl Marx (1846/1939) wrote "the philosophers have only interpreted the world, in various ways; the point however is to change it" (p. 13). In fact, this is precisely the point of critical pedagogy; it is in effect, revolutionary Marxism made visible in the modern world. This was precisely what I wanted to accomplish in my career, to develop a genuinely radical teacher preparation program that would seek to foster the development of transformative intellectuals who would carry a mission of critical democratic citizenship into the classrooms of public schools. At the core of this was the opportunity for future teachers to become critically conscious of the social, political, and economic systems and institutions that stand in the way of such a goal. However, I realized early in my career that finding a place where such ideas are welcomed within the conservative world of teacher preparation was not going to be an easy task; I anticipated a struggle.

My first attempt took place in Buffalo, New York where I taught for five years in a graduate education program at Medaille College. When I arrived in the fall of 2000, the program was relatively new and excessively generic; a run of the mill Curriculum and Instruction master's degree. During those five years Medaille effectively became my laboratory where I rewrote the program mission and rationale, created new courses, instituted a new research base and supervised more than eighty graduate students in writing their masters thesis. By the time I left Medaille I had effectively transformed the program into a Master's Degree in Critical Pedagogy, although I had yet to win the battle to officially change the name to reflect the new mission at the time of my exit. Sadly for me, the program was executed within a year of my departure to make way for an online degree program that was to be "more approachable" and "user friendly" – which, of course, really meant more profitable. Still, I learned so much in my experience at Medaille, especially in terms of navigating the political waters of academia in order to get things done. I took all of what I had learned in Buffalo with me to West Chester University of Pennsylvania in the fall of 2005. I was convinced by my experiences at Medaille that exposure to critical pedagogy could be just as impactful for future teachers at the undergraduate-level (perhaps even more so) as it was for current teachers at the graduate-level. West Chester gave me the opportunity to test that hypothesis.

I arrived at WCU with two goals; 1) to create a required undergraduate course for future teachers that would serve as a deeply profound examination of the system of education in which they hope to teach – especially in regard to the question of

freedom and 2) to bring together a core of critical pedagogues and build a new base for critical pedagogy in the United States. I am happy to say I feel I have come a long way in accomplishing both. In fact, we now offer three critical foundations courses at the undergraduate-level that are required by the various teacher preparation programs on our campus – the most recent, which is required for the Early Grades Program, was built on *Schooling in Capitalist America*, by Bowles and Gintis (1974). To my knowledge it's the only one of its kind in the nation. We have also managed to hire Dr. Curry Stephenson Malott (also included in this volume), a renowned Marxist educator and Dr. Rob Haworth, a distinguished Anarchist educator. We are planning yet another hire in the fall. I'm obviously proud to have my new comrades, but even more proud that collectively we have managed to expand the critical foundations in the teacher preparation programs at WCU at a time when it is being reduced and even deleted in programs around the country. It has not always been easy, but our hope is that we can serve as an example for our critical colleagues to find ways to elbow out what the late Jean Anyon (1997) called "crawl spaces" and expand their influence within their respective institutions and push their programs in a more critical direction.

This, in my opinion, is difficult for many in our field because we spend so much of our careers on the margins of the academy, as the outcast critical pedagogue, or Marxist, or Anarchist, or Atheist. I find many of my colleagues on the left avoid seeking the positions where they might increase their influence, such as program directors, department chairs, and even deans. I think because we spend so much of our careers criticizing the systems of education and the neoliberal and corporatized institutions in which we work that we cringe at the thought of becoming "part of the machine" or "institutionalized." We don't want to "sell out." So we shy away from leadership and leave that "administrative bullshit" to the neocons. But, I see this as a huge mistake. I certainly did not come to West Chester with some grand plan of being a department chair – and there are more than a few meetings that I sit through where I question my decision to do so – but, it was undoubtedly a price worth paying. So, this is my pitch to my fellow critical pedagogues out there who gnash their teeth when witnessing the continuous de-valuing and slow destruction of their field, get involved where you can – volunteer to chair that search committee, throw your name in for the curriculum committee, serve as a department chair or program director – stack the deck anyway that you can and expand the space you need for you and your colleagues to do your work. The enemies we face are powerful and well funded, but what is on the line for our students and, ultimately, the society we live in is more than worth the battle. As an old professor once told me at the first conference I ever attended when I was belly-aching about how everything was going in the wrong direction no matter how hard I tried, *"Embrace the struggle comrade ... embrace the struggle ... it has value unto its self"*.

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13. FROM PRACTICE TO THEORY & FROM THEORY TO PRAXIS

A Journey with Paulo Freire

THE JOURNEY – THE START

The journey started when I was "initiated" into critical pedagogy through *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Paulo Freire's major work (Freire, 1970). This initiation happened in Manaus, in the heart of Amazonia, during a high school sociology class where the teacher assigned this work as required reading. Reading *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* resonated with me immediately and laid a foundation for which I returned when I attended university as a graduate student in the field of education. Education was very important to my parents; curiosity and learning were emphasized and questioning was always encouraged. School was a place where I had fun and wanted to go to. Instead of being a place of "suffering," for me it was a place of learning, thinking, questioning: a place that enabled the pursuit of knowledge and a place where I had space for curiosity. My educational journey eventually led me to the professional field of education, maybe pre-determined through the example of my mother who was an elementary schoolteacher and who always made me see school as a place of engagement and participation.

THE JOURNEY – A NOTE ON GEOGRAPHY

Like Paulo, I was born in Brazil. I grew up in a middle-class family in Manaus the capital of the north-central state of Amazonas. Manaus is a vibrant city of about 2 million inhabitants, many of whom can trace their ancestry – or part of their ancestry – to indigenous roots.

Paulo is from the northeastern state of Pernambuco. The Northeast of Brazil still is one of the poorest regions of Brazil – it includes the semidesert Sertão Nordestino – with higher levels of illiteracy. The city of Recife, Paulo's birthplace, is located at the coast and like the region is strongly marked by Afro-Brazilian culture; the imprints left by former Africans brought to Brazil as slaves to work on sugarcane and coffee plantations. This is the region of Brazil that spawned the original Brazilian carnaval, and which produced the musical genres of forró and axé, coupled with the dance style of frevo. Paulo very much enjoyed the cuisine influenced by these

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African roots, highlighted by the ubiquitous use of coconut milk in the preparation of dishes, a personal favorite of Paulo's (A. Freire, 2001).

Manaus, on the other hand, is different from the Brazilian Northeast and Recife. It is surrounded by the vast green sea of the Amazon rainforest. Located close to the equator, the climate is tropical with high levels of rainfall and consistently high temperatures all year. The city is dominated by the confluence of the Rio Negro with the Rio Solimões which forms the Amazon River. Although isolated and reachable only by air or river, because of federal tax incentives, the city is a commercial and industrial hub. The influence of indigenous people can be seen everywhere and again can be most clearly appreciated in the local cuisine that is dominated by the large variety of fresh-water fish dishes using tambaqui, pirarucú, or tucunaré. In addition to these, tacacá, an indigenous dish that can be purchased at street corners, and the ubiquity of exotic tropical fruits, such as açaí, cupuaçú, graviola, caju, and guaraná, make the local cuisine quite unique. The city I grew up in, at the time and with a middle-class background, provided ample opportunity for exposure to culture, education, and politics. Nevertheless, since childhood I was made aware there is clearly a stark division of Brazilian society, a large segment of poor citizens and a small segment of affluent citizens.

THE JOURNEY – A NOTE ON MY TRAVEL COMPANION'S LIFE

Paulo Freire was born on September 19, 1921, in Recife, the largest city in the northeast Brazilian state of Pernambuco (sources to Paulo Freire's biography include Gerhardt, 1993; Freire, 1996; McLaren, 2000; A. Freire, 2006; Kirylo, 2011). Paulo's family was middle class with his father Joaquim Themístocles Freire working as a military police officer and his mother Edeltrudes Neves Freire as a homemaker and seamstress. Paulo, the youngest of four children, experienced a very loving family environment and was raised a Catholic (for a brief period, he even considered becoming a priest). Because of the world economic crisis starting in 1929, the family moved to Jabatão, a smaller city close to Recife, the family experienced poverty which was exacerbated with the death of Paulo's father in 1934; the family was able to return to Recife in 1941 after the economic situation had improved. Paulo completed secondary education and received a law degree from the Universidade do Recife in 1947. In 1944, he married Elza Maia Costa de Oliveira, with whom he was to be married for 42 years and with whom he had five children. Paulo worked as a secondary education teacher. He taught Portuguese and served as Director and later Superintendent at the Serviço Social da Indústria (SESI). In 1959, Paulo received his doctorate in History and Philosophy of Education from the Universidade do Recife. He worked at the Universidade do Recife teaching part-time and then full-time; he also worked at the same university as a counselor for student relations and later as Director of the Cultural Extension Service. Paulo also worked for the city of Recife in various capacities and was involved in the Movimento de Cultura Popular (MCP)

in Recife. In 1963, Paulo assumed the directorship of a national literacy program for the federal government under President João Goulart.

Paulo Freire's endeavors in education were successful, especially his literacy campaigns. Overcoming illiteracy empowered citizens and also allowed them to participate in the electoral process; this did not make the literacy campaigns and education efforts popular with the powerful and influential bourgeoisie. The coup d'état on March 31, 1964 overthrew the Goulart government and brought a right-wing military dictatorship to power; this political upheaval also ended the Freire-directed literacy campaigns. Paulo was arrested because of what was (then) viewed as a subversive educational method and spent seventy days in jail. What followed were sixteen years in exile: in Bolivia, Chile – where he spent four-and-a-half years and worked primarily for the government in adult education – and the USA – where he spent six months teaching at Harvard University.

Beginning in 1970, he worked in the Education Department of the World Council of Churches and Paulo and his family moved to Geneva, Switzerland. In Geneva, Paulo was also the co-founder of the Instituto de Ação Cultural (IDAC). Through the World Council of Churches and IDAC, Paulo became involved over the next ten years in educational projects in Guinea-Bissau, São Tomé and Príncipe, Mozambique, Cape Verde, Angola, Tanzania, Peru, Granada, and Nicaragua. An amnesty program by the military government allowed Paulo and his family to return to Brazil in 1980. Paulo received professorships at the Universidade Estadual de Campinas and Pontifícia Universidade Católica de São Paulo. After the death of his wife Elza in October 1986, Paulo married Ana Maria "Nita" Araújo Hasche in 1988. In January 1989, Paulo accepted the position of Secretary of Education for the municipal government of São Paulo following electoral victory by the Partido dos Trabalhadores (PT – Workers Party) of which he was a member. He also started the Movimento de Alfabetização de Jovens e Adultos (MOVA). In May 1991, Paulo resigned from this administrative position to resume his academic interests. Paulo died of heart failure on May 2, 1997 in São Paulo. Coming full circle, the Brazilian government that once forced Paulo Freire into exile and tried to expunge his work posthumously awarded him official political amnesty on November 26, 2009 (e.g., Cruz, 2013a); on April 13, 2012, Paulo also received from the Brazilian government the title of Patrono da Educação Brasileira per Law 12.612 (e.g., Cruz, 2013b).

THE JOURNEY – A NOTE ON MY TRAVEL COMPANION'S WORK

Paulo Freire left a very large body of work. However, on this journey we took along only some key works: *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (Freire, 1970); *Education for Critical Consciousness* (Freire, 1974); *Conscientização: Teoria e Práctica da Libertação: Uma Introdução ao Pensamento de Paulo Freire* (Freire, 1980); *Essa Escola Chamada Vida* (Freire & Betto, 1985); *Pedagogy of Hope: Reliving Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (Freire, 1994); *Pedagogy of Freedom: Ethics, Democracy and*

Civic Courage (Freire, 1998); *Teachers as Cultural Workers: Letters to Those who Dare Teach* (Freire, 1998).

Paulo's first publication appeared in 1958 and his books are still published posthumously, mainly under the guidance and editorship of his widow Nita Freire. As a matter of fact, the latest publication is *Pedagogy of Solidarity* (Freire, Freire, & Oliveira, 2014), a book originally published in Brazil in 2009. Approaching Paulo's work and for a thorough understanding of his work, some salient points are worth considering (Cruz, 2013b). Paulo's writing style reflects the Brazilian fondness for conversation, dialogue, discussion, and oral communication. He is always willing to insert a "story" for the purpose of illustrating a concept. His writing style often appears to meander, moving from one topic to the next only to come back re-visiting a topic addressed already previously – as would often happen in a conversation between individuals (Cruz, 2013b). Paulo loved the Brazilian Portuguese language and he emphasized literary quality in his writing; he tried to be precise but also poetic. Translating this language into English, for example, is not easy and it is very difficult to do justice to the original Brazilian Portuguese. To truly appreciate Paulo's writing is to read him in the original Brazilian Portuguese, there is always something missing in translation (Borg & Mayo, 2000). Paulo's work and books have to be appreciated with respect to place and time: the situatedness of his work is very important. Equally important is a knowledge of Brazilian history (and a knowledge of world historical events that influenced that history) as this is reflected in his work (Cruz, 2013b).

Paulo's work, in addition, was not static but evolved with time. Topics and arguments were added with time, but also topics and concepts addressed earlier were revisited and expanded, amended, and amplified reflecting Paulo's evolution and the changing context of place and time (Cruz, 2013b). Paulo's enthusiasm for learning and intellectual growth never diminished; he remained curious about the world – physical and intellectual – like a young child even as he physically aged. Paulo's published work might appear as a dense thicket. Not only are there numerous publications translated into different languages, but the content of books often fails to correspond from edition to edition and from the original to translation, including different introductions, forewords, etc. (Cruz, 2013b).

To truly understand Paulo Freire and his work requires to read and to be familiar with a large part of his oeuvre, always being cognizant of the background and realizing the context within which the individual work was produced. Too many self-professed "experts" on Paulo Freire possess only a rudimentary knowledge of his work based on the sole reading of *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*; to become a "true expert," however, requires not just the reading of one book but a familiarity with the totality and contextuality of his work. Again, Paulo did not stagnate, he was childishly curious, he evolved and progressed, and so did his work.

Paulo Freire is commonly considered as one of the most prominent pedagogues and educational philosophers of the twentieth century. Paulo was widely read and there is an eclectic body of work that he embraced to construct his thoughts on

pedagogy. The influences on Paulo Freire and his work are addressed in several publications (e.g., Mackie, 1981; A. Freire, 2006; Lake & Kress, 2013). Paulo's pedagogy is one of action, one that is aimed at social justice, liberation and emancipation. He emphasizes that teaching is always political and is never a neutral endeavor. Paulo also insists that teaching must be based on a dialectic relationship between theory and practice. Both need to be prominent for any teaching/education to be meaningful. Theory by itself is empty, whereas practice by itself is unguided activity (Freire, 1985). Paulo stresses the importance of *dialogue* in the educational process, that is the "speaking with" and not the "speaking to" in the process of teaching (Freire, 1970; 1998a). The dialogic and problem-posing approach to teaching also needs to involve respect between teacher and student (Freire, 1970, 1998a). It constitutes the opposite of the *banking model* of teaching (Freire, 1970) in which an active teacher mechanically deposits pre-fabricated knowledge into the mind of a passive student. A central position in Paulo Freire's work occupies the concept of *conscientização* (Freire 1967; 1970; 1974; 2001). Conscientização "is the active process through which a critical understanding of the social-political-economical circumstances is gained that enables one to actively change oppressive circumstances" (Cruz, 2013b, p. 173). The concept clearly entails both the process of reaching critical awareness and the acting upon this realization which leads to a transformation of the conditions that are at the root of oppression. Aligned with the concept of conscientização is another one of Paulo Freire's concepts: praxis. *Praxis* (Freire, 1970) is the continuing dialectic relationship of action and reflection; action must be followed by reflection, which in turn, might lead again to further action. It was important for Paulo to connect the teaching to the life experiences of the students in order to make learning more meaningful and less abstract. The concept of *critical literacy*, therefore, is aimed at students finding out about themselves and reflecting on their life experiences. Students, by reading the word were also challenged to read the world (e.g., Macedo & Freire, 1987), again aiming at expanding learning from the narrow confines of what is taught to thinking more broadly and making connections to social-political-economical circumstances in society.

The act of teaching – for Paulo – always involved love (Freire, 1970). Love is at the heart of freeing the oppressed, is at the core of teaching, and is also necessary for the teacher to survive in the profession: "(…) an 'armed love,' the fighting love of those convinced of the right and the duty to fight, to denounce, and to announce. It is this form of love that is indispensable to the progressive educator (…)" (Freire, 1998b, p. 41). Kincheloe (2008, p. 72) refers to Paulo Freire as "critical pedagogy's prophet of hope." Indeed, the notion of *hope* permeates Paulo's pedagogy and, for me personally, it is the one aspect that makes Paulo's work so satisfying to read: the hope and the optimism of what education can contribute to the making of a more humane world. Paulo Freire (1994) is adamant in pointing out that hope alone, however, is not enough to change the world: "hope needs practice in order to become historical concreteness" (p. 9) but he also emphasizes that "we need critical hope the way a fish needs unpolluted water" (p. 8). The notion of ethics

plays an important part in Paulo Freire's conception of pedagogy and is especially discussed in his book *Pedagogy of Freedom* (Freire, 1998a). Paulo Freire speaks of a *universal human ethic*, an ethic that is "inseparable from educative practice" (p. 24) and one that counteracts "an immobilizing ideology of fatalism, with its flighty postmodern pragmatism, which insists that we can do nothing to change the march of social-historical and cultural reality because that is how the world is anyway." (p. 26–27). Again, "the radical nature of 'hope' (…) though I know that things can get worse, I also know that I am able to intervene to improve them" (Freire, 1998a, p. 53) is the key to transformative education.

THE JOURNEY – BEING AWARE OF DETOURS

As one joins Paulo Freire on a journey one might be fully aware that others who claim to also be on such a journey actually are on a detour from that path and are part of, what Michael Apple calls, the "Freire 'industry'" (Apple, 2012, p. 26). This "industry" is characterized by a continuous production of materials on Paulo Freire, his work, and his place in the field of education, which may not necessarily be bad (Apple, 2012). However, that part of the Freire industry, namely the individuals who produce these materials because they strategized and "(…) have employed Freire as both writer and person as part of mobility strategies within the social field of the academy" (Apple, 2012, p. 26) and who are "academizing the political" (p. 27) with the absence of concrete transformative agency, need to be strongly criticized. For Paulo Freire it was always paramount that theory should be combined with practice, that a principal component and end result of critical pedagogy is agency and true transformative action. I want to add another facet to the notion of the *Freire industry*. This new facet concerns those individuals who have read very little of Paulo Freire and understood even less, but attach to and align themselves with Paulo Freire and his work only as a form of identification to show that they "belong" to an academic club, membership in which is perceived to be advantageous (e.g., for academic advancement). These mimics are even worse than the ones mentioned by Michael Apple and, unfortunately, they appear to be ubiquitous.

THE JOURNEY – TAKING THE CRITICAL PEDAGOGY PATH

My own path toward critical pedagogy, besides the early exposure to the *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* during that high-school class in Manaus, was paved at home with my parents imparting a notion of imagining the world as a more just place. Growing up in Manaus I was well aware of the poverty that characterized a large part of the city and some of the hardships endured by those living in poverty. My parents wanted me to understand the life and struggles of the poor and the importance of sharing, which is not charity. They wanted me the see the "true" human being and understand not only that what makes a person is not the money or possessions that

person owns, but how one's actions could impact others. This helped to nurture a sense of equity and social justice in me.

A Path Defined

Paulo Freire's name is firmly associated with critical pedagogy and he can be considered as the originator of this pedagogical philosophy (Kincheloe, 2007); McLaren (2000, Part 2) calls Paulo Freire the "inaugural protagonist of (.) critical pedagogy." Henry Giroux, who made major contributions in developing critical pedagogy throughout the nineteen-eighties (e.g., Giroux, 1983), writes

> Critical pedagogy (…) draws attention to the ways in which knowledge, power, desire, and experience are produced under specific basic conditions of learning and illuminates the role pedagogy plays as part of a struggle over assigned meanings, modes of expression, and directions of desire, particularly as these bear on the formation of the multiple and ever-contradictory versions of the "self" and its relationship to the larger society. (Giroux, 2011, Chapter 1)

Kincheloe (2008) posits that critical pedagogy is "grounded on a social and educational vision of justice and equality" (p. 6), "constructed on the belief that education is inherently political" (p. 8), "and dedicated to the alleviation of human suffering" (p. 11). Critical pedagogy also endeavors specifically "to link the practice of schooling to democratic principles of society and to transformative social action" (Darder, Baltodano, & Torres, 2003, p. 3).

A Path to Practice

I started to get the flavor of classroom teaching through my internships at public urban schools where many students attended because of the free meals provided to them. Resources, to a large part, were limited to the first type of technology that entered the classroom: chalkboard and chalk! Many students had a notebook and they would copy exercises and notes delivered through the chalkboard or reproduced by the teachers using Ditto machines. The limited resources demanded that classroom teachers would become very creative in supplying students with various teaching materials in order to make learning experiences less "dry" and more meaningful. I vividly remember bringing seeds and beans at this time to the classroom in order to teach my math lessons, which were used by the internship supervisor and the main classroom teacher to evaluate my teaching performance. In these instances, I could practice not only what I had learned about teaching through books, but I also could rely on the numerous informal classroom observations that I experienced when I was sitting as a small child in my mother's elementary school classroom. These teaching experiences together with the observations of my mother's interactions

with students solidified my passion for teaching. My initial teaching practice, as I look back through the lens of critical pedagogy, was framed by the respect for the learner and their lived experience (despite being poor, their rich life experience taught me much about survival, resilience, and the joy of everyday living), curiosity, and commitment to the teaching profession (see also Freire, 1998b).

The passion for teaching from these years of internship only intensified when I graduated with my diploma in pedagogy from the so-called "normal school" and immediately had my first permanent teaching position teaching elementary school (1st grade) at a private school – I was then not even 20 years old. However, with the realization that the education of 25 children depended on me, I felt like the oldest of adults on Earth! My work as an elementary school teacher was permeated with joy. At the same rate my 1st-grade students were learning about the world with me, I was learning from them about the world of teaching-learning; learning about children's authenticity in dealing with issues and about their curiosity was my driving force. Always letting my respect for the learner guide my decisions, I was able to overcome moments of insecurity and my own shortcomings in understanding how learning took place in young minds.

In addition to my elementary-school teaching, I taught adult education in the evening at a public school, and this significantly shaped me as a teacher as it showed the importance of the real life of students for teaching and the lower importance of the prescribed teaching content. Teaching adults and going back to the basics of teaching reading and writing added to my experience as a teacher. Classroom teaching provided me with ample experience in *practice*, and it was through practice that I grew up as an educator (e.g., Freire & Betto, 1985). Teaching at various grade levels in different programs in Manaus made me realize that education can give voice to people, especially to the students from impoverished backgrounds in adult evening school. In a sense, I re-traced on my own the experiences made by Paulo Freire during his time as a high-school teacher in Recife and his work at SESI. I saw through the majority of my students (and my mother's) the poverty that afflicts large parts of Manaus but also saw the beauty and optimism of the students that had to struggle so much.

A Path to Theory and Discovering a New Direction for Critical Pedagogy

I grew up with music and I also play the piano. I like theater, dance, and the visual arts, but music is like oxygen – it is a necessity to survive and draw energy from. The works of Heitor Villa-Lobos, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Johann Sebastian Bach, Béla Bartók, Camargo Guarnieri, and Arnaldo Rebello, just to name a few, accompanied me since childhood. Engaging in music unclutters one's life and cloudy eyes become clearer. A major event occurred when I was already teaching at the Universidade Federal do Amazonas. I was approached by a frustrated parent whose young daughter was congenitally deaf but who vehemently wanted to learn how to play the piano. The girl, the only deaf child in the family, wanted to be able

to better engage in the family musical activities, since her father was a professional musician. Despite not knowing much about Deaf education, I accepted the challenge by developing a music instruction program to teach the young deaf student to play the piano. After three years of study the student was able to advance to the intermediate level with a good grasp of rhythmical and melodic dynamics in music (Cruz, 1997a). This experience moved me so much that it led me to further search and research about music & deafness: I ended up leaving my home country to start my graduate program at the University of Tennessee at Knoxville not only to further my education and to engage more deeply with the field of music & deafness, but also to better explore how to make it possible that young Deaf students would have an equal opportunity to experience music, if they wish to do so. Graduate school added *theory* to my practice and this was the time when I fully re-connected with the work of Paulo Freire, going back to the *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* I engaged with in high school, and integrating my real-life experiences teaching students of poverty in Manaus. It provided a path "to expand the application of his [Paulo Freire's] ideas to another educational realm where people are still disenfranchised by the label of 'disabled'" (Cruz, 2010).

Deaf individuals engaging in music face the oppressor-oppressed relationship from individuals outside the Deaf community, who deny any possibility that the Deaf can participate in and enjoy music, and from Deaf individuals within the Deaf community, who ideologically perceive engaging in music as having a Deaf individual identifying with the "normally-hearing" culture and denying his/her own Deaf culture (Cruz, 1997b). Deaf individuals, however, can enjoy music and can derive benefits from musical activity through the use of plural pathways – that is using a combination of any residual hearing, visualization, feeling vibrations, imitation, imagination, and internalization – instead of through the use of the direct pathway – that is using the hearing sense (Cruz, 1997b). In this context Freire's concept of conscientização (Freire, 1970, 1974, 2001) and the notion of radical literacy (Cruz, 2012b), derived from the work of Macedo & Freire (1987), can be crucial. Radical literacy and conscientização can be means to contest ideologies and cultural, historical, and social constructs that limit the educational opportunities for the Deaf, including access to music. It will allow the Deaf to reconstruct their history, to find their "voice," to claim their own future, and it will result in a more democratic educational experience for the Deaf. Employing the notion and tenets of critical pedagogy and the teachings of Paulo Freire to Deaf studies is exciting and this new application of critical pedagogy promises to lead to agency enabling the Deaf to change their own reality.

This work and my place in critical pedagogy really follow the path sketched out by Paulo in his work. But as Paulo persistently emphasized, he did not want to see rigid followers, he wanted individuals engaging in his ideas but making them their own: to take his ideas on a journey and modify them according to the circumstances encountered in place and time, to apply pedagogical theory and practice leading to praxis – all for a more humane and socially just society.

Moving to the U.S. for graduate studies was a great leap from one culture to another. It required not only to communicate in a new language – to read the word anew – but also to engage in a new culture – to read the world a new. My first language, Portuguese, was all listening and "feeling," my new language, English, demanded more 'intellectualizing;' it required some time to navigate through and around cultural and linguistic nuances in this new and alien world. Instigated by one Deaf student in Manaus, a major turning point in my life was reached: my life was fundamentally changed by working with music and the Deaf.

A Path to Praxis

For the last decade, a major focus in my professional life is the education of future classroom teachers. The guiding principle in this endeavor is critical pedagogy and the application of Paulo Freire's work in the classroom. Critical pedagogy will help future teachers be cognizant of social reality and the power structures within society and how these affect education; it will help future teachers be vigilant about these circumstances influencing education; and it will help future teachers keep a moral compass and employ ethics in their profession (Freire, 1970, 1994, 1998a). Critical pedagogy – much like music – unclutters students' minds and launches a constant process of discovery and re-discovery. I firmly believe that teacher education students must be exposed to critical pedagogy early in their college career and their education should be framed throughout by critical pedagogy; exposure to critical pedagogy should not be deferred to a one-time seminar later in the education of teacher education students (e.g., Cruz, 2013c). Paulo Freire's *Teachers as Cultural Workers* (Freire, 1998b), in this respect, is a very valuable companion text that can instigate reflection, critical thinking, and discussion concerning the teaching profession and what the characteristics of an authoritative and democratic teacher should be. A strong teacher education program with solid foundational courses taught within the framework of critical pedagogy will result in competent teachers who are also responsible citizens within a democratic society, who can support a functioning democracy, and teach their own students also to be responsible members of a participatory democratic society. "The need for critical teacher education" is not just for the purpose of making "professional education more rigorous and demanding" (Kincheloe, 2008, p. 111), but ultimately is for the purpose of ensuring a more humane democratic society.

Teaching at the college-level in the U.S. injected a dose of *praxis* into my pedagogy. Working on a daily basis with students in the teacher education program and in my own Critical Pedagogy Honors Project saw those students acquire criticality, saw them transformed by realizing the purpose of education. Resulting action – student driven – stemming from classroom teaching included investigating opportunities (i.e., professional, entertainment, educational, etc.) for the Deaf and the lack of support (and at no costs) for Deaf and hard-of-hearing people at local

cinemas. Another example of student-driven action involved publicly challenging the college community to ponder the question of schooling vs. education through articles in the college newspaper. Praxis also included engagement with adult refugees and immigrants to the St. Louis area by equipping them with necessary means to survive in the technology-driven modern world and helping them not to be "lost" in a new culture. Through this project, I intended to help them to travel from prior socio-cultural-economic contexts through digital literacy to reading their new socio-cultural-economic contexts. This also was an effort to decrease the digital divide while increasing the participation of newly informed citizens in the digital democracy. In addition, informed praxis related to changing the college environment focused on intercultural and international topics and organizing groups and *"Critical Educators Roundtables"* to discuss the immediate future of higher education in the U.S. during this time of rampant neoliberal dismantling of all things public. I also continue to engage in providing workshops, lectures, presentations, and discussion groups for Deaf and "normally-hearing" individuals pressing for more equitable opportunities for the Deaf, particularly with respect to music/music education.

A Path Connecting Critical Pedagogy and Democracy

Critical pedagogy is crucial for a participatory democracy. Beginning in the 1980s and most uncontrolled over the last decade, all aspects of everyday life were intruded by the politico-economic philosophy of neoliberalism (e.g., Giroux, 2004). Paulo Freire clearly understood the threat of neoliberalism to society and humankind (Freire, 1998a), where the unfettered forces of the marketplace will inevitably lead to "increasing wealth of the few and the rapid increase of poverty and misery for the vast majority of humanity" (Freire, 1998a, p. 114) and where neoliberalism represents an "ideology that humiliates and denies our humanity" (p. 27). Education is also a target of the free-market forces of neoliberalism and with a redesign of education along neoliberal templates, education – especially higher education – will lose its role as a democratic public sphere and this development will bring with it a weakening of substantive democracy (e.g., Giroux, 2009). Critical education in the form of critical pedagogy, on the other hand, provides the possibility for critical thinking, questioning, discussion, and a critical analysis into the nature of knowledge (Giroux, 2009, 2012; Cruz, 2012a). Students will be empowered through critical pedagogy to analyze the social, political, cultural, and economic conditions that determine their lives in this contemporary neoliberal world. This, in turn, can lead to conscientização (Freire, 1974, 2001) and the development of agency to change this oppressive socio-political environment. Critical pedagogy, therefore, can provide the means for students to acquire the critical knowledge and agency to counteract neoliberalism and to support a vibrant democracy (e.g., Giroux, 2009, 2012; Cruz, 2012 a).

THE JOURNEY – A REFLECTION ON ENCOUNTERS

To embark on a journey with Paulo Freire is to understand that life is movement, life is fluid, life is transformation, and life is a school! Life can only be meaningful if human beings become conscious of their agency and power of transformation. Paulo (Freire, 1998a) once said

> I like being human because I know that my passing through the world is not predetermined, preestablished. (…) I like being human because I am involved with others in making history out of possibilities not simply resigned to fatalistic stagnation. (p. 54)

Moreover, like Paulo, I also believe that education is a form of intervening in the world because human beings, as ethical beings, make choices. As Paulo (Freire, 1998a) stated

> (…) those who may not have made the same political, ethical, aesthetic or pedagogical choices as myself, I cannot begin from the standpoint that I have to conquer them at any cost or from the fear that they may conquer me. On the contrary, the basis of our encounter ought to be a respect for the differences between us and an acknowledgement of the coherence between what I say and what I do. (p. 120)

Our intervention in the world (through education), therefore, can only manifest itself when educators and learners alike stay open to ideas, stay curious and allow respect, for what we consider different from us, to guide our relationships. And, in this case, Paulo (Freire, 1998a) said

> It is in my permanent openness to life that I give myself entirely, my critical thought, my feeling, my curiosity, my desire, all that I am. It is thus that I travel the road, knowing that I am learning to be who I am by relating to what is my opposite. (p. 119)

As I reflect on my journey with Paulo, on my first encounter with him while I was still a high-school student, and on my encounter with all the student-learners (children, youth, and adults) that interacted with me throughout these years, I would say to you, reader, who has joined us in this journey that this stop here is not yet the end of our journey – there is still much road ahead of us! At every stop of our journey, however, we will be asked to reflect on spaces – such as *our schools* – where many of us initiate the journey of discovering ourselves, discovering the world and life itself.

The connection between school and life is indeed a very intricate one. As school tries to explain life to student-learners, life by itself is also a school, as articulated by Paulo (Freire & Betto, 1985, p. 94), "Life in its totality taught me a great lesson that it is impossible to embrace it without taking risks. This is how I live."[1]

Our schools are too focused on texts and the intellect, they have become places where we frequently stop at the level of concepts and abort any type of transformative action. We need to allow our students to experience education as if being in the flow of a music tune where our emotions (not only the intellect) can help to contextualize not only present, but past experiences and even possible future ones; not only book knowledge, but lived-experiences as well. As in music, we should allow our quest for knowledge in schools to be connected to emotions, beauty, creativity, and spirituality – a thorough knowledge of oneself and the surrounding world. Schools should be spaces where students can take risks about their own education and in which the development of new ideas will take place, where the creative act of (re)connecting the old and the new and/or the possibility of reinventing what is known, would take place – this would be the kind of school looking toward a future that brings new and more complex challenges and the kind of school rooted in freedom and participatory democracy, not the type of school that emphasizes hierarchy and regurgitates the past in order to maintain forms of subjugation, imperialism and oppression. Critical pedagogy will allow critical and innovative thinking to take knowledge to new and unexplored dimensions and with it creating a more just and equal society.

My journey with Paulo Freire reveals that critical pedagogy, from practice to theory and from theory to praxis, seeks that kind of transformation: a world where life (and not death) can be in the spotlight of the news and celebrated daily; a world where the essence of our kind – humanity – can prevail and where we are guided by respect and admiration for all forms of life. And then, as we get ready to continue on our journey, Paulo (Freire, 1998a) would say

> (…) the more I give myself to the experience of living with what is different without fear and without prejudice, the more I come to know the self I am shaping and that is being shaped as I travel the road of life. (p. 120)

NOTE

[1] Translation from the original Brazilian Portuguese by A. L. Cruz.

KEY WORKS BY PAULO FREIRE

(1970) *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. New York, NY: Continuum.
(1974). *Education for critical consciousness*. New York, NY: Continuum.
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14. EDUCATION AND DISCOMFORT

On Being a Critical Scholar/Activist in Education

GETTING THERE

It was late in the evening and I had just come home after a day of teaching, filled with the combination of exhaustion, tension, and sometimes pure joy that accompanies working in schools. There was something waiting for me, a letter from Teachers College, Columbia University. I opened it with much trepidation. But the news was good. I was admitted to the Philosophy of Education program there. I had been accepted elsewhere, but this was the 1960s and in my mind "TC" was the place to be if one was deeply interested in challenging the taken for granted assumptions and practices of schooling. To tell the truth, I was surprised that I had been admitted. I had gone to two small state teachers colleges at night for my undergraduate degree, a degree that was not yet finished since I had to complete some required courses that summer. And while working full-time as a printer before my part-time undergraduate career was interrupted by the army, my grade point average was, to be honest, pretty horrible. Luckily, Teachers College focused on my post-army last two years of college work.

The army had "trained" me to be a teacher and many urban schools were facing a very serious teacher shortage. Thus, I began teaching without a degree in the inner city schools of Paterson, New Jersey, schools I had attended as a child, and then moved to teach in a small rural and strikingly conservative town in southern New Jersey for a number of years where I predictably had some serious run-ins with ultra-conservative and racist groups (see Apple, 1999). I had also been a president of a teachers union, a continuation of a family tradition of political activism. (I was born as what was then commonly called a "red diaper baby.") I loved teaching; but I was more than a little distressed by the ways teachers were treated, by curricula that were almost totally disconnected from the world of the children and communities in which I worked, and by policies that seemed to simply reproduce the poverty and racism that surrounded me. Having grown up poor myself, this was not something that gave me much to be happy about as you might imagine. Taken together, all of this pushed me toward applying for a Master's degree, with the aim of returning to the classroom and to teacher union activism. But something happened to me at Columbia. I found a way, a "vocation," that enabled me to combine my interests in

B. J. Porfilio & D. R. Ford (Eds.), Leaders in Critical Pedagogy, 185–198.

politics, education, and the gritty materialities of daily life in schools. I ultimately continued on for a doctorate.

Going to Teachers College during the late 1960s was a remarkable experience in many ways. It treated intellectual work seriously and pushed me and others to the limits of what was possible to read and understand. For me, coming from night school at small places, aside from a family tradition of radical literacy, this was one of the first times I had been treated as if I could deal with some of the most complicated historical, economic, conceptual, political, and practical issues surrounding education. I loved it and was dismayed by it at the very same time. The reason for the dismay was because TC (and Columbia University as a whole) was basically next to Harlem and yet its relations with impoverished schools and with the Black and Latino communities nearby were spotty at best. This very fact provided students like me with a bit of kindling for the gritty anger that many of us already felt. This of course was complemented by the reality that Columbia was a deeply politicized environment at the time. The fact that I had already been an activist in anti-racist, anti-corporate, and anti-war movements meant that the pressure cooker of studying at Columbia had to be balanced with the demands of political action. Somehow I and others did it.

In philosophy of education, I worked with Jonas Soltis, a fine analytic philosopher and teacher and someone who recognized that there might be something worthwhile in my rough and not yet polished conceptual abilities. But Jonas also recognized that whatever my growing conceptual talents (and they were growing since he was indeed a good teacher), I was chafing at the lack of connection between the world of analytic philosophy and the struggles over curricula, teaching, and community participation in schools. He knew almost before I did that my real interests were centered on the politics of curriculum and teaching.

Near the end of my first year at TC, he sent me to see Alice Miel, the Chair of Curriculum and Teaching and someone whose contributions to democratic curriculum have not been sufficiently recognized. And Alice sent me to see Dwayne Huebner. Her suggestion had a profound impact on all that I have done.

Very few doctoral students had finished with Dwayne. He was demanding (of himself as well as his students) and he was among the most creative critical curriculum scholars in the history of the field. He said that we needed to rethink all that we thought we knew about society, about schooling, about nearly everything. Dwayne sent me away with a list of more than fifty books to read—in philosophy, critical social theory, literature and literary theory, social action, and curriculum history. For some this would have been off-putting. But for some reason, I took up the challenge and we met again—and again and again. I engaged with the books. It was a bewildering array and yet I began to see a pattern, a set of ways in which our common-sense must be and could be challenged. My political and pedagogic commitment to understanding and interrupting common-sense that was so much a part of my political and educational activity earlier and that became the central focus of my work as a scholar/activist throughout my career later on was given direction.

Dwayne sent me to the New School to take courses in phenomenology and critical social and cultural theory. He insisted that I get to know Maxine Greene well, a person who also had a major influence on me. In essence, I did a joint degree in curriculum studies, philosophy, and sociology under the direction of Dwayne, Jonas, and Maxine. This combination led to a dissertation that brought these traditions together, "Relevance and Curriculum: A Study in the Phenomenological Sociology of Knowledge," at the same time as it provided both the foundation and many of the guiding questions for much of my later work on the relationship among education, knowledge, and power.

COMING TO WISCONSIN

Dwayne had done his PhD at Wisconsin. He told stories of Wisconsin and of his experiences there, compelling stories that documented its excellence, its political tradition, and the ways in which it provided a space for critical work. When I was called for an interview there in the spring of 1970, I was more than a little happy—and filled with a bad case of nerves.

My first experience of Madison, Wisconsin was arriving in the midst of a large anti-war demonstration. The power of the demonstrations (and they continue today), the intellectual and political openness of the Departments of Curriculum and Instruction and Educational Policy Studies, the quality of the students there, the progressive political traditions of the state and the community, all of these combined to make me feel that I had found a home. No place is perfect, but Wisconsin continues to be a special place, an institution where I have spent more than four decades.

KNOWLEDGE AND POWER–FIRST STEPS

Wisconsin provided the space for truly serious critical work, work that could be *engaged*. It was an ideal place to be a "scholar/activist." In the early 1970s, in addition to the other writing I was doing on teacher education, on critical studies of curriculum and evaluation, and on student rights, and in close relation to the political/educational activist efforts in which I was also deeply engaged, I began the initial work on a volume that was to take nearly five years to complete, *Ideology and Curriculum* (1979/1990/2004).[1] (Luckily, I had gotten tenure in 1973 after only three years at Wisconsin, and was promoted to full professor after only three more years, so the pressure was off.)

The aim of that early book was not only to revitalize critical educational studies, but also to challenge both "liberal" educational policies and practices *and* the reductive and essentializing theories of the role of education that had become influential in critical analysis, books such as Bowles and Gintis's *Schooling in Capitalist America* (1976). In *Ideology and Curriculum* (*I&C*), I argued that education must be seen as a political act. I suggested that in order to do this, we needed to think *relationally*. That is, understanding education requires that we situate it back into both the unequal

relations of power in the larger society and into the relations of dominance and subordination – and the conflicts – that are generated by these relations.

Others had said some of this at the time, but they were all too general. I wanted to focus on the connections between knowledge and power. Thus, rather than simply asking whether students have mastered a particular subject matter and have done well on our all too common tests, we should ask a different set of questions: Whose knowledge is this? How did it become "official"? What is the relationship between this knowledge and who has cultural, social, and economic capital in this society? Who benefits from these definitions of legitimate knowledge and who does not? What can we do as critical educators and activists to change existing educational and social inequalities and to create curricula and teaching that are more socially just?

During the writing of *Ideology and Curriculum*, I came into contact with a number of people in England who were doing similar critical work on the relationship between knowledge and power. The "New Sociology of Education" in England had nearly exactly the same intuitions and used much the same resources as critical curriculum studies did in the United States. As my analyses became popular there, international connections were cemented in place. This led to my first set of lectures outside the United States in 1976 and created a set of intellectual and political bonds that continue to this day. I am certain that *Ideology and Curriculum* would not have been seen as such a major contribution without the political and academic influences of these colleagues in England.

A moment ago, I mentioned the kinds of questions that *I&C* raised. Yet, it is important to state that the volume was grounded in a large array of issues and literature. Indeed, *I&C* enabled me to synthesize a considerable number of the influences that had been working through me for many years. Let me note them here, since many people see such early work as simply an expression of Neo-Marxism. It is this, but it was so much more. It rested in such traditions as the following: cultural Marxism and Marxist theory; phenomenology and in particular social phenomenology; the sociology of knowledge; analytic philosophy inside and outside of education; European critical theory; the philosophy, sociology, and history of science; aesthetics and the philosophy of art; political economy and studies of the labor process; the new sociology of education in England and France; and last but certainly not least, the critical and literary traditions within education.

Thus, *Ideology and Curriculum* was meant to speak to a much larger array of educational, social, cultural, and political issues than some might have realized. And it certainly could not be captured by overly simplistic slogans such as curriculum "reconceptualization," a term with a very weak empirical and historical warrant. I fully recognize that *I&C* bears the mark of its time. It devotes most of its energy to unpacking the role that curriculum and pedagogy play in cultural reproduction. It spends much less time than it should on a more dialectical understanding of knowledge and power and because of this is not as adequate in understanding transformations and struggles (see Weis, McCarthy, & Dimitriadis 2006). But this is taken up in the many books that followed. Yet, even with its limitations and silences,

the fact that it has gone through multiple editions and has been translated into a very large number of languages means that I must have gotten something right.

EXPANDING THE DYNAMICS OF POWER

I&C was the first step on what became a long journey, for other books regularly followed as I understood more and as I was taught by the criticisms of other scholars and activists throughout the world and certainly by my doctoral students and visiting scholars from all over the world at Wisconsin.

Two other books followed—*Education and Power* (1982/1995/2012) and *Teachers and Texts* (1986). That set of books formed what somehow came to be known as the first "Apple trilogy." The two additional volumes both corrected some of the errors and spoke to some of the silences in *I&C* and expanded the dynamics of power with which we had to be concerned to include gender and race. They focused on the power and contradictions of resistance and struggle both inside schools and in the larger society. They critically examined what was happening in curricula and in teachers' labor through a process of deskilling, reskilling, and intensification. They illuminated the political economy of the "real" curriculum in schools–the textbook. And they analyzed the spaces where possible counter-hegemonic action could take place. Each of these books reflected political and theoretical debates that were raging at the time; and each of them as well has close connections to the political and educational movements in which I was participating.

Looking back on this first set of volumes, I can now see more clearly that they led me from a largely neo-Marxist analyses of social and cultural reproduction, to an equally critical (and unromantic) emphasis on agency, to treatments of teachers' work and lives, to an enlargement of political and cultural struggles to complement (but definitely not abandon) my original focus on class, and more recently to sustained critical analyses of how powerful movements and alliances can radically shift the relationship between educational policies and practices and the relations of dominance and subordination in the larger society, but not in a direction that any of us would find ethically or politically justifiable. All of these efforts over the years have been grounded in a sense of the significance of cultural struggles and of the crucial place that schools, curricula, teachers, and communities play in these struggles.

UNDERSTANDING CONSERVATIVE SOCIAL MOVEMENTS IN EDUCATION

Another series of books followed—this time four volumes–these focusing much more directly on the ways in which power worked currently and on how we might interrupt these relations. In volumes such as *Official Knowledge* (1993/2000/2014), *Cultural Politics and Education* (1996), *Educating the "Right" Way* (2001/2006), and *The State and the Politics of Knowledge* (2003), I spent a good deal of time showing that it is social movements, *not* educators, who are the real engines of

educational transformations. And the social movements that continue to be the most powerful now are more than a little conservative. In essence, I have claimed that if you want to understand how to engage in a successful large scale pedagogic campaign that changes people's common-sense about legitimate knowledge, teaching, and evaluation – indeed about schooling in general – examine those people who have actually done it. I hadn't abandoned my previous concerns with knowledge and power, but I now had better tools. And the politics were now even more pressing since educators all over the world were facing a set of conservative attacks that were deeply damaging to any education worth its name.

For exactly these reasons, over the past two decades I have been engaged in a concerted effort to analyze the reasons behind the rightist resurgence – what I call "conservative modernization" – in education and to try to find spaces for interrupting it. My aim has not simply been to castigate the Right, although there is a bit of fun in doing so. Rather, I have also sought to illuminate the dangers, and the elements of good sense, not only bad sense, that are found within what is an identifiable and powerful new "hegemonic bloc" (that is, a powerful set of groups that provides overall leadership to and pressure on what the basic goals and policies of a society are). This new rightist alliance is made up of various factions – neo-liberals, neo-conservatives, authoritarian populist religious conservatives, and some members of the professional and managerial new middle class. These are complicated groups, but let me describe them briefly.

This power bloc combines multiple fractions of capital who are committed to neo-liberal marketized solutions to educational problems, neo-conservative intellectuals who want a "return" to higher standards and a "common culture," authoritarian populist religious fundamentalists who are deeply worried about secularity and the preservation of their own traditions, and particular fractions of the professionally oriented new middle class who are committed to the ideology and techniques of accountability, measurement, and "management." While there are clear tensions and conflicts within this alliance, in general its overall aims are in providing the educational conditions believed necessary both for increasing international competitiveness, profit, and discipline and for returning us to a romanticized past of the "ideal" home, family, and school.

I have had a number of reasons for focusing on the alliance behind conservative modernization. First, these groups are indeed powerful, as any honest analysis of what is happening in education and the larger society clearly indicates. Second, they are quite talented in connecting to people who might ordinarily disagree with them. For this reason, I have shown in a number of places that people who find certain elements of conservative modernization relevant to their lives are not puppets. They are not dupes who have little understanding of the "real" relations of this society.

My position is very different. I maintain that the reason that some of the arguments coming from the various factions of this new hegemonic bloc are listened to is because they *are* connected to aspects of the realities that people experience. The tense alliance of neo-liberals, neo-conservatives, authoritarian populist religious

activists, and the professional and managerial new middle class only works because there has been a very creative articulation of themes that resonate deeply with the experiences, fears, hopes, and dreams of people as they go about their daily lives. Worries about economic insecurity, about the destruction of communities, about feelings of powerlessness, about a lack of respect, about bureaucratic inaction and intransigence—all of these are based in real things that very many people experience in their daily lives The Right has often been more than a little manipulative in its articulation of these themes. It has integrated them within racist nativist discourses, within economically dominant forms of understanding, and within a problematic sense of "tradition." But, this integration could only occur if they were organized around people's understanding of their real material and cultural lives.

The second reason I have stressed the tension between good and bad sense and the ability of dominant groups to connect to people's real understandings of their lives– aside from the continuation of the profound respect for Antonio Gramsci's writings about this that was so visible even in my early work – has to do with my belief that we have witnessed a major educational accomplishment over the past three decades in many countries. The Right has successfully demonstrated that you need to work at the level of people's daily experiences, not only in government policies. The accomplishment of such a vast educational project has many implications. It shows how important cultural struggles inside and outside of schools actually are. And, oddly enough, it gives reason for hope. It forces us to ask a significant question. *If the right can do this, why can't we?*

I do not mean this as a rhetorical question. As I have argued repeatedly in this next set of four books, the Right has shown how powerful the struggle over meaning and identity – and hence, schools, curricula, teaching, and evaluation – can be. While we should not want to emulate their often cynical and manipulative processes, the fact that they have had such success in pulling people under their ideological umbrella has much to teach us. Granted there are real differences in money and power between the forces of conservative modernization and those whose lives are being tragically altered by the policies and practices coming from the alliance. But, the Right wasn't as powerful thirty years ago as it is now. It collectively organized. It created a decentered unity, one where each element sacrificed some of its particular agenda to push forward on those areas that bound them together. Can't we do the same?

I believe that we can, but only if we face up to the realities and dynamics of power in unromantic ways. And this means not only critically analyzing the rightist agendas and the effects of their increasingly mistaken and arrogant policies in education and so much else, but engaging in some serious criticism of some elements within the progressive and critical educational communities as well. Thus, as I argued in *Educating the "Right" Way*, the "romantic possibilitarian" rhetoric of a good deal of the writing on critical pedagogy is not sufficiently based on a tactical or strategic analysis of the current situation nor is it sufficiently grounded in its understanding of the reconstructions of discourse and movements that are occurring in all too

many places. The sometimes mostly rhetorical material of critical pedagogy simply is unable to cope with what has happened. Only when it is linked much more to concrete issues of educational policy and practice—and to the daily lives of educators, students, and community members—can it succeed.

This, of course, is why journals such as *Rethinking Schools* and books such as *Democratic Schools* (Apple & Beane, 1995; Apple & Beane, 2007) that connect critical educational theories and approaches to the actual ways in which they can be and are present in real classrooms become so important. Thus, while I may have been one of the originators of critical theory and critical pedagogy in the United States, I also have been one of its internal critics when it has forgotten what it is meant to do and has sometimes become simply an academic specialization at universities.

Democratic Schools (Apple & Beane 1995, 2007) is an example of what I mean here. Along with other people, I've argued that it is essential that critical educators not ignore the question of practice. That is, we must find ways of speaking to (and learning from) people who now labor everyday in schools in worsening conditions which are made even worse by the merciless attacks from the Right. This means that rather than ignore "mainstream" organizations and publications, it's important to occupy the spaces provided by existing "mainstream" publication outlets to publish books that provide *critical* answers to teachers' questions about "What do I do on Monday?" during a conservative era. As I hinted at earlier, this space has too long been ignored by many theorists of critical pedagogy.

The publication and widespread distribution of *Democratic Schools* – and the more recent publication and translation into multiple languages of the enlarged 2nd edition – provides one practical and strategic instance of making critical educational positions seem actually doable in "ordinary" institutions such as schools and local communities. Not unimportantly for me personally, it is one more thing that keeps me connected to the realities of curricula and teaching that sent me to Teachers College in the first place.

LEARNING INTERNATIONALLY I—PAULO FREIRE AND CRITICAL PEDAGOGY

My understanding of these political and educational issues, of the dangers we now face and of what can and must be done to deal with them, is grounded not only in my early political experiences, in the gritty realities of working with children in urban and rural schools, in the research I've carried out on what schools do and do not do in this society, or in my and Jim Beane's work with practicing educators on building more critical and democratic curricula and teaching strategies. It also has been profoundly affected by the extensive international work in which I have been fortunate to engage in Latin America, Asia, Africa, and elsewhere. For example, beginning in the mid-1980s, I began to go to Brazil to work with the Ministry of Education in the southern city of Porto Alegre and to give both academic and more popular lectures at universities and to teacher union groups. Most of my books

had been translated there. Because of this, and because of similar theoretical and political tendencies in the work coming out of Brazil and my own, I developed close relationships with many politically active educators there. This also meant that I developed not only an ongoing relationship with activist educators and researchers in the Workers Party throughout Brazil, but just as importantly an even closer relationship with the great Brazilian critical educator Paulo Freire grew as well.

Oddly enough, unlike many critical educators in the United States I actually had not been strongly influenced by Freire. While his arguments were indeed poetic and powerful, they had less of an impact on me since I had already been deeply involved in critical pedagogical work in schools, communities, and labor and anti-racist mobilizations and had already been formed by those critical educational traditions from the time I was a teenager and still carried them with me. Thus, as we became friends over the years, our conversations were less those of teacher and taught– although I respected him immensely. They were more those of relative equals who often agreed but sometimes disagreed. For example, I believed that Freire was much too romantic about the question of content. He seemed too easily to assume that almost automatically oppressed people would discover what was crucial to know. I wanted much more attention to be paid to the *what* of the curriculum. It was only later that I realized that my ongoing public and private discussions with Freire had indeed had a lasting effect on me.

Let me say, however, that like so many others people throughout the world, I too strongly believe that Freire deserves our utmost respect as one of the greatest and most influential critical educators ever to live. But there is something more personal that I need to say, something that speaks to why I respected him so much. As I read his material, as I just noted there were places – sometimes entire arguments – with which I disagreed. (Indeed, there were many progressive social and educational activists and writers in Brazil and elsewhere who had similar worries). I was fortunate enough to have many conversations with him, sometimes in front of large audiences and sometimes in the privacy of a home or an office. Our discussions were often intense and deeply respectful. There is no doubt in my mind that I owe him a debt as a teacher, colleague, and friend that can never fully be repaid.

Yet, I must be honest here, especially since Paulo himself insisted on speaking the truth. I have many worries about what might be called the "Freire industry." Too many people have employed Freire as both writer and person as part of mobility strategies within the social field of the academy. Bourdieu (1984) would recognize this as a set of conversion strategies in which members of an upwardly mobile fraction of the new middle class substitute linguistic activity – radical sounding words and supposed friendship and closeness to radical actors – for lived political action of a more substantive kind. They, thus, engage in the collection of cultural and social capital that they hope to someday convert into economic capital gained through academic advancement and prestige. Thus, for some individuals, getting close to Freire, using his books and language, was at least partly a strategy

(in Bourdieu's words, a conversion strategy) of career advancement in which being seen as part of his circle gave one legitimacy in the social field of critical education.

I realize when I say this that there is a danger of overstating this claim. However, in this case I believe that Bourdieu's analysis is useful. Status is related in complex ways to markets in social and cultural capital in academic fields (Bourdieu, 1984; Bourdieu, 1988). And too often, members of the new middle class within the academy solve their class contradictions by writing in an elaborately abstract but seemingly "political" manner, by being seen as a member of a "critical" community of academics and as someone who from the outside looks as if she or he is part of the inner circle "critical pedagogy" and of Freire initiates; yet their political work is limited to writing political sounding words on a page.

One of the major elements that gave Paulo Freire such legitimacy was not only that he focused on and wrote about a particular kind of educational/political praxis, but that he himself had engaged in the hard and disciplined (and sometimes dangerous) work of putting theory and practice together. He had actually helped build programs that were not meant to simply be rhetorical. For him, education *had to be* about changing society; and he was a full participant in this struggle. Yet, unfortunately, some parts of the critical pedagogy and Freire "industry" have recuperated much of his work into the safe haven of the academic world. In the process of supposedly "politicizing the academic," one of the latent effects of this has been the opposite. They have too often succeeded in simply *academicizing the political*. In the process, much of what gave Freire's work its meaning – its concrete connections to lived struggles in "favelas," in rural areas, among (the identifiable, not abstract or anonymous) large groups of oppressed and exploited people, and so on – is vitiated. It is not connected to social movements in which the writer herself or himself is involved (in part because the writer herself or himself is unconnected in any meaningful and organic way to large-scale social movements). It becomes something we only write about and study.

I do not want to be misunderstood here. I am not claiming in any way that there is not crucial political/intellectual value in serious academic work; nor am I taking a vulgar pragmatist position here. Indeed, like Freire himself, I believe that we must be very critical of a position that is anti-book and anti-theory. And like him, I "prefer knowledge that is forged and produced in the tension between practice and theory" (Freire, 1996, p. 85). Rather, I want us to take seriously the historical conjuncture in which we live. In a time when the university puts immense pressure on people to act like possessive individuals and when forms of solidarity are being fractured ideologically and materially both within the university and between cultural workers at universities and other sites of struggle in "the real world," I want us to explore the possibility that one of the uses of Freire and other radical scholar/activists among some people has been to create an illusion of political commitment while managing to make no sacrifices in one's goal of individual advancement and prestige. I also want to claim that this strategy is made easier because of the disconnection between the persons doing the writing and the concrete historical and current struggles to put

Freire's work into practice in multiple sites, from schools and communities to unions to other oppressed groups.

Yet, this dis-connection is something Paulo Freire would have never wanted. He better than anyone knew both intellectually and bodily what was at stake in the struggles over literacy, culture, economy, and power. And he more than almost anyone else I knew understood that "naming the word and the world" was part of an ongoing and never ending struggle in which we could never be satisfied with abstract commitments. They had to be acted upon, embodied, lived. They could not be incorporated in new middle class conversion strategies, nor could they be consistent with the possessive individualism increasingly becoming the dominant form of subjectivity in all too many nations (see Apple, 2013).

LEARNING INTERNATIONALLY II

These international connections were—and continue to be—crucial in the development of my work. Later on these were to be joined by intellectual and political connections in Japan, Korea, China, and elsewhere in Asia, in Spain, Portugal, Norway, and other nations in Europe, and even more work in Latin America. Thus, the international discussions, debates, and co-teaching, and the academic and political activity in which I engaged in these nations, always have had a powerful impact on me and have led me to develop what I hope are more nuanced understandings both of the ways in which context and history matter and of the multiple kinds and forms of dominance and politics that exist. Thus, for example, I am now much better able to think through what roles different kinds of government/economy relations and histories (strong or weak, capitalist or state bureaucratic socialist, strong or weak labor movements) play. I also am now much more aware of how different traditions of religious impulses and movements with their varying strengths and weaknesses operate. Furthermore, the significance of histories of racial subjugation and gendered realities—and similar dynamics – are now clearer than they were before. Finally, I have come to have an immense amount of respect for the creative resiliency and political and educational courage of people in what we in the North somewhat arrogantly call the "Third World." Thus, words that we tend to treat as nouns—housing, food, education—I now even more than earlier very much recognize as *verbs*. They require constant effort, constant struggle and constant organized and personal action.

These ongoing and deepening international relations and experiences provide some of the reasons that in even more recent books such as *Can Education Change Society?* (Apple, 2013a; see also Apple, 2010), I have argued that the North needs to be taught by the South, with the development of the Citizen School and participatory budgeting in Porto Alegre for example being more than a little significant in this regard. Similar things could be said about my continued involvement with the struggles of the once banned but now legal teachers union in Korea.

FURTHER PERSONAL REFLECTIONS

In the previous sections of this chapter, I tried to be honest about complex issues that I've attempted to understand and about how much I have learned from others internationally. Of course, no person, and certainly not me, can ever be fully aware of what drives her or his intellectual and political efforts. What I do know is that it is more than a little important for me to remember how my work was formed out of the time I spent living and then teaching in one of the poorest communities in the United States and then in a very conservative rural area. I think that this has acted as a reality check, as did my role as a president of a teachers union.

But this is not all. The fact that I had grown up poor, but in a strongly politically active family, was significant, as was my activity while still a teenager in anti-racist mobilizations. Added to this were the years I spent working as a printer before and then during part of the period of time I was going to night school for my initial college degree. Coming from a family of *printers*—that most radical bastion of working class struggles over literacy and culture—meant something. It demanded that literacy and the struggles over it were connected to differential power. Theory and research in education, hence, was supposed to *do something* about the conditions I and many other people had experienced. Because of this radical tradition, this has also meant for me that I have never felt totally comfortable within the academy or with an academic life. The additional fact that I am the parent of a child of color has continually brought home to me that these struggles leave no place to feel "comfortable" with today's society. Indeed, if I lose the discomfort, I fear I will lose myself.

What does this mean to those people who still want to affix an easy label to me and my work? To be honest, I am not one who responds well to labels. I am not in a church, so I am not worried about heresy. I am not simply a "neo-Marxist," a "sociologist," a "critical curriculum scholar," or someone in "critical theory" or "critical pedagogy." Nor am I someone whose roots can be traced simply to something like "phenomenology meets Marxism." As I showed in the list of my early influences, a commitment to the arts—written, visual, and tactile—and to an embodied and culturally/politically critical aesthetic, have formed me in important ways as well. It may be useful to know in this regard that the "W" in Michael W. Apple stands for Whitman – the poet of the visceral and the popular, Walt Whitman, who like me came from New Jersey. Furthermore, as a film maker who works with teachers and children to create aesthetically and politically powerful visual forms, this kind of activity provides me with a sense of the importance of the very act of creation, of knowledge being something people can *make*, not simply "learn."

When I look back over the most recent books I've written at this stage of my career, it now seems that I still am attempting to deal with the same questions about the relationship between culture and power, about the relationship among the economic, political, and cultural spheres, and about what all this means for educational work, with which I started more than four decades ago. And as I show

in *Can Education Change Society?* (Apple, 2013a; see also Apple, 2013b), I still am trying to answer a question that was put so clearly by George Counts when he asked "Dare the Schools Build a New Social Order?" Counts was a person of his time and the ways he both asked and answered this question were a bit naïve. But the tradition of radically interrogating schools, of asking who benefits from their dominant forms of curricula, teaching, and evaluation, of arguing about what they might do differently, and of asking searching questions of what would have to change in order for this to happen—all of this is what has worked through me and so many others throughout the history of critical education.

I stand on the shoulders of many others who have taken such issues seriously and hope to have contributed both to the recovery of the collective memory of this tradition and to pushing it further along conceptually, historically, empirically, and practically. If we think of critical democracy as a vast river, it increasingly seems to me that our task is to keep the river flowing, to remove the blockages that impede it, and to participate in expanding the river to be more inclusive so that it flows for everyone.

NOTE

[1] Many of my books have gone through multiple editions, with revisions to the original arguments and the inclusion of what is often a good deal of additional material. I've employed the "/" symbol to indicate the varying dates of each edition, but the reader should understand that each edition may have very significant changes. When a new and expanded edition has been published by a different publisher, I have listed it separately. In addition, I have edited a large number of, books that have also been important to the development of my arguments. But in the interests of space, I haven't listed most of them here.

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JUHA SUORANTA

15. TOWARDS REBELLIOUS RESEARCH

Pages from the Sketchbook of a Working Class Academic

"MISREADING" IN URBANA–CHAMPAIGN, IL.

> Only slowly did I understand that if some of my most banal reactions were often misinterpreted, it was often because the manner – tone, voice, gestures, facial expressions, etc. – in which I sometimes manifested them, a mixture of aggressive shyness and a growling, even furious, bluntness, might be taken at face value, in other words, in a sense too seriously, and that it contrasted so much with the distant assurance of well-born Parisians that it always threatened to give the appearance of uncontrolled, querulous violence to reflex and sometimes purely ritual transgressions of the conventions and commonplaces of academic or intellectual routine. (Bourdieu, 2008, p. 89)

Carolyn Ellis et al. (2011) define autoethnography as follows:

> When researchers do *autoethnography*, they retrospectively and selectively write about epiphanies that stem from, or are made possible by, being part of a culture and/or by possessing a particular cultural identity. However, in addition to telling about experiences, autoethnographers often are required by social science publishing conventions to analyze these experiences.

In what follows, I have selected four episodes from my academic career, which can be described as epiphanies, or turning points. The first has to do with finding a critical pedagogy, and the second with practicing it. The third turning point is my step to activism, and the last, a path towards rebellious research.

I was first introduced to critical pedagogy during my year as a visiting scholar at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign in 1996. I was 30-years old and had written my PhD on qualitative methodology the previous year, a month before my daughter Anna Sofia was born. From the Cultural Studies section of the campus bookstore, I found Henry Giroux's recently published book *Fugitive Cultures* (1996). I remember reading the book between the shelves (our budget was tight so I hesitated to buy it right away) and was not only inspired by its beginning, as the author reflected on his youth as a working-class kid, and his later struggles with academic codes of neutrality, empty objectivity, and political correctness, but also was drawn to the ideas of critically committed educational research and praxis.

B. J. Porfilio & D. R. Ford (Eds.), Leaders in Critical Pedagogy, 199–209.

> Lacking the security of a middle-class childhood, my friends and I seemed suspended in a working-class culture that neither accorded us a voice nor guaranteed economic independence. Identity didn't come easy in my neighborhood. It was painfully clear to all of us that our identities were constructed out of daily battles waged around masculinity, the ability to mediate a terrain fraught with violence, and the need to find an anchor through which to negotiate a culture in which life was fast and short-lived. I grew up amid the motion and force of mostly working-class male bodies—bodies asserting their physical strength as one of the few resources we had control over. (Giroux, 1996, p. 4)

The accidentally found book was at the same time a revelation and a relief in two respects. I was caught in an identity trap: here was the background culture I was supposed to forget, while being positioned to replace it with an academic culture, imbued with new, strange and, from my point of view, wrong meanings. My case as a first generation academic was classical in terms of the differences of social and academic capital. Methodologically, I realized that educational research needed not to be a distanced and "objective" endeavour. (Objective is a term I have learned to hate, for too often it is nothing more than a weapon teachers use against their students. Many teachers have not been informed that the term refers not as a technology nor a method, but refers to a researcher's critical reflection).

A decade or so later, I discovered that I was not alone in my estrangement from academic life. Finding Ryan and Sackrey's (1984) book taught me that I was another "stranger in paradise," a misfit in the university world. And there were many others, too, even on the top like Pierre Bourdieu (1930–2002):

> Most of the questions that I ask, and that I put first of all to intellectuals, who have so many answers and, at bottom, so few questions, no doubt stem from the sense of being an *outsider* in the intellectual world. I question that world because it calls me into question, and in a very deep way that goes beyond the simple sense of social exclusion. I never feel myself fully justified in being an intellectual, I don't feel "at home", I have the feeling of having to justify (to whom? I have no idea) what seems to me an unjustifiable privilege. This experience, which I think I recognize in many socially stigmatized people (and in Kafka, for example), does not incline one to an immediate fellow-feeling with all those – and they are no less numerous among intellectuals than elsewhere – who feel fully justified in existing as they exist. The most elementary sociology of sociology confirms that the greatest contributions to social science have been made by people who were not perfectly in their element in the social world as it is. (Bourdieu, 1993, p. 47)

My unreflective academic socialization to the "pure" truth pursuing the ideals of academia and blind escape from the working-class consciousness ended in the middle of cornfields in Urbana-Champaign. Thankfully, critical pedagogy began to

open my eyes to the politics of education, methodology, and to the world of severe social inequalities.

I had travelled to the U.S. to study educational anthropology with Alan (Buddy) Peshkin (1931–2000). I returned home with new tools of critical understanding and *conscientização*. I remember mentioning this perhaps unexpected critical turn to Buddy at the dinner table. His reply was: "Giroux and his kinds are mere witnesses." Obviously he did not think critical pedagogy was a legitimate academic field but, if anything, a form of social critique. Of course, I respected his viewpoint and his work; in his apartment, I secretly admired his bookshelf and working environment, where he spent many afternoons consuming and producing research. I am still in debt for his advice: "you should nurture not only your methodological eye, but also your skills in empirical fieldwork *and* social theory."

Perhaps, in retrospect, this was not an unexpected turn. I had grown in a working-class family in the blue-collar city of Tampere, Finland. Growing up as a working-class inner city kid in the "red" factory town meant learning the basics of the pedagogy of the street and class struggle. I listened to my dad's and late grand dad's talks on current affairs, and histories of civil war in 1918 between proletarian reds and capitalist whites. This history included the slaughtering of thousands upon thousands of workers, children and women.

Besides this self-evident leftist bias in my upbringing, I was also among the first products of the Finnish public schooling system launched in the early 1970s. Based largely on social democratic party politics and the evolving Nordic welfare state model, the Ministry of Education created a national curriculum and public schools. In doing so, they enhanced the idea of educational and social opportunities for all. However, many of the gains made in providing public supports for students during the 70s and 80s were lost by the end of the 80s and early 90s, as a tsunami of market liberalism took over Finnish educational policy.

FROM QUALITATIVE METHODS TO CRITICAL PEDAGOGY

After my critical awakening, I began to publish more in the field of critical sociology of education, a marginal fraction in Finnish social and educational sciences. Since the late 1990s, I started to find blind spots amid critical research in Finnish social and educational sciences. I made them visible by writing, publishing, and participating in academic life. I played different roles to the best of my ability. Before my critical turn, I had co-authored an all-round book on qualitative research methods (Eskola & Suoranta, 1998), a steady-seller to this day.

Hitherto I have authored a book entitled *Radical Education* (2005) and co-edited a collection of Henry Giroux and Peter McLaren's work in Finnish (Giroux & McLaren, 2001). In addition, I had the privilege to supervise two doctoral dissertations on critical pedagogy (FitzSimmons, 2004; Moisio, 2009) and act as opponent of doctoral dissertations on Paulo Freire (Hannula, 2000) and Ivan Illich (Saurén, 2008). Furthermore, I have co-edited a critical education trilogy (Aittola

et al., 2007; Lanas et al., 2008; Moisio & Suoranta, 2009), which provided doctoral students and young scholars an avenue to publish their first articles related to critical pedagogy.

In 2006, I acted as a guest editor in the theme number on critical pedagogy in the *Finnish Journal of Educational Research,* and in the previous year, I managed to convince a publisher to translate Paulo Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* in Finnish (Freire, 2005). It is worth mentioning that when Freire's book was translated in Finnish, I wrote its afterword with Tuukka Tomperi. It says a lot about the stagnation of Finnish educational research, when Finnish translations of *Oppressed* came 35 years after it was published.

Soon after, I was appointed as tenured Professor of Adult Education to the University of Tampere. At this time, I founded the Paulo Freire Research Center–Finland (PFRC). PFRC is the first of its kind in Scandinavia; it is dedicated to fostering critical research in education and training, participatory democracy, and social equality. It also aims to participate in national and international debates on education, to promote research and events, and to collaborate with educational groups and agencies for the purpose of developing academic projects and organizing teaching events relating to arts, comparative education, critical pedagogy, developmental issues, media education and social media.

Although critical pedagogy is marginal in Finland, the ground has been laid to make it a more central force in promoting equity, social, justice and democracy during the first decade of the new millennium. Critical scholars are still sparse, and there is no critical school of thought in any of the Finnish universities as yet. However, critical minds belong to a vibrant international communication network or "invisible college" (see Crane, 1972, p. 35) that links them with other critical thinkers in other countries. Informal communication network consist of electronic correspondence, social media, academic journals (*Journal of Critical Educational Policy Studies* and *Critical Education* as the two flagships), and annual meetings and conferences. Critical pedagogues are scattered over the world, but their aims remain the same.

Besides the Finnish debate, I have tried to be part of an international communication network on critical pedagogy thanks to Peter McLaren, who I first met in 1999. Since then, Peter's comradeship and encouragement have been very important. He has visited Finland five times, among them a visit to the University of Lapland in 2004, to receive an honorary doctorate. In 2007, he gave an inaugural lecture of Paulo Freire Research Center–Finland.

I spent the academic year 2005–2006 as Visiting Professor among the Midwest sociologists at the University of Minnesota. I studied and learned the conceptual and practical relations between public sociology and critical pedagogy. During that year in Minneapolis, I listened to Michael Burawoy's speech in Augsburg College and found his ideas of public sociology both inspiring and resembling my previous knowledge of critical pedagogy. When he mentioned Freire and stated that in public sociology students are not treated "as empty vessels into which we pour our mature

wine, nor blank slates upon which we inscribe our profound knowledge" (…) [but] "as carriers of a rich lived experience that we elaborate into a deeper self-understanding of the historical and social contexts that have made them who they are" (Burawoy, 2005, 9), I decided to study public sociology a little further.

Since 2009, I have mentored a course on public sociology. The course can also be studied non-stop in Wikiversity (search the Internet by typing "studying public sociology in study circle"). Besides using Wikiversity in my courses, I have tried to conceptualize it as a free and potentially emancipatory learning site for all by imagining a world in which everyone has an access to the sum of all human knowledge (see Suoranta & Vadén, 2010; Suoranta, 2011). To this end, I am reluctant to identify myself as a teacher anymore, but as a mentor or facilitator. In essence, I have taken Kenneth Gergen's words to my heart:

> The classroom is no longer my ship; I am no longer its commander. I have shed the traditional vision of individual minds, of the knowing teacher and ignorant student, of teaching as a cause of learning. I find it difficult to think of my actions in the classroom independent from the students I teach, and student performance as issuing from an internal well-spring of intelligence. What takes place in the classroom is our achievement together. (Gergen, 2009, p. 241.)

A STEP TO ACTIVISM: HIDDEN IN PLAIN SIGHT

On March 9, 2009, I received an email from my former sociology student, Raphi Rechitsky, from the University of Minnesota. He is now a colleague and a friend. He forwarded the following brief message from the mailing list to which he subscribed: "After many months in a Finnish refugee reception centre, a 17-year-old Afghan minor is to be deported to Greece this Wednesday under the provisions of the Dublin Regulation. Does anyone happen to know anyone in Finland? Time is running out. With thanks, Marily."

The moment of decision is clearly pictured on my mind. I was reading the message in front of the kitchen table from my laptop's screen and wondering: Should I press the delete button or try to find out what it is all about? I chose not to trash the message; instead, I began to search for more information. That decision started my "career" as an activist who, after learning the cruel realities of paperless refugees in Europe, was morally obliged to shelter a paperless, under-aged refugee from Afghanistan, Ashraf.

The months underground with Ashraf taught me valuable lessons of the functioning and logics of fortress Europe and Finland, of the police, of the Finnish immigration service, and of the double standards of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland, an organization to which 75% of the Finns belong. In the book *Hidden in Plain Sight* (Suoranta, 2011a), I brought to light the lesser-known realities faced by paperless immigrants and asylum-seekers and the people who help them. Most people are ignorant of their experiences; yet, they ought to know more about them. I did not

presume to offer a solution to the many problems and open-ended issues surrounding people on the move. I merely wished to shed light on these problems and perhaps dispel some of the more distorted misconceptions and racist views that had emerged in the public debate in Finland and elsewhere. At the same time, I could only hope that my book would encourage more people to help those knocking at our door, whether as victims of persecution or simply in the hope of building a better future for themselves and their families. Here and there in the book, I describe my moments of awakening:

> Only now do I finally understand what is presumably obvious to everyone who works with immigrants and refugees. Finland is a well-guarded fortress. It is impossible to get in without passing certain credentials. You must be fluent in Finnish and possess a skill-set that "we Finns" happen to lack (I enclose "we" in quote marks to question exactly who qualifies as "we" and whom this country rightfully belongs to). The ideal candidate for work-related immigration is someone who speaks Finnish fluently and who happens to possess an expedient and appropriate set of professional skills. Everyone else is left to drown without a life belt, or to waste away in refugee reception centres on income support. This is the grim reality of the "hotel life" that immigrants and asylum-seekers are so often accused of leading. (Suoranta, 2011a, p. 90)

What did I learn form my experiences with Ashraf? Meeting Finnish bureaucracies and state apparatuses (police, church, employment office, vocational school) as well as several NGOs and individual human rights activists, I learned that there is more than one reality in this world, even in Finland. It was not easy to step outside my own private Idaho, my neat academic comfort zone, place myself in the shoes of someone near the lowest point of his existence and offer help. Yet, as it turned out, it was not impossible, either. After months of hiding from the authorities, trials and errors, agony, and uncertainty, I succeeded in getting Ashraf a place to study and a residence permit. Nowadays, he lives a relatively good life with a status of permanent resident of Finland.

Although I came to know Ashraf as a sensitive, kindly young man who loves poetry and photography – all things beautiful – I found it hard to let him into my life. Perhaps the feeling was mutual. Maybe he felt the same in my company, not to mention all the other material and mental difficulties newcomers face in trying to adjust to a culture imbued with a pervasive outlook of indifference and parochialism. The sociologist Abdelmalek Sayad (2003) uses the term "double absence" to describe the immigrant's struggle with identity and social dislocation: the newcomer is no longer part of the old world, but not yet part of the next, either.

I took a step to activism, without being or hoping to become an activist. As a tenured scholar, I was struck by a social problem and felt compelled to intervene. Pierre Bourdieu once stated, "we all have a small margin of freedom, so each of us must do what little he or she can do to escape the laws, the necessities, the

determinisms." In that spirit, I tried to do my share with Ashraf to escape the unjust laws, the necessities and the determinisms.

In general, I do not think that one needs to be a professional 24/7 activist, an expert of sorts in social change, in order to participate in transformational activity. In the book I stated, after series of on-line allegations describing Ashraf as my "toy-boy sex slave," demanding my resignation and suggesting that I should be packed off to Afghanistan, that "I have stuck to my original belief that there are two dimensions to my professional role: my core academic competence (sociological theories and methodologies) as well as activism, i.e. active investigation and intervention to address inequity wherever it might happen to arise." In turn, I noticed that "there is no real pro-immigration movement to speak of in Finland, unless we count a handful of free agents who scarcely even form a network, much less an organisation with a clear leadership structure or an established system for exchanging facts and knowledge. An embryonic form of activism appears to exist, but it remains behind closed doors, which makes it difficult to access any information on practical ways of helping refugees" (Suoranta, 2011a, p. 102). The alternative to activism is ordinary people. In the words of Deric Shannon:

> Instead of going "out there" to "do actions" with fellow specialists, we might intervene in our schools, our workplaces, our neighborhoods—places where we actually spend most of our daily lives. We might find co-conspirators among people outside of tiny fringe ideological groups, and the movers of history might be ordinary people who don't need to be led by activists, political organizations, or other self-appointed representatives. (Shannon, 2014, p. 496)

It is heartening, if not even a little romantic, to think that ordinary people move and eventually change history. It is the lesson I learned, and it is also the message I try to convey to my students, for very few of them dream to be an all-day activist, but many find jobs in the public sector as teachers, social workers, adult educators or youth workers. At the same time, we all are ordinary and exceptional as well as suffering and loving beings.

RECLAIMING CRITICAL RESEARCH

The fifth chapter of *Roots of Finnish Sociology*, published in 1973, dealt with Marxist research (Alapuro et al., 1973). The Marxist tradition in Finland had been characterized by two traits. On one hand, it had been extra-academic; on the other hand, it was tied to leftist party politics. Thus, in writing the chapter, the sociologists' somewhat artificial task was to legitimate Marxism as part of Finnish sociology. Some were interested in Marxist research during the early 1960s. Two course books by Soviet sociologists and philosophers, *The Fundamentals of Marxism-Leninism* and *The Philosophical Foundations of Marxism*, were translated into Finnish. The fifth chapter concludes as follows: "Social changes in the 1960s have been

a beginning of a new era: Marxist sociology is not anymore an extra-academic tradition, but an integral part of academic sociology in Finland" (Eskola et al., 1973, pp. 222–223).

In addition to *The Philosophical Foundations of Marxism*, course readings in the 1960s, included such texts as T. B. Bottomore's and Maximilien Rubel's edited *Karl Marx's Selected Writings in Sociology and Social Philosophy* and C. Wright Mill's *The Marxists* (ibid., 223). In the 1970s, Marxist literature was somewhat expanded. There were no examples of Finnish Marxist sociology until the 70s. Yet, even then Marxist empirical research was rare and remained marginal (see also Eskola, 1992). Some debates on Soviet sociology and Soviet Marxism were launched, but during the 1960s and 1970s Finnish sociology was primarily associated with policy sociology. Research techniques and designs were borrowed from the 1950's North American empirical social research. Radical influences of the 60s were skipped: a case in point is C. Wright Mills' radical thinking, which went practically unnoticed among the Finnish sociologists in the 60s. His *Sociological Imagination* emerged in course readings 15 years after its publication, and the Finnish translation had to wait 23 years. Finnish social sciences remained one-dimensional and provincial, to say the least. Unlike other European countries, there was no radical intellectual tradition in Finland. Whereas the bulk of Finnish social scientists worshipped U.S.-style abstract empiricism, Finnish intellectuals were German-inspired nationalists and firm anti-Communists.

Twenty years later, and as a reflection of the times, *Roots of Finnish Sociology* was revisited as *History of the Finnish Sociology* (Alapuro et al., 1992). Not only was the title changed, but also the whole fifth chapter on Marxist research was outrageously removed. As it were, Finnish sociologists had quietly decided, apparently in an arrogantly collegial consensus, that Marxist research was already passé. There was not even a chapter on this form of research, let alone a reference when characterizing the history of the discipline! Of course, the authors provided an explanation to "justify" the omissions: they have not sketched "the history of the lost", that is, those traditions that have been broken or totally missing from the picture – or, as they put it, "maybe influence underground so that we do not see them" (Allardt et al., 1992, p. 17). Sociologist Antti Eskola, who had co-authored a chapter on Marxist research with Risto Alapuro, Matti Alestalo and Seppo Toiviainen (1944–2005) in the first edition, has later commented on the incident as follows: "Thus, sociology that had already started to develop [from the late 1960s on] as a general debate and analysis of society, was reduced to mere academic discipline" (Eskola, 2009, p. 158).

One way to understand and interpret this sad turn is to refer to sociology's internal development. The 1980s gave rise to cultural studies, post-structuralism and other non-Marxist approaches, as intellectual forces used to explain developments in society. Yet, the social sciences and social scientists never exist in a socio-historical vacuum. Therefore, another possible interpretation for the rejection was reflective of an Anti-Communist sentiment across the globe. The Berlin Wall had collapsed in

1989 and the power of the Eastern bloc was in rapid decline. A year or so before the publication of the revisited *History of the Finnish Sociology,* the USSR suddenly fell. Could it be, then, Marx was definitely a "yesterday's man, and no longer worth bothering about" (Hobsbawm, 2012, p. 5)? If that were part of sociological intellectuals and political leaders rationale in rejecting Marxism, they were, indeed, wrong in their reasoning: the collapse of the USSR did not mark the end of Marx and Marxism, but rather signalled their liberation "from public identification with Leninism in theory and with the Leninist regimes in practice."

It became quite clear that there were still plenty of good reasons to take account of what Marx had to say about the world (…) The globalized capitalist world that emerged in the 1990s was in crucial ways uncannily like the world anticipated by Marx in the *Communist Manifesto*. This became clear in the public reaction to the 150th anniversary of this astonishing little pamphlet in 1998 – which was, incidentally, a year of dramatic upheaval in the global economy. Paradoxically, this time it was the capitalists and not the socialists who rediscovered him: "the socialists were too discouraged to make much of this anniversary." (Hobsbawm, 2012, p. 5)

Economic upheavals, deepening inequalities, and ecological and social disasters follow one another in the first decade of new millennium. Therefore, the need for Marxist research grows, but Finnish sociologists continue to sleep and snore. It is as if they are suffering from historical amnesia, unlike some of their colleagues, like Michael Burawoy, who reminds us that in today's turbulent world there are counter-movements all over the world for social scientists to join forces:

> The era of market fundamentalism is not eternal. There have been at least two previous waves of marketization, one in the nineteenth century and another in the early part of the twentieth century, beginning after World War I. Both gave rise to counter-movements—the first to a vibrant civil society and the second to a welfare state—and both would produce a vibrant and self-confident sociology. Today we see the exhaustion of third-wave marketization that began in the 1970s. (…) Counter-movements can be found all over the world (…) The era of counter-movement introduces enormous uncertainty as to its form and direction. It is an era in which the range of possibilities expands, possibilities that portend repressive dangers no less than democratic openings. We close our eyes to such dangers and openings at our peril—we can assert our presence in society, joining the switch men and women of history, or, possibly for the last time, be condemned to irrelevance. (Burawoy, 2009, p. 470)

As a social scientist, ask yourself, do you want your work to be insignificant and condemned to irrelevance? In one evening in August 2011, I decided with my colleague that something ought to be done to bring forth a critical Marxist-flavoured research tradition in Finnish social sciences. A turning point was my colleague's opening lecture in her doctoral disputation. In it she refers to "rebellious research." In the celebration party that followed, I said that if she is not going to write about

rebellious research, I definitely would. We decided to work jointly on this topic and write a manuscript. Our project became *Rebellious Research* (Suoranta & Ryynänen, 2014).

In writing this book, we could not lean on Finnish tradition because there was not any. Likewise, there was no guidance from left-leaning political parties. What we were forced to do was to introduce Marxist-oriented research tradition though using cases from around the world. This approach allowed students and younger scholars in social sciences to see all of its varieties. Naturally, our writing was guided by Marx's famous quote: "The philosophers have only interpreted the world, in various ways; the point is to change it." Thus, we defined rebellious research as a participatory activity in which researchers not only write and publish but also participate and act among others involved in the research act.

The story continues. So far I have been extremely fortunate and privileged in my academic life. I have had an opportunity to read, write, and speak freely. Talented and spirited students and colleagues have surrounded me. What will be in store for me in the future? I try to continue reading widely and keeping my ears and eyes open, enjoying the moment, remembering my past and cherishing my loves and desires, recalling my solidarity with those who keep up radical hope, a form of hope that directs "toward a future goodness that transcends the current ability to understand what it is" (Lear, 2011, p. 103).

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16. THE POTENTIAL OF POETIC POSSIBILITY

A Currere of Sociopolitical Awakenings

This poetic, autobiographic performance piece frames the intersection of the personal and the political for a scholar-practitioner, one who is a life-longer learner and voracious reader. The utilization and examination of critical pedagogy/ies through poetic aesthetics animates the author's teaching, research, and pursuit of personal transformation.

> One of the greatest liabilities of history is that all too many people fail to remain awake through great periods of social change. Every society has its protectors of the status quo and its fraternities of the indifferent who are notorious for sleeping through revolutions. But today our very survival depends on our ability to stay awake, to adjust to new ideas, to remain vigilant and to face the challenge of change. The large house in which we live demands that we transform this worldwide neighborhood into a worldwide brotherhood. Together we must learn to live as brothers or together we will be forced to perish as fools. (King, 1994, p. 181)

> Critical literacy… challenges the status quo in an effort to discover alternative paths for self and social development. This kind of literacy – words rethinking worlds, self dissenting in society – connects the political and the personal, the public and the private, the global and the local, the economic and the pedagogical, for rethinking our lives and for promoting justice in place of inequity. (Shor, 2009, p. 282)

> Poets are exceptional, of course… they remind us of absence, ambiguity, embodiments of existential possibility. More often than not they do so with passion; and passion has been called the power of possibility…passion signifies mood, emotion, desire: modes of grasping the appearances of things. It is one of the important ways in recognizing possibility. (Green, 2009, p. 84)

On the prospects of possibility:

A leader in critical pedagogy…
Me?
Can't yet claim this
as my identity…

B. J. Porfilio & D. R. Ford (Eds.), Leaders in Critical Pedagogy, 211–224.

Though one day I desire,
God willing –
certainly aspire
to be…

Yet, humbled and motivated
while I pen this text
As a contribution
within this anthology

Determined to remain awake
To contribute to the discourse
within critical literacy

So I acknowledge, like Green, the power of poetic possibilities…

And so, what is true is that
It is my norm to question
To engage in reflection
Appropriation and *rejection*

Downright curious,
And restless
Naturally

Thus, it is my fear of ignorance which leads me to search
And reach…
And so, I seek –

To know
To read
To examine
To grow,
To understand
More deeply
My positionality in this country,
how the U.S. has structured opportunity,
which shapes my lens
bout my life
and family history

On foreparents' journeys:

You see
I draw inspiration from resilient, rural Black folk
Foreparents survived slavery's yoke

Yet, they still embodied the strength to PRAY,
To press
To dream
The audacity to strive
and HOPE
That change would one day come

That freedom and opportunity would be actualized
For our elders
and for the younguns
If not bequeathed by the notion of *natural rights*
And automatic citizenship
in this "system"

then DEMANDED by revolt
challenging the process to vote
and through Civil Rights activism

A major push factor for migration
was escaping southern social
and economic exploitation

The harshness of Plessy[1]
and the yoke of generational racial subordination

See, social equality and education
was not intended for the kinfolks before them
Or their children

"*Chattel need not be learned*
As they are beasts of burden"

Teach a slave to read
Face the penalty of sanctions
Negroes attaining literacy
"*Can't tolerate such abominations*"
The economic system in the southern US
Intended to reproduce their station

So the Great Migration
brought them
My grandparents
And others of our kin
To populate urban centers
successive generations
of Black migrant populations

They secured some access to employment opportunities
Up from slavery
And sharecropping
To line workers in urban industry
for generations of our family
They provided a way
and a means

Paternal grandmother in a New York State vegetable cannery
Maternal grandfather toiled for years
in a Prestolite Battery factory

Labored in the area of US manufacturing,
you see
The fruits of their labor increased our family mobility
Which birthed unionized jobs
some tenuous, semblance of security
It paid the bills
Kept folks fed
But was it truly opportunity?

[Hook:]
The answer to this question,
is one which leads me to search
And reach…
And so,
I seek –

To know
To read
To examine
To grow,
To understand
More deeply
My positionality in this country,
how the U.S. has structured opportunity,
which shapes my lens
bout my life and family history

Emerging critical consciousness
For me
Born of racial injustice
dislocation
challenges
ADVERSITY

Yet, continuously yearning
to read the world around me
where many Black, Brown and poor live a life polar
to a privileged, often
White majority

So, I examine the structural
and cultural forces that
shape me

It's been a journey of endurance
On the path towards sociopolitical awakenings

On parents' influence:

My parents' youth were shaped by events of the 1950s
My adult mind replays vivid tales
Of *their* childhood stories
An imagination shaped
by the US hierarchy
of "white only"
Jim Crow
The facts of their Alabama-lived histories

These tales were impressionable to a child, like me
Cause oppression was not just in rural spaces
or southern cities
But also a northern reality

Spawned involvement
In Operation Push[2]
And civil rights efforts in the early 70s
For daddy

Led towards community organizing efforts
And activism for mommy[3]

Galvanized against sexploitation
and the quest for victim's rights
and gender equality

From the William's
Both of them
I experienced a love of learnin'
And probably agitation!
As I reflect on my family situation
It helps me to understand my chosen occupation

My consciousness shaped heavily
By Daddy and Mommy
It started early
Thankfully!
Attributed, too, to a love of story
And reading
cultivated when I was tiny

I remember vividly
that smaller,
little-girl me
Who'd spend hours reading books
Secured in my parents' home office library
All-in-all they poured into my siblings and me
A value of learning to attain knowledge
and social mobility

Feet couldn't yet reach the floor
Yet engaged in racial literacy
Weldon Johnson, Hughes and McKay[4]
Fascinated by prose and poetry,
expressions of Negro Intellect,
and their quest for American equality

The melodies of the texts
Aligned with a larger community around me
I attended St. John's Baptist Church
a site of Black liberation ideology
Embedded with scripture
public talk of inequality

But not just this space on Sundays only
You see,
Also

"I'm a product of segregated schooling in the 1970s
The Build Academy, I attended
in elementary
Legacy published in the *Journal of New York Life and History*
To Build
Unity, Independence,
Liberty, and
Dignity
That acronym, today, still speaks volumes
to me

The school was grounded and mobilized
By community advocacy
Black liberation
And economic mobility"[5]

My school days began with "Lift Every Voice and Sing"[6]
Throughout my elementary years
that Anthem would resound
and ring

Those early years post the Civil Rights Movement
Gave birth to radical teachers
Who sought our liberation
as their students

I was in first grade, too
when came the advent of a month for Black History
informally adopted by the US Presidency
Ford expanded Carter Woodson's exaltation of a week[7]
Of Negro History
The discourse of Negro mobility and progress
Unfurling all around
was molding me

What would be the implications
of such ideals
Through the formative years of my journey?

[Hook:]
The answer to this question,
is one which leads me to search
And reach…
And so,
I seek –

To know
To read
To examine
To grow,
To understand
More deeply
My positionality in this country,
how the U.S. has structured opportunity,
which shapes my lens
bout my life and family history

Emerging critical consciousness
For me
Born of racial injustice
dislocation
challenges
ADVERSITY

Yet, continuously yearning
to read the world around me
where many Black, Brown and poor live a life polar
to a privileged, often
White majority

So, I examine the structural
and cultural forces that
shape me

It's been a journey of endurance
On the path towards sociopolitical awakenings
The process of explicating a narrative
Begins with examining my own heritage
Thus, it is the totality of my journey
That helps *my students* to understand me
And the forces shaping, *today*, my classroom *discourse*
And *pedagogy*

On my formative years:

My years in EPA[8]
Illuminated a myriad of other ways
To think about my future
My life as it would come to be
Shaped by my parents' marital dissolution
Strife and family disharmony
Dislocation from Buffalo
Then increased economic uncertainty

Abruptly uprooted from that
Working-class glass menagerie
That patriarchal, family-constructed
Middle American security –
homeownership,
Disney vacation trips
And the illusion of middle-class stability

My mom – mostly a house-wife
And dad
A tradesmen in the field of electricity

They bought into the notion of the American Dream
Passed on its meaning
Though later I explored more thoroughly
What this myth meant for them

Mommy embodied notions of personal mobility
A college education
And career goals with autonomy

Three children was certainly a blessing
But not the totality of the life she envisioned
Juxtaposed to the house
Daddy wished that she would live in

And as far as the legend goes
Those goals didn't jive for Daddy
A wife at home trumped the discourse of gender equity
apparently
I hear that was a problem
in the land of Holy matrimony…

Thereafter
That 5-day Greyhound bus ride
Didn't quite go so smooth
divorce brought migration
a new state
New cultures
And rules

Enveloped then in frequent moves
Where I lingered dispassionately in a variety of California schools
Inadequate and underfunded Ravenswood City Schools
Among the brood
Where aggrieved teachers
And the school board dealt shady moves

Rote learning and tracking fed my *ghetto blues*

Before busing led me to and out of my black community
Into schools largely populated by a white, suburban majority
Where educational opportunity abounded
For those who were not low-income,
and ethnic/racial minorities

Historic and unequal housing patterns
Established in the 1940s and 50s
Brought disparate opportunities
For those who were relegated to red-lined communities

Access blocked for decades to purchasing homes of quality
Some families subsidized by the govt. in building wealth
And opportunity
Through federally-backed home loans
They gained property and equity
While others were disposed of wealth
Relegated by urban renewal programs
And policies

The generations which followed
Inherited the birth right of racialized inequalities
Knowledge I later attained by pursuit of critical studies
An omission in my graduate education

Independently I learned of these realities

Policies which, in turn, encoded disparate resources
And material distribution
Between affluent and poor communities
The implications of such legislation
Would produce underserved local schools
Serving those in poverty,
Naturally
Yet, not natural but purposeful in our so-called "democracy"

As might be imagined
Community economic struggle and chaos
Made living in this new place kinda hard
No supermarkets
Neither businesses
Nor banks
a.k.a no infrastructure for employability
and jobs!

"Hell, by moving here, I feel robbed!"

"Where's the grassy knolls
Shady parks
And community spaces were folks jog?"

"You know, soap opera
sit-com lifestyles

Where everyone seems happy
Prosperous
And they smile?!?"

"Where drug fronts
And urine-saturated liquor alleys
Aren't in the zone for miles…"

On my college journey:

Undergrad years I majored in journalism
Entertained notions of foreign travel
And storied investigation
Held romanticized, youthful ideas
Like writing for the New York Times or CNN
Oblivious to what drives the corporate media
within a capitalistic system
or how politics and profit
feeds the focus of news sensationalism

And, at times, I found myself disturbed
by the lack of minority representation
Outright invisibility
And image manipulation
Lived moments of tokenism –
Perceptions by being an "exception"

Fueled by interactions within the profession
Particularly when steered towards "minority" stories
Through mentorin',
I was certain

Yet, lo and behold I was committed towards completing that degree
Cutting my teeth on research and writing
Was of value for me
Journalism enabled me to hone my writing skills
More critically
Prepared me to change my focus
Upon graduating College in the 1990s

My master's degree offered me something new
Pursued a Jesuit education
At age 22
International, multicultural education
became my program upon matriculation

The content of critical studies forged my passions and vocation
A perfect location

The content I would study
allowed me to meet folks like
Said, Memmi and Freire
Devoured post-colonial knowledge and studies
Enabled me to examine Europe's enduring legacy
In this country

Constructing the "other" as a tool of invention
Denying many folks status as a person
Birthed by imperialism
The legacy of economic and military exploitation

My doctoral classes rarely engaged critically
Grounded in more traditional notions of exploring
Epistemology
I struggled to make sense, at times, of the pedagogy
Devoid of a focus on communities
And cultural relevancy

Negated focus on the politics of schooling
Zero grounding in the political economy

Is this how graduate education prepares leaders in our democracy?
What is the purpose of schools in a global, political economy?

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how the U.S. has structured opportunity,
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bout my life and family history

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On the path towards sociopolitical awakenings

NOTES

1 *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896) is a landmark United States Supreme Court decision in the jurisprudence of the United States, upholding the constitutionality of state laws requiring racial segregation in public facilities under the doctrine of "separate but equal".

2 The Rainbow PUSH Coalition is the result of a merger between Operation PUSH and the Rainbow Coalition. Established in 1971 by Rev. Jackson, People United to Save Humanity (later changed from "Save" to "Serve")–PUSH, was an organization dedicated to improving the economic conditions of black communities across the United States. – See more at: http://rainbowpush.org/pages/brief_history#sthash.KGnD20hN.dpuf

3 My mother worked to fund raise in the City of Buffalo to support the legal defense fund of *Joan Little*, an African-American woman whose trial for the 1974 murder of a white prison guard at Beaufort County Jail in Washington, North Carolina, became a cause of the civil rights, feminist, and anti-death penalty movements. Little was the first woman in United States history to be acquitted using the defense that she used deadly force to resist sexual assault. Read more about this case at: http://newsone.com/2679256/joan-little-case/;

4 James Weldon Johnson was an American author, educator, lawyer, diplomat, songwriter, and civil rights activist. Johnson is best remembered for his leadership within the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), where he started working in 1917, being chosen as the first black executive secretary of the organization, effectively the operating officer. He was first known for his writing, which includes poems, novels, and anthologies collecting both poems and spirituals of black culture; Langston Hughes was an American poet, social activist, novelist, playwright, and columnist. He was one of the earliest innovators of the literary art form called jazz poetry, and is best known as a leader of the Harlem Renaissance; Claude McKay was a Jamaican-American writer and poet, who was a seminal figure in the Harlem Renaissance.

5 "The Negro National Anthem"— is a song written as a poem by James Weldon Johnson (1871–1938) in 1899 and set to music by his brother John Rosamond Johnson (1873–1954) in 1900.

6 National African American History Month had its origins in 1915 when historian and author Dr. Carter G. Woodson founded the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History. Through this organization Dr. Woodson initiated the first Negro History Week in February 1926. Dr. Woodson

selected the week in February that included the birthdays of Abraham Lincoln and Frederick Douglass, two key figures in the history of African Americans. In 1975, President Ford issued a Message on the Observance of Black History Week urging all Americans to recognize the important contribution made by black citizens to American life. In 1976 this commemoration of black history in the United States was expanded to Black History Month. In 1986 Congress passed Public Law 99–244 which designated February 1986 as "National Black (Afro-American) History Month." The law further called upon to President to issue a proclamation calling on the people of the United States to observe February 1986 as Black History Month with the appropriate ceremonies and activities.

[7] East Palo Alto, California is where I moved with my mother and two sisters, after my parents divorced.

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SUZANNE SOOHOO

17. HUMILITY WITHIN CRITICAL PEDAGOGY

The way you frame the world affects the way you work in the world.
(Author unknown)

I offer to you my Asian ontology, critical incidents, and critical friends that have brought me into the world of critical pedagogy.

My Chinese grandmother had bound feet. As a young child, I placed her feet in a washbasin filled with warm water each night and massaged her broken arches and crumpled toes. This binding represented physical bondage and disfigurement by men hoping to control their women. The practice of binding feet was cleverly disguised by dominant cultural beliefs that bound "lotus bud" feet were aesthetically beautiful, sexually seductive, and representational of social class standing (ironic word choice) because these crippled, mutilated women had the privilege of not working in the fields. As I poured the warm water over her and watched the rings of water emanate from her being, I could see this gnarly knot of crushed bones relax as if it were hopeful to unfold with rhizomatic power to reconfigure and to stretch on American soil. I knew intuitively then that my destiny would be to confront the patriarchal social forces that crippled the bodies, hearts, and minds of my ancestral women. As a third generation Chinese American, my feet have refused to shuffle behind the dominant gender. My feet also rejected marching in compliance with the communists. Instead, my feet have carved pathways of resistance and hope, challenging the terrain that denies the rights of all to have secure footing in our social order while they explore new ground to create more humane alternatives. While this sounds like an agenda of a soldier, it is not at the frontlines that I do my best work. Therefore, many may not know or see me. This essay reveals many forms of humility.

SILENCE

As soon as I lay down words on a blank document, my instinct is to erase them – not because the words are not worthy but because there are more humble ways than through text to touch the world and humanity – particularly English text, a language not of my ancestors. When I was young, my father (a first generation immigrant) said, "Don't say anything unless you can improve upon the silence." He brought his learnings of Lao Tzu and ancestral worship from China. These early lessons taught

B. J. Porfilio & D. R. Ford (Eds.), Leaders in Critical Pedagogy, 225–233.

me to respect a quiet way of life and to pay homage to humility and ultimately to question the right to speak.

Speech, he felt, was unnecessary chatter. In my early upbringing, silence was a preferred form of behavior over spoken language. As a young child, I learned to bridge the gap between my Chinese-speaking grandmother and me, her English-speaking granddaughter. Through silence, I sent messages, knowing words did not tell it all, that meaning is deeper with silence.

> Those who speak do not know, those who know do not speak – Lao Tsu

Silence is disquieting to my colleagues (pun intended). They tell me I have a responsibility to articulate my thoughts and positions. Routinely, I traverse the worlds of silence and speech. "When we are talking, I am in their world. When we are quiet, they are in mine" (Mayer Shevin, 1999). My question to my peers is, "Instead of silencing my silence, can you take 'an opportunity to listen without mastery' (hooks, 1994, p. 172) and learn my language?"

One finds humility (SooHoo, 2013) in a language of silence. Humility emerges from a quiet place. In a linguistically-centered world, humility is something that once one has found it, one must lose it because sequestering humility in words, orally or in writing, brings forth an uncharacteristic boldness. Humility is silently performed. How then does one write or talk about humility and remain humble? Humility defies the conventions of writing and orality because attempts to codify it detract from its inherent meaning.

Are there some values in the world that cannot be fully understood through words? Perhaps the wisdom of the following Japanese saying might explain how something like humility defies definition and why humility resists naming and deconstruction:

> There is such an intrinsic nature in things, in this sense: – Things which are curved require no arcs: things which are straight require no lines: things which are round require no compasses; things which are rectangular require no squares; things which stick require no glue; things which hold together require no cords. (Watts, 1975, p. 110)

The concept of *wabi-sabi* (Koren, 1994) is a Japanese aesthetic that seeks intrinsic beauty in the natural order with an appreciation of the cosmic order. Philosophically, *wabi-sabi* suggests that truth comes from the observation of nature and therefore "greatness" exists, inconspicuous and ordinary. Flower arrangements or paintings of nature that are *wabi-sabi* are unstudied and do not command the center of attention. "They are understated and unassuming. Furthermore, they are not dependent on the reputation of their creator. In fact, it is best if the creator is of no distinction, invisible, or anonymous" (ibid., p. 68). The *wabi-sabi* state of mind resists naming but humbly submits to what is natural and organic. Therefore, to say what humility is, one has to be less than humble and invade the unspoken essence and meaning of humility. Therefore, as I proceed to write about myself in this essay, I do so with apologies to my Asian heritage.

As a Chinese-American woman living in the United States, I find myself simultaneously resisting visibility and resisting erasure. My ethnic heritage has socialized me to be unassuming and compromising. My western identity commands assertiveness and a strong articulated public presence. On any given day, I navigate between the cultural contradictions of bystanderism and activism, standing back and standing up, silence and voice. I am both a cultural schizophrenic and a changing chameleon, adapting to and challenged by different environments and expectations.

I resist the dominant western metanarrative that defines me as "less than" with the zeal of a Chinese woman warrior and a raging conviction to demonstrate to others that Chinese women are more than compliant model minority service workers. With the vengeance of a Tiger Mom, I challenge those who define me and fellow non-westerners as culturally impoverished. The memory of my grandmother's bonded feet commands me to stand tall.

But this posture of dominance and defiance threatens others and is antithetical to my Taoist upbringing. The *other* in me sees the *me* in others. The message of worthiness and a respect for the wide spectrum of humanity must be translated in respectful ways so I continually seek these translations between rage and respect.

AT THE MARGINS

In one of my previous essays, "I am who I am because of a white man," (SooHoo, 2006), I describe my life experiences living in a white man's world – as the daughter of a biological Chinese mother and father and three white stepfathers, who reminded me regularly I was not white. Schooling confirmed I was not white, and subsequently, my occupations as teacher, school principal, and professor further corroborated this reality. While all of these experiences informed me of who I was not, it took me many years to determine who I was.

I am the result of a family and schools that are both places of domination and liberation (McLaren, 2005) for it is in the margins as a minoritized person that I found the sites of struggle and possibility as so many of my critical pedagogy colleagues have before me. The power of the river is at the margins because it is the negotiation between water and land that shapes its path. Sometimes there is turbulence at the edges as the river makes defiant efforts to carve its power into the landscape. The land resists with its mass and stands its ground, commanding the mainstream river to remain constrained. Sometimes, the river and the land are tranquil; liquid and mineral in peace. My years of work in New Zealand with the Maori taught me to honor the river as a gift from the snow gods providing mankind its spiritual water highways. The mythical river gods are at every turn of the bend protecting its river passengers, directing the fishing, and warning of the power of the sea. It is at the river's edge that possibility, domination, and liberation intersect.

The margin is a purposeful place, one which I have both accepted and preferred. However, identifying with the metaphoric margins and the least powerful in society is not entirely honest because I bring my privilege, prejudice, and ignorance to the

riverbanks as well. The privilege to study my life and the conditions of other human beings cannot be over estimated. The ongoing critical self-analysis of my personal and professional place in this world is an honor and a responsibility. I study the river with great humility.

> My initial mistake was to try to essentialize the river. In the act of trying to hold it, capture it, and name its elements, I soon realized that it has many forms. The river was at times still and other times raging. It was quiet and loud, wet and dry, calming and threatening, and frozen and fluid. It seemed without effort to "go with the flow," running down the path of least resistance but also has seemingly intentionality as it drove its way to a lake or ocean. The river was accepting and collaborative as it collected and welcomed new tributaries but also determined as it cut new paths and penetrated the landscape. It worked in service to humanity as it transported our goods while at the same time resisting domestication when it grew full and flooded the adjacent land. It had transformative power as some of it is evaporated into the sky and ultimately returned as rain and snow on the mountaintops, reinvigorating the cycle of nature and life. And, after this long stream of words, I humbly bow to the greatness of the river and know there is much more to learn from it. I sit on its banks awaiting my lessons. (SooHoo, 2013, p. 199)

In this exercise of self-interrogation, I name the critical incidents that spurred early forms of conscientization and give credit to those experiences that guided my growth in a direction that is more socially just.

THE OMNIPOTENT "THEY"

I provide the following story from the position and "authority of experience" (hooks, 1994), where experience spawns theory. While I will claim experience has its proper place at the theorizing table, I am aware that it should not be essentialized as having greater value. I offer critical learning points in my professional life as possible engagement for further theorizing by others.

"They won't let us" expressed the students at school X and then again refrained by the teachers in school Y. I found students and teachers who were held hostage by a mysterious omnipresence that imposed its will over the minds and bodies of their human spirits. They called it "they" and their submission to these gods prevented them to act on behalf of their need to self actualize in this place called school.

The first month into my assignment at School X, I met with a randomly selected group of students (every 20th person listed on the school roll of the student body grades 1–6) for the purpose of hearing from them the good news and the bad news about our school. I asked if they would meet with me every two weeks for the next three months to help me learn and get to know people. Over the course of the first three meetings, there was a generating theme of how unfair the school rules were. When asked, what is one rule you would like changed, they responded the "gum

chewing rule." I asked the students who made the rules and they surmised it was the principal. I explained I was indeed the principal, but that I was new at the school and I did not make that rule. At the next meeting, I brought copies of the school rules for them to review. We found there was no such rule. Well then, the students asked, who did make this rule? After some discussion, the students reasoned, it must have been the teachers. So we asked a couple of teachers to come to our next meeting. Teachers were amused by this inquiry but ultimately reported the teachers did not make this rule. So who we asked made the rule? While this search resembled the children's story of *The Little Red Hen* who continues to look for a farm animal to sow her wheat, the students,like the red hen, maintained persistence in tracking down who was responsible. They were determined and eventually they invited our custodian to come address us. He revealed he did not make the rule. Furthermore, he added, our school was one of his cleanest schools – no gum under the desks or in the water fountains, perhaps because this rule was in place, he suggested. That point was recorded in our meeting minutes but still unresolved was who made the rule and moreover, who was left to ask? One student suggested that we ask the school nurse. "Did you make the no gum chewing rule at this school?" they asked. She responded, "No, but if I could, I would because it is unsafe for young children to chew gum and run." A dialogue ensued where students posed questions to the nurse. What if, they asked, students chewed gum at the lunch tables and spat it out before playing on the playground? "She replied, "That would be acceptable."

After three months of meeting and deconstructing the phantom "they," students discovered they were restrained by a rule that was never written. Records and interviews showed no students were ever disciplined by anyone at the school for gum chewing. This revelation led to a subsequent negotiation between students and teachers of a new gum chewing standard informed by student-led focus groups with children at other grade levels about responsible gum chewing.

Children were not the only ones haunted by an omnipresent "they." Teachers at school Y complained they could not do their best teaching because "they won't let us." Upon a similar process of investigation conducted by teachers and me, we uncovered the "they" was the power of the district office. After querying representatives from the district, we found no one but ourselves were in the way of good teaching and child centered practices.

As a new principal trained to lead and speak rather than follow and listen, I did not know how to understand the culture of my school. As part of a school renewal project, my district was a member of a school reform effort led by Dr. John Goodlad from UCLA, which started in 1980. I attended leadership development seminars led by Jeannie Oakes, Paul Heckman, and Ken Sirotnik. I recall how decentered I was when they asked us, the principals, to begin leading our staff meeting with teacher-generated agenda items rather than our own. "What were they thinking!" I thought to myself. "I was already the youngest principal in the district and they would ask that I play the fool? To not show deliberate leadership would be to show weakness."

I slowly recovered from this dethroning of conventional leadership and cautiously approached this challenge. I imagined all kinds of things going wrong and tried desperately to second guess what teachers had on their minds. I never would have ever guessed what they asked to put on the staff meeting agenda. They asked, should we give children pencils with erasers or pencils without erasers? Some teachers reasoned, if we give children pencils with erasers, we will not find their mistakes. They argued we needed to catch student mistakes to help them learn. Other teachers indicated that children were spitting on their mistakes and rubbing holes into their papers to disguise their errors. They concluded that perhaps we should consider the eraser as a second chance.

Ensuing faculty meeting agendas built on the momentum of the prior meeting. The central question this time was: should we provide children single sheet tissue toilet paper or rolled toilet paper! Teachers cited incidents of clogged toilets as a result of the privilege of having rolled toilet paper. Students needed to be disciplined by issuing single sheet toilet paper. The problems posed by this conversation were a) how had we educators come to distrust students? b) Why was it so easy to vilify students for wrongdoings? c) where was a shared humanity between the teacher and student in the process of learning and becoming? We could not entrust the students with rolled toilet paper or pencils with erasers. We expected mistake-proof kids. A mistake was not a platform of opportunity but rather a place of condemnation. Teachers chose the curriculum of discipline over the curriculum of responsibility. Furthermore, their choice of agenda items showed me we were dealing with some basic levels of human needs. They needed to resolve these housekeeping situations before we could even talk about teaching and learning.

I realized teachers could not engage in authentic dialogue with students when they had perceived themselves as victims of a system that distrusted their professional opinions. Socialized in a teacher proof culture with the mantra "They won't let us" so embedded in their psyche that even when bureaucratic obstacles were removed and the invisible "they" had long been removed, the myth of helplessness had disabled them and they could not see pathways to liberation. The collateral damage of lost agency was apathy replacing caring. To survive in a system that tells you your thoughts do not count, leads folks to respond reciprocally – uncaring and disengaged from humane ways of teaching – humans reduce to zombies (Giroux, 2011).

Herein lay the challenge for me to make a long-term commitment to that school to honor teachers as professionals and respect students for their rich inherent abilities and acquired talent. Through and alongside these interventions, I hoped we would carve pathways for parent voice as well for they also were disengaged and disenfranchised. They had their own version of "They won't let us." A major part of our school's community included a 300-unit apartment building that included many transient families. Over eighty percent of the children coming from the apartment building had elementary school careers of more than three schools. Over the years,

the teachers tried to shape these kids into what they envisioned as normalized schooling, but this approach was riddled with racism and classism.

Previous principals were also uncommitted. Before my arrival, the school had three principals in five years. Teachers hoped I would abandon the school as others before me. They relegated the roles of playground police and head lice examiner to me. I realized after three months of duty, I needed to engage in a deep study of this school to understand fully what my role *could* be. Some instincts came more naturally than others in my self-assessment. As a child of the 60s, I had cut my teeth questioning the "they" as bureaucracies, but I thought little about school reform or the roles schools serve in society. Now I wondered, what forces were keeping these oppressive practices in place? What approaches might teachers, parents, students, and I study to overcome these mutual incapacitating beliefs and accompanying inertia. How could we build a school environment with respect for children, families, and teachers as core to our mission?

CONFLICT PROPELS A NEW CONSCIOUSNESS

After four years of restructuring school practices, the school community believed we were ready to introduce a comprehensive school reform initiative: to propose a year round calendar for the purpose of increasing student learning. We theorized that school days distributed over the calendar year maintained academic and English language development better than the traditional school calendars with three-month summer breaks. Challenging the traditional September to June school calendar caused teachers to wonder how the calendar came to be. They became conscious of their own conditioning. Could a calendar established over a hundred and fifty years ago when farmers harvested their crops in the summer be adapted to 20th century learning needs? We had been warned that messing with the school calendar was like changing the order of letters on your keyboard: it may make sense but history runs deep. For a full year, we brought in consultants from across the nation to talk with our community about the merits of year round schooling. We held several rounds of focus group meetings and subsequently prepared a proposal to the school board.

Doing what was right for children, establishing relationships with families, and understanding our own potential as change agents were essential components for school reform but not sufficient. What we soon learned as we took our proposal to the school board was that we were politically naïve about the national conversation taking place in other states about how schools threatened family values and how there was a perceived peril of the secularization of schools,which allegedly eroded the Christian family structure. We did not consider that a national coalition of family values and followers of political conservative activist Phyllis Shalafly would land at our schoolhouse door. They brought critics and press and we were suddenly newsworthy. Teachers and administration were discredited and accused of disrupting quality family time by offering an alternative calendar. Our right as a community

to determine what was good for our school did not dissuade them from pressing us to disband our initiative. Ultimately our school board succumbed to this national scrutiny and our proposal was denied.

As I personally assessed the spoils of war, in the end the faculty was right. "They" did not let us, but this time the "they" was not ourselves but truly an organized coalition of right wing politicians. This bittersweet revelation galvanized new found power within ourselves and prompted us to assess our wounds. No longer fearful of our own self-imposed demons, we concluded that education and good intentions were critical to school reform, but not sufficient because schools were perceived as part of a national community belonging to various constituents who used schools as battlegrounds for their political agendas.

Ultimately, we bowed to our ignorance and "unfinishedness," something we could not have done without this battle. This history is not told by the victors but by the survivors.

UNFINISHEDNESS

> Wherever there is life, there is unfinishedness.
> (Paulo Freire, Pedagogy of Freedom, 1998, p. 52)

By surrendering knowing for the humility of not knowing, the full potentiality of the human race comes into focus; "It is our awareness of being unfinished that makes us educable" (ibid., 105). Unfinishedness is the watermark for open-mindedness, respect, and humility. Rather than debate over giving children pencils with or without erasers, we should look to a worn eraser as a sign of unfinishedness, something to praise rather than something by which to be disgraced. In the defeat of the alternative calendar proposal, we recognized a need to know, a need to rise above the ashes, to understand larger forces that surrounded schooling. Instead of talking about housekeeping issues at staff meetings, teachers raised questions about the social, economic, and political powers that shape schools and the world. In these aftermath dialogues, teachers began to think more about the role schools play in sustaining the status quo and/or contributing to a transformative praxis. A newly acquired self-empowered stance brought light to humility and humanization in various facets of the school.

Coming from positions of love, respect, and humility rather than rules, discipline, and policies, the concept of unfinishedness had the power to displace deficit theorizing in which students and their families were blamed for lacking cultural capital or readiness for school. As victims of racism, sexism, linguicism, and classism, students who were typically identified as low achievers, now were framed by a benevolence of unfinishedness and were now seen as young people with undiscovered potential (Milne, 2013). The ownership and responsibility of undiscovered potential belongs both to teacher and student in their mutual discovery of a student's capabilities.

There is no teaching without learning (Freire, 1998), so when teachers recognize the reciprocity in the teaching and learning process,they realize that it is unfinishedness that educates each other. Unfinishedness dethrones authority because there are no sole authorities within this concept. Unfinishedness is sourced by a humbled stance causing one to listen and learn from another. It provides the foundation of co-creation. Our consciousness of our unfinishedness and the vulnerability as human beings move us towards one another.

The critical friends who have accompanied me along the path of an unfinished life and who have acted as guides and translators include John Goodlad, Paulo Freire, Tom Wilson, Barry Kanpol, Donaldo Macedo, Don Cardinal, Russell Bishop, Mere Berryman, Ann Nevin, Patricia Huerta, Lilia Monzo, and Peter McLaren. They have challenged me to think critically and act democratically in this world. And until I give to others as much as they have given to me, I cannot stop. My works in the community, within the College of Educational Studies, among my students and in my courses are testimonies of unfinishedness as I continually develop authentic collaborative relationships and organic social projects.

In the grand schema of life's lessons, my failures proved to be more valuable than my successes. Knowledge has been a mirror that has allowed me to see who I was and who I could be. Humility and unfinishedness helped me to be eternally seeking and always becoming. The concept of ever-becomingness has a timeliness quality that is optimistic and liberating to all who are unfinished and who have undiscovered potential.

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18. AFTERWORD

Critical Pedagogy in the Year of Magical Thinking

> Life Changes in the instant. The ordinary instant.
>
> Didion (2005)

> As the killing of those at the margins of liberal and neoliberal sovereignty continues to be glamorized and fetishized in the name of "democracy," we are confronted with urgent questions about the ways in which life, death, and desire are being (re)constituted in the current political moment.
>
> Aganthangelou (2008)

This has been a year of magical thinking. On the personal front, I helped to hospice my mom's passage onto the spirit world, coming to new depths of understanding that grief is indeed a "place none of us know until we reach it" (Didion, 2005). On the global political front, while high intensity warfare persisted in places like Nigeria, South Sudan, Afghanistan, Syria, and the Ukraine, it was the low-intensity forms of perpetual war (against the poor, black, and brown) in the U.S. that captured public attention. Though casualties continue to mount on all fronts, there is growing awareness that even death and grief are conditioned by inequality and asymmetries of power.

Consider for example, Joan Didion's account of her experience with grief in the classic text, *The Year of Magical Thinking* (2005). She writes:

> People who have recently lost someone have a certain look, recognizable maybe only to those who have seen that look on their own faces…The look is one of extreme vulnerability, nakedness, openness. It is the look of someone who walks from the ophthalmologist's office into the bright daylight with dilated eyes, or of someone who wears glasses and is suddenly made to take them off. (They) look naked because they think themselves invisible … (in) a place … (they) could be seen only by those who were themselves recently bereaved.

In this passage, Didion describes grief as invisibilizing, a blinding that not only prevents one from seeing but also from being seen. Yet, the "dilated eyes" of victims who have filled the streets in protest over the loss of loved one sacrificed at the neoliberal altar of austerity and militarization, disclose a different "look." Contrary

B. J. Porfilio & D. R. Ford (Eds.), Leaders in Critical Pedagogy, 235–241.

to Didion's invisiblizing grief, the families of Tamir Rice, Eric Garner, Michael Brown, Loretta Saunders, and others have been made *hyper*-visible in their sudden (albeit momentary) catapult from the margins of "bare life" into "qualified political life." Their invisibility came *before* death. So much so, they were left to organize around the prosaic sign #BlackLivesMatter.

Against this backdrop, issues of educational reform may appear mundane. But the corpus of policies and legislation aimed at "reforming" public schools and teachers is yet another manifestation of low intensity warfare. Educational despots who consciously but un-thinkingly carry out the orders of the corporate-federal-industrial complex have caused the death-by-bureaucracy of public education. Take, for example, the banality of evil represented in the new draft of Teacher Preparation Regulations proposed under Title II of the Higher Education Act. Among other specious, non-research-or-evidence-based reform measures, the new regulations call for assessing the quality of teacher education programs through the "outcomes data" (i.e. standardized test scores) of their graduates' students. The invalid and reductionist nature of this policy becomes even more self-evident when one considers its corollary in other educational contexts. Imagine, for example, assessing the quality of medical schools by the vital signs of their graduates' patients.

Beyond the "magical thinking," inherent to such policies, they portend serious material consequences. Majority-white, highly-resourced schools will always find their way to "good teachers." So make no mistake, "educational reform" efforts are about "other peoples children" (Delpit, 2006); about shutting down schools in high-need districts through protracted processes of dispossession. Among critical scholars such processes are generally theorized as an effect of neoliberal economic and social policies (i.e. privatization, deregulation, financialization, and enclosure) applied to education through the discourses of competition, accountability, choice, and efficiency (Saltman, 2000).

The gestalt of the above has activated for me a particular vigilance to the temporal, a desire to inventory, to construct chronologies and genealogies of the defining events and ideas of both my life and this time, turning upon the central organizing question of, "How did I/We get here?" It is, thus, quite fitting to write the afterword for this text,[1] synthesizing the thoughtful and poignant narratives of the "leaders of critical pedagogy," each of whom trace the imbrications of their own personal and scholarly lineages. I begin with an overview of the field as evidenced by and embodied within the essays in the text, mapping the emergent continuities and discontinuities. That discussion is followed by a re-examination of the grief of the nation – settler colonialism – and the implications for a redefinition of the horizon of critical pedagogy.

MAPPING THE FIELD

Like most academic disciplines, the ground of critical pedagogy is predominantly white and male but as evidenced by the diversity of scholars in this volume, the

field has expanded. The collection of seventeen essays depict journeys that not only traverse across race, class, gender, and ethnic lines but also draw upon a range of experiences from mid-western farms to the U.S. military and geographies of identity from the heart of Amazonia to the tenements of Brooklyn. Additionally, the scholars come to critical pedagogy from a variety of disciplines to include curriculum and instruction, teacher education, adult education, and critical and cultural studies in education.

Diversity notwithstanding, a definitive common ground also emerges from among the essays. First and foremost, the scholars share a common intellectual ancestor: Paulo Freire. While some share personal histories, others mark the significant influence of his passion, ideas, and political project. True to (critical) form, however, the relationships are not framed by sycophancy but rather, radical love. That is, they engage, push and pull Freire through the vicissitudes of the field as it grows around him. Undertakings of Marx and the scholars of the Frankfurt School (particularly Horkheimer, Adorno, and Marcuse) also help to frame the central problematic of the field: deploying theory and dialectics in service of socially just practice, *praxis*. Finally, while there are many references to scholars from across the critical diaspora, there is a tacit consensus among contributors that Peter McLaren, Henry Giroux, Michael Apple, Ira Shor, and Joe Kincheloe serve as the primary interlocutors and transits of Freire to North America as well as the fields central architects.

In terms of shared pedagogical commitments Domenica Maviglia in this volume channels Joe Kicheloe to capture the fields central tenets. She writes:

> The task of critical pedagogy is to question the bonds existing between education and politics, between the socio-political relationships and the educational practices, between the reproduction of knowledge created through the revision of power hierarchies and the privileges that exist in the framework of social daily life, in classes, and in institutions; proposing at the same time a program aimed at an educational transformation in which educators are entrusted, in a first stage, with the responsibility of understanding the socio-political context of the educational action and, in a second stage, with the responsibility of becoming actors of a radical democratic action both in educational places and in the wider social context.

Upon this common ground, scholars overlay unique perspectives and emphases that address certain particularities including issues of language and literacy, (dis)ability, (im)migration, feminism, and environmental studies. While, for the most part, such issues don't engender theoretical or paradigmatic fissures, they do produce (dialectical) tensions that may, in the short run, lead to incongruities but, in the long run, help keep the field from stagnating. Critical scholars tend to not only be open to intellectual engagement but also generative of such interactions among each other. For example, scholars in this volume, in varying tones of urgency, petition the field to be more attentive across a myriad of issues. Some caution against the deployment of critical pedagogy as simply a means of *"academicizing the political*,"

or of perpetuating "the Freire industry" as opposed to being connected to and active in the hard work of putting theory to practice, to engagement with the struggle of making real social change. Others caution against fetishizing on-the-ground work at the expense of theory, implicitly contributing to the de-professionalization and de-intellectualization of teaching and education. Nearly all speak of the need for greater humility, for embracing the "unfinishedness" of the project, and for being responsive to the changing contexts in which we work. In short, they take seriously Freire's entreaty to continually read the word and the world. In keeping with this spirit I return in the following section to concerns addressed at the start of this chapter, thinking out loud about the role of "critical pedagogy in dark times" (Giroux, 2005).

More specifically, given the manner in which the recent deaths/killings/sacrifices of unarmed black men and boys have been taken up in the media and public eye, I am interested in examining the role of spectacle in the consolidation of whiteness and the solidification of the settler state. I'm thinking here of the families of Aiyana Jones, Tarika Wilson and others killed with impunity by the carceral state who were not only forced to fathom the unfathomable but also to do so publicly. Their grief has been hyper-visibilized for the world to *consume;* tragedy played out in real time, with the most spectacularized images placed on perpetual rewind to be relived over and over and over again. Perhaps such conditions helped to fill "the unending absence, the void, the very opposite of meaning" that death compels (Didion, 2005). But still, I wonder what it must be like to have to carry the weight (the rage and indignation) of a racist settler state while at the same time to absorb the "shock" of the (liberal) protestor-subject, insistent upon staging their grief not simply alongside of but at center stage.

Within this context I am particularly concerned with how the construction of the settler state has relied on identity and cultural politics for its reconsolidation, requiring and soliciting certain ways of being, desiring, and knowing at the same time as it destroys others (Agathangelou, 2008; Duggan 2012). As discussed by Bhandar (2010), "The colonial is crucial to thinking about contemporary forms of capitalism," as it forces new analyses of analytical concepts such as "mode of production," "accumulation by dispossession," and "surplus value" to a trembling that enables an expansion or perhaps even an implosion of Marx's analysis of capital to account for the ongoing forms of colonial violence."[2]

The ongoing salience of the settler project beckons critical pedagogy. It compels a shift in the discourse from theorizations of democracy and social justice toward undertakings of decolonization and Indigenous sovereignty. This fundamental difference shifts the pedagogic goal away from the critique and transformation of capitalist social relations of production (i.e. oppression), toward the critique and transformation of colonialist relations of exploitation (i.e. dispossession).

I offer, in the following section, some preliminary thoughts or guideposts on how the field of critical pedagogy might begin to think about such shifts. Beginning with a broad definition of spectacle I move to a discussion of social protest and

the (liberal) protestor subject as particular forma of spectacle, examining how they both may function to tactically and optically solidify the settler state. Thinking more specifically about what "bodies, desires, and longings must be criminalized and annihilated" in order to: (1) produce the (desirable) subject; and, (2) destroy the (undesireable) non-subject or what Davis (2001) terms as the "human surplus" of capitalism (Agathangelou, 2008, p. 124).

ON SPECTACLE AND SETTLER MAYHEM

Writing in the late 1960's French theorist Guy Debord penned his cautionary text the *Society of the Spectacle* (1967), where he laments the displacement of "authentic" social relations with their false representations under advanced capitalism. He writes, "in societies dominated by modern conditions of production, life is presented as an immense accumulation of spectacles. Everything that was directly lived has receded into representation." Modernist, essentialist discourse aside, the deeper salience of Debord's analysis is the way it marks the shift from life in a *market economy* to life in a *market society*, tracing the "degradation of being into having" and then from "having to appearing." He writes:

> …Spectacle is both the result and the product of the dominant mode of production. It is not a mere decoration added to the real world. It is the very heart of this real society's unreality. In all of its particular manifestations – news, propaganda, advertising, entertainment – the spectacle represents the dominant model of life…in both form and content (it) serves as a total justification of the conditions and goals of the existing system.

Considering that his treatise was written well before the digital age and the "hyperreality" of the 21st century the corpus of Debord's thesis remains surprisingly relevant. Under the regime of neoliberalism the speed, scope, and power of commodification has only intensified, reconfiguring the very character of life as not simply conditioned by consumerism and commercialization but actually replaced by, exchanged for, and rejected in favor of its more spectacular simulations. Think, for example, of the blurring lines between "fake news" (e.g., The Daily Show, The Colbert Report) and "real news," between online "friends" and in-person relationships. In such a highly mediated society it isn't just that everything is for sale but that the only life worth living is one on display.

In grafting Debord onto the contemporary landscape, spectacle is about the constant barrage and panoply of images, purposely captured or posed to illicit the greatest emotional response by depicting the most extreme or reductionist form of the subject. Speed and succinctness are also important in the fast production and distribution of spectacular images readied for the 24-hour news cycle. Within the compressed space of spectacular time, if it can't be Instagram-ed or reduced to 140 characters, it loses value. That being said, Debord also cautions against defining

spectacle as just the product of mass media, asserting it instead as a *"weltanschauung* that has been actualized, translated into the material realm – a world view transformed into an objective force."

In addressing the space between cultural politics and neoliberalism, Giroux (2008) draws upon the insight of British media theorist, Nick Couldry, who insists that "every system of cruelty requires its own theatre," one that "draws upon the rituals of everyday life in order to legitimate its norms, values, institutions, and social practices," helping to retain the legitimacy of a system that would otherwise be wholly objectionable. The intensification of cruelty under the *weltanschauung* of neoliberalism has brought with it a renewed press to draw the liberal subject into performing its theater. As observed by Giroux (2008), "What is often ignored by many theorists who analyze the rise of neoliberalism is that it isn't only a system of economic power relations, but also a political project of governing and persuasion intent on producing new forms of subjectivity and particular modes of conduct."

Indeed, the construction of the settler state, at every stage, has relied on identity politics for its reconsolidation, posing urgent questions about how new subjects are seduced into the settler fold and about how these seductions are produced and naturalized. Mark Rifkin's (2013) work on settler common sense asks us to address the question of how "settlement as a system of coercive incorporation and expropriation comes to be lived in the quotidian forms of non-Native being and potential" (p. 323). And further, "how projects of elimination and replacement become part of the geographies of every day settler occupants" who do not see themselves as, predicated on colonial occupation (even though they are) and what the contours and effects of this experience…has on self and society" (p. 323).

For instance, it wasn't long before protests and die-ins began to be staged everywhere from Harvard University to suburban malls, sometimes under the effacing signifier of #AllLivesMatter. Such erasures didn't go unnoticed by Black activists who took to issuing "rules" for white engagement at protests, which in turn, sparked a social media war of words and charges of "reverse racism." Clearly, coursing through the veins of the Whitestream body politic are the residuals of trauma over losing their religion. That is, the deep faith of American democracy, that there is no human contradiction that can't be resolved within the context of modern liberalism (Fukuyama, 1989).

The domesticating, assimilative and invisibilizing forces of settler common sense compel a rethinking and recasting of critical pedagogy beyond the horizons of democracy, in all its permutations: participatory, substantive, deliberative, radical, revolutionary. As noted by Tuck and Yang (2012), "decolonization wants something different" from civil and rights based forms of social justice that is not "easily grafted onto pre-existing discourses/frameworks even if they are critical" (p. 2–3). That "something different" is nothing short of a remaking of the nation state through Indigenous repatriation and sovereignty. A failure to disrupt what Kazanjian (2003) refers to as "the colonizing trick" – the myth that the U.S. was founded on democratic principles initially eroded through the practices of slavery and genocide

as opposed to a state fundamentally constituted by capitalism, colonialism, and white supremacy – not only threatens the vitality of Indigenous peoples but also arrests the development of new social alternatives.

NOTES

[1] I was originally invited to write a chapter in the book but as the deadline for submissions coincided with the death of my beloved mom I wasn't able to complete my contribution. As it is with so many things viewed through the glasses of retrospection, it now all seems for the better; to have had a purpose.

[2] Consider for example how Glen Coulthard's ground-breaking text, *Red Skin, White Masks* (2014) has imploded on the scene, evidencing a hunger for such re-theorizations among critical scholars.

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