IJPE

International Journal of

Progressive Education

Volume 2   Number 3   October, 2006

International Journal of Progressive Education

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Volume 2, Number 2
June 2006

Editorial Statement
Understanding Critical Pedagogy and Peter McLaren in the Age of Global Capitalism

Peter McLaren is a teacher, a poet, a revolutionist, a theorist of the revolutionary critical pedagogy, and a critical ethnographer of capitalist relations and reproductions in public schools. McLaren is an intellectual and political risk taker; he is willing to go outside of the field of education and confront challenging new theories, and fight against conservative and neo-liberal political attacks and agendas. He is not a "Homegrown Democrat... who supported Bush's war…who wait(s) to see which way the wind is blowing before they commit a political act requiring honesty and courage…who think(s) the good Democrat is homegrown." (Denzin, 2005, p.47). His body of work embodies commitment to human well being, the search for truth, respect for other views, and the obligation to defend the weak and the poor. His writing style is not content with the standard academic format. He writes not just as a radical philosopher of education, but also as an international activist and a visionary dreamer.

McLaren's work is embedded in a rich and deep literature. He draws from the work of such radical progressive theorists as Paulo Freire, Karl Marx, Che Guevara, Louis Althusser, Pierre Bourdieu, Raya Dunayevskaya, Erich Fromm, G.W.F. Hegel, John Dewey, Antonio Gramsci, and many other theorists of Marxist and progressive political philosophy.

For the last three decades, McLaren has made important contributions to the field including his elaboration of an ethical basis for critical pedagogy and radical politics; his view of the impact of global capitalism and postmodernity on human identity and collective struggles; his ethnographic exploration of schooling and the key concepts of ritual, liminality, and enfleshment; and his notion of critical or revolutionary multiculturalism and pedagogy as the political basis for a radical transformation of education and society.

First, his notion of "enfleshment", the process by which the body is inscribed or colonized by certain dominant interests and becomes the site through the rituals of schooling maintain the status quo, provides an important dimension to our understanding of the processes of reproduction and resistance in schools (McLaren; 1991). McLaren's analysis of the role of rituals and the body in these processes provides another important avenue for educational research and theory (McLaren; 1986).

Another key contribution is the relationship between multiculturalism and radical social transformation. Following Freire (1970), McLaren (1997) has stressed the importance of understanding students' culture and developing a student-centered educational process while, at the same time, recognizing the crucial role of teachers in helping students become critical thinkers and activists. McLaren (1995) contrasted critical multiculturalism and those forms of multiculturalism that do not challenge the capitalist system, including conservative, liberal, and left-liberal versions. According to McLaren (1997), critical or revolutionary multiculturalism emphasizes the primacy of cultural differences, but it recognizes that such differences, including our representations of race, class, and gender, have to be viewed as part of a larger social struggle over meanings in a social system of unequal power and class relations. Differences are socially and historically produced; they are not based on trans-historical essences. From this perspective, the purpose of recognizing difference is not a mere celebration of diversity, but creating the conditions for a multicultural coalition that can bring social transformation. For McLaren, the revolutionary multiculturalism challenges the racist, sexist and oppressive foundations of schooling and urban education. McLaren seeks to inspire teachers, students, and parents to work within a revolutionary pedagogical framework.

Mclaren's revolutionary pedagogy seeks a theoretical perspective that can deconstruct and grasp both the broad dynamics of capitalism as a global system and the unique nature of local struggles regarding various forms of oppression: race, class gender, and sexual orientation (McLaren, 2004;

2005a). On the other hand, McLaren (2003) rejects ludic forms of postmodernism as incapable of providing a theory and practice of revolutionary social change. In his view, postmodernism's focus on fragmentation, exchange, discursive incommensurability, and difference moves critical analysis away from capitalist exploitation. McLaren is not satisfied with either an identity politics based on cultural differences or a limited economic reformism that does not challenge capitalist hegemony. He recognizes that cultural diversity and economic transformation must go hand in hand.

In his recent writings, McLaren (2000; 2004; 2005a,b; 2006a,b) has firmly embraced a revolutionary pedagogy based on Marx's notions of praxis and historical materialism. McLaren has increasingly urged a return to Marx and historical materialism as part of developing a revolutionary critical pedagogy and a utopian vision of a non-oppressive society. His revolutionary critical pedagogy theorizes the liberating potential of Marxist humanism by bridging the gap between the individual and the collective through a revitalized theory of praxis. For McLaren (2006b),

> Revolutionary critical pedagogy works within a socialist imaginary, that is, it operates from an understanding that the basis of education is political and that spaces need to be created where students can imagine a different world outside of capitalism's law of value (i.e., social form of labor), where alternatives to capitalism and capitalist institutions can be discussed and debated, and where dialogue can occur about why so many revolutions in past history turned into their opposite. It looks to create a world where social labor is no longer an indirect part of the total social labor but a direct part it (Hudis, 2005, 2005a) , where a new mode of distribution can prevail not based on socially necessary labor time but on actual labor time, where alienated human relations are subsumed by authentically transparent ones, where freely associated individuals can successfully work towards a permanent revolution, where the division between mental and manual labor can be abolished, where patriarchal relations and other privileging hierarchies of oppression and exploitation can be ended, where we can truly exercise the principle 'from each according to his or her ability and to each according to his or her need', where we can traverse the terrain of universal rights unburdened by necessity, moving sensuously and fluidly within that ontological space where subjectivity is exercised as a form of capacity-building and creative self-activity within and as a part of the social totality: a space where labor is no longer exploited and becomes a striving that will benefit all human beings, where labor refuses to be instrumentalized and commodified and ceases to be a compulsory activity, and where the full development of human capacity is encouraged. (pp.34-56).

While seeing Che Guevara and Paulo Freire as exemplars of a Marxist humanist position that is at the heart of revolutionary critical pedagogy, McLaren (2000) called for a commitment to working class struggle which is the heart of revolution.

It is my pleasure as managing editor to dedicate this special issue on Peter McLaren's work and the future of the critical pedagogy, which has been and will be shaped by McLaren's revolutionary vision.

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Managing Editor

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Interfering with Capitalism's Spell: Peter McLaren's Revolutionary Liminality

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Abstract

McLaren's recent (post-2000) writings promote a form of agency called "revolutionary critical pedagogy," and a type of agent, the "committed intellectual" (McLaren 2005b, p. 253-281). But one can find an earlier agent-type in McLaren's (1986) *Schooling as a Ritual Performance*, the "liminal servant," that explains how "critical pedagogy is secured by the most fecund of revolutionary talismans, critique" (2005a: 9). Borrowing from Theodor Adorno (1968), I suggest that McLaren's recent writing uses aspects of the "liminal servant" for the purpose of interfering with the "spell" of capitalist social relations through "revolutionary critical pedagogy." The beginning prologue examines "revolutionary liminality" in McLaren's writing; the second part explains how his written discursive strategies (naming the culprit, suggesting icons, theorizing to unite the disaffected) work to act out "revolutionary liminality."

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Prologue: Introducing the Liminal Servant in the Context of Capitalism

Flash back to the 1980s. This is from Peter McLaren's *Schooling as a Ritual Performance,* put into publication in 1986, definitely one of my "formative texts" when I read it in graduate school in the early 1990s. In this text, Peter was observing classrooms in a 7-8 grade school in Toronto, specifically a Catholic school ("St Ryan") that served lower-class students. In the paragraph quoted below, he is creating a typology of the teacher-types he has been observing. One of the most important of his categories is that of the liminal servant:

THE LIMINAL SERVANT

The following section on the liminal servant is a composite description of what I consider to be the best attributes of a teacher working within a liberatory pedagogy. These attributes have been collected from observing teachers both formally and informally for over a decade. Some of the characteristics of the liminal servant were evident in teacher performances at St. Ryan....

The liminal servant is both a convener of customs and a cultural provocateur, yet she (or he) transcends both roles. She does not subordinate the political rights of students to their utility as future members of the labor force. She is a social activist and spiritual director as much as she is a school pedagogue. The liminal servant, as the name suggests, is able to bring dimensions of liminality to the classroom setting where obligations that go with one's social status and immediate role are held in abeyance.

The liminal servant does not shy away from the ambiguity and opacity of existence. She/he is androgynous, drawing upon both feminine and masculine modes of consciousness. Much depends upon her personal charisma and her powers of observation and diagnosis. She becomes aware of the strengths and weaknesses of her students by observing and diagnosing their ritual needs. The liminal servant views working class students as members of an oppressed group. Not only does she fight for the equality of her students outside the classroom, but she also attempts to educate her fellow teachers to the dangers of false consciousness. (McLaren, 1986, p. 114-115)

What is impressive about this description of the liminal servant is that it suggests a leader/ teacher of exceptional qualities who is there to fight for the social standing of the students, and who maintains a number of "normal" roles ("convener of customs and a cultural provocateur") while being both teacher and liberator. This is all accomplished through the manipulation of "liminal" rituals, which is to say that in the classroom of the liminal servant classroom activities are turned into special occasions of a sort.

All of this description functions as a sort of anthropological superstructure set atop the basic requirement that the liminal servant follow "a liberatory pedagogy." Now this can be a number of things, but mostly what it is, is a "pedagogy of the oppressed" in the sense in which Paulo Freire meant it in his earlier (1970) book *Pedagogy of the Oppressed.* The "pedagogy of the oppressed" was meant to help the least-well-off students of society liberate themselves from oppressive circumstances.

Fast-forward back to the present day. When Peter McLaren wrote in the 1980s of "a liberatory pedagogy" in *Schooling as a Ritual Performance,* he now writes of "revolutionary critical pedagogy." The present-day incarnation of Peter McLaren now describes himself as a "classical Marxist," and writes theoretically of "Marxist-Humanism" and of neo-Gramscian international political economy in the vein of William I. Robinson.[i] One reason for McLaren's change in writing style has

been his growing concern about the distance between recent versions of "critical pedagogy" and Freire's original version in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. Indeed, for McLaren, this is a concern about

> the way in which the work of Paulo Freire has become -- in many instances -- reconciled to capitalism through political vulgarization and pedagogical domestication. The work of Freire is often used in the field of critical literacy in a way that alarmingly disconnects literacy and pedagogy from capitalist exploitation and class struggle: in short, in a way that side-steps revolutionary praxis. (McLaren, 2006, p.25)

The radicalism of *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* itself confirms McLaren's assertion that Freirean pedagogy is moving in the direction of domestication -- the point being that Freire's own text is of a piece with revolutionary sentiment in the 1960s. The rarely-quoted chapter 4 of Freire's early (1970) magnum opus is about how to teach "revolutionary praxis," (p.107) and more specifically about how to teach groups of people to resist colonization. It was specifically written in a spirit that celebrates Che Guevara and Fidel Castro. And, arguably, McLaren's pivotal (2000) book *Che Guevara, Paulo Freire and the Pedagogy of Revolution* can be read as an attempt to contextualize and update that same chapter of Freire's book. This book marks a period where McLaren revisits Freirean theory to become a "classical Freirean" as much as he himself claims to be a "classical Marxist."

McLaren's recent output is quite prodigious. Indeed, as I said in my interview with him,[ii] McLaren is "most recently the author of *Capitalists and Conquerors* (2005) and *Red Seminars* (2005) and *Teaching against Capitalism and the New Imperialism* (with Ramin Farahmandpur) (2005)" as well as a recent set of interviews titled *Rage and Hope* (2006). A discursive examination of these works will uncover a set of strategies for this return to "classical Freireanism." Furthermore, one can read into these strategies a reappearance of the "liminal servant" mentioned in McLaren's earlier writings. In sum, my reading of the "liminal servant" within McLaren's later writings reveals a "revolutionary liminality" at work in his written persona.

The goals of a "revolutionary liminality" could perhaps be read out of something Peter wrote with Nathalia E. Jaramillo in an essay on George W. Bush with the vivid title "God's Cowboy Warrior"

> ...any revolutionary struggle must be dedicated to educating the emotions as much as the intellect and why anti-imperialist struggle must be waged on the triple continents of reason, passion, and revolution. It must take place not only on the picket line or protest march, but also in the schools, places of worship, libraries, shop floors, and corporate offices -- in every venue where people come together to learn, to labor, and to love.
> In order to shift critical pedagogy into a new register, we need to rethink the very premises of critical pedagogy, not as some grand contemplative act, but as part of a philosophy of everyday life. This challenge has to do with creating a living Marxism, a way of negotiating the reality of a racist and class society on a daily basis so as to transform such a society. (McLaren, 2005a, p. 324)

One can see how, in this passage, McLaren and Jaramillo want to make the return to (Freirean) critical pedagogy into right-brained, ritual activity, contextualized by the venues of everyday life and the activities of learning, laboring, and loving. This is often regarded as a mind-space far away from that of the typical professorial pursuit of "academic writing as real estate"[iii] that churns out texts from within the sheltered structures of the academic tenure-track. Compare the spirit of the above quote with that of a similar passage from *Schooling*:

> the liminal servant is wary of too much ratiocination and leans toward divining myths, metaphors and rhythms that will have meaning and purpose for her students -- not just as abstractions, but

> as "lived" forms of consciousness... The liminal servant encourages students to enact metaphors and embody rhythms that bypass the traditional mind/body dualism so prevalent in mainstream educational epistemology and practice. The liminal servant is a vagrant, a tramp of the obvious who becomes the tramp of demystifying conscientization. The ordinary becomes the object of critical examination and reflection... (the liminal servant) knows that she must not merely present knowledge to students; she must transform the consciousness of students by allowing them to 'embody' or incarnate knowledge. (McLaren, 1986, p. 116)

The aim of "incarnate knowledge" in the latter passage from Schooling is less distinct than in "God's Cowboy Warrior" -- but nevertheless illustrative of "revolutionary liminality." The difference between the two "revolutionary liminalities" is more reflective of McLaren's change in focus than of anything else. In *Schooling as a Ritual Performance*, McLaren attempted to capture the stultifying atmopshere of a school which was in the business of "making Catholics," (pp. 180-216) in which the subjectivities of the students were, in the end, inscribed into late capitalism (p. 216). In the more recent works, McLaren is concerned with the overall picture of the capitalist system and with the overall theory to be used in demystifying it. And it is this demystification that requires further explanation. What needs to be demystified? Why is writing (and writing style) so important to McLaren's "revolutionary critical pedagogy"?

To understand what about capitalist society ultimately needs demystifying, we flash back to 1968, a good year for radicalism. Here is the transcript of the final flourish of a speech given by Theodor Adorno (2001), the intellectual voice of critical theory, a year before his death:

> The only relationships ultimately realized between people, however, are those buried under the relations of production. This is why the overwhelming organization of things remains at the same time its own ideology, virtually powerless. As impenetrable as the bane [Bann] is, it's only a spell [Bann]. If sociology is to do more than just furnish welcome information to agents and interests, by fulfilling those tasks for which it was once conceived, then it is up to it, with means which do not themselves fall prey to the universal character of the fetish, to ensure, be it to ever so modest an extent, that the spell dissolves itself. (p. 1)

The concept of "spell" or (in German) Bann is one of the most compelling in the lexicon of the critical theorist Theodor Adorno. Adorno uses the word "Bann" to mean a sort of bad magic in the world; the translator Dennis Redmond translates it as "bane" to distinguish its negative character. What Adorno is talking about is a spell -- and a spell, according to the mythology of witchcraft, conveys magic to be used over people, to make them do things they ordinarily wouldn't do. Only in Adorno's use of "Bann," the spell is something cast upon the "organization of things" itself -- in other words, the ordinary is itself the source of bad magic. The implication is that there is some sort of bad magic going on in a world ostensibly rationalized by democracy, technology, and the corporate order.

More specifically, the world of the present is said to be under the spell foist upon it by the relations of production, i.e. by the capitalist system. The capitalist system is, today, the system we all use; it is the system Adorno speaks of when he uses the term "the overwhelming organization of things." The "organization of things" is, as the hard-headed speak of it, the real world; yet there is this idea conveyed in "Bann" that a spell continues to operate in the "organization of things."

The idea that capitalism involves a spell doesn't originate with Adorno. Marx, indeed, wrote of "commodity fetishism"; and a fetish is about a (magical) power that an object has over us. Commodity fetishism, indeed, is the name of the spell. When one thinks in an anticapitalist manner, against a society that believes in itself when one, oneself, doesn't, one tends to argue that the rest of the world has been trapped under a spell, a spell that normalizes the capitalist system to an extent that life outside of it

becomes unthinkable. Consumerism and family life define the normal role for those who have "leisure time"; "work" becomes equivalent to being on someone's payroll, and "unemployment" a state of "poverty." Possessive individualism, an ideology that defines the world as something to be owned by (white, male) sovereign individuals as "real estate," becomes the only way to think about the natural world. The individual's relations to others reinforce these ways of thinking. And this is the power of the spell that commodity relations hold over society.

What was Adorno's response to this reality? For Adorno, sociology (as practiced within the academy) needed to avoid commodification, somehow. Indeed, this was to be done in the radical hopes of 1968 that "the spell dissolves itself," but in light of Adorno's famous pessimism about radical social change, it's easier to paint him as a survivor of the world that produced Auschwitz (the Nazi concentration camps, as a horrifying event of bureaucratized mass murder) rather than as a revolutionary. As a note of explanation, Adorno (like McLaren) believed that there was no imminent possibility of revolution to be found in the privileged "First World," For anticapitalists like Adorno and McLaren, when revolution is not imminent, what remains are attempts to interfere with the spell of commodity relations, to build something new in capitalism's shadow.

For McLaren, the question of how to interfere with the spell of capitalist relations becomes a question of how to practice a "revolutionary critical pedagogy" when "there is little evidence to indicate that the United States is prepared to consider a socialist alternative to its imperialist democracy anytime soon" (McLaren, 2005a, p. 323). What is McLaren's purpose, given these conditions? He gives his own answer to this question in an interview (with Michael Pozo) in *Rage and Hope*:

> My particular task is to transform teacher and student practice into a far-reaching political praxis linked to social movements to contribute to creating a multi-racial, gender-balanced, anti-imperialist, anti-capitalist movement that is internationalist in scope. (McLaren, 2006, p. 17)

With our analysis of McLaren, then, we are concerned with how he sees the spell of capitalist social relations to be broken, and with that, how a movement is to be built amongst those who have recognized McLaren's anticapitalism as their own.

This essay will concern itself with what he does in his writing, paying close attention to "revolutionary liminality" and to the way in which it forwards the goals of "revolutionary critical pedagogy." (There is also an activist dimension to McLaren's own work, which in a future essay will have an even more encyclopedic scope than it does today. McLaren has worked with communities in Colombia, Venezuela, Mexico, Pakistan, and South Africa to promote "revolutionary critical pedagogy," and has an academic organization "La Fundacion McLaren," in Mexico (and on the Web at http://www.fundacionmclaren.org/), to promote "revolutionary critical pedagogy" from within the academy. Indeed, if one is going to be a revolutionary, then word must be matched by deed.) There is an agent-form suggested in McLaren's later writings – the "committed intellectual," suggested in essay on Gramsci in *Red Seminars*. But in this essay I will focus upon the more discursively-revealing agent-form, the "liminal servant."

McLaren's immediate purpose is expressed quite simply: "As a critical educator, I follow Glenn Rikowski's work and encourage students to ask themselves the following question: What is the maximum damage we can do to the rule of capital, to the dominance of capital's value form?" (McLaren, 2006, p. 25) In the next portion of this essay, I shall examine the strategies of McLaren's prose to observe what damage he himself intends to do.

McLaren's Strategies for Interfering With the Spell of Commodity Relations

There are three strategic types in McLaren's (written) discourse that I wish to highlight; a) naming the culprits, b) suggesting icons, and c) theorizing to unite the disaffected. All of these strategies are strategies that a liminal servant would employ were she to engage her role in the written word. They attempt to engage existing customs; they attempt to educate the reader as regards the dangers of false consciousness. In general, McLaren's writing attempts to provide a liminal space where academic conventions of "detachment" are swept aside in favor of academic writing as a form of performance art.[iv] For each category, then, I will illustrate with a prominent example for the sake of showing its discursive workings in the academic context in which McLaren's writings register their meanings.

Naming the Culprits

My interview with Peter McLaren (The "Dirty Thirty") provided a forthright example of this strategy; another important example of this would be the first part of "God's Cowboy Warrior," a section of which was quoted above. The general tone of this discursive strategy is cautionary; he argues to warn people of the bad things that people do when caught in the spell of pernicious ideologies. The especially-bad, then, are held up as examples of the dangers of false consciousness. In McLaren's hands, this strategy chooses its targets in a somewhat limited fashion; when he talks of the attack upon radical academia, for instance, he concentrates his fire upon those specific neoconservative organizations which he sees as engaged in a direct effort to silence free speech in the academy. In naming enemies, McLaren focuses upon fact, stylizing it to reveal how there are powers in the world, and real individuals using them, to struggle against us as individuals and as a class, so that we might be provoked into joining the struggle.

In my interview with Peter McLaren (The "Dirty Thirty"), in particular, the main task-at-hand consisted in identifying the main political culprits (Lynn Cheney, Andrew Jones (the head of the Bruin Alumni Association, David Horowitz), and their associates (Linda Chavez, a former Reagan appointee, and current UCLA professors Matt Malkan and Thomas Schwartz), and then to move on to identify the initiatives which they support. These include HR 509, the "International Studies in Higher Education Act," David Horowitz's "Academic Bill of Rights," and a couple of individual state legislative bills that are being drawn up around it. All of this is being foregrounded against the authoritarian tendencies of the "far right" in their current domination of American politics, as McLaren himself explains. In sum, McLaren tries to roll together a series of facts in a way which offers a sense of motivation to the reader. The interview reads as a sort of "action alert" to concerned academics.

"God's Cowboy Warrior," a piece McLaren wrote with Nathalia E. Jaramillo, (McLaren and Jaramillo (2006)), offers a more elaborate naming of culprits. The authors deliver a thorough evisceration of the Bush administration for its megalomania, its adherence to the narcissistic philosophy of Leo Strauss (examined in detail therein), and its role in the triumph of the military-industrial complex in a nation in which "the infrastructure for a transition to a fascist state is already in place" (p. 266). Thus, there are people in the world who are manipulating the spell cast upon the world into something even worse, i.e. fascism. McLaren and Jaramillo suggest modestly that the Bush administration is in fact so self-discrediting that "it doesn't need a commentary such as ours to make a case against it," (p. 277) and call for Bush's impeachment. They then make a connection between Bush imperialism and the needs of the (owning class within the) capitalist system itself. "Whereas imperialism once tried to disguise the tendency in the decline of the rate of profits through the extraction of super-profits from exploited lands overseas, the tendency of the rate of profit to decline is now what openly drives capital's quest for imperialist expansion" (p. 279). The theories of Peter Hudis and James Petras are discussed as relevant to these phenomena. The narrative of "God's Cowboy Warrior" ends with a discussion of how a socialist alternative to US imperialism can be imagined.

The point, then, of naming the culprits as a discursive strategy is to show how certain particular people are responsible for the increasing difficulty of life, as it currently stands under neoliberal economic hegemony. This is pursued not to implicate us all in the presence of the evils of neoliberalism, but rather to explain that, under the current system, power is routinely granted to the avatars of false consciousness.

Suggesting Icons

When McLaren wrote *Che Guevara, Paulo Freire, and the Pedagogy of Revolution*, he chose to discuss Guevara in the context of schools and education not because Che was a schoolteacher by profession (Che's original training was in medicine), but rather because he thought a discussion of Che would provide appropriate symbolic brushstrokes for a theory that would make critical pedagogy, like Che, "militantly optimistic about overcoming capitalism," and give it a perspective that was "unwavering and heroic." (McLaren, 2000, p. 107). This is, perhaps, the most dramatic example of McLaren's use of iconic discourse within his opus. In discussing Che Guevara's lessons for critical pedagogy, McLaren employs similar prosaic techniques to those used elsewhere in his opus; he suggests, for instance, that "a critical pedagogy for multicultural education should quicken the affective sensibilities of students as well as provide them with a language of social analysis, cultural critique, and social activism in the service of cutting the power and practice of capital at its joints." (p. 103) This may be an "ordinary" McLaren recommendation, if such a thing can exist. But the point of saying these words this in the context of a discussion of Che Guevara is to allow us to see Che Guevara as an inspiration to *try to do* what he (McLaren) is suggesting teachers ought to do.

In using iconic discourse, in suggesting Che Guevara and Paulo Freire as part of a pantheon of iconic figures, McLaren is not suggesting any sort of Marx-worship or Marxist-worship. Indeed, McLaren suggests that "Marxism puts its stock in good works rather than in faith. It puts an emphasis in denouncing and transforming the world, not wrapping doctrinal tentacles around its major texts..." (McLaren, 2006, p. 45) We have already discussed above the power of McLaren's denunciatory discourse; the point here is that his iconic celebration of Che Guevara is not meant in any way to be doctrinal or religious.

Perhaps, then, we would be underestimating icons if we theorized icons, and iconic discourse, to be inimical to critical thinking. Clearly, our own society is full of icons. We fetishize these icons for their symbolic value. Money itself serves us as an icon; in its physical paper and metallic forms, it has the pictures of Presidential icons printed on it. Our respect for it is iconic; as a material existence it is mere paper bills, metal discs, or (as credit) pixels on a screen, themselves unimportant as objects. Yet somehow we regard money as the moving force of our working lives, as something that in fact "makes the world go 'round." More theoretically, money is an iconic form of exchange-value. Because of our fetish for money, everything we can buy with it has an "exchange-value." This is indeed what commodity fetishism is about. We use monetary forms (gold, silver) to make jewelry, and display them on our bodies iconically. In school we teach icon-worship; the American flag is saluted every morning. The point of flying airplanes into the World Trade Center in New York City on the morning of September 11, 2001 was that these towers were regarded by the airplane hijackers as American icons, as symbols of American strength. The power of icons and of iconic forms of communication and behavior indeed constitutes "the spell" in general, and the spell of commodity relations in particular. McLaren's response to our iconic existence is to bring counter-icons into the discussion, to evince their subversive value. His office at UCLA, for instance, serves as a shrine to Marx, Engels, Hugo Chavez, and anyone of iconic value who has value in his chain-of-associations as a subverter of the dominant paradigm. Would we be able to break the spell so easily if we merely proclaimed ourselves to be purely agnostic postmodern intellectuals, and then went about our business within the capitalist academy? I don't see it.

Now, as regards Che in particular, I do recognize that Che Guevara is more of an inspiration to anti-capitalist effort than perhaps any iconic figure Latin America has produced (I'm sure there are exceptions, hoever), and certainly I recognize that the impact of his facial image has been spread throughout the (capitalist) world in murals, on t-shirts, and otherwise. I do not, however, imagine Che Guevara to be an icon of perfection. I will only discuss what I imagine to be the most innocuous of Che's shortcomings. It was my reading of Che's works as reported in Jon Lee Anderson's respectful biography *Che Guevara: A Revolutionary Life* that his revolutionary strategy suffered from an underestimation of the need for appropriate conditions for the "making of a revolution." This, too, played with his reputation; the back cover of Pierre Kalfon's *Che, Ernesto Guevara, una leyenda de nuestro siglo* refers to Che as "un Don Quijote de los tiempos modernos," or in short, a romantic unrealist. If we wish to do the most possible damage to capitalism, we need to wrestle with what is possible. In theorizing this difference I have with Che, I would invoke Gramsci's distinction between a "war of movement," involving the conquest of the state such as was accomplished by Lenin, and a "war of position," the ideological battle for the consciences of the people. I would use this distinction to suggest that perhaps Che was a little too anxious to get onward with the "war of movement" when the "war of position" in the countries where he worked (outside of Cuba, of course) had not run its course.

Nevertheless, I can participate in the aura of Che as a liminal servant, as someone outside of the now-globally-dominant capitalist social structure provided by US hegemony, promising the United States an engagement in "One, two, three, many Vietnams." The celebration of Che Guevara is iconic play; people who wear images of Che on their t-shirts are not suggesting everything that Che did so much as a romantic anticapitalism which uses his image as the basis for a sentiment.

Theorizing to Unite the Disaffected

Much of the recent writing done by Peter McLaren is theoretical, dealing with generalities about capitalism, about social categories, and about critiques of social theory from his "classic Marxist" perspective. However, even though at times McLaren's prose can become dry in this respect, the general intent appears to be a sort of community-building, starting from the base of a respect for the individual whose individuality is being incorporated into a coerced unifornity. In an interview with Michael Pozo in *Rage and Hope*, McLaren defends his use of theory qua theory, in response to the question: "How has your implementation and study of people such as Ernesto Guevara, Malcolm X and Rosa Luxemburg returned the lived experiences back to students taught under "detached" theories?" McLaren responds:

> ...the question is not one of providing the correct political language -- revolutionary critical pedagogy, critical theory, historical materialism, analytical or dialectical Marxism, or what have you -- but to create pedagogical spaces and contexts for the oppressed to fashion their own understandings out of their shared history of struggle. (McLaren, 2006, p. 33)

This quote, itself, would offer a straightforward definition of what it means to proclaim a theory to unite the disaffected. The oppressed have their own understandings of how life in the world is, but within each is a shared history of struggle. A theory that is useful to revolutionary critical pedagogy can provide a pedagogical space to illuminate that history; a theory that doesn't, won't.

So that is what a McLaren continues with a discussion of what a theory that is useless to revolutionary critical pedagogy looks like:

> Theories... often set up an opposition -- an irreconcilable dualism or un-transcendable antinomy or incontestable contradiction between the subject and the object or nature of knowledge where the ontological structure of subjective agency supposedly corresponds to the actual dualisms of the mode of production, albeit in its alienated and reified formations. In this process, the

concrete historical subject is obliterated, abstracted away, so that it is made to feel as if it were at one with the madness of capital into which it has been insinuated, so that the subject resigns itself to an inevitable complicity with the processes of its own formation. (p. 33)

To imagine an example: uncritical theories locate the agency of capitalism (insofar as capitalism is itself an agency) in something other than capitalism itself. So, for instance, one might blame George W. Bush, and George W. Bush alone, for the trajectory taken by the US government, without looking at all of the other subjectivities that stand with Bush in his policies, and without looking at the hierarchical and mediated nature of the "structure of subjective agency" (i.e. the system) that grants Bush the power that he has. Meanwhile the subject, i.e. the individual person, can imagine her powerlessness before Bush without examining the roots in political economy of Bush's power. In real life, however, the capitalist system helps George W. Bush do his dirty work, but without a helpful theory, the subject remains unable to see how such a system becomes an agency.

A solid example of an active McLaren discussion of "theoretical power" is his paper with Nathalia E. Jaramillo, "Critical Pedagogy, Latino/a Education, and the Politics of Class Struggle." (*Cultural Studies/Critical Methodologies 6*:1 (2006), pp. 73-93). This essay theorizes the space constructed for the sake of "latino/a" identity as it interacts within a larger context of global capitalism, US nationalism, and racism in the US and in specifically Californian contexts. The authors explicitly defend language rights (in general) in the context of an ideology of assimilation that dominates the US context:

> The very system that incorporates Latina/os and other immigrant groups into the dominant "Whitestream" society is the same system that seeks to alienate them from their local histories, their culture, and the location where their knowledge is inscribed, namely their language. (McLaren and Jaramillo, 2006, p. 81)

This initiates a discussion of language policy, in which the diversity of human subjectivities is defended against policies such as Proposition 227 in California and the No Child Left Behind Act.

From that point, this essay connects its defense of cultural identity to a Marxist-humanist critical pedagogy and, indeed, a critique of class struggle in a global context that derives its strength from the writings of William I. Robinson (McLaren and Jaramillo, 2006, pp. 86-90).

The point, then, of the discourse of theorizing to unite the disaffected, is to defend the particular against its incorporation into an imperialist universal, while at the same time suggesting a theory around which greater unities can be assembled. After all, those disaffected by imperialism must have something to unite around.

Conclusion

In writing of "revolutionary critical pedagogy," then, Peter McLaren performs some of the functions of a liminal servant. One of the byproducts of this performance, incidentally, is that McLaren appears to have accumulated a community of allies. This, of course, is reflected in his activist efforts in various places in the world; but for a written-word rendering of McLaren's community spirit one can read, for instance, his recent collection *Red Seminars*, co-written with twenty-two different co-authors. One can also read in McLaren (and this is common in academic writing) a heavy bibliographic emphasis upon citation; this itself also serves as a community-building function. The function of a liminal servant is to build communities of thinkers; as Turner theorized the concept of "liminality," it (as a ritual state of human existence) could be associated closely to the social state of existence which he called "communitas," which was meant to describe a state of social being devoid of status and roles and engaged in a sense of "togetherness" outside the social mainstream (Turner, p. 132). Now, in a context

of global capitalism where the reigning pedagogy acts to turn the world's distinct peoples into English-speaking consumers (Spring 2006), McLaren's work in building a counter-community aims at breaking the spell of commodity relations that holds people in thrall to the capitalist system as a whole.

Nevertheless, it is still an open question as regards to how far the above discursive strategies can interfere with the spell of commodity relations. It is also an open question whether the (written) discursive strategies for being a "liminal servant" can be diversified beyond the narrow typology I have set out in this essay. In summary, it is an open question how far the discourse of the "liminal servant" can go. Kudos to Peter McLaren, and friends, for making it happen in the way that they did.

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Notes

[i] See especially McLaren and Jaramillo (2006), "Critical Pedagogy, Latino/a Education, and the Politics of Class Struggle," *Cultural Studies/ Critical Methodologies 6*:1, pp. 73-93.

[ii] Fassbinder, S. (2006, 6 April). "The 'Dirty Thirty's' Peter McLaren Reflects on the Crisis of Academic Freedom," *MRZine*. Accessed 6 June 2006. http://mrzine.monthlyreview.org/fassbinder060406.html

[iii] Agger, B. (1990). "Academic Writing as Real Estate," *The Decline of Discourse* (pp. 122-147).

[iv] In the introduction to *Che Guevara, Paulo Freire, and the Pedagogy of Revolution*, itself titled "Peter McLaren: The Poet Laureat of the Educational Left," Joe Kincheloe has already remarked at length on Peter's "fusion of reason and emotion" (x)

Imagining the Impossible: Revolutionary Critical Pedagogy Against the 21st Century American Imperium

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Abstract

This article examines some of the major Marxist-humanist themes that animate the revolutionary critical pedagogy delineated by Peter McLaren in recent years. Among these themes are radical universalism, an interrogation of the capitalization and commodification of human labor, and the interrelatedness of American imperialism and neoliberal globalized capitalism. It argues that McLaren's scholarship provides progressive educationalists with an alternative to those "post-alized" and liberal humanist versions of critical pedagogy that have virtually abandoned all forms of class analysis. It contends that revolutionary critical pedagogy offers a much-needed narrative capable of challenging the most recent manifestations of empire, wars of aggression, and exploitative capitalist relations.

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Introduction

The emotion of hope goes out of itself, makes people broad instead of confining them . . . The work of this emotion requires people who throw themselves actively into what is becoming . . . Hopelessness is itself, in a temporal and factual sense, the most insupportable thing, downright intolerable to human needs. (Bloch, 1995 [orig. 1959]:1, 3)

The impossible must be imagined if it is to be realized, and it is true sanity to do so. (Kovel, 1991, p. 13)

The quotes cited above appropriately capture the two most important lessons that I have learned from Peter McLaren over the years. Those lessons—to always search for a ray of hope even as the world lurches toward barbarism and to imagine new visions of human sociality that counteract the mind-numbing mantra of TINA (there is no alternative)—were gleaned through reading his many works, personal interactions and communications, and through my more recent collaborations with him. They are lessons which also animate the subsequent engagement with his work offered in these pages. However, before embarking on that task, a bit of personal history is in order.

I first met Peter in 1991. I was then a graduate student working on a Masters' degree at the University of Windsor in Ontario, Canada. Even though I was in the early stages of my program, I knew that my thesis would somehow deal with the topic of "political correctness." At the time, of course, one could hardly escape the deluge of hysterical media accounts proclaiming that the academy had been taken over by unruly cabals of "leftists." Conservative intellectuals and media cognoscenti had managed to paint a picture of campus life reminiscent of Hieronymus Bosch's vision of hell. They demonized the "left"—a catch-all phrase that encompassed feminists, multiculturalists, deconstructionists, Marxists, postmodernists, sixties radicals, and virtually anyone who wasn't white, straight, male and conservative—as a coterie of propagandists; as Orwellian dragoons of group-think who were intent on silencing free expression and imposing the edicts of "correctness" on naïve, vulnerable students. I recall laughing at such far-fetched assertions for the only university that had been taken over by leftists was the one that existed in the paranoid minds of right-wing extremists who despised dissent.

In addition to pursuing my studies, I served as the coordinator of a graduate student colloquium series which sponsored lectures by renowned scholars. I had just begun to explore some of Peter's independent work as well as his collaborations with Henry Giroux and was inspired by his scholarship and the passion and intensity he brought to his writing. With the encouragement of a faculty member, I suggested to my fellow graduate students that we invite Peter to speak at our campus as part of the aforementioned colloquium series. He was then housed at Miami University in Ohio and, within days of receiving our request, accepted the invitation.

In September 1991, he came to our campus and delivered a rousing address entitled "Critical Pedagogy and the Politics of Political Correctness" that was covered in the local and regional news. After the lecture, over dinner and drinks, I had the opportunity to engage Peter in conversation. He was warm, funny, and self-deprecating. Almost immediately, he asked about my research interests. When I informed him I was working on the very topic that had been the subject of his address, he said he would send me some of the material he had reviewed in preparing his lecture notes. At the time, I thought the intent of his offer was gracious but never expected him to follow up on it. He did. About a week later, a package arrived in my campus mailbox. In it were the materials he had promised and a note inviting me to keep in contact. That was the beginning of a mentorship and friendship that has

grown over the last fifteen years. It was the first day in a life-long curriculum marked by lessons that are still unfolding—lessons in the politics of hope and the possibilities of radical imagination.

Part I: McLaren and the 'Old Bearded Devil'[i]

Of course, it is often difficult to maintain a sense of hope in a world that grows bleaker and more dystopian with each passing day. As I write, the situation in the Middle East has grown even more combustible as Israeli bombs are now raining down on parts of Lebanon while rockets fired by Hizballah are targeting Israel. Meanwhile, the bloodbath in Iraq continues unabated. Tens of thousands of Iraqis have been slaughtered and mutilated. And many, many more have been condemned to slow deaths from malnutrition, poisoned water supplies, and the toxic environment created by the "liberators'" use of weapons of mass destruction—particularly depleted uranium. More than twenty-five hundred soldiers have lost their lives in Bush's imperialist escapade only to have their sacrifice trivialized by the likes of former Fox news personality turned White House Press Secretary Tony Snow. Snow, of course, saw fit to mark the gruesome milestone in June 2006 by referring to the number of casualties as "just a number." Various estimates place the number of U.S. personnel maimed (in Iraq alone) at over seventeen thousand. Many more have been psychologically traumatized, emotionally scarred for life by the atrocities they have both witnessed and perpetrated. And the savagery continues to be legitimated by "stay-the-course" Bush and his media sycophants as an unfortunate but necessary price of "progress" and "freedom."

And let us not forget the killing fields in Afghanistan where the Taliban (who were, of course, aided and abetted by the CIA for years) have once again emerged triumphant. Despite Bush and Blair's [whom Arundhati Roy (2004[a], p. 50) has sarcastically labelled as the "twenty-first century's leading feminists"] back-slapping photo-ops aimed at convincing domestic audiences about their role in "democratizing" Afghanistan and "liberating" women from the grip of fundamentalism and, despite Bush's 2001 proclamations about establishing "order" and rebuilding the country after it was reduced to rubble by "coalition" bombs, today, Afghanistan is in shambles and there "is little prospect for improvement in the foreseeable future." The Taliban have all but "reclaimed southern Afghanistan," reconstruction efforts have been "miniscule" and there has been no "attempt to establish security beyond the capital of Kabul." The country "continues to languish in grinding poverty" and there is "less clean water and electricity than before the war" (Whitney, 2006, p. 1). Not surprisingly, Whitney informs us that the only notable developments have been the "American military bases which dot the landscape like lesions on a leper and the oil pipelines that snake through the barren countryside" (p. 1).

Both Iraq and Afghanistan are illustrative examples of what McLaren & Martin, rightfully call one of the most "dangerous, corrupt, and oppressive" periods in American history—a period in which "imperialism has assumed its most mature and brutal character" (2005, p. 199). Contrary to the "official" proclamations that emanate from the Bush administration's propaganda factory about the magnanimous reasons for war (i.e. protecting the 'homeland' and indeed the 'free world' from terrorism, spreading 'democracy' in the Middle East, liberating populations from tyrannical leaders), these are the days of ruthless empire. As McLaren (2005, p. 1) notes, the "Bush Jr. *junta* took advantage of a tragic terrorist attack" on America and has proceeded to create a "climate of fear"—a "culture of intimidation and hostility" that serves as a "smokescreen for its empire building." While talk of imperialism once elicited shudders on the cocktail circuit inside the Washington beltway, it has been boldly, even proudly, reintroduced into the lexicon of the American government, the mainstream media, and in what apparently passes for intelligent reflection about the role of the United States in the world.

Today, right-wing warmongers and corporate marauders openly talk about the need for a "strong empire to police an unruly world" (Roy, 2004[b], p. 11) and many openly advocate the use of

violence.[ii] But they are not alone for even self-proclaimed "liberals" and what Herman (2002) has called the "cruise missile left" have adopted the notion of America's "good exceptionalism"—that is, the conviction that the United States is a "benevolent power in world affairs," a "force for democracy and 'civilization,'" with "unique rights and responsibilities" and motivated "not by greed or power but by the greater common good" (Arnove, 2006, p. 39).[iii] And Bush, who views "American leadership" on the world stage as a "self-evident moral right" (2006, p. 34) and who seems to think he is on a mission sanctioned by the Almighty, has gleefully assumed his role as Emperor. Given the Bush administration's audacious and brutally aggressive pursuit of global hegemony, it is easy to conclude—as even many critics on the U.S. liberal-left have—that what is necessary is the simple removal of the neo-conservative militarists from office (Mann, 2003, p. 267). That is precisely the sort of conclusion that McLaren's work—even his recent scathing indictments of "the Bush gang"—cautions us against. For McLaren well understands that the "latest wars of aggression in Afghanistan and Iraq are simply an intensification of the United State's distinctly neoliberal agenda, which is to impose old-school American values of capitalist exploitation through a policy of 'peace through strength'" (McLaren & Martin, 2005, p. 192). Indeed, war and free trade are (mistakenly) viewed as "twin solutions to virtually all the world's problems" (Juhasz, 2006, p. 3).

In identifying recent military action as an escalation of U.S. led neoliberalism, McLaren unflinchingly shines the spotlight on what should be the focus of substantive left criticism—the very system of capitalism itself. Undoubtedly, American empire is being militantly pursued at the current historical juncture, however, the quest and growth of empire is neither the particular province of the United States nor a mere consequence of the policies of particular nations. Rather, it is the "systematic result of the entire history and logic of capitalism" (Foster, 2006, p. 13). McLaren's work ups the radical ante by refocusing our gaze on the history and machinations of the capitalist world order in all its ugliness and by being unafraid to use an explicitly Marxist lens to do so. This is especially bold given that Marxian theory has been maligned, for years, by the prevailing centers of intellectual power as "totalizing," "reductionist," and even "repressive." This is particularly true among those who identify with the discursive apparatus of "post-Marxism" that was erected to overcome the presumed inadequacies of Marxism. Post-Marxists (who often go by other names including postmodernists, poststructuralists, postcolonialists, radical multiculturalists, etc.) have tried to entomb Marx's legacy while simultaneously benefiting from it by penning umpteen elegies about its death.

Within the North American academy, in particular, outlandish caricatures of Marx and Marxism abound. It has become quite commonplace to dismiss Marxism as a form of ideological Neanderthalism, an antediluvian memory invoked by those trapped in the mental furniture of a bygone era. Most often this is accomplished by invoking academic buzzwords (i.e. universalizing, totalizing, essentializing, etc.) which have gained such currency and become so pervasive that it is no longer necessary to explain what these terms imply. Some of the post-al critiques are animated by a widespread reluctance to seriously engage Marx's oeuvre and a preference for relying on the kinds of distortions found in introductory sociology textbooks. Others are particularly confounding and paradoxical. For while many post-Marxists rhetorically celebrate difference, particularity, historicity and the like, they do not bring these positions to bear when they critique Marx and Marxism—that is, they do not put into practice, methodologically, that which they champion in theory. Rather they construct Marxism as a unified phenomenon informed by a variety of erroneous and naïve assumptions and reject it *in toto*.

Despite the desperate attempts to devise the definitive requiem for Marxism, McLaren reminds us that post-Marxists and anti-Marxists alike have never quite managed to drive the irrevocably terminal nail into that legacy's coffin. The crypt designed for Marx, while reverential in its grand austerity, has never been quite able to contain his impact on history. As Greider (1998, p. 39) maintains, his ghost still "hovers over the global landscape" for as conditions for the many continue to

deteriorate, as human misery escalates under the rule of globalized capitalism, it is increasingly difficult to ignore Marx. Indeed, when Marx and Engels penned their agitational pamphlet—the *Communist Manifesto*—capitalism was still confined to a few countries. Today, the reign of capital is more absolute than ever and in many parts of the world social conditions are reverting back to "those of the 19th century" (Petras & Veltmeyer, 2001, p. 45). Saad-Filho adds that key passages of the *Manifesto* ring truer today than they did in 1848 as "key features of nineteenth-century capitalism are clearly recognizable, and even more strongly developed, in the early twenty-first century" (2003, p.1).

Ours is a world that is internationally connected but ultimately dominated by the whims of the capitalist class and the agenda of corporate "globalization;" a world where the profit motive reigns supreme and where it subordinates every area of society and every corner of culture; a world where the many are oppressed for the benefit of the few. It is a world where 'free trade' has become nothing more than coerced compliance, where local control over economies has been superseded by the most powerful global interests and a world in which "half of the world's one hundred largest economies are corporations" (Starr, 2000, p. 18). It is a world where 'consumer choice' has trumped the notion of citizenship as the pre-eminent right and where 'freedom' increasingly refers to "the freedom to structure the distribution of wealth and to exploit workers more easily across national boundaries" (McLaren, 2005, p. 29). It is a world where 'democracy' has become nothing more than the "Free World's whore" and "Empire's euphemism for neo-liberal capitalism" (Roy, 2004[a], p. 54, 56). It is a world where naked imperialism has clearly made a comeback as the belligerent U.S. administration does the bidding for the global capitalist class. A world where resources such as oil are determining the future of global relations between nations and affecting the lives of scores of innocent people caught in the crossfire of imperial wars and the crosshairs of austere "structural adjustment programs;" a world where cowboy capitalism enflames an unprincipled frenzy of economic deregulation that only exacerbates the financial impoverishment and insecurity for the vast majority of the world's poor.

We are witnessing not what McLaren refers to as "lemonade stand capitalism on steroids" but rather "the most vicious form of deregulated exploitation of the poor that history has witnessed during the last century" (2006, p. 20). As starry-eyed "Apprentice" contestants covet the fortunes of "the Donald" and lend credence to the myth of the American dream, currently in the 'land of the free' and the 'home of the brave' one in four jobs "pay less than a poverty-level income." Since 2000, the number of Americans living below the poverty line, at any one time, has risen steadily—now 37 million residents in the United States are "officially poor" (Jeffery, 2006, p. 20). The richest 1% of the American population—the "haves" and the "have mores" whom W. Bush has referred to as his "base"—continue to reap the benefits of his generous tax cut package which represents one of the most brazen redistributions of income to the wealthy that the nation has ever seen. Bush's tax cuts, which have been extended until 2010, provided an average of $10 in tax relief to those earning $20,000-$30,000 while those earning $1 million raked in $42,700 in savings (Jeffery, 2006, p. 20).

In virtually every country in the world, the gap between the rich and poor has widened considerably as we continue to witness with "dismaying regularity an obscene concentration and centralization of social, political, and [most importantly] economic power in the hands of a relatively small number of oligopolies" (McLaren & Farahmandpur, 2004, p. 195). The combined wealth of the three richest people in the world exceeds the combined gross domestic products of the forty-eight poorest countries and the combined wealth of the 225 richest people is roughly equal to the annual income of the poorest 47 percent of the world's population (Ibid, p. 194). The "Nike economy" has ushered in the rebirth of satanic mills—child labor, slave-like conditions, young women working for a pittance in the export-processing zones where they are subjected to sly new forms of indentured servitude and where trade unionists and labor organizers are routinely fired, beaten, or simply "disappeared." There are about 100 million abused and malnourished "street kids" in the world's major cities and some estimated two million girls from the ages of five to fifteen have been drawn into the

global sex trade (Cole, 2005, p. 114). Today, as the media boast about the net worth of corporate moguls and celebrate the excesses of the rich and famous, roughly three billion people struggle to sustain themselves on less than U.S. $2 a day. There are 852 million people across the world who suffer from chronic or acute hunger.[iv] Everyday, more than 16,000 children perish from hunger-related diseases—one child every five seconds. This despite the fact that a mere fraction of what the United States currently spends on the military could end world hunger as we know it (Galeano, 2003, p. 19).

These are the concrete realities that exist in our world—tales of desperation, destitution and despair. Why are so few telling their stories? Where is the outrage? Could it be that many self-proclaimed "left" academics serve as diversionists rather than political interventionists? Are they so enamored with their "discourse radicalism," so preoccupied with deconstructing texts that they have failed to confront the broader context of globalized capitalism? On this matter, it is worth quoting McLaren in his own words and at length:

> As the poor grow in numbers, as the homeless flood the streets of our cities, they are seen more and more as disrupting the 'natural order' of capitalism. And facing this unravelling historical matrix we have, in the Western academy . . . the avant-garde celebration of cultural hybridity; the incommensurability of discourses; pastiche, indeterminancy, and contingency . . . textual burlesque . . . parody . . . paraded as dissent . . . where one can avoid putting political commitment to the test. The academy is a place where Marxism is dismissed as innocent of complexity and where Marxist educators are increasingly outflanked by fashionable, motley minded apostates in svelte black suede jackets, black chinos, and black '50s eye-glass frames with yellow-tint lenses, for whom the metropole has become a riotous mixture of postmodern mestiza narratives and where hubris shadows those who remain even remotely loyal to causal thinking. For these voguish hellions of the seminar room, postmodernism is the toxic intensity of bohemian nights, where the proscribed, the immiserated, and the wretched of the earth simply get in the way of their fun (2000, xxiv-xxv).

In this remarkably provocative statement, McLaren clearly throws down the gauntlet in challenging those who have turned the "text" into the marionette theatre of the political. For many self-proclaimed "cultural radicals" textual analysis has been raised in their imaginations "to the same system-shaking level as revolutionary action." Safely sequestered in their seminar rooms "but still playing at resistance," "their 'discourse radicalism' has led them into a dead end dalliance that fetishizes language" (Harvey, 1998, p. 29). Here, the revolution is "largely a textual one," one "reduced to waging war against the literary canon and other forms of discursive authority" while the "concrete world of labouring subjects" is left "largely on its own" (McLaren, 2007, p. 13). In such a context, McLaren's work reminds us of the living, suffering, bleeding, and breathing subjects of history, the poor and the dispossessed written out of history. And he reminds us of the political implications of "theory" which refuses to confront capitalism, which strips knowledge of its emancipatory possibilities, and which relegates the link between theory and practice to the domain of inconsequentiality.

In doing so, McLaren echoes the concerns of another Marxist humanist—E. P. Thompson—who, writing almost three decades ago, was equally repulsed by "unmeasured" assaults on Marx and historical materialism. Thompson, of course, penned his polemical book, *The Poverty of Theory*, largely in response to what he perceived to be a fundamental distortion of Marx by Althusser and his academic disciples. But Thompson (1978, p. 4) was also perturbed by those intellectuals who had been caught in the "web of scholastic argument" and he had little patience for would-be radicals who regularly engaged in harmless "revolutionary psycho-dramas" while at the same time "pursuing a reputable and conventional intellectual career" (p. 251). Consider the following raucous passages:

Althusserian 'Marxism' is an intellectual freak—but it will not for that reason go away. Historians should know that freaks, if tolerated—and even flattered and fed—can show astonishing influence and longevity . . . This particular freak . . . has now lodged itself firmly in a particular social *couche*, the bourgeois *lumpen-intelligentsia*: aspirant intellectuals, whose amateurish intellectual preparation disarms them before manifest absurdities and elementary philosophical blunders . . . while many of them would *like* to be 'revolutionaries', they are themselves the products of a particular 'conjuncture' which has broken the circuits between intellectuality and practical experience . . . and hence they are able to perform *imaginary* revolutionary psycho-dramas (in which each outbids the other in adopting ferocious verbal postures) while in fact falling back upon a very old tradition of bourgeois elitism for which Althusserian theory is exactly tailored. Whereas their forebears were political interventionists, they tend more often to be diversionists (enclosed and imprisoned within their own drama) . . . Their practical importance remains, however considerable, in disorganising the constructive intellectual discourse of the Left, and in reproducing continually the elitist division between theory and practice (Thompson, 1978, pp. 3-4).

And,

today's Western Leftist intelligentsia is distinguished by its lack of political experience and judgement. But this is not offered in any sense as an accusation of sin. It is a necessary consequence of the determinations of our time. We cannot remedy it by wishing it was otherwise. But it provides, nevertheless, the necessary ground within which the ideological deformations of our time are nurtured. Isolated within intellectual enclaves, the drama of 'theoretical practice' may become a *substitute* for more difficult practical engagements. Moreover, this drama can assume increasingly theatrical forms, a matter of grimaces and attitudinising, a game of 'chicken', in which each theorist strives to be 'more revolutionary than thou.' Since no political *relations* are involved, and no steady, enduring struggle to communicate with and learn from a public which judges, cautiously, by actions rather than professions, the presses may reek with ideological terror and blood (Thompson, 1978, p. 249).

Thompson's caustic condemnation of Althusserianism, written more than twenty-five years ago, initiated one of the most impassioned and bitter debates (not to mention some of the best intellectual theatre) in the British Marxist tradition. And while it is certainly the case that Thompson's invective was directed mainly at Althusser and his anti-humanist intellections, *The Poverty of Theory* was, in many ways a clarion call to reassess the status of the Left at the time. It was also a plea for a humanistic Marxism that was explicitly internationalist in its orientation (Palmer, 1981). If he were alive, what would Thompson say today if he surveyed what currently constitutes the "leftist" intelligentsia dominated as it is by theories which have little, if any connection, to the concrete material realities in which we live? A definitive answer, of course, cannot be provided for the dead cannot speak for themselves. Yet their ghostly memories can be given a degree of materiality and invoked to evaluate the present.[v]

In my estimation, at some level, McLaren's work is haunted by the ghost of Thompson. This, I would argue, is as it should be for many of Thompson's scathing critiques are relevant today albeit in a different form. The set of constitutive principles that have come to define the "leftist" intellectual terrain are not, in the most general sense, that different from those which were the targets of Thompson's wrath. Human agency is a chimera for today's "subject"—while interpellated by ideology in Althusser's narrative, contemporary post-al theory posits the subject as constructed in discourse while those of communitarian persuasion posit a rigid pre-modern conceptualization. Consequently, "human subjects rarely speak: instead, they are presumably 'already spoken' or culturally inscribed by

historically sedimented discourses and linguistic traditions" (McLaren, 1994, p. 195). In this regard, both post-al intellectuals and self-avowed communitarians seem to have little concern for the real, living, historical agents that so preoccupied Thompson and that continue to preoccupy McLaren.

Another common denominator that links Thompson's critiques to contemporary theoretical trajectories is the theme of anti-humanism. While Thompson referred to Althusserian-inspired anti-humanism as an intellectual freak, he understood that even freaks could survive among the academic bourgeoisie. Thompson's observations were undoubtedly prescient—today anti-humanism has become one of the dominating motifs in current social theory that advertises itself as "radical" and/or "progressive." It doesn't matter that humanism is not, nor has it ever been, a monolithic discourse and that the revolutionary humanism of Marx differs significantly from that of liberal humanism. Humanism is just another universalizing, totalizing narrative that is best buried in the graveyard of modernist history.

Thompson might ask: what about ethical commitments informed by revolutionary Marxist humanism. Nothing more than poppycock would be the likely reply from today's pseudo-radicals. There are no universal standards from which to judge anything. The name of the game is indeterminability and undecidability; relativism and anti-foundationalism are all the rage. Historical materialism? The importance of interrogating capitalism? Historical materialism is too dogmatic they say—its pretension to the status of a "totalizing" master narrative is a gesture of domination and coercion and concomitantly a subordination of multiplicity and difference. Furthermore the concept of class so central to historical materialism is antiquated, intellectually passé, reductionist, and horror of all horrors, too closely aligned with Marx whose figurehead has, for the most part, been burned in effigy at the altar of Nietzsche or, in some cases, Aristotle. What about the link between theory and practice, of intellectual discourse that takes as its starting point the politically pressing issues of the day; a link so forcefully defended by Thompson? Nonsense! According to contemporary commandoes of the cultural left "it is a mistake to conflate academic and political work." What's more, "to constrain thought to what has immediate political application, is to constrain our imaginations" (Brown, cited in Wray, 1998).

The excesses of Althusserianism once prompted Thompson to remark that should Althusser's formulations mark the "logical terminus of Marx's thought" he "could never be a Marxist" (1978, p. 254). If the logical terminus of the progressive "left" consisted of nothing more than the fetishization of language, what Harvey (1998) calls "discourse radicalism," the production of theory (with a capital T) as an end in and of itself, the *tout court* dismissal of Marxism and historical materialism, the abdication of ethical responsibility, and above all the surrender of revolutionary political praxis, McLaren would have certainly ceased in identifying with the "left." But he hasn't for he does not think that what passes for "radicalism" in the academy today is the logical terminus of progressive leftist thought. If he did, the words, the carefully crafted phrases, the voluminous arguments which he has put forth over the years would have never materialized. He would have exorcized the ghost of Thompson which—albeit tacitly—so profoundly haunts him.

Indeed, McLaren has never explicitly written about Thompson and there are undoubtedly aspects of his work with which McLaren would likely disagree. But, what has prompted me to invoke Thompson's memory in my reflections on Peter's work is the spirit which inspired Thompson to write his polemical text. McLaren's thought—particularly his more recent Marxist-inflected writings—resound with an apodictic familiarity. They remind us that many of the concerns voiced by Thompson more than a quarter-century ago—particularly the political pusillanimity of theoreticist, idealistic, trajectories; the disjuncture between theory and practice; the offensive against historical materialism and; the negation of human agency—still have something to teach us.[vi] Moreover, I agree with Lears (2006) who laments the contemporary neglect of Thompson by the intellectual avant-garde, whose

verbal and discursive callisthenics impress other academics but bear little or no relation to the lived experiences and struggles of most of labouring humanity.

We find ourselves ensconced in the brutality of imperial wars and the injustices unleashed by globalized capital, squinting nervously toward the horizon for a glimpse at what the future may hold in store. In this context, McLaren has refused to concede that the insights of thinkers working within the broad parameters of the Marxist tradition have been eclipsed by today's fashionable apostasy of transformative political agendas and socialist visions (cf. McLaren, 2006, p.viii). He recognizes that amidst the cracks and fissures of capitalist hegemony, their voices can be faintly heard and that their ghosts provide a disturbing reminder that something must be done.

Marxist Humanism and Revolutionary Critical Pedagogy

. . . the Left continues to be braver in its philosophy than in its politics . . . anti-humanism may look well on one's office door while the university enjoys civil liberties and good salaries in exchange for its responsible academic irresponsibility. But where the political consequences of anti-humanism are practiced by soulless bureaucracies and state machineries of confinement, censorship, and torture—such a notice would merely mark one's own disappearance (O'Neill, 1995, p.17)

Like Thompson, Peter is "neither neutral nor amorphous" (Casali & Freire, 2005, p. 22). Like Thompson, McLaren is not a "thinker providing exploitation and manipulation services for the bourgeoisie" and, like Thompson, he "knows how to choose courageously the side he wishes to be on: the side of life, close to those who are oppressed . . . and deprived of justice" (Ibid). Like Thompson, like Freire, like Guevara, a humanist impulse pulsates through the heart of McLaren's work. That humanist impulse, not surprisingly, has been the object of scorn and derision among 'post-al' anti-humanists.

To admit to humanist allegiances or to invoke humanist rhetoric is tantamount to revealing oneself as insufficiently "radical" according to the "hellions" of the seminar room. In many contemporary narratives, humanism has come to stand for the "kingdom of darkness" and is used by its critics to identify everything that is awry in the modern world (Bernstein, 1992). It is castigated as an ideological smokescreen for the barbarous mystifications of modern society and the marginalization and exclusion of masses of human beings in whose name it pretends to speak. There has been the acknowledgement (though this aspect of the critique of humanism was initiated by the humanist Karl Marx and continued within the tradition of socialist thought) of the partial, limiting, and excluding quality of the supposedly universal "we" which characterized liberal humanist discourse (Young, 1990).

Humanism has been criticized as both an epistemological and an ethico-political position. As an epistemological position, humanism has been attacked for its view of human nature as a static, eternal quality; for its essentialism and universalism, and its 'metaphysical' postulates. It has also been castigated for its complicity in the history of European colonialism (Said, 1978). As an ethical and political narrative, the ideal of humanism, which proclaims an emancipatory message, is said to be nothing more than an ideological vessel through which certain values, norms, and experiences are constructed as universal and imposed upon individuals with "normative" force. In short, the discourse of humanism is, according to its critics, theoretically moribund and politically bankrupt. The aforementioned dimensions of anti-humanist critique are undoubtedly intertwined but some of the more ardent anti-humanist tracts are both intellectually disingenuous and politically suspect for a variety of reasons, not least of which is the tendency to create a caricature of humanism and treat it as though it exists, or existed, as a monolithic discourse. This homogenizing representation of modern humanism

as simply a repressive, totalitarian construct suggests a one-dimensional interpretation for as Malik (1997, p. 12) notes, humanism has expressed itself "in a variety of political forms, from liberalism to Marxism."

McLaren is primarily concerned with rescuing critical pedagogical work from the clutches of "bourgeois humanism that has frequently made it functionally advantageous to existing social relations, the employer class, and the international division of labor" (McLaren, 2000, p. xxvi). His formulations clearly attempt to enliven the liberating potential of Marxist humanism by bridging the gap between the individual and the collective through a revived theory of praxis or what McLaren (2005, 2007) calls "revolutionary critical pedagogy." Revolutionary critical pedagogy seeks to generate new ways of thinking about the "possibilities for human agency" as "humans are conditioned by structures and social relations just as they create and transform those structures and relations" (McLaren, 2005, p. 9). But McLaren is careful in noting the constraining "effects of capital as a social relation" on such agency (Ibid). Here, not surprisingly, he echoes Marx.

Marx, of course, was one of the first "modern" thinkers to attack the conceptualization of the subject within Enlightenment-inspired bourgeois humanism. In the *Grundrisse* he argued that abstract formulations of the "subject" were highly problematic for they neglected the specific, malleable determinants of the *self*.[vii] Hence, Marx regarded the subject of liberal humanism as nothing more than an "illusion" derived from the "Robinsades" of eighteenth century prophets" (Marx, 1973, p.83). Furthermore, the seeming freedom and autonomy of the liberal subject was something which Marx emphatically repudiated for one was always circumscribed by the material and historical conditions or "circumstances" (as Marx deemed them in *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*) over which the individual had little control. However, it should be noted that the *potential* to transform oppressive circumstances by embodied agents located in history was a recurring theme in Marx.

The agenic human self that animates revolutionary critical pedagogy is a corporeal, living, real, sensuous being that is always understood in relation to what Marx called the "ensemble of social relations" that condition each individual and change historically (Marx, 1978, p. 115). Contrary to what many have claimed, Marxist humanism rejects the essentialism of liberal formulations. And Marx himself rejected Hegelian notions of transhistorical human nature. When Marx discussed "human essence," he did not imply a form of ahistorical and unchanging human nature, but rather basic human characteristics that distinguish human beings from animals and that evolve and change historically (Marx, 1978, p. 150). Marx insisted that "the human essence is no abstraction inherent in each single individual" (1978, p. 145). Marx's revolutionary humanism was grounded in an understanding of the self as a historically contingent entity which could not be divorced from the lived, material, and hence, concrete manifestations of embodied selfhood.

Radical anti-humanism tends to deny any genuinely human qualities and/or features. Marx (1978, p. 149) noted in the *German Ideology*, that "the first premise of all human history" is that "men *{sic}* must be in a position to live" in order to make history. But life involves before everything else certain basic necessities—food, a habitation, clothing, and many other things (Marx, 1978, p. 156)— these needs are universal features of the human condition which seem to be undermined within anti-humanist narratives. Moreover, in a hurry to escape the rut of "essentialism," far too many post-al theorists conflate "human nature" which is an historical problematic with "human attributes" that include a variety of qualities such as affective responses, capacities for abstract thought, the capacities to experience joy, pain, etc, and the capacity for self-reflection. As Eagleton notes the

> capacity for critical self-reflection belongs to the way the human animal belongs to the
> world—that this is not some phantasmal alternative to our material embeddedness but

constitutive of the way that humans, as opposed to beavers or beehive hairdos, are actually inserted in their environs (1996, p. 36).

Acknowledging the existence of such human attributes *does not* constitute a totalizing form of essentialism. The distinctive character of this affective dimension and the capacity for self-reflection is central in thinking about the issue of agency for while it is necessary to interrogate notions of an unchanging and timeless 'human nature' as such, it is nonetheless imperative to acknowledge that there are 'human attributes' that must necessarily factor into discussions of political agency. In other words, political agency begins to emerge when distress that may be either personal or felt through emphatic recognition prompts people to come together, share experiences, and perhaps (but not necessarily) mobilize. As McLaren has repeatedly argued, post-al anti-humanism pulls the proverbial rug out from under discussions of human liberation by undermining the very notion of human agency and capacities of self-reflection, self-determination and self-making.[viii] Indeed, any form of theory which denies the efficacy of human actors upon history and which treats them as mere supports for relations created quite independently of their actions is literally "forced to look outside of humanity for the agency of salvation" (Malik, 1997, p. 122). What is objectionable about such formulations is not the assertion of the structured nature of experience, but the conceptualization of individuals as no more than social or discursive effects, as little more than entities which float aimlessly in a sea of ever-proliferating signifiers. After all,

> if we play no part in the formation of the structures that dominate us, what sense is there in trying to alter them? If, moreover, the experience of individual men and women is viewed as inessential to their existence, then the category of the 'concrete individual' ceases to have any reference to *human* beings . . . one can no longer speak of individuals as 'dominated' by social structures or in need of 'liberation' from them, since they are not thought of as beings with 'interests' to be affected (Soper, 1986, p. 106).

With respect to this issue, McLaren has attempted to reveal a debilitating lacuna in many anti-humanist formulations—the simple dismissal of experience as a remnant of humanism.[ix] McLaren's work seeks to retain the centrality of experience as a referential standpoint from which peripheralized and historically marginalized peoples deconstruct the mystifications of the dominant social order. However, he has been careful to avoid the kind of uncritical fetishization of 'experience' that tends to assume that experience somehow guarantees the authenticity of knowledge and which often treats experience as self-explanatory, transparent, and solely individual. Rather, his work advances a framework that seeks to make connections between seemingly isolated situations and/or particular experiences by exploring how they are constituted in, and circumscribed by, broader historical and social circumstances (McLaren, 2000, p. 200). As we have (Scatamburlo-D'Annibale & McLaren, 2004, p. 189) recently argued, "experiential understandings, in and of themselves, are suspect because, dialectically, they constitute a unity of opposites—they are at once unique, specific, and personal, but also thoroughly partial, social, and the products of historical forces about which individuals may know little or nothing (Gimenez, 2001)." In this sense a rich description of immediate experience in terms of consciousness of a particular form of oppression can be an appropriate and indispensable point of departure. However, such an understanding can be limiting unless it transcends the immediate point of oppression, confronts the social system in which it is rooted, and expands into a complex and multifaceted analysis (of forms of social mediation) that is capable of mapping out the general organization of social relations.

Revolutionary critical pedagogy recognizes that the embodied self (as opposed to abstract philosophical concepts like the "subject") is a practical knowledgeable actor in the world; it recognizes that "the actions of human beings are what shapes history" and not "abstract categories" (McLaren, 2006, p. 19). As such, it does not relegate human agency and the category of experience to the

netherworld of discourse or textuality. However, its materialist situating of human agency "teaches us that people make history within, against, and through systems of mediation already saturated by a nexus of social relations, by a force-field of conflicting values and accents, by prior conventions and practical activities that constrain the possible (McLaren, 2006, p. 266). This conceptualization clearly poses a challenge to the voluntaristic, autonomous subject of bourgeois liberal humanism and it draws our attention to the forces of capital for in the present-day world the "nexus of social relations" are historically specific to capitalism. But more than this, it reminds us that no emancipatory narrative is possible without some form of humanistic perspective (Malik, 1997, p. 122).

Radical Universalism

All universalisms are dirty. And it is only dirty universalism that will help us against the powers and agents of still dirtier ones (Robbins, cited in McLaren, 2005, p. 42)

Intrinsically related to the critique of humanism is what Ahmad (1998) has called the "problem of universality." And, Heller and Feher (1991, p. 5) have astutely noted that philosophical/theoretical anti-humanism "*ipso facto* implies the total rejection of (political) universalism"—that is, as a referent which seems necessary to a revolutionary theoretical and political project. Such a statement does not imply that we ignore the atrocities which have been committed in the name of universalism, nor that we refrain from interrogating the false universalism of liberal humanism. Rather, it suggests that the complete and utter denunciation of universalism is, in many respects, politically debilitating and can easily lead willy-nilly down the path of ethical relativism. This is a message which is effectively communicated by McLaren (2000; 2005) who maintains that one of the most important and enduring insights of Marxist humanism is the acknowledgement of the continuing relevance of a form of radical universalism.

Contemporary critiques of universalism derive from a variety of quarters and vary in their form and intent. But for the most part, for those working within a post-al paradigm, universalism is upbraided for its insensitivity to difference; indeed, difference has been the central category deployed in narratives which have sought to reveal the oppressive and exclusionary underbelly of Enlightenment humanism. Derrida (1981), Foucault (1973), Lyotard (1984, 1988) as well as a host of postmodernists, poststructuralists, and postcolonialists who incorporate the work of such thinkers have all castigated universalism for its hostility to "otherness" and for its Eurocentric attempts to impose "Euro-American ideas of rationality . . . on other peoples" (Malik, 1997, p. 112). Various theoretical trajectories have, in fact, exposed the false claim of universality inherent in the European particular—a point which McLaren (2006, p. 48) readily acknowledges and which he accepts as an important criticism. Yet, there is also a paradox at the heart of several post-al attempts to reveal the European particular insofar as the Western, "First World," postmodern intelligentsia has mistaken "its own very local difficulties for a universal human condition in exactly the manner of the universalist ideologies it denounces" (Eagleton, 1997:25). The post-al preoccupation with the "crisis of humanism" also tends to forget that it is not everyone's crisis (not even in the West). Hence their projection of it as somewhat universal, is ironically quite universalist, not to mention Eurocentric, for it is hard to deny that several of these theoretical pronouncements have taken place with "backs turned to the Third World" (Nederveen Pieterse, 1990, p. 51) and that they have failed to acknowledge that many third world struggles of the post-war era all drew upon the "emancipatory logic of universalism" and that it remains crucial in many parts of the world still struggling for emancipation (Ahmad, 1997; Kang, 1992).

Furthermore, when many critics of humanism and universalism point out the prejudiced and exclusionary character of notions such as "common humanity," they adopt an immanently critical posture—in other words, they use the discourse of universalism to critique the exclusionary nature of the humanist enterprise. In their efforts to reveal and contest old shibboleths which encrust the main

formulations of the ideals of modern humanism—including Marxist humanism—much of post-al theory reveals its own silence about the radical potentiality of humanist value ideals and the concept of universalism for as Ahmad states, universalism itself can be "put to coercive purposes as well as to revolutionary ones, depending on the politics of the women and men who take hold of it" (1998, p. 16).

While the critique of false universalism is vital and, indeed, warranted, McLaren (2000, p. 197) implores us to acknowledge the necessity of preserving the validity of a "nonabstract and nonhomogeneous" form of universalism as a *political* referent. He points to the importance of distinguishing between an abstract universalism that dissolves important differences among diverse phenomena and a concrete universalism that carefully draws such distinctions while upholding conditions that are binding for all. He writes:

> Clearly the limitations of the Enlightenment project of universalism need to be problematized . . . The restricted and often dangerously destructive Western bourgeois character of Enlightenment universalism is a worthy and necessary object of critique, but to attack the idea of universalism itself is not only foolish but also politically dangerous . . . the politics of postmodern pluralism— that is, providing voice to those marginalized social groups who have been denied political participation—[is] only a partial solution that itself needs to become an object of critique. The belief that an increased diversity of marginalized voices will automatically ensure that marginalized social groups will gain social, political, and economic demands and interests is politically naïve . . . the struggle for diversity must be accompanied by a transnational revolutionary socialist politics (McLaren, 2005, p. 42-43).

McLaren illustrates how, in conflating universalism with uniformity, far too many critics have failed to recognize that universals can be both various and locally diverse, and hence they have been unable to grasp that some human values might be universally worth living and dying for, regardless of whether some people might pervert those precarious ideals and turn them into weapons. McLaren's dedication to a radical form of universalism echoes the sentiments of Aijaz Ahmad who writes:

> Contrary to prevailing fashions, I am a shameless advocate of the idea of universality. This is so despite the fact that colonialism has been intrinsic to the kind of universality that we have had so far and that the only universal civilization that exists today is the capitalist civilization. I think that human beings are perfectly capable of waking up to the barbarities of this civilization and making a far better universality—for which my word continues to be "socialism," but you are welcome to use some other word so long as you mean the same thing. As an idea, universality cannot be given up . . . No struggle against . . . any kind of collective oppression is possible without some conception of universality (Ahmad, 1997, p. 57).

The notion of a concrete, radical universalism or socialism, as Ahmad calls it, is crucial within revolutionary critical pedagogy for it reminds us that "universals are not static; they are rooted (routed) in movement. They are nomadically grounded in living, breathing subjects of history who toil and who labor under conditions not of their own making" (McLaren, 2005, p. 42). Moreover, it challenges us to think about how the incurably iniquitous organization of capitalism is systematically incompatible with universality in any meaningful sense of the term—in short, "there can be no universality in the social world without substantive equality," particularly economic equality (Meszaros, 2001, p. 11).

McLaren (2006, p. 48) contends that a more useful alternative to "dismissing universalisms as masked particularisms" is to side with Eagleton who makes the following observations and is worth quoting at considerable length:

It is difficult for us to recapture the imaginative excitement which must have burst upon the world with the concept of universality. What could have sounded more scandalous to a profoundly particularist culture, one in which what you were was bound up with your region, function, social rank, than the extraordinary notion that everyone was entitled to individual respect quite independently of these things? This outlandish new doctrine was of course launched into philosophical orbit from a highly specific position, that of a wing of the European bourgeoisie, but so is every doctrine, universal or otherwise . . . The exotic new thesis was abroad that you were entitled to freedom, autonomy, justice, happiness, political equality and the rest not because you were the son of a minor Prussian count but simply on account of your humanity . . . It was not at all true in practice that everyone—women, for example, or non-Europeans or the lower peasantry—was accorded equal respect. But everyone's freedom mattered in theory, and 'in theory' is a sizeable improvement on its not mattering even as that . . . it was by virtue of our shared humanity that we had ethical and political claims upon one another, not for any more parochial, paternalist or sheerly cultural reason. These matters were too important to be left to the tender mercies of custom or tradition, to the whim of your masters or the tacit codes of your community . . . Socialists, or at least Marxists, are often hotly upbraided with being universalists. But . . . one is a socialist, among other reasons, precisely because universality *doesn't* exist at present in any positive, as opposed to merely descriptive or ideological, sense. Not everyone, as yet, enjoys freedom, happiness and justice. Part of what prevents this from coming about is precisely the false universalism which holds that it can be achieved by extending the values and liberties of a particular sector of humankind, roughly speaking Western man, to the entire globe . . . Socialism is a critique of this false universalism, not in the name of cultural particularism . . . but in the name of right of everyone to negotiate their own differences in terms of everyone else's (Eagleton, 1996, p. 113, 118).

Here Eagleton, like McLaren attempts to rescue the concept of universalism from the post-al abyss and to place it in the service of a reinvigorated socialist politics against capitalism. This does not imply a substitution of moralism or mere ethical protest for class struggle—the two need not be mutually exclusive for as McLaren & Farahmandpur assert, we cannot evade "the moral issues surrounding neoliberalism's scandously unbalanced assault on and treatment of the world's poor and aggrieved communities" (2004, p. 212). It does, however, accept that the left, "now more than ever, has need of strong ethical . . . foundations" (Eagleton, 1996, p. 134-135). As McLaren further argues (2006, p. 49) capitalism is not "justifiable on ethical or political grounds" and what is imperative is a relentless challenge to the most universal grand narrative of them all—global corporate capitalism.

PART II: Contesting the Nattering Nabobs of Neoliberalism, or Socialism Without Apologies

The globe spins, but as they cross the campus to the next committee they don't notice any movement. The conventions of their ideologies hem them in but they have lived inside there so long that they don't know it. The world of politics chunters on from one unprecedented danger to the next, but the salary still gets paid in to the Bank, and promotion (if one keeps one's nose clean) may be round the corner (Thompson, 1979, p. 70).

 . . . none of the New Social Movements . . . can confront capitalism on its own terms . . . they have all foundered on the barrier reef of class . . . In fact, many of those swept up in the politics of identity have made their peace with capital and have prospered accordingly . . . these masters of theory-in-and-for-itself engage in the hollow puffery of introspection, creating occupationally safe crusades, and demanding bad faith reforms that deftly side-step the enduring conundrums of class struggle . . . A decade ago they contested socialism's privileging of the producing classes and promoted their own alternative theory of liberatory politics. Now they are reduced to the

role of supplicants in the most degraded form of pluralist politics imaginable . . . the class war rages unabated as liberals and radicals alike seem either unwilling or unable to focus on the unprecedented economic carnage occurring around the globe . . . What is needed at this juncture is a cadre of engaged intellectuals who can speak the . . . voice of . . . socialism (Harvey, 1998, pp. 29-31).

The larger goal that revolutionary critical pedagogy stipulates for radical educationalists involves direct participation with the oppressed in the discovery and charting of a socialist reconstruction and alternative to capitalism (McLaren, 2006, p. 126).

Over forty years ago, the renegade sociologist C. Wright Mills (1959) complained about the retreat of the intellectual and the failure of scholars to ask the "big" questions. Of course, Mills was then lamenting the methodological inhibition and fact fetishism of positivist social science which provided insular intellectuals with "busy work" by counting more and more about less and less. Twenty years later, Thompson (1979) in his tribute to Mills (cited above) bemoaned the loss of political nerve among so-called radical academics and objected to their strident anti-Marxism (Palmer, 1981, p. 2). And almost two decades after that Harvey indicted much of what falls under the rubric of post-al theory and identity politics as superficial and esoteric; little more than academic exercises of nominalism and excessive discursivism.

In varying ways and on many different levels, McLaren's scholarship strives to address the concerns articulated by Mills, Thompson, and Harvey. Even a passing engagement with McLaren's writings demonstrates that he has been undaunted in pointing out that equal amounts of "busy work" are carried out by many present-day "radicals" in the form of a flighty theoreticism which bears little connection to the realities of the existing world under the brutish and inhumane rule of globalized capital. The voguish postmodern brigands no longer ask nor explore the "big" questions because they've painted themselves into a corner of particularisms, fetishized concepts of difference, tropicity, and rhetoricity of discourse.[x] More starkly, they have also sought to expunge questions of class, the interrogation of capitalism, and any memory of Marx and socialism from the theoretical and political canvas.

Given such a context, it may appear anachronistic, even naïve, to speak of the importance of Marxism and the promise of socialism. Yet, the trajectory of McLaren's work—particularly in the last 8-10 years—has unabashedly sought to resuscitate Marx's legacy within educational circles in light of the terror unfurled by the forces of free market fundamentalism and imperialist wars. Against the chorus refrain of TINA chimed by liberals and conservatives alike and buttressed by the symphony of post-Marxist voices recommending that we give socialism a decent burial and move on, McLaren has marched along the path of *most* resistance, ducking the slings and arrows directed his way by right-wing rodomonts and rabid anti-Marxists. He has done so because he stubbornly believes, as do I, that the chants of TINA must be challenged for they offer as a fait accompli something about which progressives should remain defiant—namely the triumph of capitalism and its political bedfellow, neoliberalism, which have worked together to naturalize suffering, undermine collective struggle, and obliterate hope. Some time ago, Amin (1998, p. 151) urged committed progressive constituencies to combat the TINA syndrome as "absurd and criminal" and he put that challenge unambiguously: humanity may let itself be led by capitalism's logic to a fate of collective suicide or it may pave the way for an alternative humanist project of global socialism. Eight years later, the choice is ever more urgent as Amin's comments have taken on a new and chilling significance as we survey the global social, political and economic landscape.

Three Cheers for the American Imperium?

Especially since September 11, 2001, the United States has been acting more and more like a nation-state pushed to the limits of imperial expansion, where permanent war has become the preferred modus operandi. Three days after the tragic attacks of 9/11, the *New York Times* proclaimed that the Bush administration "gave the nations of the world a choice"—"stand with us against terrorism . . . or face the certain prospect of death." Such a doctrine—"the right of the mighty to decide who shall live and who shall die" has been, as McNally (2002, p. 148) notes, "a cornerstone of imperialism throughout history." Mahajan (2003, p. 181) has suggested that it is already passé to call the Bush administration's foreign policy a new form of imperialism—a statement echoed by Roy (2004[b], p. 11) who conceded that the "New Imperialism"—while a remodelled, streamlined version of what once was—is "already upon us." Of course, the history of American imperialism is a long and inglorious one but for the first time in history,

> a single empire with an arsenal of weapons that could obliterate the world in an afternoon has complete, unipolar, economic and military hegemony. It uses different weapons to break open different markets. There isn't a country on God's earth that is not caught in the cross-hairs of the American cruise missile and the IMF checkbook . . . Poor countries that are geopolitically of strategic value to Empire, or have a 'market' of any size, or infrastructure that can be privatized, or, God forbid, natural resources of value—oil, gold, diamonds, cobalt, coal—must do as they're told or become military targets (Roy, 2004[b], p. 11).

The message is clear—surrender to the might of the military-industrial-corporate machine or war, by any means necessary, will be waged. This drive towards global empire or what some neoconservatives have called "the American hegemon" may not constitute a classic imperial mission for control over another territory. It may not be about establishing a set of colonies around the globe. But, it does reflect the use and projection of political and military power on behalf of a radical, pro-corporate, anti-government, free market fundamentalism that mainly benefits the global economic activities of the capitalist elite and multinational corporations—all the while cloaked in the rhetorical garb of "democracy." This posturing, of course, is not exclusive to Bush's bellicose band of PNAC thugs or to far-right crackpots.[xi] Consider the hubristic musings penned by the relatively sane (and so-called liberal) journalist Thomas Friedman who, in 1999, wrote the following:

> We Americans are the apostles of the Fast World, the prophets of the free market and the high priests of high tech. We want "enlargement" of both our values and our Pizza Huts. We want the world to follow our lead and become democratic and capitalistic, with a Web site in every pot, a Pepsi on every lip . . . (p. 4)

But of course,

> The hidden hand of the market will never work without a hidden fist—McDonald's cannot flourish without McDonnell Douglas, the builder of the F-15. And the hidden fist that keeps the world safe for Silicon Valley's technologies is called the United States Army, Air Force, Navy and Marine Corps . . . Without America on duty, there will be no America Online (p. 13, 15).

Friedman's manifesto which starkly spelled out, in bone-chilling explicitness, the program for a new imperialism was the featured article in a March 1999 edition of the *New York Times Magazine* whose cover displayed a colossal clenched fist festooned in the stars and stripes motif of the US flag above the words "What the World Needs Now: For globalization to work, America can't be afraid to act like the almighty superpower it is." Of course, the phrase "what the world needs now" was a play on a tune famously belted out by chanteuse turned psychic network spokeswoman Dionne

Warwick. The lyrics of that classic song suggested that what the world needed was "love, sweet love." There was no mention of Pepsi or Pizza Huts or the use of military force to buttress the profit margins of American multinational corporations. Nonetheless, that it is what it came down to. And there is no longer any pretence about the fist being hidden—today it is out in plain view pummelling the hopes of many into the dirt.

As previously noted, American imperialism has a long and tortuous history but it has become even more naked in the last decade or so, especially since the fall of the Soviet Union which, in effect, dissolved any formidable obstacles to the universalization of capitalism. Since the early 1990s, a more cruel form of capitalism pushed aggressively by the United States has evinced itself on the world stage to the detriment of workers everywhere and especially those living in countries occupying the lower rungs of the global hierarchy. Indeed, from the perspective offered by a historical-materialist critique of capitalism, "the direction that would be taken by U.S. imperialism following the fall of the Soviet Union was never in doubt" (Foster, 2006, p. 19). Hence, the prescription for more rigid forms of neoliberal economic policy—backed by American military might if necessary—dosed out by Friedman, who is typically in the know when it comes to the backroom machinations of the U.S. ruling class and the national security establishment, wasn't all that surprising. And yet, the audacity with which the prescription is now being promoted—particularly after "9/11"—is profoundly disturbing and alarming (McLaren, 2005).

Just four years after the aforementioned "What the World Needs Now" cover, the *New York Times Magazine* (presumably a bastion of liberalism according to many on right-wing of the American political spectrum) ran another issue with a similar theme. On January 5, 2003, the phrase "The American Empire (Get Used To It)" was emblazoned on a glaring red, white and blue cover. This time, the featured article was authored by Michael Ignatieff, who essentially urged Americans to face up to their country's imperial role in the brave new post-9/11 world and to lovingly embrace the "burden" of empire. The 21st century American imperium is not, he thundered, "like empires of times past," rather it is a "new invention in the annals of political science," a "global hegemony whose grace notes are free markets, human rights and democracy, enforced by the most awesome military power the world has ever known" (Ignatieff, cited in Foster, 2006, p. 99). It should be noted that Ignatieff had previously conceded (in the July 28, 2002 issue of the *New York Times Magazine*) that "America's entire war on terror" was and is "an exercise in imperialism." Besides providing obvious boosterism for the Bush administration's war without end strategy, Ignatieff's comments also implied that TINA should now be read as "there is no alternative to American empire" in the age of "terrorism." Indeed, the empire builders of the Bush regime and their media and intellectual toadies would like the world to believe that their only choice is between their version of empire and the axes of "evildoers." Apparently, the United States has been called upon to defend the "hopes of all mankind" (this proclamation, I should add, from a president of the only country in the world to have used nuclear weapons against a civilian population) and the saving grace of humankind is presumably to be found in the religion of neoliberalism and faith in free markets.

Such proclamations must be interrogated unrelentingly at this crucial juncture in history and we must work towards revealing the specious nature of the aforementioned "choice." For what such logic fails to grasp is that for many around the globe, the real source of terror comes from the "market" itself as Galeano (2003) has aptly noted. Despite all the fanfare surrounding the promises of free trade, it remains the case that both advanced and developed countries have been traumatized by globalization— only a few metropolitan centres and select social strata have benefited, and it is no secret who those select occupants are. As previously noted, in virtually every country of the world, the era of free market fundamentalism has ushered in more and more forms of social disintegration as revealed by a rise in abject poverty, inequality, un- and underemployment and devastating environmental destruction. The euphoria of the former communist countries has given way to disenchantment—in

1989 they envisioned capitalism as a cornucopia of consumer goods and freedom; several years later they began to see how free market reforms brought with them a drop in living standards, dramatic increases in hunger, and ill-health (Singer, 1999).

Friedman, Ignatieff, Bush and other nattering nabobs of neoliberalism tend to conflate American style consumerism with nirvana, freedom with free markets, and capitalism with democracy. But the globalization of capitalism has not in any sense been held accountable to democratic interests despite the best efforts of its cheerleaders to hide its diabolical nature behind the non-sequitur claim that the free market promotes democracy. In fact, the "free market"—one of the hallmarks of neoliberal ideology—is one of the most dangerous forms of economic and political organization we face today. As McLaren argues, the free-market revolution, "driven by continuous capitalist accumulation of a winner-take-all variety, has left the social infrastructure of the United States in tatters." Through "policies of increasing its military-industrial-financial interests, it continues to purse its quivering bourgeois lips, bare its imperialist fangs, and suck the lifeblood from the open veins" of regions across the globe (McLaren, 2005, p. 23). He adds, that

> Millions from aggrieved populations worldwide stand witness to the law-governed process of exploitation known as capital accumulation, to the ravages of uneven development called "progress," and to the practice of imperialism in new guises called "globalization." Exploitation is not an aberrant deviation but a constituent and durable form of capitalist democracy. Capitalism constitutes the absolute negation of humanity, personhood, and freedom and, as such, represents the limit of the logic of domination (McLaren, 2007, p. 18).

Under the direction of international bodies such as the IMF, the World Bank, and the WTO (largely beholden to corporate interests), what has been called the "race to the bottom" has manifested itself not only in the standard of living and in the denigration of environmental, labor and health safeguards, but in democracy itself. At a time when corporations have more rights than people (Bakan, 2004; Hartman, 2004), at a time when the pathological pursuit of profit and power undermines the every essence of what McMurtry (2002) calls the "life economy," it is ludicrous to suggest that capitalism and democracy are compatible, except on the most superficial of levels. Neoliberalism is "the immediate and foremost enemy of genuine participatory democracy, not just in the United States but across the planet, and will be for the foreseeable future" (McChesney, 1999, p.11).

The Boy Emperor and his minions would have us believe that our only choice is to embrace the manic logic of American imperialist capitalism disguised as "democracy." But as concerned citizens, activists, educators, workers, and students, we must vigorously challenge such an assertion. While they would like to have the citizens of the United States (indeed, the whole world) sit back and let them take care of "democracy," we need to remind ourselves that democracy is not a spectator sport. It cannot exist in a context where corporations rule the world and where the fruits produced by labouring humanity are horded by the global capitalist elite. It cannot exist when anyone who opposes the policies of the IMF, the World Bank, and/or the WTO or any nation which rejects the "Washington consensus" runs the risk of being tarred and feathered with the label of "terrorist." It cannot exist when governments lie to their citizens and when wars are fought to increase the profit margins of multinational corporations at the expense of innocents slaughtered and bodies mangled on battlefields strewn with limbs lost and dreams dashed. Democracy cannot exist when entire populations are being obliterated through genocide, when people are starving, when human rights are being trampled upon both at home and abroad. Capitalism, in short, cannot be "rescued for democracy" for "capitalism is beyond salvation" and so is the very notion of democracy "so long as it looks to capitalism to support it" (McLaren, 2007, xvii). At this point in history, McLaren (2005; 2006; 2007) urges us to expose the inner workings of the so-called "benevolent" imperialism of Pax Americana in all its social ugliness

and to emphasize that the agenda of neoliberalism and its concomitant militarism is driven by corporate interests that are fundamentally at odds with the interests of working people. We need to start asking and exploring the "big" questions. We need a new vision of human sociality and we need to dare to speak the language of socialism. To that end, McLaren's revolutionary critical pedagogy can offer us some valuable insights.

Against Capital

This is definitely not a postcapitalist world, nor is it a post-Marxist one (Foster, 2002, p. 43).

Cutting ourselves off from Marx is to cut off our investigative noses to satisfy the superficial face of contemporary intellectual fashion (Harvey, 2000, p. 12).

[i]mperialism has, from the beginning, been part and parcel of capitalism and will not be eliminated until capitalism itself is ended (Foster and McChesney, 2004, p. 11).

McLaren points to a development that has troubled many progressive educators over the years, namely, the domestication of critical pedagogy within the academy. Once a fierce critic of U.S. imperialism and capitalist exploitation, critical pedagogy has become so "conceptually psychologized, so liberally humanized, so technologized, and so conceptually postmodernized that its current relationship to broader liberation struggles seems severely attenuated if not fatally terminated" (2005, p. 33). In light of such domesticating gestures, critical pedagogy seems to have lost its potential to serve as a trenchant challenge to globalized capital and U.S. imperialist aggression. As such McLaren's attempts to revivify the political roots of critical pedagogy by reintroducing the language of class struggle and Marxist-humanism (under the rubric of revolutionary critical pedagogy) come at a much needed juncture.

Since we live at a time when capitalism has become an unrepentant universal system, the basis of our struggles, of our resistance, of our revolutionary praxis must be grounded in an equally universalist narrative—that of socialism. We must transcend the deconstructive dalliances of those post-al theorists who have abandoned metanarratives—particularly those of Marxism and socialism—for in all of their deconstructive posturing they have ignored the most "meta of all metanarratives"—namely, the "creeping annexation of the globe for the dominance of capital over labouring humanity" (Ahmad, 1997, p. 364). It seems that in recent years, the only "ism" which hasn't garnered the interest of many self-proclaimed radicals is that of capitalism.

McLaren vividly calls our attention to this problematic void within so much of contemporary theory and urges us to utilize the tools of Marxist analysis to contest current social relations linked to the globalization of capital. He cautions us, however, that Marxist educationalists must also avoid the numbing altitudes of abstract cogitation that seldom touch political realities here on earth. Rather than speaking to one another in self-referential code, engaging in scholastic rituals, and navigating "theory for its own sake or for academic jollification," they must demonstrate the utility of Marxism by applying it to political actualities and by working towards creating the "conditions for a social revolution" (McLaren, 2006, viii). This task has assumed an even greater importance in light of current conditions for as Jameson (1998, p. 136-137) reminds us we seem to be returning to "the most fundamental form of class struggle." In this regard, the line of thought derived from Marx is far from obsolete.

Given the entrenchment of neoliberal globalization practices and the global dominance of U.S. military might, McLaren (2006, p. 19) reminds us that class struggle is as important as it ever was, perhaps even more so. And as more and more of humanity faces the ravages of capitalism's totalizing impulses and the savagery of wars fought on behalf of capital, his revolutionary critical pedagogy

points to the need to understand and confront the "antagonistic relation between labor and capital" that "constitutes the essence of capitalism" (Ibid, p. 95). This entails a much different conceptualization of class than that offered by post-al theory which tends to view class as simply about habits and behaviour, cultural status, or social prestige, or that suggests that class is merely a language sign whose meaning is overpopulated with referents and therefore "undecidable." Rather, class must be understood as both a lived culture and an objective entity.

As an objective phenomenon, class is directly connected to where a person is located within the capitalist division of labor and it is labor that is the source of value. Capitalism is a system based on the imposition of "universal commodification, including centrally, the buying and selling of human-life time" (Dyer-Witheford, 1999, p. 9). Within capitalist forms of organization, human labor itself is a commodity which can be bought and sold just like any other. Such an arrangement reduces the creative capacities of humans and relegates them to the status of mere cogs in the machinery of various forms of production. Alienation, oppression, and the dissolution of democracy are inherent features in such an arrangement where labor-power is capitalized and commodified (McLaren, 2006). For these reasons and many others, it is imperative to work towards the de-commodification of human labor in ways that would reinvigorate its status as a form of meaningful, creative activity. This entails moving beyond a mere reformist agenda—one which calls for a friendlier, less brutalizing form of capitalism—to questioning the very nature of capital as a social relation rooted in the selling of human labor power. As McLaren (2006, p. 319) asserts, "we need to move towards a *new social humanity* . . . we need to work towards the goal of becoming associated producers, working under conditions . . . where the measure of wealth is not labor-time but solidarity, creativity, and the full development of human capacities."

This struggle, against a specific form of social being as a capitalized and commodified life form—the very struggle to be "human"—situates revolutionary Marxist-humanism "at the core of any project to implode capital's social universe" (McLaren, 2006, p. 314). Contrary to those who have sounded the death knell of Marxism, Marxist-humanism is not straining against the boundaries of a closed ontology. Rather it is a set of living ideas that can help us better understand the world—and more importantly—can provide a point of departure on how to change it. Marxist-humanism can guide us in working towards the creation of a social universe outside of capital based on socialist principles and practices not just in the sense of negating today's economic and political realities but of developing new human relations. It is after all capital that imposes on our lives certain forms of doing, certain forms of relating to one another, certain forms of *being*.

Marxist-humanism can also educate us about the importance of class consciousness and class struggle in attempting to overcome the brutal and barbaric limits to human liberation set by capital.[xii] After all, the most powerful force on the planet is the working class—without their labor, the wheels of the machine would cease in turning. The only force that the capitalist class cannot do without is the working class that produces the food, processes the raw materials, educates the young, tends to the sick and the infirm, builds the arteries, moves the goods, and so on. Contrary to the conventional political wisdom and the post-al declarations that we live in an age without classes, the transnational working class is in fact growing—there are increasing numbers of people who "now depend—directly or indirectly—on the sale of their labor power for their own daily reproduction" (Panitch et al., 2000, p. ix). Although it is certainly apparent that there have been major changes in the class structure, they have not been in the direction that post-Marxists point to. In fact, the major changes have reinforced class differences and capitalist exploitation. Petras notes that there are now more "temporary wage workers than in the past" and that there are many more workers toiling in "unregulated labor markets (the so-called informal sector today) than in the past." This issue of "unregulated exploitation" points not in the direction of "post-capitalism" but rather represents a return to "nineteenth century forms of labour exploitation" (1998, p. 5).

That said, it is important to bear in mind that the bodies of work and the concepts produced by Marx to assess the intricacies of capitalism in the nineteenth century are not completely adequate for analyzing contemporary conditions. Any historical concept carries in itself specific historical indices and the structure it analyzes is an historical structure. Therefore, it is necessary to avoid the reification or "petrification" (to use of line from Marcuse, 1972) of Marxian concepts since that would violate the very core of Marx's work—namely, the unity of theory and practice in relation to specific configurations of capitalism. Moreover, revolutionary praxis, is brought about by "approaching Marxism not as an inert body of ideas for contemplation but as a motive force for remaking society" (McLaren, 2007, p. 35). As such, it still provides the most powerful conceptual apparatus from which to construct a critique of contemporary capitalism and envision an alternative to it.

The legacy of Marxist humanism and the revolutionary critical pedagogy espoused by McLaren remind us that contrary to TINA, there are always alternatives. As a form of emancipatory critical knowledge that offers a systematic way of making sense of contemporary social life, the current configuration of imperial global capitalism, the alienating aspects of commodified human labor and their interconnectedness, revolutionary critical pedagogy simultaneously serves as an agent for changing the conditions which it condemns. It reminds us that whatever misunderstandings or confusion surrounding the notion of socialism—largely bound up with a mistaken identification of Marxism with its opposite, Stalinism—that the *democratic* and *internationalist* principles of socialism need to be reinvigorated among those serious about resisting the domination of capital. It reminds us— to paraphrase the words of Luxemburg (1971)—that the struggle for socialism must be created by the masses of labouring humanity who must break the chains of capitalism wherever they are forged. And above all, it reminds us that we cannot abandon hope.

CONCLUSION: Hope Dies Last

In the preface to the fifth edition of his landmark text, *Life in Schools*, McLaren declares that the "unfulfilled" democracy which he envisions is "unashamedly socialist." In so doing, and in speaking as a "Marxist humanist who advocates a revolutionary praxis" (2007, p. xvii), he encourages us to think about a new humanism for the 21st century—one that is *unrealized* in any profound sense; one set against the 21st century American imperium; one which we can aspire to. This new humanism would confront the *actual* conditions of capitalist oppression, imperialism, neo-fascism and colonialism and not merely the texts of colonialism, imperialism and the like. It would give expression to the pain, sorrow, and degradation of the oppressed and the wretched of the earth as well as to their dreams of social change. This new humanism would recognize the creative potential of people to challenge and change collectively the circumstances which they inherit. It would be predicated on a firm commitment to human emancipation and the extension of human dignity and freedom to all people—a commitment to really *universalize* such values in concrete, practical and economic terms. It would go beyond calls for social justice that are embraced by liberals yet too often "antiseptically cleaved from the project of transforming capitalist social relations" (McLaren, 2007, p. 29). Rather, a new humanism would call for the transformation of those oppressive social arrangements, institutions and relations that have prevented the bulk of humankind from fulfilling its potential.

The task of even imagining, let alone struggling for, such a new humanism may seem daunting but we must find our inspiration and strength in the emotion of hope.

Hope is the freeing of possibility, with possibility serving as the dialectical partner of necessity. When hope is strong enough, it can bend the future backward towards the past, where, trapped between the two, the present can escape its orbit of inevitability and break the force of

history's hubris, so that what is struggled for no longer remains an inert idea frozen in the hinterland of "what is," but becomes a reality out of "what could be." Hope is the oxygen of dreams, and provides the stamina for revolutionary struggle. Revolutionary dreams are those in which dreamers dream until there are no longer dreamers but only the dreams themselves, shaping our everyday lives from moment to moment, and opening the causeways of possibility where abilities are nourished not for the reaping of profit, but for the satisfaction of needs and the full development of human potential (McLaren & Jaramillo, 2004, p. 89).

In this passage McLaren beckons us to rescue the principle of hope from the abyss of cynicism, complacency, and apathy and to apply it to imagining something resembling a democratic form of socialism. He challenges us to safeguard the embers of hope smoldering amidst the rubble of war and to fuel even further the fires of hope wherever they may burn. And he challenges us, above all, to keep hope alive—whatever the circumstances—and to ensure, in the words of the legendary American historian, scholar, and activist Studs Terkel, that hope dies last.

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Notes

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[i] The "old bearded devil" is a phrase which McLaren has often used to refer to Marx.

[ii] Typical of this posturing is the stance taken by Max Boot, a "scholar" funded by the conservative Olin Foundation who proclaimed that the U.S. government should embrace the practice of imperialism and impose American "values" on various populations "at gunpoint if need be" (Boot, 2003).

[iii] For a critique of this notion of America's "good exceptionalism," see Rieff, 2006. For an example of "liberal" narratives about America's benevolence, see Beinart, 2006.

[iv] This according to the State of Food Insecurity in the World 2005.

[v] I should caution my readers that I do not attempt anything resembling a full-scale treatment of Thompson's life work. Rather, I draw upon Thompson in relation to a discussion of Marxism and political commitment and more importantly, the spirit which motivated Thompson to write *The Poverty of Theory*.

[vi] The accusation of theoreticism is not intended as a form of anti-intellectual posturing. Rather, it is to raise the issue of the inadequacy of those forms of theorizing that so monolithically reject any theme even remotely associated with the legacy of Marxism and humanism.

[vii] For an elaboration on the distinction between the 'subject' and the 'self,' see Scatamburlo-D'Annibale & Langman, 2002.

[viii] In his critique of postmodern criticism, Jeff Noonan sheds light on this problem. He writes:

> But what can freedom mean in a philosophy that deconstructs the necessary presupposition of any concept of human freedom, i.e., the principle that humans are defined by a self-determining or self-making capacity? If human beings are not essentially self-determining then no sense can be made of the terms oppression and freedom. To be oppressed means to be determined by dynamics and structures that are imposed from without and enforced by a ruling group opposed to the freedom of the group that is called oppressed. But postmodern criticism contends that everyone is always determined by external forces and consequently never self-determining, and if human beings are not in essence self-determining, then the ground of contrast necessary for a coherent understanding of oppression is lost (2003, p. 6).

[ix] See, for example, McLaren & da Silva, 1993.

[x] For an elaboration of this line of argument, see Scatamburlo-D'Annibale & McLaren, 2003.

[xi] PNAC stands for the Project for the New American Century. For a brief discussion of PNAC's aspirations of American global rule, see Scatamburlo-D'Annibale & McLaren's (2003) "Operation Human Freedom."

[xii] For an extended discussion on Marxian formulations of class, see McLaren & Scatamburlo, 2004.

Critical Pedagogy as Collective Social Expertise in Higher Education

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Abstract

In this article, dedicated to the revolutionary educational work of Peter McLaren, we will deal with the question of practical teaching methods in higher education from the point of view of critical pedagogy. We argue that nowadays teaching and learning in educational and social sciences are too often meaningless from the point of view of critical collective learning. Thus the central task in critical pedagogy, and in reform of higher education, is to understand the oppressive aspects of present college life and overall society in order to generate pedagogical, individual and societal transformation while developing pedagogical strategies and study methods that work toward the elimination of various forms of subordination based on class, gender, race and sexual orientation, and strengthen students' possibilities for genuine collective learning while empowering them to fight against inequalities in the world. Our reflections stem from our academic life and teaching experiences both in Finland and the U.S. We suggest that in order to teach critically, educators need to use more collaborative and collective teaching and learning methods. Thus the idea of collective social expertise becomes a core aim of teaching in the context of critical pedagogy.

Critical Pedagogy as Collective Social Expertise in Higher Education

I should just like to formulate this: the main problem, as I see it, is how human energy is channelled and used by every given society for its own purposes, and how in turn the human needs thus produced have an influence on social development; sometimes a revolutionary one but very often a reactionary one, because the character structure as it has been formed in the past by tradition, culture, teaching, family, etc., changes more slowly than the socioeconomic factors. Indeed, the slowness of the historical processes is to a large extent to be explained by the fact of this lag, that is to say, by the fact that man psychologically lives several generations behind the new economic and technical possibilities. If that were not so, the birth of a new society would not be as painful and difficult as it is. – Erich Fromm in his letter to the Soviet philosopher Vladimir Dobrenkov in 1969

In this article we will deal with the too often neglected question of practical teaching methods in critical pedagogy. By acknowledging the common critique of critical pedagogy – that it is too much a theoretical project without practical reflection (what it really means to do critical pedagogy in practice) – we focus on the question of teaching practices in the current university-factory. We claim that teaching and studying in educational and social sciences are too often meaningless from the point of view of critical experiential learning. Although we partly accept this criticism, we also believe that critical pedagogy would benefit from the division of labor: whereas some build theory, others use it practically, and some others evaluate the pedagogical usefulness of theories and practices by correcting and re-building.

The central task of critical pedagogy in higher education is to understand the oppressive aspects of present college life, and overall society, in order to generate pedagogical, individual and societal transformation while developing pedagogical strategies and study methods that work toward the elimination of various forms of subordination based on class, gender, race and sexual orientation, and that strengthen students' possibilities for genuine learning and powers to fight against inequalities of the world.

Our reflections stem from our academic living and teaching experiences both in Finland and the U.S. We want to suggest that in order to teach critically, critical educators need to use more collaborative and collective teaching and study methods. Therefore we argue for the idea of collective social expertise as a core aim of critical teaching in the context of critical pedagogy, which emphasizes the unity of human beings, in the positive sense of "unity in diversity", as solidarity between people, or as a common good, and the equality of human beings irrespective of their class, race, gender, sexual orientation, or disabilities. By first taking up some general principles of critical pedagogy, and critical points of view regarding the present stage of teaching and learning in the university (of course, not suggesting that our observations describe the field as a whole), and then briefly describing a study method entitled "study circle", we will place Peter McLaren's work against the grey canvas of university teaching, for he has moved from the academic field of formal education to the organic and colorful field of learning in social and militant movements, and other sites of learning in people's lifeworlds.

Pedagogical Principles in Critical Pedagogy

Over the years Peter McLaren has developed a unique and innovative theory of critical pedagogy by moving from critical (or lucid) postmodernism, and exegesis of popular culture as pedagogy, to a more radical form of Marxism by re-reading and renewing it in the context of global capitalist exploitation (McLaren 2005; McLaren & Farahmandpur 2005). In capturing McLaren's critical endeavor and his pedagogical creed Zeus Leonardo, one of McLaren's co-authors and a critical pedagogue in his

own right, has referred to McLaren's *Critical Pedagogy and Predatory Culture* (1995) by summarizing its central tenets of critical pedagogy. In the following paragraphs we use Leonardo's pertinent analysis in summing up McLaren's contribution to the theory of critical pedagogy.

In McLaren's critical lexicon, the concept of pedagogy in general, and critical pedagogy in particular, is (or at least it should include) a form of social and cultural criticism by offering prospective teachers and in-service teachers possibilities for critical reflection as transformative intellectuals and cultural border crossers. In the manner of Antonio Gramsci's organic and engaged intellectuals, teachers can tear down the walls for new ideas, lifestyles, thoughts and actions to appear (Moisio & Suoranta 2006). Critical educators in schools and elsewhere need to recognize that socially and historically constituted linguistic relations mediate information and knowledge. Through their historically formatted linguistic and social relations people are mundanely related to the wider society, and other traditions of mediation such as family, peers, friends, religion, ethnicity, formal schooling, popular culture, and, as McLaren has emphasized, especially in his later texts, social class. (Leonardo 2005, 31-32.)

Thus, as often repeated, social facts are not "isolated from the domain of values or removed from forms of ideological production as inscription," but in critical pedagogy facts are value-laden, and also normatively loaded entities. This is also to say that relations of concepts to object are not inherently stable, or transcendentally fixed, but often "mediated by circuits of capitalist production, consumption and social relations" (ibid. 32). As Leonardo further points out, McLaren's critical pedagogy keeps language as "central to the formation of subjectivity (unconscious and conscious awareness)" (ibid. 32), but, as he demonstrates in his later works such as *Capitalists and Conquerors* (2005), material histories of societies, histories of the class struggle, and the means of capitalist production have a firm place in them as fundamentals of the formation of world view, identity, and a sense of self.

It follows from this materialist conception of history (Marx's *materialistische Geschichtsauffassung*) that capitalist society consists of different groups, those who are considered owners and rulers, and those of servants and scorned outcasts who merely obey. There are many reasons for class division and various forms of oppression. Critical educators should be conscious of these prevailing tendencies, and see that various forms of economic and social inequality and oppression are "most forcefully secured when subordinates accept their social status as natural, necessary, inevitable or bequeathed to them as an exercise of historical chance" (ibid. 32). Although oppression has many forms and faces, "focusing on only one at the expense of others (e.g., class oppression vs. racism) often elides or occults the interconnection among them" (ibid. 32).

It is as if Leonardo interpreted McLaren's view as utopian – if not even Messianic – when stating that "an unforeseen world of social relations awaits us in which power and oppression cannot be understood simply in terms of an irrefutable calculus of meaning linked to cause-and-effect conditions. Domination and oppression are implicated in the radical contingency of social development and our responses to it." (Ibid. 32.) But if so, McLaren's utopia is a Freirean one in the sense that, using Freire's word, it builds on "the act of denouncing the dehumanizing structure and of announcing the humanizing structure" (Gadotti 1994, 64). As a methodological consequence, McLaren's critical pedagogy maintains that mainstream social scientific and educational research practices are "unwittingly implicated in the reproduction of systems of class, race and gender oppression" (Leonardo 2005, 32).

These tenets of McLarenian critical pedagogy can be compared with others such as those described by Stephen Brookfield (2005), Daniel Solórzano and Tara Yosso (2005). The primary task of critical pedagogy is to challenge ideology and to set people free from the servitude of repressive ideas. But, as Brookfield reminds us, ideologies are hard to catch since they are tightly "embedded in language, social habits, and cultural forms that combine to shape the way we think about the world. Ideologies appear as common sense, as givens, rather than as beliefs that are deliberately skewed to support the

interests of a powerful minority" (Brookfield 2005, 41). A critical pedagogy helps students to contest aspects of hegemony that affirm political control in the hands of the white, rich and powerful. Here Brookfield is using hegemony in the sense of the way people learn "to accept as natural and in their own best interest an unjust social order" (ibid. 43). And, as he aptly points out, "the dark irony, the cruelty of hegemony, is that adults take pride in learning and acting on the beliefs and assumptions that work to enslave them. In learning diligently to live by these assumptions, people become their own jailers." (Ibid. 44.) A critical (race) pedagogy emphasizes the need to recognize and challenge "the traditional claims that the educational system and its institutions make toward objectivity, meritocracy, color-blindness, race neutrality, and equal opportunity" (Solórzano & Yosso 2005, 70).

In addition, a critical pedagogy is directed at unmasking power. Critical educators help people to read reality analytically and critically, and encourage them to act on the power that they already possess. "Adults learning the possibilities of their own power through sharing knowledge, experiences, tactics, strategies, successes, and failures" (Brookfield, 2005, 48) forms an important dimension of what we are calling a critical pedagogy. A critical pedagogy helps students overcome alienation and creates the context for the struggle for human freedom, which can only exist in a non-alienated world. As Brookfield notes, "alienation is antithetical to freedom, and the abolition of the former is essential to the realization of the latter" (ibid. 50). Alienation describes not only capitalist conditions but all the other forms of living that reduce human beings to commodities in the economy or infrastructure of capitalist society. A critical pedagogy envisions "social justice education as the curricular and pedagogical work that leads towards (1) the elimination of racism, sexism, and poverty, and (2) the empowering of underrepresented minority groups" (Solórzano & Yosso 2005, 71).

Therefore a critical pedagogy is learning about liberation. Although critical education emphasizes collective action, it reserves in its pedagogical agenda a place for reflective distancing. It thus sees momentary reflective privacy not a retreat from collective solidarity but a true revolutionary act, a deepening step into the real world. (Ibid. 51.) Another task for critical education has to do with reclaiming reason (ibid. 56). An important element of reasoning is to direct it toward a good cause, to criticize inhuman circumstances, and to construct a better world. Reasoning concerns all spheres of life, and can take various forms. In critical pedagogy it can refer to basic literacy (reading, writing, math) as well as other forms of literacy such as economic, health, and media literacy.

And finally, one of the central tasks of a social pedagogy is practicing democracy as part of the overall process of furthering political and economic transformation. Whatever the final purpose, critical education is always political in a strict and concrete sense of the term: "it is intended to help people learn how to replace the exchange economy of capitalism with truly democratic socialism" (Brookfield, 2005, 351).

Collective Social Expertise

Critical education aims to help human beings grow in their ability to think collectively, cooperatively, and in solidarity with their fellow human beings, and often adopts an eco-critical perspective with respect to the biosphere or nature. Critical education fosters critical and analytical skills to comprehend the world, to read the world, and to act within and upon the world in ways that build the conditions necessary for a critical society. In the context of critical education, critical thinking does not refer to isolated cognitive faculties, or new business liturgies found in management textbooks, but to social reality, in that its focus is on "common interests, rejecting the privatized, competitive ethic of capitalism, and preventing the emergence of inherited privilege" (Brookfield, 2005, 351). These ideals of collective and shared work are operationalized in various group-based, or collaborative teaching and study methods.

Different "interactionist," collaborative and cooperative pedagogies (see Shlomo 1994) are part of a larger idea we would like to call "collective social expertise." Before describing the basics of collaborative study methods – and especially that of a study circle – we will elaborate on the concept of collective social expertise. One of the foundations of this idea is information overload. We don't believe that there are many ways of increasing our human ability to handle and form knowledge (1). To acquire and thoroughly analyze the knowledge that we are getting from diverse sources is getting all the more difficult due to information overload. One factor seems to be the common experience of the intensification of time.

It seems that time has become a luxury commodity that most of us do not have anymore in the age of hyper-capitalism. On the sidelines of this larger cultural, and in most cases economic, process, it seems that fields of power/knowledge are differentiating, and, in turn, fields of expertise increasing exponentially. Resulting from these elementally politico-economical and social processes, the concept of "expert" is going through fundamental changes. This situation in which different fields of knowledge have become more specialized and more separate both linguistically and conceptually has brought forth a deep challenge to education: How can these experts share their expertise and understand each others' in communicating their knowledge and evaluating each others' viewpoints?

Although the amount of information available has been steadily increasing for the past several hundred years, and especially after the Second World War, the quantity of information has exploded since the Information Revolution of the 1960s. In the constant flow of new scientific information, the concept of expertise has been in the processes of re-definition and re-evaluation. On one hand, expertise has enjoyed high social status, and it has been distanced from ordinary knowledge into the realm of professional knowledge as the phenomenon of expertise has become more complex and wide. It seems as if there were no limit to what is required of the individual expert. On the other hand, the idea of expertise have been devalued, primarily for two reasons. Firstly, experts are becoming part of the working class and losing their formerly high social status and respect. Secondly, their specialized knowledge has tended to become so narrow in scope that in many practical fields – particularly in the human and social sector – it has somewhat lost its practical relevance.

Thus it is vitally important for the theory of critical pedagogy to develop a concept of open collective social expertise along with student- and dialogue-centered study methods as well as tutoring practices (2). By these we refer to constructing, creating, formatting, sharing, elaborating and connecting knowledge with two or more people so that the combination of these individual fields of expertise would be more than the sum of its parts. It is obvious for many different organizations that one human being alone – no matter how skillful she is – cannot gain the same amount and quality of knowledge as she would in collaborating with a group of experts from various fields.

Open collective social expertise consists of interdisciplinary research and teaching based on interdisciplinary elaborations of the themes involved. In the current condition of information overload, and capitalist exploitation of the individual worker (or expert), it is imperative that teaching and research be brought together in a fruitful manner. Then learning can be seen as a joint venture based on the problems that have been produced together as experts, and with the people involved and touched by the problems.

Collective social expertise can first confront a certain problem or a field of problems, and start to tackle them. Collective social experts can work with teachers who can lead them to the sources of the problem. From there, they can use their theoretical and methodological knowledge in solving the problem, and simultaneously gaining deeper knowledge of it. But it is obvious that problem-solving and deeper understanding take time, and there are no shortcuts. The process of understanding can employ teachers' and students' perspectives alike. An apt example of this mutual process is studying the history

of philosophy or the history of education together by breaking up the chronological order that is usually employed in these instances.

The students are at the center of educating in collective social expertise. Their individual needs should be addressed in personal counseling situations. One way to arrange this is to assign a group of students a teacher-tutor who interacts with them in different parts of their studies, giving advice and also rocking their personal and collective boats. This is necessary in order to we get rid of the business-as-usual understanding of expertise on which the university system as a diploma mill is founded.

This rigid profit-driven system is among the very reasons people are drawn further away from each other; in the university system, it's survival of the fittest. The capital-oriented system works almost like a hidden curriculum: everyone knows it, but no one cares. Both in academia and in various expert organizations, specialist expertise is usually seen as highest priority, something that is closely knitted to an individual, and her individually acquired special abilities. As the world becomes radically diverse, and harder to control with former means and technologies, the old way of understanding expertise must also vanish if technological and social "progress" is to be maintained and carried on.

Thus today, rather than being an individualistic know-it-all character, an expert should be open, reciprocal, and trustful. Trust especially means that an expert does not cling to a hope that she can, based on her expertise, gain control over the changing world. Instead she should be able to evaluate the knowledge that is produced by other experts, and critically proportion her own know-how to it. This is perhaps the only way to act meaningfully as a collective social expert.

But this trust is not to be understood as a blind dependency on the knowledge produced by others, but understood as critical trust. Critical literacy is part and parcel of this critical trust as a core part of expertise. Critical literacy means both internal and external criticism. Internal critique involves the critical evaluation of the principles and guidelines of the production of knowledge. External critique aims at critical analysis of the connections of the knowledge produced in social processes and its interpretations and exploitations in other social processes.

The idea of collective social expertise can be seen as part of the debate on the direction of higher education in quite a paradoxical situation (see Aronowitz 2000; Giroux & Searls Giroux 2004). On the one hand, many universities are lacking both material and intellectual resources, and are increasingly defined in the language of corporate culture. In consequence, universities in the U.S. and elsewhere seem to have become "less interested in higher learning than in becoming licensed storefronts for brand name corporations -- selling off space, buildings, and endowed chairs to rich corporate donors" (Giroux 2004). On the other hand for the first time in human history everyone can pursue her own educational ends at any age, and for the goal of individual and collective development (Aronowitz et al. 1998).

The Management of Campus Life

Collective social expertise goes against the grain of current academic life, which on the surface emphasizes commitment, participation and community involvement (among other values claimed by the administration), but in reality, right below the surface, nourishes quite the reverse: individualism, competition, and superficial teaching and study methods. Without too much exaggeration, we are willing to claim that at stake is what has been called a university's contract between students and their teachers. This contract gives students a freedom to superficiality, as if they were studying and learning, and to their teachers a freedom to act as if they were teaching. As a result everyone is happy, and the university machine produces degrees for the meritocratic markets, or "meritocratic myth" according to which a social system gives advantage to people with educational merits, or capital. Rebekah Natham sums up her anthropological study on North American college life as follows:

Taken together, the discourse of academe, both in and out of classes, led me to one of the most sobering insights I had as a professor-turned-student: How little intellectual life seemed to matter in college. This is not to say that no one cared about her education or that everyone cut all his classes. Rather, what I observed was that engagement in the philosophical and political issues of the day was not a significant part of college student culture. (Natham 2005, 100.)

Instead, at present college life is seeing as purely instrumental, and controlled by three different management techniques: shaping schedules, limiting workload, and taming professors. Common to all these survival tasks is that there is little or no mention of learning or discovery, not to mention enthusiasm or dedication to learning. Quite the contrary, freshmen are encouraged by their seniors to give professors what they are assumed to want: acted effort and instrumentally performed opinions. (Ibid. 110-120.)

In more general terms, these observations evoke Erich Fromm's (1976) distinction between two learning modes (linked to two different modes of living), namely those of learning to have and learning to be. In 'learning to have' mode students try to write lectures passively into their notebooks word for word, and afterwards memorize them. Study contents do not become parts of their own thinking and reflection, but stay silent. But in 'learning to be' mode, student are prepared for and interested in their study contents, and their learning is active; a lecture or other form of teaching is more like a launch pad for future studies. For them teaching and learning have transformative and often unpredictable effects.

This problem of studying is probably more severe in the U.S. than in Scandinavian universities, for the myth of a triumphant individual is deeply ingrained in the North American psyche. It is clear, however, that purely instrumental teaching and studying cannot satisfy students' desire for full intellectual development. This is why the triumphant individualism of the era is completely different from the individual and collective intellectual development we are trying to bring forth. For this fully developed individual has nothing to do with individualism but everything to do with the ethical individuality, and collective humanity. Avishai Margalit (2004) has tried to capture this concept of individuality by arguing that all humans deserve respect because they are icons of one another -- that is, of humanity. Learning this requires a special kind of educational setting usually absent from the current profit-oriented university.

Educational systems of multicultural and multiracial societies are faced with the problems of conflicting basic values and assumptions regarding the decent society. In multicultural and multiracial settings, it is not plausible to try to act value-free by ignoring normative problems, abandoning prescriptive statements, and taking a neutral, seemingly objective stance toward pressing issues, which require debate and discussion, for as Dewey (1920, 184) once wrote, "the educative process is all one with the moral process." Education is and always will be – at least from the critical perspective -- about values, choosing why, what, how, and where to teach.

Ethical neutrality is impossible also on the individual level. The teacher cannot turn her moral self off every time she teaches, for she is an ethical human being with moral choices, and a "moral conscience." This idea of "moral conscience" is something that Fromm tried to elaborate on in comparison with "authoritarian conscience." According to Fromm, authoritarian conscience is "more or less what Freud meant by superego, a term much more popular today than the term 'conscience.' Authoritarian conscience, or superego, is the internalized power of the fathers, originally; later it is the internalized authority of society" (Fromm 1964a, 171). Against this there is a moral conscience which is "our own voice, present in every human being and independent of external sanctions and rewards;" it is "a reaction of ourselves to ourselves" (Fromm 1947, 158). In this respect, "to have a bad conscience" means that it "bothers" us not because of moral issues in our actions and omissions, but because we have failed to be true to ourselves in these very acts.

This idea is closely connected to division of the basic human needs Fromm articulated. The basis of Fromm's division is the fact that human beings share with other animals physiological needs that must be satisfied in order to survive. But even after these needs are satisfied, human beings are affected by other drives and passions. And it is precisely these other needs, products of the social processes, that Fromm sees as essential to human beings in his humanistic philosophy (Fromm 1941, 27). In his *Sane Society* (1955) he lists the following needs: a need for relatedness, transcendence, rootedness, identity, and a frame of orientation as distinct human drives. One should notice, however, that we do not refer to these drives as things that predetermine human actions, but as ones that offer a theoretical frame of reference for creating more humane and critical means for studying in higher education. In this respect we want to believe, like Albert Scherr (2005, 147), that students, and human beings in general, are not "'trivial machines' reacting to changes in their natural and social surroundings by fixed patterns of behavior. They rather deal with impulses and information on the basis of complex emotional and cognitive structures, in a manner that is not determined and likewise is not predictable."

Next we want to elaborate on Fromm's division of these needs as they illuminate our aim of developing a foundation for collective social expertise in higher education, and elsewhere.

The need for relatedness states that every individual has a need for a sense of belonging, or communion with others. However, as maintained by Fromm, and also by Marcuse, this is not necessarily achieved in a group but could also happen in conscious isolation, which Marcuse interpreted as an authentic revolutionary act. According to Fromm there are three ways to answer the need for relatedness: submission to external authority, repressing others, or love of humanity. For Fromm love means productive care, responsibility, respect, and wisdom. (Fromm 1955, 30-36.)

The need for transcendence is part of human beings' inherent capacity to create. Human beings are thrown into the world without act of will, and taken out in the same manner. Animals live in a state of passiveness. But as Fromm stresses, human beings need to cut themselves loose from passivity. The need for transcendence turns human beings into creatures of reason and imagination who can transcend "beyond the passivity and accidentalness" of pure "existence into the realm of purposefulness and freedom" (Fromm 1955, 37). According to Fromm, this creative act is based on love, for as we create something we also care for it, respect it, and try to understand it more deeply. The act of love and care is most vividly present in raising children. But what if one is not capable of loving? How then to answer the call of transcendence? Fromm's answer is linked to his concept of the active being, for if human beings are unable to create life, they might be quite able to destroy it. For by destroying life, human beings can also transcend it in order to demonstrate their activeness, and thus distance themselves from passivity.

The third need for Fromm is that of *rootedness*. As people move away from their mother's womb, breast, arm, and eventually from their presence, they must fulfill their infantile need for security by other means. After cutting themselves from these seemingly 'natural ties' there emerges the need for a separate or autonomous identity.

> As long as I have not established my own identity, as long as I have not fully emerged from the womb, from the family, from the ties of race and nation – in other words, as long as I have not fully become an individual, a free man, I cannot throw away this individual and thus experience that I am nothing but the drop of water on the crest of the wave, a separate entity for a split of a second. (Fromm 1962, 162.)

There are many ways that people try to fulfill this *need for identity*. Among the frequently used means is to connect oneself to something larger. When asked about one's identity ("who are you?") it is relatively easy to identify oneself in terms of profession, nationality, political ideology, religion etc. This kind of "I am what you want me to be" type of thinking is connected to "herd identity" that rests "on the

sense of an unquestionable belonging to the crowd. That this uniformity and conformity are often not recognized as such, and are covered by the illusion of individuality does not alter the facts." (Fromm 1955, 62-63.)

When human beings acknowledge that they are separate units in the chain of generations, they often recognize the need for a new frame of orientation, which then may bridge the gap between them and reality. By making the sensory experiences into a meaningful whole, the frame of orientation operates both on emotional and on cognitive levels. A human being "has to react to the dichotomy of his existence not only in thinking but in the total process of living in his feelings and actions. Hence any satisfying system of orientation contains not only intellectual elements but elements of feeling and sensing which are expressed in the relationship to an object of devotion" (Fromm 1955, 65).

Radical Teaching and Learning

There is, however, another way of learning besides that individualism and "having mode" described by Natham and Fromm, and through which it is possible to reach for a subversive and radical reading of the world, and the fulfillment of the human aspect of our lives. In order to change the modes in which students learn, it is imperative to focus on changing the way learning and students as learners are defined in higher education. For if we want to educate people who are ready to take a step toward productive being, to move closer to the 'being mode' of learning, we must envision new models of teaching. These are not the ones that within safe limits give learners room for self-activity and self-determination as forms of mental masturbation. Instead, new models of learning represent a radical change from unprincipled, undiscriminating, indifferent, mercenary, inconsistent, and opportunistic modes of learning, and from the character type that Fromm called "marketing orientation." This type seems to have a deep indifference toward others, but is actually afraid of being alone since "his security lies in conformity, in never being more than two feet away from the herd" (Fromm 1964b, 97). The marketing human being is preoccupied with being attractive so she can be loved; the productive human being is attractive because of her capacity to love.

Thus, in this Frommian sense, productiveness means the realization of the human potential, and the use of one's powers. With the power of reason, human beings can gain their understanding and awareness; with the power of love they can break through the wall separating persons from each other; with the power of imagination they are able to begin to create. (Fromm 1947, 87-88.)

Prominent Finnish philosopher Juha Varto (2005) has pointed this direction by stating that productive and authentic learning can be reached by concentrating strictly on study contents that differ from students' previous experiences, thus representing the other. This otherness can offer truly liberating, and, in Fromm's vocabulary, productive learning experiences. Following these theoretical reflections we would like to turn to the following Table 1, which stems partly from Fromm's ideas, and partly from Freire's distinction between banking and "problem-posing" education. We will concentrate on its left side, that of radical teaching and learning, and leave the right side, for it is almost too well known to anyone who has ever studied or taught in the modern university-factory.

Let us take the left side of Table 1 for a detailed scrutiny. The concept of reality in radical teaching, as it is in Marx's view, is dialectical and contextual: In place of a "frozen" universe is an open and changeable reality. The goal of radical teaching thus is to liberate students from all sorts of fixed ideas about "the way things are" and replace them with the conviction that the world is a state of "coming to be" where students, as well as teachers, can invent and create themselves and the world anew. This is not to assert that there would not be any constants in the universe but rather that ideologies and beliefs change, and this is why values cannot be contemplated in isolation from their historical context.

This is also true with the concept of knowledge in radical teaching. Knowledge is not given to the students from above, but shared with them in a certain frame of reference. We want to emphasize that as teachers our task is to see those "generative themes," which are at hand, as broadly as possibly and try to reframe them into meaningful wholes. In this students are important actors, for they give experiential and other impulses for reframing formal curriculum. It thus follows, in Freire's (2004, 74) words, that in this mode "no matter whether a program is concerned with adult literacy, sanitation education, cooperative organization, or evangelization, education will be all the more effective to the extent that, while enabling learners to gain access to knowledge of the field they are dealing in, it challenges them to build a critical understanding of their presence in the world." It is as Marx and Engels (2005/1848, 26) wrote: "Does it require deep intuition to comprehend that man's ideas, views, and conception, in one word, man's consciousness, changes with every change in the conditions of his material existence, in his social relations and in his social life?"

Table 1.

Two Models of Teaching and Learning

	Radical Teaching and Learning	**Traditional Teaching and Learning**
Concept of Reality	Changing and negotiated	Static and given
Concept of Knowledge	Dialectical, constructed knowledge	Bird's eye view, encyclopedic knowledge
Learner	Agent (students and teacher as subjects)	Receiver (teacher as subject)
Range of Studies	Relatively open	Relatively closed
Form of Questions	Authentic and open-ended (answers are not known)	Unauthentic and closed (answers are known)
Group Interaction	Subject-oriented	Performance-oriented
Aims of study	Conflict, new questions and insights	Consensus, reproduction of existing knowledge
Subject of Study	Students and teachers	Teachers

Range of studies ought to be relatively open-ended in radical teaching and learning. By this we refer to the idea that themes and contents (texts and assignments) can vary during the class, and teachers and students can plan them together, and also invent new forms of assignments (3). This has also to do with the form of questions that are posed in the class. Usually pedagogical question are closed, that is, the teacher knows the answer, and in turn students know that the teacher knows. Students learn this formal pattern early on in their school careers. In radical learning the truth must be demonstrated in praxis, that is, in reflective practice. Furthermore, and this we stress, group interaction should be educational, that is, it should focus on creative cognitive dissonances, and not performances; in other words, students should focus strictly on learning the given themes and topics, and not on pretending to participate.

A learning group should also learn collective self-direction without the teacher's continuous presence. This is essential in order to give students a sense of autonomy, and also a free space for collective wonder without the teacher's controlling power. We recognize that this is not a common procedure in the university, and are fully aware of the possible problem of free loading without the teacher's control. However, we do not see this as a major problem, for on one hand, the teacher's presence does not guarantee learning, and on the other hand, the group has an inner control system, and does not usually allow imposters. Autonomous group work not only enhances students' skill to do authentic group work, that is, read, discuss, and write together, but also develops their responsibility for their learning. Autonomous groups may also allow new inventions and connections better than the one directed to happy consensus under the teacher's controlling eye. Thus, self-directed collaborative group work -- such as study circles (see below) – offers, in our view, at least a partial solution for the general lack of learning motivation among university students.

When it comes to aims of study we are inclined to refer to Freire and his book with Moacir Gadotti and Sérgio Guimares Pedagogia: diálogo e conflito. In it Freire reflects on the distinction between the pedagogy of dialogue and the pedagogy of conflict. According to Gadotti (1994, 80) "the central idea of this book is that the pedagogy of dialogue does not exclude the notion of conflict. On the contrary, the philosophy of dialogue values conflict and works to overcome it. It considers conflict legitimate and relies on it as a means of fully realizing authentic dialogue. Conflict is the engine of history." Thus the aim of radical teaching and learning should be understood not only as a philosophical ideal but also in the very pragmatic sense, for if university teaching is understood, at best, as consensus, and at worst as a performance (as social theater in which each party pretends to teach and learn), then there is not much sense in having institutions of higher education at all (at least in social and cultural sciences including philosophy).

In regard to the last characteristic of radical teaching and learning, that of subject of study, again we would like to refer to Freire, and his famous notion of the roles of students and teachers in his *Pedagogy of the Oppressed (1972/2005).* According to Freire (2005, 80) "the teacher-of-the-students and the student-of-the-teacher cease to exist and a new term emerges: teacher-student with student-teachers. The teacher is no longer merely the-one-who-teaches, but one who is himself taught in dialogue with the students, who in turn while being taught also teach. They become jointly responsible for a process in which all grow." In a sense both the knower and the thing known are in a continual process of mutual adaptation and transformation.

It is obvious that teaching cannot be executed without the idea of getting students to learn and digest information. The crucial issue is, however, how and in what ways learning is evoked. For there is a danger that the teacher thinks that learning activity is solely her responsibility, or that the subject matter is more important than the learner -- or even that by preparing for the class the teacher is doing the students' job, and actually learning for them. These accidents would produce negative responses to the needs elaborated above. Knowing about the good life does not insure that one will live the good life; this is something that both academic philosophy and the history of ideas has shown us. We might argue that a teacher has not fulfilled her responsibility by mechanically dispensing information. Therefore among the most important components in the teacher-student relationship is the way in which the teacher interprets authority. For as Fromm argued, there are two different types of authority: irrational and rational. The former is based on power and fear, the latter on competence and love.

In this process, all participants develop and transform into learners, or more precisely, into critical learning agents who do not merely give opinions for opinion's sake, and do not act learning but develop expertise in comprehending the word and the world, and thus develop their capacities to become knowledge creators. Even thought our hope for formal higher education is sometimes fragile, and we concede the always-present dual character of education – that of slavery versus liberty – it is impossible

to accept the following, somewhat one-sided and shallow criticism by McKenzie Wark in *A Hacker Manifesto* (2004): "Education is slavery. Education enchains the mind and makes it a resource for class power. The nature of the enslavement will reflect the current state of the class struggle for knowledge, within the apparatus of education." From the vantage point of critical pedagogy it is necessary to underline that the university – or any other institution of formal education – is not set apart from the 'real world,' and stress that it is another community of learning practice. This is also bell hooks' (2003, 41) point as she writes that it is important to break "through the false construction of the corporate university as set apart from real life and ... re-envision schooling as always a part of our real world experience, and our life." This way we may "share the knowledge gleaned in classrooms beyond those settings thereby working to challenge the construction of certain forms of knowledge as always and only available to the elite."

Thus in the following we turn to describing a viable way of learning collective social expertise, which we feel is within the scope of critical pedagogy, and fits well into its pedagogical register.

Study Circle for Developing Collective Social Expertise

Ralph Armbruster-Sandoval, a critical scholar in Chicana/o studies, has a pedagogical motto: "Another classroom is possible." By telling his students that "'we cannot create that other world, that world where many worlds fit, unless we first create another classroom, one in which all voices and lives count,'" he is in search of the means to actually establish such a classroom. "How can an egalitarian, exciting, challenging, and loving space, one where students and teachers talk, argue, laugh, cry, hold hands, sing, clap, role-play, and organize rallies and teach-ins, be created and sustained?" (Armbruster-Sandoval 2005, 34-35.) One possible answer for founding "another classroom" is to set up a study circle.

Practically speaking, a study circle (4) belongs to the family of collaborative learning methods that facilitate discussion and enhance thinking as well as overall academic skills. It can also be used as a vehicle for enhancing collective social expertise. Study circle as a form of "associated life" means breaking free from the competitive and individualistically driven learning and embracing collaborative and interdependent learning as a more rewarding and permanent learning mode (see Bruffee 1995). A study circle consists of a group of 4-8 students who meet a given number of times to give presentations and discuss the reading assignments. Study circle is based on the following core educational principles:

• The focus of learning in a study circle is more on the process than product ("the road is made by walking," perhaps by talking, too) and this process is understood as a collaborative exploration.

• The group is more than the sum of its individual members, thus collaboration is power.

• The emphasis is on critical learning and understanding substance (reading assignments), not in class performance (empty talking, and opinion making for its own sake).

• The aim is a cooperative atmosphere of responsibility in which each member's work benefits all.

• Participants in a study circle are "agents" of their own learning (goal setting, scheduling, etc.). Agency in learning means that participants do not give opinions for nothing but develop expertise and become knowledge creators (see above).

• Studying in a study circle corresponds, and is in many ways analogous to, the "real world" learning situations in various formal educational settings, social movements, and workplaces.

A study circle has four phases: forming of a group, reading the required materials, having presentations and discussions, and evaluation. Study circle does not allow free loaders, for everyone is involved in doing a presentation, and serving as secretary in one meeting plus participating in all meetings. So the very format of a circle guarantees the commitment of each member to the core ideals of the circle. A circle does not tolerate the breakdown of a chain. Presumably this alternative social structure of learning might also help "students become autonomous, articulate, and socially and intellectually mature, and it helps them learn the substance at issue not as conclusive 'facts' but as the constructed result of a disciplined social process on inquiry" (Bruffee 1995).

In phase one, a study circle is established; usually this takes place in the first class meeting. Ideally, a study circle consists of 4-8 students. The schedule should permit sufficient time for group members to complete the required reading assignments. Most groups settle on weekly or biweekly meetings. Readings will be decided on in the first class meeting, and they partly depend on how many students form each study group. An optional book–participant-ratio is 1:2 -- that is one book per two participants, or 1:1, one book per participant (depending on time range, motivation, book length, themes etc.). In deciding the organization of the study circle, at least the following things must be taken into account: Reading time – how many weeks are needed for reading the required material and making presentations; meeting dates; presentation – who will present what and when; schedule – who will act as a presenter, and who as a secretary writing notes (minutes) about the discussion in the meetings. And finally, the group decides the final meeting with the teacher.

In phase two (reading and preparation), all participants in a study circle read all the required texts before the meetings start. When there is a large amount of readings, it might be useful to share the reading assignments in the group. However, this may create too much pressure for individual presentations, and give too little opportunities for real discussions. In any case, it is useful to take good notes on the required readings in order to make a presentation and participate in discussion.

Instead of reading the required materials and then meeting afterward, the group may decide to read part of the material (a book, a few articles) first, and then have a meeting. Then participants read the second part, and have their second meeting, and so forth. This can be a productive way to proceed, but can lead to poor presentations for a lack of time.

A presentation should briefly introduce the overall idea of the text (a book, an article), as well as key concepts and ideas of the text. It should not be a summary, but a (critical) reflection or consideration of a given text. It should also concentrate on interesting questions in the text. A presentation should also include topics for discussion. It should be about 8-12 double-spaced pages, although the length of a written presentation is not important in itself. In this phase it is also possible to try to find alternative ways to approach and question the readings. One option for critical reading is to put different texts up against each other to see the possible discrepancies and similarities between them. Another possibility is to try to find other viewpoints than the ones in the text, perhaps in novellas, films, historical studies, philosophical texts etc. By cross-exposing the given themes, collective social learning could grow deeper and more lasting. Encouraging students to bring in their own experience in the forms of storytelling, family histories and biographies and theorize it can facilitate a sense of "collective belonging" (see Solórzano & Yosso 2005, 71).

In phase three, after reading the texts, a study circle meets for presentations and discussions. The length of a meeting varies from 90 minutes to two hours. A presentation should last around 20-30 minutes, and the rest of the time – 60-90 minutes – is for discussion. Everyone should participate. There are no "stupid questions." Discussion should focus on understanding a given topic. The secretary has a double role in the meetings, both in documenting the discussion (a tape-recorder can be used), and

participating in it. In addition to a summary of the discussion, the minutes (around 8-10 pages) should include: who was present, and how long the meeting lasted.

In phase four, at the end of the course, members of the study circle meet with their teacher for the final discussion. One week before the scheduled meeting, members have sent their collected presentations and minutes as one chronologically organized document to the teacher. From a five-person study circle, the end result will easily be a 60-100-page document. In the meeting, members of the group and the teacher reflect on the group's work both from the academic and practical points of view.

It is up to the teacher's imagination to apply a study circle in a given situation, the central idea being to "learn freedom" with students by giving them collective assignments and respecting their intellect. Dialogue is sometimes taken for granted in the discourse of critical pedagogy, and kept as a solution for collaboration without deeper reflection on the concept itself or its practical uses as part of educational interaction. However, when striving toward collective social expertise, it is necessary to reach for a more complex mode of collaboration. In this mode, students (and teachers) are representing complementary domains of expertise by planning, deciding and acting, and most importantly, thinking together, and "combining independent conceptual schemes to create original frameworks" (Minnis, John-Steiner & Weber 1998). In a genuine collaboration students (and teachers) share resources, power, and talent. No one's argument or "point of view dominates authority for decisions and actions resides in the group, and work products reflect a blending of all participants' contributions" (ibid. 744). However, each group varies in these features, and may exhibit them only after long cooperation. (Ibid.)

All in all, the study circle as a means for creating collective social expertise, a sense of solidarity, and commitment to critical learning gives students, as subjects and agents of their own learning, a chance to oppose instrumental expectations, break with ordinary habits of studying, question the status quo, and, if needed, ignore norms and do the unexpected (cf. Scherr 2005, 147). The study circle fulfills one of the basic premises of critical pedagogy and collaborative learning: in the process of testing the quality and value of learning "by trying to make sense of it to other people – their peers" (Bruffee 1981, 745) students realize their responsibility for self- and collective education (cf. Gadotti 1994, 111).

Conclusion

While we have conducted our discussion inside the walls of academia, Peter McLaren has consciously taken his revolutionary educational theory into political praxis. He has made a radical decision to move from behind the university walls to the open *agora* of political struggle in the form of "traveling critique." By taking this "natural next step" after theory, he has fulfilled his mission as an intellectual, but what sort of an intellectual? And is there a distinction between an academic and an intellectual? Using Steve Fuller's (2005, 137-138) work we are inclined to say that McLaren has been able to invent a radical intellectual by providing a political context for the research findings in critical educational theory.

Among the various conceptions of intellectuals, such as traditional, specific, and organic (5), McLaren's radical intellectual comes closest to that of Antonio Gramsci's organic intellectual, and as its extension, the idea of committed intellectual articulated by McLaren with his companeras and companeros: "The committed intellectual is not someone who is interested only in resisting and defeating forms of cultural domination, but rather someone for whom the end of all forms of exploitation is the focal point of his or her commitment to transform the world" (McLaren et al. 2005, 277). McLaren has taken a critical stance toward global economic capitalism while linking his metatheories firmly with diverse local communities and the people living and working in those communities. In the spirit of Gramsci's prison writings, and critical theory at large, he has formed himself into an intellectual who

"can no longer consist in eloquence, which is an exterior and momentary mover of feelings and passions, but in active participation in practical life, as constructor, organizer, 'permanent persuader' and not just a simple orator" (Gramsci 2000, 321).

In his writings and travels as a guest lecturer, which have taken him to every continent, but especially to Latin America, McLaren has practiced his revolutionary critical pedagogy as a variation of critical theory, which, in the words of Horkheimer and Adorno in the revised preface to their *Dialectics of Enlightenment* (2000), has a "temporal core to truth instead of ... truth as something invariable to the movement of history." McLaren's revolutionary thinking is inherently linked to the building of collective social expertise, for in his public engagements he has developed a theory of revolutionary civil participation in the spirit of radical adult and popular education. He has not only expanded the scope of his audiences, but also taken his theory and praxis to new heights of political formation. Captive as his audience was, and still is, in his home institution in Los Angeles, it is perhaps even more receptive, and, above all, reflectively active in various countries in Latin America, where he participates in numerous workshops, seminars and dialogues with his co-educators, administrators, politicians, social movement activists, political provocateurs, and common people. Many engagements are under the auspices of the Fundación Peter McLaren de Pedagogía Crítica, an organization established by a group of scholars and activists in Northern Mexico to promote projects in critical pedagogy and popular education.

McLaren lives dangerously in his trips in Latin America. After the World Social Forum and World Education Forum in Caracas Venezuela 2006, he visited Colombia, and was told by several witnesses how the death squads of the local paramilitary hunt and assassinate teachers and teachers' union leaders. Shortly before his arrival in Caracas, a teacher was assassinated in front of her own students. In these locations of ultimate desperation, McLaren gives his speeches, and shares the sorrow, but also the spirit of hope and struggle, with teachers and union activists – almost always under heavy security, and still getting robbed and losing his belongings.

McLaren is a student of many figures, influences and thinking traditions, among them Marx and radical humanist Marxism, some lucid versions of postmodernism, and structuralism, cultural studies, feminism, postcolonialism, symbolic anthropology, race and ethnic theory, Freirean pedagogy, Frankfurt critical theory, critical ethnography and critical media studies (see Leonardo 2005, 44). This repertoire of influences gives him the perspective "to read the word and the world" and maintain critical reasoning in divergent situations. He has gained an ability to address various political and educational activists around the world and wherever he goes, the reception is passionate. This is partly because of his humanist radical and universal agenda, and partly due to his affectionate and always alert character. His message will not leave anyone unruffled, and his voice is heard, for wherever he tours he finds like-minded people, and they find him, as he announces his message of radical hope: that even in the most difficult times, the maladies of capitalism are not insurmountable when people come together and engage in the process of conscientization.

One of the main questions in critical pedagogy is, what keeps the hunger for learning, understanding, knowledge and social transformation alive, and how can we help to nurture it? And if we ourselves feel satisfied, how can we reawaken the process for critical learning? Nowadays there are many experts – or meaning marketers – who tell us how to think and act. But, in the end, no expert can help when the time comes to ask the ultimate question: "what do you want from life," or "what is a good life." For these questions are about fundamental values, and about choices that are hard to escape on the sometimes rocky road to revolutionary critical pedagogy.

Notes

(1) But Kevin Kelly (2005) paints a different picture: "The human brain has no department full of programming cells that configure the mind. Rather, brain cells program themselves simply by being used. Likewise, our questions program the Machine [the Internet with diverse software] to answer questions. We think we are merely wasting time when we surf mindlessly or blog an item, but each time we click a link we strengthen a node somewhere in the Web OS, thereby programming the Machine by using it. What will most surprise us is how dependent we will be on what the Machine knows - about us and about what we want to know. We already find it easier to Google something a second or third time rather than remember it ourselves. The more we teach this megacomputer, the more it will assume responsibility for our knowing. It will become our memory. ... Each time we forge a link between words, we teach it an idea. Wikipedia encourages its citizen authors to link each fact in an article to a reference citation. Over time, a Wikipedia article becomes totally underlined in blue as ideas are cross-referenced. That massive cross-referencing is how brains think and remember."

(2) However, in the present context of the modern university-factory it is not clear if these methods and procedures alone are enough to enforce a needed structural reform and conceptual re-thinking of higher education's most corrupted study and other practices based on ultra-individualism, isolation and competition. What would be needed at minimum in the realm of pedagogy are methods of deconstructing the prior 'bad' habits of learning such as rote learning, and replacing them with innovative learning, organic learning, creative learning, aesthetic learning, and collaborative learning.

(3) One possibility is to make class learning more public by organizing open mini-seminars in the universities or in some other public places, or publish the learning outcomes in blogs, or in wikis. This sort of "externalization" of learning is true to the project of radical democratization of learning, and to the epistemology of collective social expertise.

(4) Study circle has its roots in 19th century adult (and folk) education both in North America and Europe, when knowledge was seen as an integral part of social change (see Byström 1996, 663). It also has a substantial resemblance and an inherent relationship to Latin America's pedagogical traditions, especially Freire's "cultural circles" (1970; 2004). Both in Freirean thinking, and in the basic ideas of study circle, the concept of culture has an essential place; "culture" refers to the people's ways of thinking and acting in the world in order to transform it. The following words of Freire (2004, 81) are insightful, and worth quoting: "If it is possible to reach water by digging up the ground, if it is possible to decorate a house, if it is possible to believe this or that truth, if it is possible to find shelter from cold and heat, if it is possible to alter the course of rivers and to build dams, if it is possible to change the world we have not created, that of nature, why not change the world of our own creation, that of culture, of history, of politics?"

(5) Traditional intellectuals "are people who produce decontextualized ideas" apart from any localities and practices, as if these "intellectual products are felt … to belong to a realm which is peculiarly elevated" (Collins 1998, 19). Foucault's specific intellectuals, for their part, do not want to tell others what needs to be done, or mold peoples' political will. Instead through their analyses in their own field they question the common assumptions and habitual ways of working and thinking, and by doing so, as citizens participate in the formation of a political will. Gramscian organic intellectuals, who usually are of working class origin, participate in practical life, helping to create a counter hegemony that undermines existing social relations and capitalist means of production. However, this is not done in an ideologically blind manner, but always with self-reflection, by asking what one really is.

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Remaking Critical Pedagogy: Peter McLaren's Contribution to a Collective Work

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Abstract

This article explores the collective works of Peter McLaren and his contribution to critical pedagogy within the field of education and beyond the academy. To understand how McLaren's work took a radical turn in the 1990s, the article traces the historical development of his praxis. In particular, McLaren's engagement with the postmodern Left and his response to developments in British educational Marxism are highlighted in this paper. Bringing Marxism, class analysis and politics back into the heart of education, McLaren has situated himself at the forefront of remaking critical pedagogy as a material force for social change. The resulting fusion has provoked a storm of controversy amongst the educational Left. Beyond this, however, has been the influence of critical pedagogy in social spheres beyond the university and academia, including the mass workers movement.

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Remaking Critical Pedagogy: Peter McLaren's Contribution to a Collective Work

But the worker has the misfortune to be a living capital, and therefore a capital with needs-one which loses its interest, and hence its livelihood, every moment it is not working. (Marx, 1988, p. 85)

In the Byzantine labyrinth of the bourgeois academy, the frustration, anger and political maximalism of Peter McLaren lets the world know that the "protest gene" is alive and kicking (Ng, 2006). On the whole, out of character with his compassionate and hypersensitive disposition, McLaren's ideologically driven truculence is spurred by a vision of proletarian actions aimed at overcoming a corrupted and crumbling system of injustice. Whether on the page, at the podium or in the trenches, McLaren holds up amazingly well and there certainly doesn't seem to be much that frightens him. Over the past twenty years, he has been an astute observer of the political landscape who has sought to demystify bourgeois ideology and thus expose (with exhilarating clarity) the interests and workings of capitalist culture. Fired from his first academic appointment at Brock University, McLaren was invited in 1985 to work with Henry Giroux at the University of Miami Ohio (Pozo, 2003). McLaren recently stated, "Working with Henry for me was like a budding artist working with Picasso. He was, and still is, a great mentor" (Engles, 2005, p. 3). In 1993, McLaren began teaching at UCLA and at a time when Marxism has gone underground he is the only Marxist on the faculty in the Department of Education and Information Studies.

With a handful of others (including Henry Giroux), McLaren is one of the founding architects of critical pedagogy and is a staunch proponent of its Marxist current. At a time when socialism is a dirty word, he has breathed new life into Marxist education, which prompted Joe Kincheloe (2000) to call him "the poet-laureate of the educational left," acknowledging his unusual gift of communication (p. ix). Indeed, it is impossible to miss, ignore or deny McLaren's impact on the field of education and cultural studies. Endlessly prolific, he has written over 40 books as well as hundreds of single and co-authored book chapters, monographs and articles on critical pedagogy, as applied to curriculum, educational policy and grassroots political, educational and cultural movements (e.g., anti-war mobilizations, multiethnic labour struggles, indigenous and neo-colonial liberation movements, struggles for environmental justice, international Palestinian solidarity campaigns and student activism). Channeling the spirit of the times, the carnage of the Iraq War bleeds into his writing and indicates an engagement with a key aspect of Marxist politics, namely internationalism (McLaren, 2005; McLaren & Farahmandpur, 2005a). Indeed, he was recently invited to speak and teach in Venezuela, where he declared his support for the revolution and democratic socialism. Having absorbed the lessons that are to be learned from Venezuela, McLaren operates from the starting point that all people can play a leading role in some way in the mass movement and he encourages his audience to make decisions about how to transform existing structures and social relations into desired ones.

Very briefly, it should be clear from the outset that McLaren's theoretical work is inspired by Marxist Humanism. Unlike Stalinism, which negated the "free, conscious activity" of the individual, Marxist Humanism is dedicated to a democratic communism aimed at a better life for the world's inhabitants (human and non-human) (Marx, 1988, p. 76). Raya Dunayevskaya (1910-1987), who was Trotsky's Russian language secretary in 1937 before she broke with him politically at the time of the Hitler-Stalin Pact in 1939, is hailed as the founder of Marxist-Humanism in the United States (Trotsky still defended the USSR as a degenerated workers state) ("Who is Raya," nd). Taking his cue from Raya Dunayevskaya and Peter Hudis, an organizer for the Chicago-based *News & Letters* collective, and co-editor (with Kevin Anderson) of *The Power of Negativity*, McLaren (2005) writes, "My own Marxism is

informed by the philosophy of Marxist-Humanism, which posits, after Hegel, that forward movement emerges from the negation of obstacles. It is the negation of "what is" and a critique of the given that spurs development and creates the path to liberation" (p. 35). Without ignoring the conflicts between theory and practice, and concretely, the struggles between the tendencies in the academic, trade union and revolutionary left, McLaren argues that there is no such thing as a pure or unadulterated Marxism.

Basically, as concerns Marxism, McLaren's approach is eclectic and non-sectarian. He displays admiration for such diverse figures as the Marxist revolutionary and Cuban guerilla leader Che Guevara, the anarchist Emma Goldberg, the revolutionary nationalist Emilio Zapata and revolutionary pacifists such as Ghandi in India and Martin Luther King in the United States. We can also connect his brand of critical pedagogy to the work of John Dewey, the Latin American tradition of popular education and liberation theology as well as critical aspects of the Enlightenment tradition (see McLaren, 2005, p. 40). In his latest writings, he is sympathetic to the anti-vanguardist tradition of Marxism (the Hegelian Marxism of Raya Dunayevskaya and Peter Hudis), libertarian Marxism or following Harry Cleaver (2000) autonomist Marxism (Nick Dyer-Witheford, Massimo De Angelis) and certain trends in anti-authoritarian anarchist politics: i.e., council communist/workers' council Marxists. These minority tendencies in Marxism share a close affinity with the work of autonomist and Open Marxists such as John Holloway and Werner Bonefeld whose writings are associated with *The Commoner*. It is not possible to provide a more concrete elaboration here, however, while McLaren provides critical support for new forms of anti-hierarchical, decentralized and grassroots organizing characteristic of autonomist Marxism (as a class alternative to the parties of the bourgeoisie), he does not put any faith in its non/anti-Hegelian tendency, which is particularly influenced by the cult of French anarcho-communist philosophers such as Deleuze and Guatari.

The Early Years

Born in Toronto, Canada, McLaren received his education teaching in the Jane Finch corridor in Toronto, a multi-ethnic, multi-lingual working class suburb scarred by utilitarian public housing blocks for which there is no ecological justification. This high-density landscape exemplifies how capitalism concentrates uneven economic and urban development (market forces, speculative greed, zoning laws). Rather than moan privately McLaren rolled up his narrative sleeves and wrote a blistering expose of the "savage inequalities" built into the Canadian school system, which are "invisible" to those separated from this world by privilege and uneven development. An instant bestseller in Canada, McLaren used *Cries from the Corridor* (1980) as an opportunity to speak out against a system that routinely exercises violence against poor children at school. At the same time, the making and tracing of such geographies and knowledges resists casual explanation and McLaren rewrote *Corridors* to bring a theoretical lens to his earlier journalistic documentations. In an interview for Mike Pozo (2003) in *Dissident Voices*, McLaren reflected:

> I eventually grew to dislike the book—disgusted perhaps is a better term—but felt it was useful in publishing here in the US on condition that it be accompanied by an extended self-critique. The problem that I had with the original book is that it was a journalistic description of my experience with little analysis so that it could have been—and was—read as blaming the students and their families for the violence that permeated their lives both inside and outside of the school context. That all changed when I republished the book as Life in Schools, with an extended leftist analysis, and the book gradually became more politically radical and more theoretically nuanced with each edition (there have been four so far).

To his credit, McLaren's groundbreaking book *Life in Schools* was recently listed as one of the 12 most significant books written by a foreign author in the field of educational theory, policy and practice by an international panel of experts assembled by the Moscow School of Social and Economic Sciences; other writers named by the panel include Paulo Freire, Ivan Illich, Basil Bernstein, and Pierre

Bourdieu. Rebutting his conservative critics who exploited his narrative to construct teachers and students as "problematic" and "deviant," McLaren challenged this deficit discourse that shifts blame for problems to do with "the system" onto its victims.

With regards to Marx's theory of alienation, McLaren (2003a) has "always taken a stand against the abuses of capitalism" and "supported emancipatory politics" (p. 3). Without ever loosing sight of his overall socialist perspective, McLaren undertook a careful critical engagement with the post-modern left because of his interest in issues to do with the politics of difference and representation (Cole & Hill, 1995). Paying a debt to British Marxists such as Mike Cole, Dave Hill and Glenn Rikwoski, McLaren recognized that the privatized spheres of left postmodernism represented a social dead end. Immersed in the radical political culture of Los Angeles (Pruyn & Huerta-Charles, 2005), he started reading the work of British Marxists such as the HillCole Group and became acquainted with the writings of Raya Dunayevskaya, which is evident in his writing, particularly in the latter editions of *Life in Schools*.

Enlarged by Marxist theory, the fourth edition of *Life in Schools* is buoyed by McLaren's personal anecdotes and the full cataloging of data that surge from every page. Using Marx's humanized materialism as the starting point for a "philosophy of praxis," McLaren (2003a) blends theory with biography and history at the intersection of where students/teachers construct themselves subjectively within schools to offer a real-and-imagined "pedagogy of hope" (Friere's words); or as he prefers to term it, following Paula Allman (1999, 2001), a "revolutionary critical pedagogy." McLaren achieves this by providing the reader with both the explanatory concepts (class, ideology and exploitation) and empirical tools to simultaneously understand and intervene in emerging global structures that are increasingly organizing and regulating everyday practices of schooling. By situating this critique (which is at the core of a revolutionary critical pedagogy) not in the space of the self but in the site of the social, McLaren puts the ideology of capitalist knowledge industry permanently on the defensive. According to McLaren and Farahmandpur (2005), this will require students, as social and historical agents, to "gain control over both their intellectual and physical labour" (p. 180), which includes figuring out ways to "pry theory away from the academics and incorporate it in educational practice" (McLaren, 2003a, p. 189). This is intrinsically important to a revolutionary critical pedagogy, which is not so much about liberal notions of "empowerment" but rather collective action and "power" directed toward "the abolition of class society and the realization of a socialist alternative" (McLaren, 2003a, p. 191).

Certainly, in *Che Guervara, Paulo Freire, and the Pedagogy of Revolution* (2000), McLaren makes clear that his leave of absence from Marxism was temporary. Grappling with the historical pedagogy of Che and Freire, he explores the question of how to transform the spontaneous potential of class-consciousness into actual proletarian class-consciousness. At this moment, he argues that the key is the development of class consciousness that is both coordinated and principled with regard to the knowledge produced about the material conditions and limits within which revolutionary struggle must be fought. While the different tactical problems to building socialist organizations in each country will need to be confronted, "organic intellectuals," to take advantage of Gramsci's use of the term, should not underestimate the accumulated political knowledge embedded in the collective capacity of diverse spontaneous elements.

What should not be forgotten here is that Marxism is not a disembodied idea but is rather the subject "both of *sensuous* consciousness and of *sensuous* need" (Marx, 1988, p. 111). With his emphasis on "de-fetishizing theoretical (of the mind) categories" (De Angelis, 1996, p. 10), Marx (1978) argues that people's understanding of the world is not autonomous from the "*immediate* sensuous environment" or material conditions that make an individual human (p. 158). This is central to Marx's notion of praxis as sensuous beings are "able to act upon these senses" (individually and collectively) to change the world (De Angelis, 1996, p. 11). In the real world struggles of real world victims, proletarian ideas are built upon an extended questioning of "the way things are" as well as theories and ideas from outside an

individual's existing belief system. Moreover, at this critical juncture of repression that has swept right in behind a whole juggernaut of war and terror, such opposing ideas at the level consciousness are expressions of the limits of an era.

Eschewing intellectual vanguardism (like his mentor Paulo Freire), McLaren argues that a revolutionary pedagogy acts as an antidote to political alienation and defeatism. Given that capitalist control of subjectivity and consciousness is never total, it does so by making the ideas and intentions that are censored in capitalist society more active through acts of radical critique that are dialectically grounded in praxis. McLaren (2000) writes:

> Critical pedagogy constitutes a dialectical and dialogical process that instantiates a reciprocal exchange between teachers and students-an exchange that engages in the task of reframing, refunctioning, and reposing the question of understanding itself, bringing into dialectical relief the structural and relational dimensions of knowledge and its hydra-headed power/knowledge relations. Revolutionary pedagogy goes further still. It puts knowledge/power relations on a collision course with their own internal contradictions; such a powerful and often unbearable collision gives birth not to an epistemological resolution at a higher level but rather to a provisional glimpse of a new society freed from the bondage of the past, a vision in which the past reverberates in the present, standing at once outside the world and beside the world, in a place of insight where the subject recognizes she is in a world and subject to it, yet moving through it with the power to name it extopically so that hidden meanings can be revealed in the accidental contingencies of the everyday. Revolutionary pedagogy creates a narrative space set against the naturalized flow of the everyday, against the daily poetics of agency, encounter, and conflict, in which subjectivity is constantly dissolved both to an affirmation of the world through naming it, and an opposition to the world through unmasking and undoing the practices on concealment that are latent in the process of naming itself. (p. 185)

Here, as always, it is important to guard against any pre-conceived notions about how to build the struggle against exploitation and oppression. Grounded in shared experience, discussion and investigation, revolutionary critical pedagogy must be constantly reinvented. At the same time, McLaren and Farahmanpur (2005c) argue that its praxis should not be limited to, in the words of Marx and Engels (1850), "the smoothing over of class antagonisms but the abolition of classes, not the improvement of existing society, but the foundation of a new one" (p. 61).

Toward a Pedagogy of Revolution

Holding up a carnival sideshow mirror to bourgeois society, McLaren has acted as our anti-tour guide of capitalist schooling for the past twenty years. Critical pedagogy, immortalized by Paulo Freire and rebooted by Peter McLaren, is actually more than 30 years old. According to McLaren (2003a) there are many different strands to critical pedagogy (libertarian, radical and liberationist) and revolutionary critical pedagogy is a recent materialist intervention in the struggle for socialism within the field of regular and adult education. As demonstrated by McLaren (2000, 2003a), the ancestral DNA of revolutionary critical pedagogy reveals that it emerged out of disillusionment with critical pedagogy, which was caught in the quicksand of liberal/deconstructive/post Marxist approaches to social change (Martin, 2005). Even today McLaren (2000) reminds us:

> The conceptual net known as critical pedagogy has been cast so wide and at time so cavalierly that it has come to be associated with anything dragged up out of the troubled and infested waters of educational practice, from classroom furniture organized in a "dialogue friendly" circle to "feel good" curricula designed to increase students' self image. It has become, in other words,

repatriated by liberal humanism and cathected to a combination of middle-brow, town-hall meeting entrepreneurship and Sunday School proselytizing. Its multicultural education equivalent can be linked to a politics of diversity that includes "tolerating difference" through the celebration of "ethnic" holidays and themes such as Black History Month and Cinco de Mayo. If the term 'critical pedagogy' is refracted onto the stage of current educational debates, we have to judge it as having been largely domesticated in a manner that many of its early exponents, such as Brazil's Paulo Freire, so strongly feared. (pp. 97-98)

In contrast, McLaren and Farahmandpur (2005d) describe some of the foundational principles of a "revamped" critical pedagogy:

First, critical pedagogy must be a collective process that involves utilizing a dialogical (i.e., Freirean) learning approach. Second, critical pedagogy has to be *critical*; that is, it must locate the underlying causes of class exploitation and economic oppression…Third, critical pedagogy must be profoundly systematic in the sense that it is guide by Marx's dialectical method of inquiry, which begins with the "real concrete" circumstances of the oppressed masses…Next, it reconstructs and makes the social world intelligible by transforming and translating theory into concrete social and political activity. Fourth, critical pedagogy should be participatory. It involves building coalitions among community members, grassroots movements, church organizations, and labor unions. Finally, critical pedagogy needs to be a creative process by integrating elements of popular culture (i.e., drama, music, oral history, narratives) as educational tools that can successfully raise the level of political consciousness of students and teachers. (p. 9)

As mentioned earlier, McLaren's work underwent a change of direction in 1990s. Tired of the tepid and reformist politics of the postmodern Left, he was very much influenced by a resurgence of interest in the relationship between Marxism and pedagogy. Forging new relationships with Marxist academics and activists both inside and outside of the university, he began to bring Marxism, class struggle and politics back into the heart of education. Breaking free from the shackles of institutional patronage and the social universe of capital, McLaren argues that a revolutionary critical pedagogy "sets as its goal the decolonization of subjectivity as well as its material basis in capitalist social relations" (Rizvi, 2002). Elaborating upon Rikowski's (2000, 2001) work on Marx's value theory of labour, McLaren (2003a) argues that, "class struggle occurs *intersubjectively* as well as collectively as a clash of contradictory forces and drives within the social totality" (p. 30). To clarify this point, McLaren (2003a) cites Rikowski (2001):

The class relation runs through our personhood. It is internal to us; we are labor, and we are capital. We are social beings incorporating antithetical social drives and forces. This fact sets off contradictions within our lives, and their solution can only come from the disintegration of ourselves as both capital and labor and our emergence as a new, non-capitalised life-form. (p. 30)

Given, as Rikowski (2002) puts it, that the underlying contradictions of our social existence "screw us up, individually and collectively", he argues that we need to overcome our alienation within the labor process itself by resisting our self-reduction to the "peculiar" form labour power takes as human capital under the alien and hostile powers of money and the state (Marx, 1967, p. 167). Rikowski (McLaren & Rikowski, 2001) writes:

We require a *politics of human resistance*. This is a politics aimed at resisting the reduction of our personhoods to labor power (human-capital), thus resisting the capitalization of humanity. This politics also has a truly negative side: the slaying of the contradictions that screw-up,

bamboozle and depress us. However, only collectively can these contradictions constituting personhood (and society: there is no individual/society duality) be abolished. Their termination rests on the annihilation of the social relations that generate them (capitalist social relations), the social force that conditions their development within social phenomena, including the 'human' (capital) and the dissolution of the substance of capital's social universe (value). A collective, political project of human resistance is necessary, and this goes hand-in-hand with *communist politics*, a positive politics of social and human re-constitution.

In view of all this, a revolutionary critical pedagogy, which ties individual human development (the interior life of the subject) to forms of collective engagement aimed at social transformation, is designed to resist the "capitalization" of subjectivity" (McLaren, 2003a, p. 25). All that has been possible is to sketch the most general about McLaren's (2005) theory of the subject but as it relates to pedagogy and those trapped in lives of desperation and hope, it is worth quoting him at length:

> Revolutionary critical pedagogy must speak not only to those already far along the path of dissent but to those wayfaring citizens who live Icarus-like lives of ascents and descents yet whose optimism of the will remains a constant source of strength, who seek ballast in the swirling eddy of political decision making but fear losing their faculties of critique, who desire to transform the sociopolitical terrain but lack a systematic language of social analysis, who outflank despair with steady resolve but long for more opportunities to build alliances around a coherent philosophy of praxis, who refuse to take refuge in some unnamable space, some fertile void or sublime metaphysical retreat where fungible epiphanies replace concrete struggles to transform the social relations of production, who resist official advice from the plenipotentiary of the state in favor of reflecting critically upon their own historical experiences, who refuse to turn the seminar room to a self-serving precinct of reflection safely ensconced from the absurdity of human existence and the turbid and restless sea of contemporary struggles against capital, who avoid the pitfalls of religious triumphalism but who long for inner revelation in life-affirming communal settings with like-minded citizens. (p. 66-67)

Still, what does revolutionary critical pedagogy mean to the average reader? Except in rare exceptions, the audience of this literature is limited to a mostly in-group academic readership, even if it appears in high profile teacher education journals or is published by respected academic publishing houses. This is perhaps one of the greatest criticisms leveled against the work of Marxist educators in the academy: that it has had little impact in the public policy domain (which in any case is reproductive rather than transformative). Despite such deeply unflattering sentiments, this is a static and one-dimensional view of the situation, which forgets the broad and flexible work being conducted by Marxists such as McLaren and an army of "barefoot" educators in the leftward moving layer of social movement organizations to expose workers at the point of production and all spheres of culture to a revolutionary viewpoint in the developing world situation. Recognizing that public opinion is deeply divided and that the crisis ahead looms far deeper for U.S. imperialism, Marxist educators such as McLaren and his colleagues are laying the practical groundwork for the possibility of a revolutionary situation by "stretching out" a Marxist line into various social movements through what Lenin (1975) termed, "political exposures." These political exposures are focused on "living examples" of the "shameful outrages" committed by the bourgeoisie and are organized to bring the "inner workings" of capitalism into question (pp. 43). In Lenin's political pamphlet *What is to be Done?,* he argued that this form of "all-round political agitation" constitutes "a comprehensive political education" that ought to focus on social questions and world events in the most varied spheres of everyday life and thought (p. 57). He insisted:

> The consciousness of the working class cannot be genuine class consciousness unless the workers learn, from concrete, and above all from topical political facts and events to observe

every other social class in *all* the manifestations of its intellectual, ethical and political life; unless they learn to apply in practice the materialist estimate of *all* aspects of the life and activity of *all* classes, strata, and groups of the population. (p. 42)

What matters here is that the development of working class struggle will depend upon the conscious ability of the proletariat " to respond to *all* cases of tyranny, oppression, violence, and abuse" (p. 42).

Whether through teach-ins, seminars, on-line journals, flyers, newspapers or pamphlets, McLaren believes that the ongoing cycle of dialogue, reflection and critique produced by these "vivid exposures" will have a tremendous impact on the different class forces operating in the field today by breaking down the class structure of bourgeois thought, thereby creating the necessary pedagogical conditions for the development of revolutionary thought and a whole repertoire of practices capable of bringing people consciously into motion against this oppressive system ("Support Every Outbreak," 1980). Does revolutionary critical pedagogy seem utopian? Only, as Peter McLaren reminds us, if we blindly or cynically accept as a matter of fact the rule of capitalism and its tyranny of exploitative relations that systematically deny human beings the full exercise of their creative capabilities and potential.

Numero Uno: Dirty Thirty

A period of economic crisis and political shocks such as the one unfolding now under the corrupt Bush gang undermines the authority of bourgeois institutions. It is symptomatic of the present period that it opened with the bourgeois campaign to destroy the class struggle left wing within bourgeois institutions. Whilst working conditions are substantially different for academics, engaging in this kind of political work is not without its dangers. Without shopping for heroes, McLaren was recently attacked by Andrew Jones (a UCLA graduate and former UCLA Republican and research assistant to David Horowitz) and his right sympathizers who treat McLaren's writings as an anthrax-like deadly contagion that must not, under any circumstances, be inflicted on an unsuspecting populace, particularly students (Fassbinder, 2006; Younge, 2006). It is a sad fate for the United States when sporting a Che tattoo makes you a terrorist suspect alongside Muslims and Arabs who are perceived as evil, dangerous and second-class citizens. Refusing to accommodate and pander to the far-right fringe, McLaren's willingness to question authority and speak out in favour of socialism earned him the number one ranking on Jones' *Bruin Alumni Association* Dirty Thirty List, which gained international attention. Although McLaren's work is controversial and has made him a target of modern-day Communist witch-hunts he draws inner and collective strength from his international support network within the larger mass workers movement. What needs to be understood is that this McCarthyite-style campaign is part of a much larger drive by rightist forces linked to the state to drive the left out of universities by blacklisting professors considered "unpatriotic" ("As US Bombs," 2001; Jones, 2006). Recognizing that the ruling class will do anything to protect its privileges and profits, McLaren has denounced this current wave of right-wing repression in his discussions with workers, trade unionists and students in workplaces and communities both in the United States and around the world.

As the neo-liberal economy transforms the university into a corporation that reduces education to the status of an alienable commodity (intellectually and institutionally), McLaren is rare beacon of social conscience and left-wing political activism in a new dark age of totalitarianism, fascism and terrorism. As Trotsky (1939, 1940) noted, fascism and parliamentary democracy are merely two different ways to administer capitalism. From the point of view of capital, parliamentary democracy is the preferred way to regulate conflicts between different classes, groups and strata in society. However, adopted as a last grasp, fascism provides the state with a whole arsenal of weapons to suppress political dissent during a period of economic crisis. Although we cannot speak of fascism in the same way that

Trotsky used the term, over the past couple of years we have witnessed the roll back of democratic rights and the emergence of the Homeland Security State, which adopts some aspects of fascism (anti-terrorist legislation, the development of electronic surveillance systems, National Identity Cards and the storing of biometric data about citizens) (McLaren & Martin, 2004). Always on the look out for internal and external enemies as a manifestation of its fear, the new totalitarianism that rules our world today is driven by imperialism and finance capital. Having entered a long and agonizing period of decline, imperialism, as the highest and most degenerate phase of capitalism, rules the world through the production of media images and projections of raw power, at the expense of the environment and millions of human and nonhuman lives. Here, capitalism no longer has a progressive role to play and is characterized by the hammer blows of fascism at home and military aggression abroad (McLaren & Martin, 2004).

Like Lenin, who never troubled himself with the etiquette of the salon (Trotsky, 1937), McLaren's razor-sharp lines cut through the decorum to expose the writhing mental and social effects of United States policies. Accordingly, McLaren pays special consideration to the role of the bourgeois state in pursuing neo-liberal policies that aim to shore up the crisis of accumulation and declining rate of profit. Hopelessly addicted to the flow of capital, the bourgeoisie has flourished from the exploitation of the proletariat, as the boundaries between the "haves" and "have-nots" are reinscribed, especially along lines of "race" and gender. Acknowledging that class division in society is derived from the definitive economic relations which enable the exploiting class to appropriate the labour of the exploited, McLaren (cited in Pozo 2003) suggests that students and teachers ask the following question: "What is the maximum damage you can do to the rule of capital?"

Given that McLaren is not afraid to get his hands dirty, his recent work is informed by the Marxist-Humanist idea that says both philosophical theorizing and social activism should be dialectically intertwined. With regards to what he and Ramin Farahmandpur (1999a, 1999b, 2000) refer to as "praxis-orientated pedagogy," they argue that reflection (and knowledge) arises from the struggle over contradictions that come up in the various realms of human practice (e.g., the gap between the American Dream and institutionalized racism). Of course, theory (as an idealized version of the world) must be tested against the experience of the mass movement and in the course of class struggle (Martin, 2005). In this sense, practice is not only the source of ideas and consciousness but also a criterion of the truth of an idea (Martin, lisahunter & McLaren, 2006). That outrages are committed and that a reign of state terror persists means that there are going to be obstacles in the path of the workers struggle for understanding. With this in mind, the use of sophisticated and intellectually hard-won theories to consciously guide difficult and complicated class-struggle questions on strategy and tactics is central in the midst of capitalist decay on a whole scale.

Debunking the Myth that there is No Alternative

As McLaren has made clear in his recent political work, the current "War on Terrorism" signifies that the inherent contradictions of imperialism have now raised themselves in the form of the historic alternative of what Rosa Luxemburg referred to as "socialism or barbarism" (Martin, 2004). Just look at what has happened over the past five years as what Lenin referred to as "moribund capital" resorts to increasing state intervention and imperialist war to resolve the disruptions and crises that erupt from the falling rate of profit (Lenin, 1977). Amidst a sea of subaltern discontent, McLaren argues that as the contradictions of the imperialist system worldwide come to the fore, bringing forth spontaneous outbursts of protest and rebellion, opportunities for revolutionary work are opening up. Still, at a political level, it is hard to ignore the fact that despite recent developments such as the outpouring of protest against the war in Iraq, the present situation is not one characterized by vast numbers of people engaged in active debate and action against a social system, which is the cause of barbarity that is descending upon the entire planet. Depending upon the country, part of the problem is that symptomatic of capitalism's degeneration, the ruling class and its supporting state apparatuses have created new networked command

structures to crush, pulverize and atomize the consciousness of workers in a frantic bid to hold society in a state of equilibrium (Martin, 2004).

Despite such blows against the consciousness of the working class, McLaren argues that capitalism will not last forever (Martin, 2004). While it is easy to lose sight of hope in the face of capitalist authority, rather than view the current situation as static and bleak, McLaren urges us to see every outbreak of protest and rebellion as a training ground in preparation for revolutionary opportunities in the future. Faced with a new world situation, this will require tactical flexibility, both political and organizational. Clearly, there is a lot of debate about how to build revolutionary organizations and no blueprint or recipe exits. Although the time is not "ripe for revolution" in the home-citadels of imperialism, we are living in a period of opportunity when the movement of the working class can learn from the rich experience of other countries and forces, particularly in oppressed capitalist countries in Asia, Latin America and Africa (Percy & Lorimer, 2001, p. 11). More work needs to be done to understand this, but the conditions leading up to revolutionary crisis in advanced capitalist countries are also being prepared for by the thousands of minor skirmishes and struggles engaged in today (Martin, 2005; Percy & Lorimer, 2001). For example, over a period of ten weeks in early 2006, youth and workers across France transformed mass mobilizations against the introduction of the "first job contract"-known as the CPE-a youth employment law that makes it legal for employers to sack workers under the age of 26 without notice or compensation, into an indefinite strike (Clancy, 2006; Smith, 2006).

The point here is not to fall prey to economism, pragmatism or sectariansim but to remain flexible and ready in any period to consciously intervene in class struggle, both ideologically and practically, by responding to the demands of various social movements for political and educational action, whether in small activities to establish neighborhood protest campaigns or in vast mobilizations to establish or re-establish internationalist organization (Martin, 2004). While the process of building socialism is not a straight line there are grounds for hope. Within the most visible social struggles to oppose capitalism, militant and leftward moving tendencies are developing and it is becoming increasingly clear that a new layer of radicalized activists is very interested in taking real steps toward left renewal/regroupment.

There is much that has not been said about McLaren's work but I can say it is driven by a deep sense of passion, hope and revolutionary love. At the heart of these attitudes is a political approach to every aspect of McLaren's work, which is part of a larger collective effort. As a former student of McLaren, I can attest that he is never ashamed to make himself vulnerable and expose his heart socially. Perhaps it is for this reason that his revolutionary message is getting such a great response. For some strange reason, academics are supposed to adopt a cool and distant approach to their students yet I am grateful that McLaren was never sufficiently detached. Over the past eight years, I have felt his daily gestures of care as well as his great love for the planet's inhabitants, which are grounded in his supportive networks that provide unhampered opportunities for growth and solidarity. Here, McLaren operates within a collective framework, helping others to lead, encouraging his students to do their best, and taking pleasure and pride in the success and victories of other comrades and the mass workers movement as a whole. A hundred and fifty years ago, Marx gave revolutionary hope its lineage but he also wrote that ideas by themselves could not change society. Adopting a long view of history, McLaren's main argument is that destroying capitalism is more a matter of reconstituting our internal and social relations than it is a matter of propagating a particular set of ideas. Against the backdrop of an intolerable world that can only be described as a "war zone," fighting the outrages of ruling class will require a new relation between theory and practice (Hudis, 2003). More to the point, a revolutionary struggle that brings with it revolutionary love, will require academics to develop a more reflexive culture of orientating toward working class communities (Martin, 2005). In short, as right-wing attacks escalate to further enrich an increasingly isolated and tiny layer of the population, a critical pedagogy that is

grounded in the material struggles and interests of the working class is both a humanitarian and revolutionary act.

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The Possibilities of Transformation: Critical Research and Peter McLaren

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Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to unveil how Peter McLaren's revolutionary brand of pedagogy, multiculturalism, and research colored my two-year qualitative research study, which unearthed twenty White female future teachers' experiences and perceptions in relationship to computing technology and male-centered computing culture. His ideas positioned me to see beyond technocentric discourses generated by political, economic, and education leaders, as I was enabled to pinpoint how larger social relations of power perpetuate computing technology as a "boy's toy," designed to amass wealth and power for elite White male corporate leaders at the expense of the vast majority of global citizens. His scholarship also proved to be a source courage and inspiration. It prodded me to believe my research project has the potency to bludgeon unjust practices that perpetuate women's and girls' technological reticence, fuel the corporate takeover of teacher education, and perpetuate Western imperialism, environmental degradation, and hopelessness across the globe. Not coincidentally, the critical study served as an educative space for several pre-service teachers. They uncovered how several constitutive forces merge with unjust practices to create women's and girls' computing reticence as well as perpetuate women's marginalization in schools, the business world, and in other social contexts. They appear to possess the critical mindset and courage to create classroom practices bent on forging an egalitarian society.

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The Possibilities of Transformation: Critical Research and Peter McLaren

For the past decade, Peter McLaren has profoundly influenced my development as a teacher educator, learner, scholar and citizen. His work has pushed me to examine the social world through many intellectual domains, such as critical theory, critical pedagogy, critical multiculturalism, critical ethnography, and critical media studies, for the purpose of excavating systemic inequalities that create hate, violence, and oppression across the globe. Most recently, his scholarship has deepened my understanding of how neoliberalism, deindustrialization, and economic globalization have led to the ascendancy of market imperatives over democratic impulses in all facets of social life. Particularly, within my own lived world, I have turned to Peter's scholarship to untangle how the commercial ethos at my current institution has influenced my teaching, relationships with students and colleagues, and vision towards the functions of schooling. His bold critique of market-driven educational approaches to teaching and learning gives me the courage to voice my opposition and resistance to this reactionary trend and the role it plays in gutting the progressive and democratic elements within public institutions (Porfilio & Yu, 2006).

In my classroom, I employ Peter's revolutionary scholarship to explore with my students the "conditions making possible the growth of unprecedented globalization, U.S. imperial domination, the spread of militarism, and deepening economic crises" (McLaren, 2005, p. x). My students also examine *Life in Schools* (2006) for the purposes of understanding how unjust social, cultural and economic practices ensure inner-city, marginalized students are set up to fail in schools and society, to become familiar with critical education theory, and to recognize the immediacy to contest and destroy Whiteness (McLaren, 2003). They also gain inspiration and hope through Peter's reconstituted, Marxist-inspired pedagogy. Unlike many critical educators on the Left, McLaren (2005, p.75) provides an alternative social vision for educators that moves "education reform past its log-jam of social amelioration into the untapped waters of social transformation." By reflecting upon McLaren's revolutionary project, future teachers are aware, often for the first time, of the urgency to ratchet a revolutionary agenda for their classrooms. They believe their pedagogical projects, along with similar educational practices engendered by schoolteachers across the globe, have the potency to subvert social relations of oppression as well as eliminate "economic exploitation, racism, sexism, and homophobia" (p.105).

Beyond the confines of the graduate seminar, Peter's theoretical insights surrounding the way racial, class, gender, and sexual forms of domination have historically developed and are perpetuated in today's society have positioned me, as a young scholar, to conduct research that joins the ongoing "process of critical world making, guided by the shadowed outline of a dream of a world less conditioned by misery, suffering of deceit" (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2000, p. 303). The purpose of this essay is to capture how McLaren's brand of *revolutionary multiculturalism* helped shape my two-year qualitative research study, which unearthed twenty White female pre-service teachers' beliefs and experiences surrounding computing technology and phallocentric computing culture.[1]

In the sections that follow, I will illustrate how harnessing McLaren's major ideals helped me see beyond technocentric discourses generated by politicians, business leaders, government officials, and school administrators, which position computing technology as an omnipotent artifact, allegedly having the power in and of itself to improve society as well as the power to wash away pervasive social ills, such as poverty, racism and sexism. By taking inventory of how "ideological inscriptions and multiply-organized discourses of desire" merge together with systemic barriers, I untangled how computing technology and culture functions to perpetuate "existing hegemonic arrangements" between the sexes (McLaren, 1995, p.104).

I will also provide several "snapshots" from the study, which consists of participants' alternative narratives, to detail how the research project was linked to McLaren's and several other critical scholars' view of critical inquiry. According to Kincheloe and McLaren (2000, p.291), qualitative research is deemed "transformative" when it is "connected to an attempt to confront injustice of a particular society or public sphere within society." With the globalization of capital "turning the world into a global toilet of toxic waste while adding legions to Marx's reserve army of labor," McLaren believes critical researchers must up their radical ante. To eliminate institutional forms of oppression, their lens must examine how social relationships and dominant ideologies are colored by unfettered capitalism (McLaren, 2005, p. 20).

In this vein, the study was, indeed, *political;* it served as an educative site for several of my participants and for me. Several future teachers left the study with a newfound understanding of how entrenched systemic barriers, gendered stereotypes, and political, cultural, and social processes surrounding technology perpetuate many women's and girls' computing reticence in the business world, schools, and the wider society, while concomitantly coming to a deeper understanding of how their own life is mediated by patriarchal structures of power. It is a mindset that will allow them to surreptitiously deconstruct how their own experiences as well as the experiences of women across the globe are structured by unjust social and economic practices. For me, the future teachers' narratives made me more aware of the socio historical forces that breed sexism in today's society. They still push me to reflect upon the unearned gendered privilege I garner by living in this unjust society, and remind me, that I must strive towards extinguishing systemic inequalities within my own social circles as well as formulate additional critical research projects that will serve as a springboard to tackle institutional forms of oppression against women and girls across the globe (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2000).

Computing Technology and Its Hegemonic Functions

Over the past decade, citizens across North America have been saturated by technocentric discourses in the wider society. The variety of texts construct new forms of technology as being inherently good for society (Bromley, 1995; Bromley, 1998). Bill Gates and other high-tech corporate leaders have (mis)informed the public by claiming the Internet is an omnipotent force. It is allegedly imbued with the power to "break down barriers between (and within) nations, opening up economies and democratizing societies" (as cited in Hunt 2004, p.1). Political leaders have also put forth romantic claims about computing technology. Five years ago, Al Gore suggested to his constituents that computer generated technology should be considered the "magic bullet," the artifact that will finally ensure poor communities have the power to educationally and economically "compete with more fortunate kids" (Kellman, 2000). Likewise, the British Prime Minister Tony Blair has put forth similar false claims about the potency of computing technology, stating IT centers have the power to eliminate poverty in the "poorest sections" of Great Britain. He is implying, incorrectly, there is a necessary connection between poverty and ignorance (Henwood, Wyatt, Miller, & Senker, 2000).

By examining Peter's work, we see the claims made by business and political leaders, namely that computing technology will eliminate social ills, ameliorate education, and bring prosperity across the globe, are specious. Information technologies are social artifacts that are affected by the social context of use. When they are "embedded heart and soul in the capitalist marketplace," they can only exacerbate alienation for citizens across the globe (Rizvi, 2002).

At today's historical juncture, computers serve as the linchpin of transnational capitalists' desire to liquidate their organizations, social relations, and ideologies to the so-called Third World regions. The globalization of capital has led to the disappearance of "good jobs" in most "developed" nations, while at the same time, creating jobs that imperil many global citizens, in less "developed" countries, to toil in the midst of poverty, pollution, and hopelessness (Aguirre, 2001). As McLaren makes it clear, digitized

information systems have sped up the "circulation and production" of capital, which has concentrated more wealth and power in hands of transnational corporate giants. Computers are used by the global aristocracy "to expand the free market in the interest of quick profits, to increase global production, to raise the level of exports in the manufacturing sector, and to intensify competition among transnational corporations" (Rizvi, 2002).

Narrowing the focus to how computing technology has influenced women's and girls' social status, we find it has done little to improve the quality of their lives. Despite popular perception, high-tech jobs created by corporate leaders have not cushioned the blow of the loss of manufacturing in North America; rather, over the past decade, the high-tech sector has also been dealt a "death blow" by transnational capitalists fixated on reducing labor costs to yield more profits. During the 1990s, corporate leaders and government officials espoused that the computer would provide limitless economic opportunities for women. The "technological genie" proved to be fanciful (Scott-Dixon, 2004).

Corporate leaders instituted the processes of automation, integration and networking, which have resulted in the "massive erosion, deskilling and demeaning of work" (Millar, 1998). Sophisticated computer technologies generally functioned to eliminate or degrade jobs staffed by women, rather than providing well compensated work that is performed at home "or in the paperless office" (p.11). On another pernicious level, the Internet functions as a "breeding ground for the exploitation" of women and children (Pehar, 2003, p.174). Tech-savvy entrepreneurs have used cyberspace to propagate the globalized male-order bride industry, "extend the breadth and depth in pornographic communications and other sexually explicit activities," and ensnare more and more impoverished women and children, particularly within sections of Asia, in the sex tourism business (Rajagopal and Bojin, 2004).

There is also a clear demarcation in relation to how women and men harness computers. In the West, women do get to use computers as much, if not more, than men; however, the way in which they use the technology, within most social contexts, gives them less power. Women generally use computers in "nonexpert" jobs, for the purpose of allowing the computer to get "*its* work done" (Bromley 2001, p.36).They are forced to "manipulate text, images, or information" for businesses controlled by men, rather than using the computer for their own ends (Weinstein 1998, p.94).

Outside the West, women are almost absent from traditionally male-dominated fields, such as science, mathematics and engineering. For instance, Akubue (2001) details how women in Third World countries are typically relegated to stereotypical feminine duties-household management, reproductive and nurturing, and food production. Dispossessed women and their children are also less likely to receive an education, but unfortunately are far more likely to live in poverty than their male counterparts. Specifically, when it comes to computing technology, the picture is very bleak for women and girls who live in so-called Third World societies. In developing nations, individual computer ownership is very uncommon. For instance, only 6% of the people in Ghana own computers, as compared with 78% in the United States (Irwin, 2000). Most of the people who own computers are men. Therefore, just as it is often the case with many other social and economic activities, women are generally playing either a nonexistent or passive role that blocks them from power when it comes to computing.

The Politics of Signification and Other Unjust Practices: Perpetuating Women's Technological Reticence

As captured in the brief overview of computing technology and its hegemonic functions at today's historical moment, computing technology is a key conduit harnessed by powerful social actors to garner more wealth, control territories, and reap power. It should not be viewed as an emancipatory device, which by itself, breeds symmetrical relations of power between the sexes across the

globe. However, women's computing relationship has the potential to be altered. We must reflect upon how larger social forces merge with systemic barriers to generate this unjust social practice. Echoing McLaren (1995, p. 111), we must also believe unjust practices can be subverted, even in a social framework predicated on the accumulation of wealth and power, provided we believe society is an "irreducible indeterminacy; the social field is always open" and we "explore its fissures, fault lines, gaps and silences."

To eliminate the gendered computing gap, it is imperative to deconstruct how women's technological subjugation is currently engendered in specific, micro-level social sites across the globe. It is also imperative to throw light on how various forms of signification, in several discursive fields, structure women's computing "difference." The debilitating discourses are often normalized and remain unchallenged by most social actors. The cloaking of how "difference" is inextricably linked to "social conditions of domination and subordination" propels relationships of domination over democratic, humane relationships, including asymmetrical computing relationships between the sexes (McLaren & Torres, 1999, p.54).

Male-Centered Gaming Culture

Over the past decade, a variety of new "teaching machines" have reinscribed the notion, to peoples across the globe, that technology and power are associated with maleness. Video and computer games have become one of the most persuasive forms of entertainment amongst boys and men (Cassell and Jenkins, 1998; Jenson, 1999; Margolis & Fisher, 2003; Agosto, 2004). The video game industry has witnessed its sales mushroom over the past five years. In 1999, it has been estimated that consumers purchased 7 billion dollars in video games (Huntemann, 2000). This figure seems quite pale compared to the 23 billion dollar of video game sales that transpired in 2003 (Slagle, 2005). The cadre of White, middle-class males who design these games came to realize young boys and men gravitate to spaces that are not fraught with the day-to-day uncertainties and anxieties that are all-pervasive in our physical and social lives (Sofia, 1998). One computer science student details clearly what attracts many disaffected boys and men to video or computer gaming (Margolis & Fisher, 2003):

> I would go to the computer lab and started playing computer games…And this is how I found my social interaction over the computer, so it was a lot more comfortable for me than dealing with people in school…I had difficulty just approaching someone and talking to them…It would be easier for me to talk over a computer. (p.41)

Computer and video gaming is also appealing to many boys and men because of the presence of male-centered sexual fantasies, violence, and adventures. They are particularly attracted to many hyper-masculine characters, who use weapons, large muscles, and aggressiveness to attract women as well as to deflect any obstacles that prevent them in their quest for power and sexual conquest. On the other hand, through video and computer video games, girls and women learn that their identities are not valued in our society. Research has shown that best-selling video games rarely contain female characters. One study states they appear only 16% of the time (Douglas, Dragiewicz, Manzano, & McMullin, 2002). When women are represented, they generally are constructed as docile, sexualized creatures, characters with large-breasts, who are thin, scantily dressed figures, relying upon the aggressive men to rescue them (Millar, 1998; Jenson, 1999; Huntemann, 2000).

Since most girls and women either find these games offensive or find them meaningless, they tend not to play video games. The video "gaming gap" that exists between boys and men and girls and women has unfortunately operated to perpetuate computing being associated with the masculine. The constant play that boys have with computer and video games leads them to view computing, at an early age, as a fun activity. Consequently, boys are much more likely to tinker with their "toy" to determine

how it works, whereas girls tend to view computers as a tool to complete a task, such as check email or type school assignments (Bryson & de Castell, 1998; Jenson & Brushwood Rose, 2003).

Some researchers have gone so far to state that boys' gaming conflates with their computer tinkering to lead parents, teachers, and students to believe that boys have a "magnetic attraction" to the masculine machine (Margolis and Fisher, 2003). This gendered stereotype is a guiding force in how boys and men and girls and women are positioned vis-à-vis computing technology. This is witnessed in many households across North America; it occurs when adult caregivers unconsciously assume boys have a penchant for playing with computers. They act on this gendered stereotype by placing computers in male-centered spaces, such as the boys' bedroom (Wenninger, 1998; Margolis and Fisher, 2003). This practice often ensures that boys will develop an early comfortableness and attachment to computing technology, while concomitantly ensuring that girls are on the computer "'sidelines" during their childhood and adolescent years (Jenson, 1999; Littleton & Hoyles, 2002; Cooper & Weaver, 2003; Margolis & Fisher, 2003).

Not only have video games configured computing as being associated with the masculine, but advertisements designed to sell gaming products and computers have represented gender in very conservative ways, locating the White male as the dominant computer user (Millar, 1998; Weinstein, 1998; Buchanan, 2000; Eubanks, 2000; Huntemann, 2000; Gorski & Clark, 2002). For instance, Weinstein analyzed advertisements in two magazines, *PC Home Journal* and *Amiga World* and found the images employed by White male advertisers catered to a White male audience. Men were depicted as actively engaged with computing technology, manipulating it for their own pleasure. Whereas women were totally left out of the computing picture, just as they are in most activities or occupations that confer wealth and status in the wider society. On the rare occasion that feminine images appear, they are design to position women as passive computer users, individuals who are incapable of using computers with skill or power.

The power of these images, within media culture, has prodded many women to completely resist using computers or partaking in computer culture. Some feel that the general masculine love for computer equipment is unhealthy for all members in the wider society, while others take exception to how women and children are demonized on the "Internet's Superhighway" through advertisements, movies, and music videos (Clerc, 1996; Sofia, 1998; Gorski & Clark, 2002). A study conducted by the American Association of University of Women (2000) suggests many teenage girls often deliberately resist developing a better understanding of computers because they believe boys' attachment to technology is a "waste of intelligence," a social activity that does little to improve society, but does much to create an outlet where boys have full-reign to assert male-centered qualities of violence, aggression and control.

Gender, Computers and Education

Over the past thirty years, women's computing experiences within the circles of education have been overwhelmingly negative. Computing now operates alongside many other social practices within schools to produce docile feminine bodies (Barrtky, 1990 as cited in Stepulevage, 2001). The collective magnitude of these practices ultimately ensures that elite males control schools and the wider society. Several studies illustrate that the dominant discourse in the wider society-the one that naturalizes "technological expertise" as being a male domain-surreptitiously seeps its way into schools to structure asymmetrical social relations between the sexes (Apple and Jungck, 1998; Bryson & de Castell, 1998; Huber and Schofield, 1998; Clegg, 2001; Stepulevage, 2001; Jenson & Brushwood Rose, 2003; Jenson, de Castell, & Bryson, 2003).

For instance, Bryson and de Castell (1998), in a two-year ethnographic study of elementary schools in British Columbia, show, at the micro-level, how "technical patriarchy" became inscribed in these schools after various school districts decided to usher computers into classrooms to ensure that

elementary students would begin to: develop technological skills that prepare them to work in our information-saturated economy, develop academic skills to pass high-stakes examinations, and develop intellectual skills to boost reading proficiency. The normalness of males being computer experts became ingrained within the schools as soon as the district constructed the technological curriculum. Men overwhelmingly were the powerbrokers in the district, which allowed their voices to color the district's technological-educational blueprint of: what should students learn, what educational standards must be met, and how much technology and resources are needed to meet these goals. Unfortunately, their technological hegemony only increased when the program was unpacked within the schools. Male teachers and technical employees were continually relied upon to repair computers within the computer labs, while a group of male administrators were called upon to tout the alleged benefits of this "progressive" program to the general public.

In the end, women found it arduous to work within this phallocentric environment. Many female teachers felt very alienated or incapable of gaining access to the cultural capitals that would allow them to be perceived as innovative technological pedagogues by their students, individuals who could guide them to become "computer experts." Partially their perception of technological "incompetence" stems from the fact that their university education as well as their teacher education failed to provide them with the needed skills to use technology within K-12 settings. Yet, equally important, their negative perception stems from being technologically subjugated by males who used the technology as an opportunity to control women's labor. They left female educators without the basic resources to keep the computer system up and running, positioned women so they lacked the needed skills to fix the technology, and kept women from playing an active role throughout this technological experiment.

Unfortunately, the technological "patriarchy" did not end its reach with the female teachers; instead, the masculine expertise over computing spilled over into the classroom. Many male administrators and female teachers allowed their perception of computing as a male domain to color their behavior with students. This possibly caused another generation of youth to internalize the asymmetrical nature of computing within schools and society. For instance, both male and female teachers constructed a different pedagogy for boys and girls; the boys learned how to understand the logic behind technological programming, whereas the girls were passively told to what to do. In fact, their teachers did not worry whether the girls gained an understanding of how or why technology works (Bryson, p. 560).

If we change the trajectory from Canada to the United States and from the elementary school to the middle school, we find that computing continues to be a male domain. Apple and Jungck (1998) went inside several classrooms and found that female teachers lacked the technological knowledge and skills to implement a computer-based curriculum, an instructional design aimed to produce computer literate youth. However, their perceived technological "incompetence" did not spur these women to reject the district's computer curriculum because the curriculum was handed to them "on a cart," an instructional design consisting of ditto sheets, videos, and cassettes that any person without technological skill could implement in the classroom (p.137).

Although some of the teachers were cognizant this form of curriculum denigrated their professional autonomy, served to promulgate the ideological imperatives set forth by businesses and governmental leaders, and blocked students from gaining a rich understanding of computers and male-centered computing culture, they, paradoxically, implemented it into the classroom. The curriculum provided them with extra time needed to "survive" the day-to-day rigors associated with contemporary schooling. The teachers used the two-week instructional unit to grade tests and paperwork that are now part of the growing intensification associated with the back-to-basics movement. In today's schools, this translates into teachers having a lack of time to have coffee or time to go to the bathroom, having

overcrowded classrooms, and having an often unbearable pressure to prepare students for taking high stakes examinations (p.134).

Looking beyond classrooms in North America, Stepulevage (2001) examines an array of research studies in Denmark, England, the Netherlands and Austria to determine how gender-technology relations are constructed within K-12 classrooms. In these various contexts, we find, again, that computing is considered a masculine domain, where female and male teachers allow boys to use the classroom as a breeding ground for demonstrating their expertise with technology (Stepulevage p. 328). However, unlike the studies presented above, we find that most women and girls *do* possess a similar computing expertise as their masculine counterparts. They feel compelled to acquire skills that will make them technologically literate because they believe that it is essential to possess these skills to amass wealth and power in our Information Society. Yet, these girls also feel compelled to keep their computer competency well hidden. If it is detected that they posses this attribute, they will face social reprisals from their teachers and peers for not embodying the "perfect image" of femaleness—that is, the intellectually submissive schoolgirl. On the other hand, if they play a submissive role vis-à-vis technology in the classroom, they will be positioned as "nice" and "good" in their inextricable web of social relationships within schools and the wider society, gaining social clout from their peers and teachers in the process (p.330).

Within the context of teacher education, female pre-service teachers' computing experiences have been overwhelming negative (Luther, 1997; Margerum-Leys & Marx, 1999). Teacher education programs have historically failed to prepare teachers to use computer-generated technology to improve their own lives, let alone prepare them to use this technology to help students improve their understanding of various people who live within our interconnected world. As teacher education programs become infiltrated by corporate logics and practices, female pre-service teachers are even less likely to be provided with the instructional support and critical coursework needed to understand: what is fueling the "digital divides" in schools and society, how schoolteachers can use computing technology as a communication device to eliminate the West and "Other" binary that fuels hatred, violence, and poverty across the globe, or how to implement classroom practices that help our youths understand the social nature of computing technology and its corresponding male-centered culture.

It would be incorrect, however, to paint a solely deterministic portrait of women's computing relationship. Not all women or girls find cyberspace alienating nor do they manipulate technology to reproduce hierarchal relations of oppression. Despite the various unjust practices and systemic forces, as detailed above, that marginalize many women and girls in relationship to technology, some women and girls have gained a sense of power from cyberspace and have employed the technology to remove unfair social, economic, and cultural practices. Young women are turning to the Internet to learn what causes institutional forms of inequalities in their own social world, to provide support to their female peers who are grappling within oppressive formations, such as racism, sexism, and poverty and to find role models who have the courage to confront oppressive practices that harm people across the globe. For example, *Teen Voices* is an online magazine and website that gives young women an outlet to share stories, produce artwork, and write original essays about issues that challenge them. In a recent issue of the magazine, young women have challenged "the mainstream media's harmful images of girls and women by providing an intelligent alternative" (www.teenvoices.com). There are also women who gain power in their lives and confront various forms of injustices by harnessing technology. Their computer network use has ranged "from mailing lists focused on women's issues, to coordinating of statewide lobbying efforts, to academic conference held online in order to include many participants lacking money or time to attend in person" (Bromley, 1995, p.32).

Emancipatory Insights: The Influence of Critical Research

Clearly, McLaren's scholarship provided the impetus to help me think beyond technocentric discourses generated by economic, political and educational leaders that give superhuman, ameliorative potency to computers. I was equipped to unpack the macro-level forces that merge with unjust micro-level processes to fuel the gendered computing gap in today's society as well as perpetuate computing technology as a draconian instrument used to empower elite White men at the expense of the vast majority of global citizens. Additionally, Peter's ideas provided the critical vision that anchored my two-year qualitative research study with twenty White female pre-service teachers. The *raison d'etre* of this project was political, designed to excavate systemic inequalities that perpetuate institutional forms of oppression. By brining pre-service teachers' voices to center of discussion, I was able to evaluate whether teacher education programs are preparing future teachers to have the critical courage and confidence to reconfigure the role computers play in the Western World, from being a tool used to empower elite White men that control women and children at a "distance" to being a tool that empowers people across the globe for the purpose of forging a society predicated on justice, democracy, and equality.

Although the vast majority of the participants' stories suggest the infiltration of market-driven programs and practices across the teacher education spectrum has thwarted future teachers from garnering the knowledge, insight, and confidence to generate pedagogical projects that will retool computing technology and its relationship to society, the study itself functioned as a reflexive space for my participants. The women-to-women talk, one-on-one interviews, and informal conversations, which took place for the course of one year, functioned as an educative space, where several future teachers uncovered the previously "covered" (Kincheloe, 2006); they politicized the sociopolitical processes and institutional practices that structure asymmetrical computing relationship between the sexes, recognized how the hegemonic, commercialized function of computing technology shaped their own lived experiences at home, work, and at teachers' college, and generated pedagogical visions that have the potency to guide our youth to engage in the same interrogation of the world. For example, one of my, participants, "Barbara" details how the most prevailing computing practices in the current social context are inextricably tied to amassing wealth and power for large-scale, transnational corporate giants. Barbara's comments reveal she is quite aware the trajectory of computing has taken a turn for the worse in today's society. She states:

B.P.: Has your computing use changed since 1989?

Barbara: Oh definitely. The culture has changed a lot, too. Then, the Internet was all education sites and .org sites. Actually, I much preferred it back then. I really don't like the rise in the .com stuff. I think it has cluttered the Internet with a lot of unnecessary stuff. I think I trusted the information back then, more then I do now. Before the tone was very much about sharing things, sharing information, sharing ideas, and sharing thoughts. You don't hear about shareware anymore, everything's become commercialized. I try to use it as a tool. My family accuses me as being a Ludditte.

Barbara recognizes the nature of the Internet has changed dramatically since she first used computers to complete a distance education course at the University of Waterloo. She postulates, correctly, that the Internet "was all education sites and .org sites during the late 1980s" (Thomas & Wyatt, 2000). She has witnessed how the "tone" of the Internet has changed dramatically over the past 15 years. Indeed, the tremendous commercialized growth of the Internet did not occur until 1993, when firms were given the power to access the World Wide Web via a graphical user interface. Many corporations soon "saw the advantages of having an 'online brochure,' which could advertise their goods and service around the

world at a low cost" (Thomas & Wyatt, 2000, p. 21). As demonstrated above, computers now serve as the linchpin, for transnational capitalists, to propagate an insatiable consumer culture across the globe. According to Barbara, this means the Internet is filled "with a lot of unnecessary stuff," and it is less about "sharing things, sharing information, and sharing thoughts."

In fact, it is estimated by the year 2007 "consumers will account for 60 percent of all Internet traffic generated" (Sarikakis, 2004). The Net functions less for educative purposes in today's society compared to when Barbara found computing "really exciting." She used computers in the late 1980s as a gateway to garner more education before her children "started public school." Through her children's eyes, Barbara details the powerful role the "virtual class" plays in structuring computer use today. She states:

> My house is filled with books. I love books and value books, reading books are always part of our bedtime routine and if they wanted my attention they (her children) knew to come to me with a book and I would get it and I would tell stories and we would read. I always made lots of opportunities for it and we had some stories he loved and I read them over and over again. He had a great sense of humor and was fun. He is now seventeen and he does not pick up a book for enjoyment at all. He reads, but reads what he finds on the computer when he surfs the Internet. So he finds ways to obtain certain games that he plays or to find music or whatever…So I have some apprehension on what is the future for that generation that has become so interested in it (commercial culture on the Internet). It is geared to playing games and the games aren't educational anymore. They are Grand Theft Auto and war games things. That's why I am disappointed in that's how it evolved. The Internet has really lost its opportunity. It is warped by commercial things and by incredibly violent games.

Barbara reveals the Internet serves as a conduit to the world of video gaming, popular music icons, and sports figures for many of today's border youth across the globe. Her son, as many adolescent boys, appears to be particularly attracted to the computing game software developed by a cadre of disaffected White men, who create virtual texts that are inline with many boys' and men's interests and world visions. Most computer gaming software is colored with typical masculine visions of violence, sex, and power (Cooper & Weaver, 2003). Barbara is quite worried that the commercialized culture "is not educational," as her son is more interested in consuming cultural texts produced by corporate conglomerates than "picking up a book for enjoyment." Although her family has labeled her as a 'Ludditie,' believing she is overly critical about the role computing technology plays in today's society. It appears the label is not justified. Concerned citizens and educators must recognize how commercialized computing culture shapes the hearts and minds of our children. Barbara seems to possess this critical insight; she recognizes how the world of computing is implicated in spawning racialized, sexist, and violent portraits of visible minorities and women, while simultaneously, sanctifying violence and war, mainly for the purposes of generating handsome profits for large-scale corporations and blocking North Americans from seeing the deleterious effects emanating from neo-liberalism, the globalization of capital, and North America's current war on "terror" (McLaren, 2006, p. 9).

Four future teachers' narratives also speak to how many discursive systems function to normalize computing technology with the masculine. They were aware of how large-scale corporations, directed by mainly White men, configure cultural texts and language systems that associate computing with the masculine. Several participants detail how computer-generated advertisements reinscribe computing technology with the masculine.

B.P.: You said computing is geared towards men and boys. How so?

Annie: You know in the job market, when you see advertisements, for men and women, usually women go into the caring fields like teaching, nursing whatever. The men go into engineering, technology. So, theirs' is more of a logical mentality and ours is more caring.

B.P.: So what type of ads, can you give me an example of an ad?

Annie: Oh, there was one for DeVry which is one of the colleges in Canada and they do a lot of information technology. They have a guy busily working on a computer and then at the end the girl smiles and says, "for more information you can call our number." So you can see men in roles where they are using information technology versus women, who are more the assistant selling the product instead of using the product. In the paper, you usually hear about business and there's usually a man involved in it, there's usually a man involved in IT. It's probably the truth that there's more men in it, so when there's a story, it's usually about a man. I'm just trying to think of commercials or magazines off hand. It's usually flipping through *the Globe and Mail;* it's usually men that are the focus of the article.

B.P.: You stated (in the focus group) society perpetuates computing as a masculine activity. Can you tell me how this happens?

Betty: Well, I mean the richest person in the United States is Bill Gates, a man who is linked with technology. And he's is the one you hear about in the media all of the time, and it's extremely important for our female children to look to women role models and take on that role. I think the media should show the real fact that women take apart and build computers everyday or are expert programmers.

The participants' narratives indicate they do recognize large-scale corporate giants perpetuate computing as an activity socially appropriate for men. Annie notes how media giants leave women out of advertisements, which are designed to sell technological products or promote computer-oriented schooling. When women happen to be located in these forms of computing ads, they are positioned to serve as docile commodities, "smiling" in front of the camera for the purpose of alluring potential customers to fulfill their wants and desires through the world of computing. She also spots men in the center of the technological spotlight, when sifting through newspaper articles that focus on IT or business culture. Newspapers, like Toronto's *Globe and Mail,* perpetuate computing as a male-domain by highlighting how male business leaders harness technology to reap economic windfalls. Similarly, Betty documents how media outlets continue to link computing with the economic success of large-scale capitalists like Bill Gates. Women are, again, absent from various cultural texts, which serves to sanctify men are the social actors who have the ability to use computing technology for their own ends.

As Millar (1998, p.174) details, the dominant computing actors in today's society, such as Bill Gates and his techno-followers, engender cultural texts that have a great impact on cementing computing as a male-domain. The digital discourse of computing technology has positioned men as "masculine deities," individuals who will lead the globe in an expansion of wealth and power via the use of computing technologies. Not only have digitized discourses functioned to dupe the public into believing computing technology ushers positive social change merely by its adaptation in various social contexts of its use, but also have sent a direct message that hypermacho men of the digitized world are the only social actors capable of developing technology to "improve" the world (Millar, 1998).

Outside of these cultural texts, it appears corporate leaders are telling the public a technological lie. As Betty notes, many women are in fact taking "apart and building computers everyday or are expert

programmers."   There are also many women, who are using computing technology to truly improve the nature of the world, through their own computing use, instead of using computers as "masculine deities" who have used the technology to layoff or permanently jettison workers, institutionalize sweatshop labor across the globe, and debase various cultures by glorifying Western beliefs and practices, such as individual communication over face-to face interaction, embracement of commercialized cultural icons and products, and the myth of progressive development in all social contexts.

These women also reflected upon what larger forces and unjust practices reproduce the gendered computing divide at work, in elementary classrooms, and at teachers' college. Here Sandy details what factors positioned a classroom teacher with whom she worked, from using technology in the classroom. She states:

> B.P.: Do you think this teacher could incorporate technology in the classroom? Could she create meaningful lessons around technology in her classroom?
>
> Sandy: I think she could. Mind you, everyone's different and she's been teaching for a long time, but I think she's tired and she's the first to admit it. So I think bringing ideas is just not an option for her at this point of the year. I'm just saying for her right now, whatever is getting her through the day is the idea. This is her lesson on coins; there's no relating it to the real world. I think there's always ways you can relate the lesson and bring in other information and present things and always have something new to say.
>
> B.P.: If you asked her, do you think she would think she is a great teacher?
>
> Sandy: I don't think she would say she was a great teacher. She would say she does the best with what she has, which could be very well true. And I think she would also say she needs a break. I think she would be the first to admit that she needs a break. I also think that it's a school with just not a lot of support. They don't have a lot of money, the kids don't have a lot of money, there's not a lot of help at home, there's not involved parents, which I think when you have kids that are having problems, you need help at home because there's only so much you can do for them.

Sandy's narration reveals an all-too familiar portrait of how female classroom teachers are positioned not to take action to eradicate the gendered computing gulf in their classrooms. Sandy notes how this teacher has not been given the instructional support, given the financial resources, or possesses the cultural capitals to create more democratic computing relationships inside and outside of her classroom. This positions her to focus on the immediate future, as she embodies a teaching philosophy of doing things that will get "her through the day." Consequently, she rarely develops student-centered lessons to push youths to develop critical thinking skills, let alone honing curricula to curtail the computing gulf within and outside of her classroom. She had three computers in the classroom, but Sandy "never saw a kid on one" during the 18 months she volunteered at the school. The computers were only used to help the Ontario government collect standardized, student assessment measures, as this teacher showed Sandy how to enter student's grades on the computer.

Many classroom teachers face a similar uphill struggle to incorporate technology in their classrooms. Government officials have positioned them to do more with less, as they have created an environment where commercial imperatives are structuring life within classrooms. This is a move that is destroying "much of the quality of public sector education" (McLaren, 2006, p. 39).

According to Apple & Jungck (1998), the corporate ethos not only operates as a means to control the labor of female teachers, but also functions to discipline the public to solve problems through the

market. For example, computer-driven standardized testing is one key educational practice, which brings commercial logics into schooling, provides a market to business leaders, and disciplines teachers to perceive themselves as workers rather than intellectuals. As McLaren & other critical scholars show, neo-liberal educational practices have ushered a growing intensification of teaching (Lissovoy & McLaren, 2003; Hill 2004; Saltman, 2004; McLaren, 2006). Teachers are often overwhelmed due to the vast array of tasks and contradictory demands played upon them by government officials and business leaders and the general public, such as grading standardized forms of assessment, entering assessment data on to computers, and meeting the various, often conflicting, intellectual, spiritual, and emotional needs of students in classrooms, spaces that frequently resemble prisons, corporations and shopping malls than institutions of learning. Therefore, these social forces have positioned many in-service teachers to lack the ambition, courage, and critical mindset to eliminate the gendered computing gulf plaguing our society or to create transformative classroom practices, which have the potency to help our youths understand what causes oppression in schools and society.

The various social forces and unjust practices that have braided together to position teachers not to use computing technology are embodied in the participants' quintessential story of computing use in Ontario classrooms. Most participants, such as Sandy, made it quite evident computers "were merely collecting dust" in classrooms. It is the same story documented by many researchers, who have attempted to untangle what social forces and unjust practices structure computing technology to be (mis) (under) (not) used in classrooms (Bromley, 1995; Bryson and de Castell, 1998; Jenson, 1999; Cuban, 2001). Arguably, if classroom teachers fail to implement computing technology to guide students to interrogate the unjust foundations of our society, the gendered computing gap, amongst a whole host of other unjust social practices, will be perpetuated. Just as the current generation of young women, our next generation of women will be positioned as "incompetent" in relation to computing technology and male-centered computing culture.

The project itself also nudged several participants to examine how larger social forces, beyond their own control, structure their experiences as women. For example, they detailed how many men, in positions of power, regulate their sexuality. They tell stories of government leaders, school officials and corporate leaders creating debilitating discourses and institutional practices that position women to regulate their bodies to fulfill men's needs and desires.

By reflecting collectively on how their lived experiences are mediated by systems of power, some participants also became compelled to reflect upon what can be done to dismantle institutional practices that marginalize many women.

Nicole: Like, we need to do something radical (to eliminate barriers that cause women's oppression). Go online or go on TV. Why can't we just converse like other people on television?

Betty: Because we are not allowed to.

Diane: Do you think men would let you have the airtime?

Although it is not clear whether these women went "online or on television" to detail what forces marginalize women in this unjust society, their alternative narratives do lend the possibility they will converse with other women about what is needed to create a democratic society. This ongoing reflexive process is needed, if they are to recognize how race, sex, and class domination work alongside gender domination in our schools and our society. It is with this form of insight that future teachers can guide youth to work towards creating a democratic society, a social landscape speckled with institutions that engender democratic practices and just power relationships amongst its citizenry.

On the other hand, the study helped me take inventory of how my gendered status has afforded me unearned privileges, within the realm of my privileged social world. I was not aware of the degree of power my White male body holds in structuring relationships. Within the context of the study, my White male medium build body, containing wired rim spectacles, animated to my participants that I possessed the skills and knowledge of society's stereotypical computing "geek." Although this is far from the case, as I do not play computing games, have not taken classes involving computing programs, and have not felt the need to control the world's resources via computing technology, this gendered stereotype, along with my status as a university professor, generated unbalanced power relationships within the context of the study.

For example, during one of the interview sessions with Annie, the topic of my subjectivity came to the surface. Annie told me that many female students were "afraid" to take part in the study because they thought I knew a great deal about technology. She told me the "girls shied away as soon as (I) mentioned the word technology." The students "were like well I don't really know much about that, so I don't think I want to participate in the study."

For those who possessed enough interest and courage to venture beyond the encounter with the computing "geek," they faced the prospect of sharing their technological "incompetence" with a male authority figure. Anne made it clear to me the extent of the power I hold over women by position as a university professor. She told me that it was difficult for some participants, especially the ones who do not have much information in relation to computers, to talk with me about this subject. She believes it is integral for female students to feel accepted by a male professor, stating "we are students and we always want you to perceive us as intelligent, right? "Some critical feminists' scholars have made the similar point: Female students look to university professors for acceptance, approval, and even for self-worth (Houston, 1996).

As the study unfolded, my gendered privilege became more evident. Several participants faced pressures of raising a family, completing coursework for six graduate classes, volunteering time in schools, but still managed to find time to talk with me. This made me question whether this research is merely an additional unpaid task that women are expected to do for men. I am left to wonder if future male teachers would have taken time out for this project, or would have demanded compensation for sharing their insights.

Taking Inventory and Looking Forward: Critical Teacher Education, Research, and a Democratic Future

Although the critical research project did not indicate teacher education programs are taking it upon themselves to ensure future teachers have a critical understanding of computer technology and its male-centered culture, the study showed critical research has the power to begin to eliminate unjust practices that fuel systemic forms of oppression across the globe. By upping the radical ante and employing McLaren's ideas surrounding neoliberlism, globalization of capital, and Western imperialism and revolutionary multiculturalism as a theoretical window, I was equipped to understand women's technological reticence, the commercialized, hegemonic function of computing technology, and the privileges associated with my gender class status. In juxtaposition, several of my participants developed the insights, confidence, and courage to employ technology to forge a more equalitarian social order. These women also became aware of how larger structures of power generate unjust practices that create systemic barriers in their lives as well as the lives of women across the globe. They appear to have desire and ability to "read the languages and discourses in which they find themselves in order to reinvent themselves" and, possibly, remap the world (McLaren, 2006, p.319).

Yet, the success stories of the critical research project should not overshadow the fact that neo-liberal policies and practices inhibited many future teachers from understanding the social nature of computing technology, understanding the unjust practices perpetuating women's and girl's computing reticence and recognizing the urgency to build a new social order inside and outside of their classrooms. As many transformative scholars have shown, neo-liberal policies and practices are smothering critical thought, coursework and pedagogical projects across the teacher education landscape (Hill, 2004; McLaren, Martin, Farahmandpur & Jaramillo, 2004; Hinchey & Cadiero-Kaplan, 2005; McLaren, 2006). Therefore, it is here where we must follow McLaren's clarion call to expose the reactionary trend of capitalism structuring all social life. Particularly, teacher educators must renew the social democratic and cultural transformative vision of schooling within and outside of their classrooms. They must guide schoolteachers to unpack how capitalist social relations are gutting the humane, progressive elements of schooling as well as breeding greed, hate and hostility across the globe (Saltman, 2004; McLaren 2005;). They must also launch critical research projects that are bent on exposing as well as subverting the social forces perpetuating hegemonic forms of schooling, which are igniting the fires of school hell in North America (Kincheloe, 2006, p. XV). Finally, concerned educators and scholars must turn to Peter for inspiration that collectively our pedagogical and research projects will parlay into emancipatory results. We must believe revolutionary forms of pedagogies and research will lead us beyond the current educational, economic and political malaise to inhibit a world predicated on democracy, social justice, and equity.

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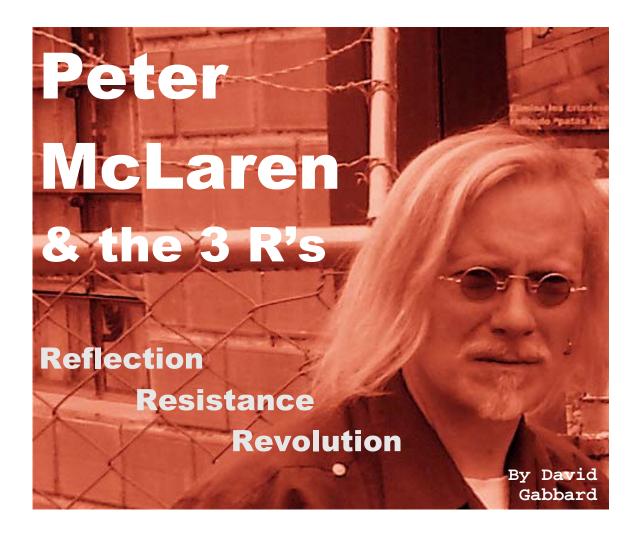http://firstmonday.org/issues/issue9_1/rajagopal/index.html

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Notes

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[1] The study was launched, in the spring of 2003, at a small, independent coeducational institution of higher learning, which comprises 2,600 students, nine hundred of whom are housed within the Graduate Department of Education. "Border College" (pseudonym) is located proximate to the Canadian/U.S. border, somewhere in the Northeastern part of the United States.

Peter McLaren & the 3 R's: Reflection, Resistance and Revolution

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Peter McLaren & the 3 R's: Reflection, Resistance and Revolution

I cannot feign some distanced objectivity in writing this profile of Peter McLaren. Our relationship dates back to 1989, when Philip Stedman, one of my professors at the University of Cincinnati, invited me to accompany him on a visit to Peter at nearby Miami University of Ohio. I had read some of Peter's work, particularly some of his early collaborations with Henry Giroux, who had helped bring Peter to Miami from Canada. No amount of reading, however, could have prepared me for meeting him face-to-face.

At the time, Peter and his wife Jenny, a beautiful woman possessed of equally great intelligence and compassion, lived an hour's drive from Cincinnati in the small town of Oxford situated in the middle of southwest Ohio farm country. After we parked the car in front of their modest house, Jenny welcomed us warmly at the door before we ever had the chance to knock. She invited us in and we exchanged introductions for what seemed like a long time. Being so new to academia, I was anxious to meet Peter who was, even then, an important figure in critical educational studies. When he did appear, he too welcomed us warmly, receiving us like we had known each other for years and like our arrival was as much of an event for him as it was for us. As I've grown to know Peter over the past fifteen years, I've learned to trust and appreciate his immediacy as part of the more general passion with which he lives his life. It's same passion unmistakably reflected in his writings, and the same passion that generates such tremendous shared loyalty and bonds of solidarity between himself, his students, and others of us who work with him.

As Alipio Casali & Ana Maria Aaujo Freire so accurately describe him in a chapter from Marc Pruyn and Luis Huerta-Charles's new book, *Teaching Peter McLaren: Paths of Dissent* (2005), "it is impossible not to notice Peter McLaren in the middle of a crowd, much as it is impossible not to be completely drawn in by his image: the extravagance of his mode of dress, his disheveled hair, his tattoos, his quick, sudden gestures, his attentive manner and luminous aura. At first, he seems a caricature, a remnant of the counterculture of the 1960s" (p. 21). Though the tattoos came after our Cincinnati years, I, too, was "drawn in" by Peter, but not as much by his appearance and demeanor than by the energy and the commitment that he brings to his work. Over a career that, to date, spans just two and a half decades, he has authored or co-authored more than 25 books, edited or co-edited 15 others, authored or coauthored over 100 chapters and more than 150 articles in scholarly journals.

Writing this profile of Peter has been a liberating catharsis for me. As much as I have always been drawn to his work, and as many times as he has come through for me when I've asked him to contribute to various projects (he has never rejected an invitation), my own stupid insecurities have prevented me from being totally comfortable in his presence. Antiona Darder shares similar feelings in her preface to *Teaching Peter McLaren* when she writes that "in all honesty, I must confess that although I appreciated his rhetorical gift, unusual language and powerful writings, I did not easily warm up to *the man* [emphasis added]. In fact, it took years for me to recognize the biases and prejudices that sharply colored my impressions." Though Darder doesn't discuss the nature of those "biases and prejudices," I have to wonder if they relate to what I've identified as the academy-induced feelings of insecurity that has inhibited me from feeling closer to him. Partially because of the passion of his presence described by Casali & Freire above, and partially because of his stature as perhaps the most internationally renowned figure in critical educational theory alive today, it is too easy to feel awestruck by Peter. It's also easy, I think, for some to feel jealous of his achievements. There are those, after all, who seem resentful of him. We can't deny the power of academia's hidden curriculum to socialize us into heavily narcissistic patterns wherein we learn to gaze upon our selves in the mirror pools of our curriculum vitas. We can, however, recognize it for the bourgeois ideology that it is, and, therefore, strive to resist its counterrevolutionary effects by framing our relationships less in terms of career aspirations and more in terms of a common struggle.

Naming the Common Struggle

Peter McLaren's name may be new to many readers of *Impact Press*. The reasons for this are tragic. The left has simply failed to mobilize any significant movement in recognition of the central importance that public education holds for the great historic struggle for democracy. For many reasons beyond its control, of course, the political left in the United States has always been fragmented and reactionary. It simply lacks the resources to create and sustain the organizational structures necessary to compete with corporate-financed structures developed by the right to inhibit the advancement of democracy. In contrast, since the

In Hollywood, California, near mural of Subcommandante Marcos before it was defaced by vandals.

populist movements of the 1960s that witnessed the potential of democratic movements to impact public institutions by harnessing the power of the state to serve public interests, the corporate sector of private wealth and privilege has subsidized the formation of a vast network of foundations, institutes, and think-tanks through which to bludgeon the mass-mind of government into complicity with their campaign of class warfare. The tight connections between these structures and the corporate-media have also given rise to such rightwing media celebrities as Rush Limbaugh, Ann Coulter, Bill O'Reilly and others. That same network also has very close ties to televangelists like Pat Robertson and Jerry Falwell, again using the media to generate religious fervor in support of their neoliberal economic and neoconservative political agendas. Those connections, or course, were most crudely revealed to us by Reverend Pat Robertson's recent call for the assassination of Hugo Chavez in which he expressed overt support for state terrorism in the name of U.S. imperialism.

Those who operate within elite planning circles that now include the likes of Reverend Robertson and other proto-fascists understand perfectly well the importance of maintaining the illusion of democracy. They also understand that combating democratic populism through military or police violence, as in a totalitarian state, would destroy that illusion. Therefore, they have invested heavily in developing these various structures dedicated to what Edward Herman and Noam Chomsky famously labeled "manufacturing consent." In order to maintain the illusion of democracy, they must control what people think, and they have made major inroads over the past thirty years toward turning the entire information system of our society into one huge propaganda machine.

Against this background, we can best understand their assault on public education and Peter McLaren's position as a leading figure in the resistance against capital's ruthless campaign against democracy both domestically as well as globally.

Life in Schools?

For those of us who recognize public schools as legitimate sites for democratic advancement and for the contestation of capital's domination, Peter's work has always held central importance. Though he finds it impossible to identify a single moment in his life as sparking his politicization, Peter does recall a formative "series of events that began when my dad was fired from an electronics firm that was headquartered in Toronto. All the managers over fifty were fired so new managers could take over. I

grew to hate corporations after watching my dad suffer. His emphysema grew worse. He refused to accept welfare, and got part-time work in various electronics stores. He died bitter and unhappy. I was bitter, too, and joined the counterculture."

This was around 1968, and joining the counterculture, for Peter, meant leaving Canada and going to the U.S. where he became involved in antiwar efforts. After a brief period in Los

At the opening of Fundacion de Peter McLaren de Pedagogia Critica at the Universidad de Tijuana, Mexico.

Angeles and San Francisco, he returned to Ontario, entering Waterloo University and earning his Bachelor of Arts in English Literature in 1973. Soon after, he began teaching at a middle school where he worked with inner-city students from Canada's largest public-housing project in the Jane-Finch area of Toronto. He would later write a book, *Cries from the Corridor*, on these experiences that, to his later horror, became a best-seller in Canada.

> I didn't offer any critical analysis in that first book, just stories of about my frustrations in trying to reach these inner-city kids who brought the violence of their lives outside the schools into the school itself. The book was shocking to Canadians. By not providing any critical analysis of the situation faced by these kids and their families, I left the door open for a lot of people to blame them for their own plight. That's when I became involved in critical theory, so I could get the story right the next time. That's what I tried to do with *Life in Schools*: *An Introduction to Critical Pedagogy and the Foundations of Education*. It's not a bestseller like *Cries from the Corridor*, but I've never had a bestseller since that first book, and I never will. But I don't care. As long as I can provide an analysis, I'll keep writing.

Internationally recognized as one of the leading architects of critical pedagogy, Peter was a close friend and associate of the late Paulo Freire, the late Brazilian theorist and activist whose famous book *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* helped to reawaken democratic energies around educational issues in North America and the rest of the world beginning in the 1970s. In a recent interview with Michael Shaughnessy, Peter described Freire's work as being "about establishing the critical relationship between pedagogy and politics, highlighting the political aspects of the pedagogical and drawing attention to the implicit and explicit domain of the pedagogical inscribed in the political." While he could have well described his own work in those same terms, Peter's recognition of capital as the overwhelmingly dominant social relation of our times has led him to infuse his writings on critical pedagogy with his own brand of Marxist humanism, which he identifies as the "cornerstone" of his work. Capital, as a social relation, negates democracy by denying us our humanity, alienating us from our need to autonomously act in community with others to create and recreate the world by reducing human beings to dead labor – strapped down and fed into the same system that produces and reproduces the private property that subjugates us in the first place. The aim of revolutionary critical pedagogy, for Peter, lies not with the abolition of private property, but with the abolition of the alienated labor on which it depends. For critical pedagogy to transcend its own domination under the social relations of capital, it must help those engaged in the pedagogical encounter to transcend their own alienation. To do so, Peter has written, critical pedagogy must brush

> against the grain of textual foundationalism, ocular fetishism, and the monumentalist abstraction of theory that characterizes most critical practice within teacher education classrooms. I am calling for a pedagogy in which a revolutionary multicultural ethics is performed–is lived in the streets–rather than simply reduced to the practice of reading texts (although the reading of texts with other texts, against other texts, and upon other texts is decidedly an important exercise). Teachers need to build upon the textual politics that dominate most multicultural classrooms by engaging in a politics of bodily and affective investment, which means "walking the talk" and working in those very communities one purports to serve. A critical pedagogy for multicultural education should quicken the affective analysis of students as well as provide them with a language of social analysis, cultural critique, and social activism in the service of cutting the power and practice of capital at its joints (p. 92).

With his open embrace of Marxist humanism, of course, Peter has become the target of the rightwing attack machine described above. One element of the rightwing network of ideological enforcement, the *Washington Times*, published an article by Kenneth Lloyd Billingsly attacking critical pedagogues in general, and Peter in particular. In another article appearing in the ominously titled magazine *EducationNext*, published by the Hoover Institute (a neoconservative think-tank that has become home to rightwing demagogue David Horowitz), J. Martin Rochester laughably accuses Peter of "intellectual flabbiness" while attacking critical pedagogy, first, for

> its emphasis on the affective-normative domain at the expense of the cognitive-empirical domain [This is simply not true and reflects either Rochester's ignorance of critical pedagogy or his willingness to lie about it.]—it is more interested in engaging students in understanding the world as it ought to be than in how it is [Again, this is another falsehood.]—and, second, [for] its acceptance of the hierarchical, judgmental classroom, where the teacher's role is not to facilitate value-free inquiry but instead to use the bully pulpit to preach doctrinaire gospel [The opposite is true, and critical pedagogues have always been especially self-conscious about guarding against such behavior], with schools performing the function not of political socialization but of counter-socialization. The school is to be, if not a ministry, at least a political party.

In criticizing critical pedagogy for politicizing education, both Billingsly and Rochester falsely portray traditional patterns in American schooling as benevolently apolitical and ideologically neutral, just as they would present their own arguments as being independent of the neoconservative agendas of the publications in which they appeared. Both the *Washington Times*, owned by billionaire neoconservative Reverend Sun Myung Moon, and *EducationNext* support the No Child Left Behind law which pressures teachers to teach in manner deemed most efficient toward maximizing student's scores on standardized tests. Under these pressures, teachers do not approach student learning as a process of "value-free inquiry" as Rochester mischaracterizes the traditional patterns. Rather, they approach student learning in the most vulgar of didactic terms – drilling and killing the kids to score well on the tests. Under these prevailing conditions in public schools today, Billingsly and Rochester hardly need to worry themselves however over the prevalence of critical pedagogy. Education in the United States is as far away from revolutionary critical pedagogy as the American political system is from democracy.

Just Rewards

For those of us writing from the left, being attacked in popular rightwing publications comes as an honor. It is a signal to us of our success. The right attacks only those whom it fears, and it fears only those whose work threatens to awaken the public to seek the truth about their own realities and to transform those realities in accordance with alternative possibilities of their own imagining. The more the right attacks us, the more energized we become, because we know our efforts are making a difference in people's lives.

In Peter's case, the difference his work is making has spilled over our own borders to attract international attention and honors. In 2004, an international panel of experts organized by The Moscow School of Social and Economic Sciences, a Russian-British University, named *Life in Schools* one of the 12 most significant education books ever written. In that same year, he received an honorary doctorate from the University of Lapland in Finland, and, most notably a group of scholars in northern Mexico established an institute in his name–La Fundacion McLaren de Pedagogia Critica (The McLaren Foundation for Critical Pedagogy).

In spite of the international and national awards and honors that he has received over the years, those of us who know Peter realize that he derives the greatest honor from the privilege of working with

his students and his colleagues. As Antonia Darder reported earlier, she remained aloof from Peter for many years. Eventually, however, she expressed her gratitude to him for "his patience and perseverance" with her. "For what I learned over time," she writes, "was that Peter McLaren is one of the kindest and generous souls that I have met in the world of academia. Yes, like so many of us pitiful humans, he forever struggles with personal questions of insecurity and self-doubt–but like few, he is ever willing to extend a hand and create opportunities for comrades and struggling young scholars who seek his support."
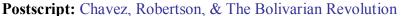
As previously mentioned, two of those young scholars, former students, and comrades–Marc Pruyn and Luis Huerta-Charles–have recently honored Peter by publishing a book (*Teaching Peter McLaren: Paths of Dissent*) of essays written by colleagues and other former students. Nathalia Jaramillo, one of his current students recently wrote to me that

Natalia Jaramillo and Peter McLaren in Caracas,

I consider Peter not only my mentor but my camarada, a dear and special friend. Working with Peter has changed my life completely, and it is not only because he serves as my academic mentor who has taught me a great deal about the ins and outs of the academy and of producing scholarship. I've learned the most from Peter because of who he is inside. It's his spirit, his heart, his loyalty, imagination for and fearless defense of revolutionary praxis that has taught me the most. I've had the opportunity to work closely with Peter for the past three years and I'm blessed, David. I'm blessed to be in his company and in that of people around the world who are striving to make this a better place for us all.

Postscript: Chavez, Robertson, & The Bolivarian Revolution

Peter has recently developed ties with scholars in Venezuela who recognize his work and value his contributions to critical pedagogy. At their invitation, Peter traveled to Caracas and elsewhere throughout the country to address scholars and teachers in a series of speaking engagements. Nathalia Jaramillo traveled with Peter. In light of the Reverend Pat Robertson's recent call for the United States to exercise state terror by assassinating President Hugo Chavez on behalf of America's historic imperial

claims to the region, I asked Nathalia for her impressions of Chavez and how he is regarded by the people of Venezuela. In keeping with Medea Benjamin's call for us to *Stop the Next War Now*, Nathalia's reflections might help better inform our fellow citizens that Robertson's characterization of Chavez as a "brutal dictator" stands in sharp contrast to the truth. This is what she wrote:

> Walking through the streets of Caracas, Venezuela it is difficult to ignore the socialist energy on the streets. The city is pockmarked with images of great revolutionary legends…Simon Bolivar, Simon Rodriguez (Bolivar's teacher), El Che, Marx, Lenin and Engels…I personally think they fail to commemorate socialist women leaders, but that's a whole other topic. But murals can only go so far, it's in speaking to working people in the Misiones (Missions), in the shantytowns, in the Plaza Simon Bolivar or in an alternative radio station located on the state-owned floor of a high rise building with spectacular views of the city, that you really get a sense of what Hugo Chavez in particular, and the Bolivarian Revolution in general, mean to supporters of the movement.

> We had the opportunity to visit one of the largest shantytowns in the hills surrounding Caracas, called La Vega. The municipality system can be a bit confusing. Within each municipality there are a number of subdivisions…so while in La Vega (which has a population of about 500,000), we were in Sector B. There is a strong emphasis and respect for systems of local governance, so while Sector B is in La Vega, La Vega (in its totality) does not necessarily operate according to what I am going to describe in Sector B. Sector B is a unique place to visit, I can't tell you the number of inhabitants who live there, but it is – at present – one of the most well organized and well-known communities in Caracas. Sector B gave us a snapshot of the various Misiones at work under the Chavez government. You walk into the unpaved community and immediately take notice of Infocentro – a two story brick building with at least a dozen high-tech computers with free internet access for the community. Across the way is Mision Barrio-Adentro, a dome shaped structure that houses the Cuban doctors who offer free medical services to Sector B's inhabitants. Just a few more steps down the road and you run into Mision Mercal, a market which sells groceries at a 40 percent discount rate and which is also known for selling food grown and produced by the local cooperative. Within this community, there is also an alternative radio station (Radio Activa, 92.5 FM), alternative press (the community has its own newspaper!), and one of the homes stacks five rows of student desks on a third story open air floor for the education missions (Mision Robinson (national literacy campaign) and Mision Ribas (high school certification program)) ** sidenote: Mision Robinson is named after the pseudonym used by the great educator and humanist Simon Rodriguez and Mision Ribas is named after Jose Felix Ribas, a distinguished figure of Venezuelan Independence **

> Okay, so you asked me about what people on the streets think of Hugo Chavez…well, I spent some time above describing the activities made possible under Chavez to give you some context about what I'm going to write here. The people who support Chavez are primarily the poor, and I don't think it's a big surprise to understand why. When you walk into Mision Mercal for example, it is the people of the community who not only produce, but they also operate the Mision. In speaking to one man about his job and about his views of Chavez, he responded, "me siento con dignindad" (I feel dignity) because he feels ownership over the means of his production. For him, his life has a new sense of meaning and worth. He then spoke about how he considered Chavez "un hermano" (a brother). I can't tell you what its like to stare into the eyes of working people who have historically been oppressed and dehumanized and hear them speak

about human dignity, of living their lives with a sense of purpose, hope and excitement about what the future can bring. The people love Hugo Chavez, David. He is charismatic, a walking pedagogue who takes advantage of every opportunity to teach and learn from the citizens he serves and to create spaces where knowledge stays in the community. During his weekly five-hour long television show, Alo Presidente, Peter and I saw in person the extent to which Chavez serves the people of Venezuela as an educator and as an advocate for the most marginalized populations. For five hours, he engaged in non-scripted discussions with citizens from the community, who caught his attention by hailing "Chavez! Chavez! Chavez!" until they were passed the microphone. Some people recited poetry they had written on Simon Bolivar, others made direct demands and questions about issues affecting their communities. Together, the people and Chavez covered a range of topics, from housing to education to health care and cooperatives. The people made demands, and he responded. It was, for us, a true example of participatory democracy.

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The Secret Downing Street Memo and the Politics of Truth: A Performance Text

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Abstract

Reading forward from the recently released secret Downing Street Memos, to the 2001 No Child Left Behind Act, in this performance text I critique the Bush Administration and its reliance on science, or evidence-based models of inquiry (SBR). SBR raises issues concerning the politics of truth and evidence. These issues intersect with the ways in which a given political regime fixes facts to fit ideology. Three versions of SBR are discussed, as is a model of science as disruptive cultural practice. I conclude by calling for a merger of critical pedagogy with a prophetic, feminist post-pragmatism.

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The Secret Downing Street Memo and the Politics of Truth: A Performance Text

With C. Wright Mills (1959) I believe scholars have an obligation to write their way into their historical moments. The failure to do so, makes us complicit with the histories that too often go on behind our backs.

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Published in the *Sunday London Times*, on 1 May 2005, the Downing Street Memo set off a firestorm of controversy. The memo demonstrated that the American and British public had been mislead about the reasons for and the timing of the decision to go to war with Iraq, The secret document indicated that the Bush administration had committed itself to war with Iraq, at least a full eight months before the official start of the war which was 19 March, 2003. I want to interrogate this history, a history which involves the politics and pragmatics of truth, the manipulation of evidence and facts about the world by governmental officials.

In this interrogation, which is a performance text[1], I move back and forth between local knowledge and global contexts. We are living in dangerous times, year three of the Iraqi War, what Joan Didion and George Orwell call the "New Normal."

Speaker Ones and Two: George Orwell and Joan Didion (Orwell, 1984

[1949, pp. 33-45] quoted in Didion, 2004, p. 71):

> Under the new normal many of us discovered ... [that] our memories were not
>
> satisfactorily under control. We possessed
>
> 'pieces of furtive knowledge' that were hard to reconcile
>
> with what we heard and read in the news. We saved entire
>
> newspapers, hoping that further study might yield their
>
> logic, but none emerged (Didion, 2004, p. 71).

Today in post 9-11 America with illegal wiretaps, and a President who performs scripts of fear denouncing evil terrorists we are struggling:

Speaker One: William Kittridge:

> to revise our dominant mythology ...to find a new
>
> story to inhabit, to find new laws to control our lives,
>
> laws designed to preserve a model of a free democratic
>
> society based on values learned from a shared mythology.

The ground upon which we stand has dramatically shifted. We are asked to accept a new set of myths and laws which threaten to destroy what we mean by freedom and democracy. The complex political spaces of the new normal are profoundly shaping the multiple terrains of qualitative inquiry in the 21st Century, including what we mean by words like science, evidence and truth.

Now the secret memo.

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Speaker Two: David Manning:

The Secret Downing Street Memo (with some paraphrasing):[2]

This is Secret and Strictly Personal--UK Eyes Only.

IRAQ: PRIME MINISTER'S MEETING, 23 JULY

This record is extremely sensitive. No further copies should be made. It should

be shown only to those with a genuine need to know its contents.

Speaker One: John Scarlett

Military action is now seen as inevitable. Bush wants to remove Saddam, through

military action, justified by the conjunction of terrorism and WMD.

Speaker Two: C:

The intelligence and facts are being fixed around the policy ...   Bush has made up his

mind to take military action ... The Attorney-General said that the desire for regime

change was not a legal case for military action ... The case (for war) was thin. Saddam

was not threatening his neighbors, and his WMD capability was less than that of Libya,

North Korea of Iran.

Speakers One and Two: Tony Blair and George W. Bush:

We stand together on these issues, It is impossible to distinguish

between al Qaeda and Saddam (Alterman and Green, 2004, p. 252)

***

The memo is chilling. It clearly states that facts and intelligence were being fixed and fitted to conform to a predetermined agenda. Through a series of carefully choreographed presentations involving aerial and ground photographs, statistics, excerpts from secret intelligence memos, Bush and his staff

based the case for war on the threats of Saddam's WMD's to the world order (Hersh, 2005, p. 235). They were hesitant, however, to sell the argument for war against Saddam Hussein in August of 2002.

Speaker One: Andrew Card:

From a marketing point of view, you don't introduce new products in August" Rich,

2005c, p. 12).

Speaker Two: Bob Woodward:

Bush initiated plans for the war on November 21, 2001 (Woodward, 2004, p. 1).

But today we know there were no WMD's.[3] There were no links between 9/11 and Saddam.

Cheering crowds did not greet American soldiers when they marched into Baghdad.[4]

Speaker One: Frank Rich:

Democracy "was hijacked on the way to war" (Rich, 2005c, p. 12).

***

Speaker Two: President Bush (Press Conference, 4 October 2005):

And we've got to win in Iraq. We will win in Iraq.

Iraq's a part of a global war on terror. We're

not leaving Iraq.

***

Meanwhile, the administration takes to a new level the meaning of the staged news event, borrowing its techniques of news management from Jon Stewart, host of the "Daily Show." Fake newsmen, looking like real newsmen, use the practices of real news programs to deliver fake news in prime time (Rich, 2005a, p. 20).

Speaker One: Frank Rich:

The use of fake reporters--six and counting-- producing fake news stories has been

exposed. The administration paid $240,000 to Armstrong Williams for delivering faux-

journalistic analyses of the No Child Left Behind Act (Rich, 2005b).

Bush's handlers script "town hall" meetings. Under Bush a lie is true if it has the appearance of truth. Manipulating the logic of the lie that looks like the truth, insures that Bush's assertions about the real have the appearance of being truthful.

***

Truth and Evidence

In times such as this the politics of truth take on increased importance. Many questions are raised. What is truth? What is evidence? What counts as evidence? How is evidence evaluated? How can evidence, or facts be "fixed" to fit policy? What kind of evidence-based research should inform this process? How is evidence to be represented? How is evidence to be discounted, or judged to be unreliable or incorrect? What is a fact? What is intelligence? What are the different discourses--law, medicine, history, cultural, or performance studies-- that define evidence and truth? (Pring, 2004, p. 203).

Speaker Two: Esther Kaplan and Union for Concerned

Scientists (quoted on Kaplan, 2005, p. 128):

There is significant evidence that the scope and scale of the manipulation, suppression,

and misrepresentation of science [and evidence] by the Bush administration is

unprecedented ... In the name of pseudo, fake, or junk science, it manufactures evidence

to support its positions ... Indeed, the Bush Administration has taken the concept of

evidence to a new level with the endorsement of what is called scientifically

based educational research (SBR).

Under the auspices of the 2001 No Child Left Behind Act, the Bush Administration has stated that traditional scientific methods are inadequate for purposes of educational reform. It has endorsed evidence-based models of inquiry, which many regard as inappropriate to human subject research, and nearly impossible to implement in concrete research settings (Ryan and Hood, 2004).

Under the guise of endorsing Intelligent Design the Administration has launched a full-scale attack on the logic and methods of modern science. Thus, while they have raised the bar concerning the standards for conducting and evaluating educational research, they have similarly moved to debunk these same standards in other areas. This allows them to have it both ways. Modern science cannot get us to where we want to be in our schools, and we will use the methods of science to prove the case!

Drawing from the bio-medical field, SBR emphasizes research practices that produce so-called objective, generalizable evidence ((Ryan and Hood, 2004). Such data, gathered from randomized and non-randomized experimental trials, and quantifiable measurement procedures are used to test causal hypotheses derived from scientific theory. When possible, data are fitted to complex causal models. Evidence based on these assumptions is presumed to be of maximal value for policy makers, practitioners and the public (Pring, 2004; National Research Council, 2002, p. 47). Evidence that does not conform to these principles is of less value and is not to be encouraged or funded.

There is a great deal at stake in these arguments. As St. Pierre (2004, p. 132) observes, the SBR criteria marginalize many forms of qualitative inquiry, including critical race, queer, postcolonial, feminist, indigenous, and decolonizing theories. The SBR model raises questions that require serious public discussion. The model endorses a narrow view of science and evidence. It celebrates a historical moment when the methods of positivistic science were not being challenged. In valorizing the

experimental paradigm, it ignores the many criticisms of experimentalism developed by Donald Campbell over four decades ago, including the inability to adequately treat rival causal factors associated with internal and external validity.

Speaker One: Donald Campbell (paraphrase):

> The critics of SBR rightfully raise other issues with the paradigm, including its reliance
>
> on a naive realism, and its failure to take up the value-fact-theory distinction. The
>
> paradigm still acts as if a disinterested observer has a God's eye view of objective
>
> reality. It relies on an ethics of deception. It does not address the contexts of knowledge
>
> production, nor is it sensitive to the nuances of the researcher-subject relationship
>
> (Howe, 2004; Campbell and Stanley, 1963; Lincoln and Guba, 2000).

<div align="center">***</div>

These limitations of the SBR model involve the politics of truth. They intersect with the ways in which a given political regime fixes facts and intelligence to fit ideology. What is true, or false is determined, in part, by the criteria that are used to judge good and bad evidence.

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SBR AND THE WAR ON TRUTH

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There are at least three versions of SBR. SBR One is the model outlined by the National Research Council (2002). SBR Two is a simulacra of SBR One. It was the model used by the Bush administration when it sold the Iraqi war to the world. This models produces simulacra of the truth. SBR Three (below) rejects SBR One and Two, and articulates a politics and methodology of truth based on a decolonizing critical pedagogy, and a feminist, prophetic ethical pragmatism (Siegfried, 1996; West, 1989, 1991; Denzin, 1996, 2003, 2005).

SBR One, with its focus on objectively verifiable evidence, was not in play when the Bush administration decided to go to war. Instead, they used SBR Two, which allowed them to act as if they were gathering objective, reliable, generalizable, evidence. But they were not doing this. The intent, instead, was to gather evidence that appeared to have these characteristics. Under the Bush regime, a fact or piece of evidence is true if it meets three criteria: (a) it has the appearance of being factual; (b) it is patriotic; and (c) it   supports a political action that advances the White House's agenda.

Evidence that contradicts that agenda is flawed, and biased. The Bush administration wanted to assert its will in the Middle East. It fabricated a set of facts, using their version of SBR One-- SBR Two-- to justify that activity. Challenges to the war were unpatriotic, and discredited because they undercut the Administration's desire to protect Americans from violent terrorists who oppose our political system.

<div align="center">***</div>

The ways in which the world is not a stage are not easy to specify. The dramaturgical politics of the Bush administration is one reason why this is so. Indeed, if, as they demonstrate, everything is

already performative, staged, commodified and dramaturgical, then the dividing line between performer and actor, stage and setting, script and text, performance and reality disappear. As this disappearance occurs, illusion and make-believe prevail. Truthful facts are casualties under such regimes. Misrepresentations are passed off as the truth. When this happens, the right people are not held accountable for the consequences of their actions. The consequences of misrepresentation can be devastating. The likelihood of future catastrophes is increased, and, as in the case of Iraq, people die needlessly (Solomon,2005, p. B-3).

In this space, where the hyperreal appears more real then the real, pragmatists and cultural critics require apparatuses of resistance and critique, methodologies and pedagogies of truth, ways of making real realities that envision and enact pedagogies of hope. Such pedagogies offer ways of holding fraudulent political regimes accountable for their actions.

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A senior advisor to President Bush (Suskind, 2004, p. 51), described this troubling relationship between performance and reality. He contrasted the so-called "'reality-based community' --people who believe that solutions emerge from ... judicious study of discernible reality" (p. 51), with his own world view.

Speaker One: **Bush aide**:

"That's not the way the world really works anymore. We're an empire now, and when we

act, we create our own reality. And while you are studying that reality we'll act again

creating other new realities, which you can study too ... We're history's actors ... and you,

all of you, will be left to just study what we do" (Suskind, 2004, p. 51).

How do you respond to a statement such as this? Whose history are they creating? And for what ends? Who gave them this power? Who is holding them responsible for the consequences of their historical actions? If they do not like the effects of one reality, they create a new one, to which we must respond, living out the consequences of their experiments in reality construction.

Speaker Two: George Bush:

I am praying for strength to do the Lord's will ... I'm surely not going to justify the war

based upon God ... Nevertheless, in my case, I pray to be as good a messenger of his will

as possible (Suskind, 2005, p. 51).

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<div align="center">**SBR THREE: CRITICAL PEDAGOGY, ETHICS AND PROPHETIC PRAGMATISM**</div>

Under such circumstances what does it mean to assert that journalists and social scientists can only write about the realities created by history's actors? What does it mean to state that journalists write the first drafts of history? Whose history, whose reality and what does reality any longer mean?

When the divisions disappear between reality and its appearances, critical inquiry necessarily becomes disruptive, explicitly pedagogical and radically democratic. Its topics: fascism, the violent

politics of global capitalist culture, the loss of freedom in daily life. We need a new politics of truth. We must embrace the justice of our rage:

Speakers One and Two: June Jordan and Patricia Hill Collins (paraphrase):

> We must reclaim the neglected legacy of the
>
> Sixties, an unabashed moral certainty, an incredible
>
> outgoing energy of righteous rage. We cannot restore and
>
> expand the forms of justice that our lives require until and unless
>
> we change the language of current political and methodological
>
> discourse. If we do not reintroduce our concepts of Right and
>
> Wrong, of Truth and Evidence, then how shall we finally argue
>
> for our cause (Collins, 1998, p. 250; Jordan, 1992, p. 178).

<div align="center">***</div>

I answer the call of Jordan and Collins by turning to the post-pragmatists (see Denzin, 1996 for a review; also Seigfried, 1996). For the post-pragmatist feminist there is no neutral standpoint, no objective God's eye view of the world. The meaning of a concept, or line of action or a representation lies in the practical, political, moral, and social consequences it produces for an actor or collectivity. The meanings of these consequences are not objectively given. They are established through social interaction and the politics of representation. All representations are historically situated, shaped by the intersecting contingencies of power, gender, race and class (Seigfried, 1996, p. 269; Collins, 2000).

An Afro-Centric, feminist ethical framework (Collins, 2000; 1998) mediates the pragmatic theory of meaning. Collins (2000) offers four criteria --primacy of lived experience, dialogue, an ethics of care, an ethics of responsibility--for interpreting truth and knowledge claims. This framework privileges lived experience, emotion, empathy, and values rooted in personal expressiveness (Collins, 2000, pp. 265-269; Edwards and Mauthner, 2002, p. 25).

The moral inquirer, whether a politician or a social scientist, builds a collaborative, reciprocal, trusting, mutually accountable relationship with those studied. This feminist ethical framework is care and justice-based. It seeks to contextualize shared values and norms. It privileges the sacredness of life, human dignity, nonviolence, care, solidarity, love, community, empowerment, civic transformation. It demands of any action that it positively contribute to a politics of resistance, hope and freedom (Denzin, 2003, p. 258).

For the prophetic post-pragmatists there are no absolute truths, no absolute principles, no faith-based beliefs in what is true or false. Following Collins (2000), Pelias (2004, p. 163), and Freire (1999), the moral inquirer enacts a politics of love and care, an ethic of hope and forgiveness.

Speaker One: Ron Pelias (paraphrase):

> The heart learns that stories are truths that won't keep still. The heart learns that facts are
>
> the possibilities we pretend we trust. The heart's method of pumping, loving and
>
> forgiving encourages
>
> us to proceed with our hearts first. What matters most is that we
>
> learn how to use our rage in positive ways, to love, to struggle
>
> to forgive. We have little other choice (Pelias, 2004, pp. 162-163, 171).

In a methodology of the heart, actions are judged in terms of moral consequences and the meanings people bring to them. Consequences are not self-evident. They are socially constructed. The concept of truth is thus replaced with a consequential theory of meaning. Experience, folded through what Stuart Hall (1996, p. 473) calls the politics of representation, becomes the site of meaning and truth. Facts about the world are treated as facticities, as lived experiences. The pragmatist examines the effects, or consequences of any line of action on existing structures of domination. The pragmatist asks, that is, what are the moral and ethical consequences of these effects for lived human experience. If people are being oppressed, denied freedom, or dying because of these effects, then the action, of course, is morally indefensible.

Speaker Two: Cornel West (1991, p. 36; 1989, p. 234; paraphrased):

> At the level of politics and ideology, the post-pragmatist acts as a critical moral agent,
>
> one whose political goal is the creation of greater individual freedom in the broader
>
> social order. Prophetic pragmatists as moral agents understand that the consequences of
>
> their interventions into the world are exclusively political, judged always in terms their
>
> contributions to a politics of liberation, love, caring and freedom.

<center>***</center>

The processes that shape national security decision-making in a democracy should be transparent and open. They should not be based, as were the Bush Administration's decisions to go to war, on cherry-picked intelligence, disinformation, secrecy, secret information, secrets that are not secrets, leaked, declassified and reclassified documents, coded phrases, misrepresentations, distortions, and lies (Sanger, 2005, pp. 1, 5). Evidence should not be doctored (Rich, 2005d, p. 13). Contradictory evidence should be openly discussed, its implications for policy debated. Decisions "should be subjected to a robust process of checks and balance" (Herbert, 2005. p. A23).

<center>***</center>

Leading scientists, including more than 60 Nobel Prize winners have all spoken out against these abuses of science under the Bush regime (Kaplan, 2005, pp. 95, 104, 113). The hallmark of a free society is its unfettered support of research and inquiry on ethically and politically sensitive, controversial issues. Such research yields trustworthy findings that many, including those in political

power, may find objectionable. But a society's respect for critical interpretive inquiry is "based on the common understanding that serious health, economic and social consequences are at stake" (Hillman, 2003).

Safe guards protecting scientists and the scientific community from censorship, misrepresentation, repression and politicization must be commonplace. The values of progressive democracy must be forefront when scientific advice is used for policymaking decisions. The pragmatic consequences for a radical democracy must be taken into account when scientific recommendations for social action are implemented. It is time for all concerned scholars and citizens to rally against the mis-uses of science, information and evidence by the Bush administration (Mooney, 2005, p. 255).

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BACK TO DOWNING STREET AND HISTORY'S ACTORS

The morally unethical actions of Bush and his administration are exposed in the Downing Street memo. Like the high level leaks that unmasked whistle-blower Joseph Wilson's wife Valerie as a covert C. I. A. agent, the memo shows that Bush's History's Actors, or the White House Iraq Group (WHIG) as they called themselves, were willing to go to any length to justify the war in Iraq. They took the concept of truth as a social construction to a logical but ethically indefensible conclusion. In so doing they exposed the vulnerability of an epistemology and methodology that relies upon manipulations of the world to produce findings that conform to one's beliefs about reality. Thus did WHIG discredit SBR One, showing that it has no full-proof mechanism for producing objective truth.

As long as reality can be socially constructed, fraudulent versions of SBR One, what I have called SBR Two will be created. In that space history's actors must be held accountable to a higher moral truth. A methodology of the heart, a prophetic, feminist post-pragmatism embraces an ethics of truth grounded in love, care, hope and forgiveness.

Speaker One: Patricia Hill Collins (2000, p. 251, paraphrase):

This methodology relies on a righteous rage to spur us on, to keep us headed in the right

direction, to point the way, to move people toward justice. If it does this then it has made

a very important difference in the lives of people.

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We demand that history's actors use models of evidence that answer to these moral truths.

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Notes

[1] The text is to be performed on a stage with three speakers: a narrator at a podium and speakers A and B seated behind a table. Speakers A and B assume the voices of a variety of persons, including Joan Didion, President Bush, Tony Blair and George Orwell. A spot light moves to each speaker when it is his or her turn to speak. When speaking the speaker first announces the name of the person being spoken for.

[2] The text reads:

This is Secret and Strictly Personal--UK Eyes Only

David Manning

FR: Matthew Rycroft

Date: 23 July 2002

cc: Defence Secretary, Foreign Secretary, Attorney-General, Sir Richard Wilson, John Scarlett, Francis Richards, CDS, C. Jonathan Powell, Sally Morgan, Alastair Campbell

IRAQ: PRIME MINISTER'S MEETING, 23 JULY

This record is extremely sensitive. No further copies should be made. It should be shown only to those with a genuine need to know its contents.

John Scarlett summarised the intelligence and latest JIC assessment ... C reported on his recent talks in Washington ... Military action was now seen as inevitable. Bush wanted to remove Saddam, through military action, justified by the conjunction of terrorism and WMD. But the intelligence and facts were being fixed around the policy ... It seemed clear that Bush had made

up his mind to take military action ... The Attorney-General said that the desire for regime change was not a legal case for military action ... But the case (for war) was thin. Saddam was not threatening his neighbors, and his WMD capability was less than that of Libya, North Korea of Iran.

[3] Since no WMD were found, the reasons for the war had to be changed. They now include bringing American-style democracy to Iraq and the Middle East; fighting terrorists in Iraq before they strike America; and honoring the dead who have been killed in the war.

[4] Saddam did not represent a threat to America, nor to the world. There were no secret purchases of uranium oxide from the African nation of Niger (Alterman and Green, 2004, p. 265). No one will take responsibility for, nor be accountable for the mass destruction, the murders and the violence that have occurred since the beginning of the war. Facts: over 2000 dead American soldiers; more than 30,000 dead Iraqi; disgrace and degradation in Abu Ghraib.

Interview

An Interview with Peter McLaren: Comments on the State of the World-2005

Michael F. Shaughnessy, Ph.D.
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An Interview with Peter McLaren: Comments on the State of the World-2005

1) **One of your most recent books is " Capitalists and Conquerors: A Critical Pedagogy Against Empire" What are the top five points that you tried to make in this book?**

Ever since writing *Life in Schools* and *Schooling as a Ritual Performance*, my books have mostly been collections of articles that I have published, sometimes modified to various degrees for the book I am putting together. So I don't set out to make certain points, I see what points are there after the book is put together. I produce a lot of written work, so much so that somebody once remarked that I have never had a thought go unpublished. Putting my articles together gives me a chance to revisit recent articles and make clarifications and to guide my thoughts to a precision they don't always have the first time around. And more recently I have sought out students and young scholars to work with in a collaborative fashion, which I think is something sorely lacking among scholars—even leftist scholars—these days. But yes, there are always underlying themes to my books that can be traced back twenty years or more. In my work dating back to the mid-eighties, I have always tried to fathom the ways that capitalism functions in North American contexts, and more recently, in global contexts, with a special emphasis on Latin America. The structural crisis of capitalism in the 1970s was a watershed moment for world capitalism, and current developments such as neoliberalism can be directly traced to this crisis. I want to underscore with a white heat that capitalism is not the best possible way to organize the social universe of human beings. In fact, it has transmogrified into a behemoth that, in a ferocious hunger for self-expansion, feeds off the commodification of social life that it creates. It is auto-copulatory. Worse, it ingests the detritus of humanity that it creates. More recently, since I began working from a Marxist humanist perspective in the late 1990s, I have tried to show the crucial role played by revolutionary social movements in the reclaiming of our humanity.

At the same time I have been arguing that totalitarian regimes, such as the former Eastern Bloc police states, are not the necessary outcomes of Marxist revolutionary movements. Instead of retreating from Marx, educators need to rediscover the totality of his work. I have also exercised an uncompromising critique of liberal, centralist governments, such as the Clinton administration. In fact, I have tried to unpack the most central and ubiquitous contradictions at work within liberal democracies. I encourage educators to move beyond the liberal/conservative dyad and view the social universe of capital more critically. I am no more reluctant to critique a democratic administration than a republican one. I am not invested in favoring either one.

I am invested in building a better society and I think its time Americans stop exercising their possessive allegiance to one party or the other like they do their favorite sports team. It's time that educators especially invest in the fight against imperialist parasitism, poverty, war, and what my friend Henry Giroux calls 'the terror of neoliberalism'.

I greatly value Marx's critique of political economy—in fact it is now central in my work—and know enough about Marx's work and the history of class struggle to be able to say that much that has happened in world history under his name has no doubt caused him to turn over many times in his grave. I also want to reveal, especially to my readers in the United States, that the history of the United States is far from unblemished. In fact, the United States has a bloody imperialist history of conquest, economic and military, that would shock most Americans if they knew it even in the most superficial sense. This bloody past, so full of presage, continues and goes on unchecked, especially now that the United States has acheived sole world superpower status.

But it is impossible for Americans to know about this bloody past unless they actively search for it outside the hegemonic precincts of the corporate media and visit the books, articles, and reports of dissident writers who publish outside of the mainstream. And this has been made very difficult since 9/11, because to do so puts curious Americans who have opened themselves up to the possibility that their country is the alpha-rogue nation among the main imperialist countries at serious risk of being labeled "America haters" and unpatriotic.

I also try to encourage my readers to think 'outside the box', not just in terms of social theory or political history, but also in terms of how they would like to transform society. Do they want to continue the dream of bringing democracy via cluster bombs, attack helicopter gunships and fighter jets to countries that refuse to allow US dominated corporations to exploit them, or do they want to investigate the marriage of democracy to the beast of capital (the pro-imperialist state apparatus that also goes under the name of the military industrial complex), and what that might mean to the majority of human beings around the world struggling to eke out an existence with some measure of dignity.

Or do they want to struggle for another world where racism, sexism, homophobia and all objectified and alienated social relations are abolished? I would say that the themes in *Capitalists and Conquerors* are more urgent than in any of my previous work. That is because the foreign and domestic policies of the United States have become more transparent, the bloodstains across the planet have become more visible to the naked eye, and our ability to trace crimes against humanity (not just to the White House but to the capitalist system itself that is the pilot light that keeps the engines of military industrial complex grinding) has improved with the advent of alternative media, the internet, etc. Our 'miliaristic messiah' has lost his clothes (including his shiny groin-enhancing flight suit with salacious diagonal straps) and we have been brought face-to-face with major political choices. The first choice is whether or not we are willing to look at the nakedness of our leaders, to stare directly at them in their unvarnished duplicity. And while there has been a significant ramp-up among those willing to criticize the Bush administration post 9/11, the majority of Americans still shield their eyes, refusing to hazard even a glance, lest their motivated amnesia grind to a halt and their world collapse. It is one thing to be a happy idiot, or to soak up for hours on end the somniferous advice of television gurus, it is quite another to refuse actively to seek the truth, especially when it stands shivering before you. Instead of condemning their leaders, many Americans remain beholden to them; they rush to cover up their nakedness, to drape the quivering, shaking bodies of their Bible-thumping Ayatollahs in the flag.

While they believe they are protecting their leaders from a vile liberal onslaught, an attack by ungodly secular humanists, they are only protecting themselves from seeing the truth. I am not just trying to 'out' a shameful White House administration that is reviled by most populations around the world. That's too easy and it largely misses the point. My message is that while we challenge the Bush administration we have also to look beyond connecting examples of social dislocation to any one governmental administration and to see them as structurally rooted in the nature of global capitalism.

I am trying to give readers some conceptual and theoretical armature that will help them to refocus their imaginations. I think it was Mark Twain who said something like: You can't depend on your

judgment when your imagination is out of focus. I am trying to exhort my American readers to look, to stare, and then to refocus through a new conceptual imaginary, to rethink the marriage of democracy to capital. Is there another bride, another bridesgroom more compatible for and less inimical to democracy? I think there is. It's called socialism. You can give it another name, so long as you mean the same thing. And finally (I am not sure here that I have talked about five points exactly), I am trying to develop a much more interesting style of presenting my ideas. I've even considered doing political film and theater in the future.

2)   After George Bush's term in office is up, what do you think will be the "legend of the Bush gang"?

The Bush gang—a term that my camarada and colleague Gregory Martin and I used in our chapter—refers to nothing short of a cabal of duplicitous thugs with corporate credentials and impressive political portfolios—will try to take credit for shifting the tectonic plates of the world's political landscape, especially in the Middle East. They will sell it as bringing freedom and democracy to former sink holes of human depravity. They know that many Americans will want to believe this. Of course, this is a reprehensible lie. But lies—the bigger the better—are what oil the right wing propaganda machines, it's what steadies the ideological rudder and gives ballast to the reproductive function of the neo-liberal state, especially when the state tacks too far from the agenda of the neocons.

I worry about the Bush legacy. Why? Look at Ronald Reagan. Under the cover of the Reagan Doctrine designed to stop communism from spreading (apparently domino-style beginning with Nicaragua's Sandinistas—a brazenly ludicrous assumption but it worked to conjure sufficient fear within the US population, like the fictitious missile gap between the US and the Soviets during the Cold War) to the doorsteps of the U.S.-Mexican border, the United States illegally supplied the Contra rebels in Nicaragua (who waylaid Sandinista supporters and attacked civilian farming cooperatives with 88-mm mortars and rocket-propelled grenades--even those populated by pacifists who refused to bear arms) and this clearly made the United States an accomplice in terrorism.

Yet the US media refused to castigate them. Remaining defiant in the face of the International Court of Justice's (1986) condemnation of the United States for "unlawful use of force" and illegal economic warfare in its attacks on Nicaragua, the U.S. vetoed a UN Security Council resolution that called on all states to obey international law. The U.S. was determined to carry out the Reagan Doctrine and ignore both international law and opinion. And still Reagan is glorified in the national media upon his death as an indelible orator and avuncular leader who won the Cold War, and we haven't even touched on his domestic policies and his war against the poor people of the United States.

And now, under Bush, we have the ominous figure of John "Dirty Tricks" Negroponte, installed as the uber-Director of National Intelligence. Negroponte is a career diplomat whose role in the dirty wars of Central America began when he was U.S. ambassador in Honduras between 1981 and 1985, during which time he took aim at the bogey-man of godless communism and coordinated the funding and training of the counterrevolutionary death squad known as the "Contras" in its illegal war against the Sandinista National Liberation Front. If there is ever a case to make that human beings are really a species of lizard that devour children and rule the world in order to harvest human flesh for their starving planet, it's Negroponte. While in Honduras, Negroponte turned a blind eye to the horrific crimes of a secret army intelligence unit -- Battalion 316 –that was trained and supported by the CIA and which led to an increase in human rights violations and tortures and missing leftwing critics of Honduran dictator, General Gustavo Alvarez Martinez.

Critics of Negroponte now fear that the U.S. is more likely to be involved in extra-judicial killings in its ongoing war on terror.

For the United States backers of the Central American regimes responsible for such atrocities, it appears that communist dictatorships were always to be shunned whereas right wing authoritarian dictatorships, in spite of their crimes against humanity, made strategic allies. For a time, Iraq's Saddam Hussein was an ally of the U.S., until he served a more convenient role as the embodiment of evil. Many of the same war criminals that were part of the recently glorified Reagan years are now serving in their graying but no less gentler years in the current Bush Jr. administration.

And now we have Iraq. A hundred and twenty thousand Iraqis have been killed by US and British air and ground strikes. There are few caesuras of tranquility in what has become for that country a symphony of death. Britain and America's reasons for escalating the bombing of Iraq in the ten months leading up to the war in Iraq were boldfaced lies, as official figures recently released by the British Ministry of Defense show. So, in effect, the war against Iraq began in earnest 10 months before the actual invasion with thousands of bombing runs against command and control centers. In fact, it had begun much sooner than that, with the sanctions against Iraq, responsible for so many deaths of children, up to half a million by some estimates.

At first the US did not want to hold elections in Iraq, but pressure from the Shite leadership caused the Bush administration to change its mind. Once the elections were held, the US used them as a photo opportunity to help convince the world that victory for democracy was won (we all know that once the US captured Baghdad, they staged the tearing down of the statue of Saddam amid a throng of cheering Iraqis and that they used the Jessica Lynch story to fuel its pro-war propaganda, even by Lynch's own recent admission). Of course, Iraq has been brought to the brink of civil war as the insurgency grows stronger. If the United States is so interested in democratic values why, when Iraqi interim government declared its intention to endorse the treaty on the International Criminal Court (ICC), did the transitional administration in Baghdad reverse its decision within a few days, presumably under unremitting pressure from Washington?

The Bush cabal will never permit conditions to exist that could put its war criminals on trial, or lead to real sovereignty for poor nations such as Iraq. Iraqi sovereignty, i.e. the Iraqi government's direct and real control over major economic decisions within its national borders, will never be permitted by the dominant capitalist states.   Poor nations will never be allowed to retain government control over substantial capital flows in and out of their borders. Deregulation will always be imposed on these economies, wherever they exist. Political-economic sovereignty cannot be permitted within the laws of the capitalist universe, laws enforced by the dominant capitalist states. Because such a move would defy the basic laws of capitalist accumulation and would give hope to the oppressed worldwide.

3)   "In his unconscious attempt to achieve aplottes(simplicity of the soul) over kipsukia (duplicity of the soul) has Bush forsaken human reason?' What led you to ask this question and how do you respond?

I think George Bush believes that he is an honest man but he betrays no surfeit of scruples when he is conducting his presidential duties in concert with his intuitive feelings that he is God's envoy. He is the exception to the warrant that requires U.S. presidents to respect the separation of church and state when engaging in exigent issues involving national security. He is more like God's court jester, but the jokes are no longer funny (if they ever were) because they are drowned out by the shrieks of the dead and dying. Interesting to note the shift of the Vatican to the right, just as Reagan and Thatcher came into power. I would like to write something about this shift that culminated in the election of Benedict XVI, and how Benedict, when he was Cardinal Ratzinger, helped get Bush Junior elected by writing a letter to American bishops that condemned pro-life political candidates (i.e, John Kerry). I think Bush Jr. is using his 'faith' in a destructive way. He sees himself as carrying out the will of God. According to some reports I have read, Bush believes that God wanted him to invade Iraq. I have no problem with religious faith. But

as a materialist I believe that we need to employ reason to understand faith. I don't want to belittle faith; the more we explain faith does not mean that we need to take faith less seriously in our lives. Increasing our knowledge of faith can help us make faith work in the interest of social justice rather than employing faith in the service of what we perceive as some 'otherworldly' command. In our quest to make the world a better place, we have to be cautious not to see ourselves as instruments of the divine that would cause us to stray into abstract utopian hinterlands too far removed from our analysis of the present barbarism wrought by capital. Our vision of the future must go beyond the present but still rooted in it, it must exist in the plane of immanence, not mystical transcendence. We cannot deny the presence of the possible in the contradictions that we live out daily in the messy realm of capital.

We need to struggle for a concrete utopia where the subjunctive world of the 'ought to be' can be wrought within the imperfect, partial, defective and finite world of the 'what is' Any authentic future must be to some extent be connected to the material forces of the present. Our utopia must be born of the here and now since it exists in a potential state within the contradictions and conflicts that make up the present. Whereas Bush seeks an abstract utopia discontinuous with the present, one based on Biblical principles that are designed to serve the invisible forces of God on the basis of America's 'providential history', I seek a concrete utopia based on hope and reason where feelings, beliefs and intuition can be rationally traced to their sources in the real world and where progressive change is brought about by class struggle, by anti-imperialist, gender-balanced, anti-racist pedagogies designed to bring about a social revolution.

4)   What are the main tenets in the age of neo-liberal globalization?

There was a time when the US was a creditor nation – it is now a debtor nation. I don't have time to discuss all the historical reasons that led to this, but the era of neoliberalism describes this shift. When you get down to it, the globalization of capitalism refers to the internationalization of capitalist relations of exploitation. It means the subjection of national capital by international capital. Its main concomitant is the astounding flexibility of capital and markets that makes it seemingly unassailable.

5) With Ramin Farahmandpur, you have written " Teaching Against Global Capitalism and the New Imperialism: A Critical Pedagogy" In it, you discuss" contraband pedagogy".What exactly is " contraband pedagogy" and why is it important?

Contraband pedagogy is another name for revolutionary critical pedagogy. I wanted to emphasize its marginalized status as a dangerous weapon in the hands of the oppressed, as a pedagogy found mainly on the black market, like a rocket launcher that fires pencils instead of grenades, a pedagogy that, if seized, would be destroyed by the transnational capitalist class because they know that they are in its crosshairs. It is a pedagogy that cannot be named because it carries dangerous memories, subjugated knowledges of the dispossessed and the forgotten, the alienated and the exploited. I don't mean to romanticize this type of pedagogy but I wanted a name that would evoke its essential complexion, its outsider status.

6) Who should teach against globalization, when should we teach against the new imperialism, and why is it important that we do so ?

We shouldn't teach against globalization. I have no problem with globalization per se but with the globalization of capitalism. We need to keep this distinction clear. Globalization is inevitable – the sharing of cultures, values, information, knowledges, etc., worldwide—but the globalization of capitalism is something else.

7) In the socialist imagination, what type or format of educational policy would we see? What kinds of a "pedagogy of resistance" would be envision?

The policies would be very much directed at issues of scarcity and human needs, they would be focused on issues of regional development and achieved through class struggle by means of participatory modes of democratic decision-making.

8) " We live in urgent times" is the first sentence of one of the chapters in" Teaching Against Global Capitalism" What is the nature of these urgent times, and what do we have to address in these urgent times?

Clearly, capital – as a social relation – that is structuring most of life on the planet through neo-liberal policies and practices exercised by the transnational capitalist class is the central problem. The very soil in which capitalism rests is based on the overaccumulation of capital and the super-exploitation of rank-and-file wage laborers. These are irreversible contradictions and there are inherent within capitalist social and economic relations –those between capital and labor. They are taking us further away from democratic accountability and bringing us perilously close to what Rosa Luxemburg referred to as an age of "barbarism." Here in the US – what I have called "las entranas de la bestia" (the belly of the beast") we are witnessing an attack by the religious right on gays, lesbians and women who are fighting for the right to control their bodies. Religious fundamentalists believe that this is divisive to American family values. But what is really destroying the American family, as well as families throughout the entire globe, is the exploitative nature of capitalism, its logic of commodification and its practice of surplus value extraction. As Marxist humanists will no doubt tell you, the major engine that drives the economic and ideological hegemony of capitalism is racism. Just examine the rates of poverty and unemployment among African-Americans and Latinos. Class exploitation involves the buying and selling of human lives as commodities –the creation of what Marx called "wage slaves''. We need wage slaves to keep capitalism in motion.

In fact, wage slavery is a constitutive factor of our democracy. When you think about it, that's why wage slavery is camouflaged as a "voluntary contractual agreement," even though there is no alternative on the table. Well, there is an alternative: it is called unemployment, starvation, and death.

The underdevelopment of the economies of the so-called Third World *has become a necessary condition* for the flourishing of the economies of the so-called First World. Marxists have long addressed this situation. There is a growing bipolarization and the over-accumulation of capital by a new breed of what I have described in previous interviews as "opulent gangster capitalists from reigning global mafiacracies". As a consequence, the odds of surviving hunger, poverty, malnutrition, famine, and disease is not very good for a growing segment of working-class men, women, and children throughout the world.

Check out the proliferation of *maquiladoras* along the U.S.-Mexican *frontera*, where the extortion of absolute surplus-value is increasing dramatically. It has to do with relative surplus value extortion through increasing the productivity of labor and reducing the value of labor power. This is precisely how capitalism continues to hold living human labor hostage to the valorization process. How else is capitalism able to recast the world into its own image?

Latin American educators don't have as much of a problem with Marxist analysis as educators in North America – part of this has been the success of Cold World propaganda in linking Marxist analysis with totalitarianism and gulags…that's about like blaming the Christian crusades on the sermon on the mount.

9) What led you to collaborate with Gustavo Fischman, Heinz Sunker and Colin Lankshear in your recent co-edited text, Critical Theories, Radical Pedagogies and Global Contexts?

I knew Gustavo as a doctoral student at UCLA, and realized then that he was going to do brilliant and important work and he has not let me down. He is a perfect example of an engaged and committed intellectual. Heinz Sunker is one of the leading critical theorists in education in Germany and fully engaged in the struggle for social justice in Europe and elsewhere. We have known he other for years, and have collaborated on projects before. Colin Lankshear is somebody with whom I have worked on and off for fifteen years, and one of the best authorities on literacy and the new technologies you can find anywhere. He's always one step ahead of most of us.

10) Can you tell us about La Fundacion McLaren, which has recently been started in Mexico?

Yes, I was approached by scholars and activists in Northern Mexico familiar with my work and they pitched the idea for an organization that would serve as a vehicle for critical pedagogy in Latin America, not only my work, but work by other individuals as well. There is a website, a journal called Aula Critica, and there are plans for conferences and seminars on contemporary issues, with the purposes of mobilizing educators for a social revolution, a revolution against capital.

11) Are there other McLaren foundations planned?

There is a university in Cordoba, Argentina that is establishing an Instituto Peter McLaren that is affiliated with a program in multiculturalism and migrations and I have been approached with the idea of more Institutos in other countries in Latin America, but they have not been finalized so I don't think I should mention them yet.

12) What do you make of these invitations to start foundations and institutes bearing your name?

I don't think they are about me as an individual as much as about the impact that critical pedagogy has made in general, which, of course, they associate with numerous educators worldwide. This does not mean that they don't see some distinguishing characteristics in my work, such as the Marxist humanism that has become the cornerstone of my work over the last decade. The word 'Marxism' is an alienating word to many North American educators, and it is less the case in Latin America. So-called third world countries that exist at the periphery of the world capitalist system are overwhelmingly the low-wage areas, interest and profit-exporters (not importers), and they are prisoners of international financial institutions and dependent on limited overseas markets and export products.

Haven't you noticed that there exists is a strong relationship between the growth of international flows of capital and an increase in inequalities between states, and between Chief Executive Officers of Corporations (CEO's) and workers?

13) It is now 2005. In retrospect, what is the legacy of Paulo Freire?

Freire's work is about establishing a critical relationship between pedagogy and politics, highlighting the political aspects of the pedagogical and drawing attention to the implicit and explicit domain of the pedagogical inscribed in the political. In a recent Preface to a new edition of Freire's book, Teachers as Cultural Workers, I had the opportunity to reflect upon Freire's enduring legacy. I mentioned that while Freire extolled the virtues of socialism, and drew substantively from various Marxist traditions, he was also critical of dogmatic, doctrinaire Marxists whom he saw as intolerant and authoritarian. Freire argued that by refusing to take education seriously as a site of political transformation and by opposing

socialism to democracy, the mechanistic Marxists have, in effect, delayed the realization of socialism for our times.

Freire believed that the Left's cardinal mistake had to do with their absolute conviction of their certainties and had to do with their unfriendliness toward democracy—and this, Freire believed, played into the hands of the Right. At the same time, Freire never forgot that educators engage in politics when they educate, and that educators need to distinguish between repressive and emancipatory politics. To be a Freirean educator in these times requires a dauntless courage, a hopeful vision and a steadfast commitment. Recently, Nathalia Jaramillo and I were invited to speak in Venezuela about critical pedagogy, at the invitation of the Venezuelan government, who are undergoing a brave an important experiment with socialism. We were struck by how important Freire's work is in Venezuela, and how it is helping to contribute mightily to the Bolivarian revolution.

14) Did you meet President Chavez?

Very briefly when he came to greet us in an office at Miraflores Palace. I am a great admirer of President Chavez and a staunch supporter of the Bolivarian revolution.

15) What are you working on in the future?

I'm trying to develop further what's involved in creating a critical pedagogy grounded in Marxist humanism. As Peter Hudis has remarked, Marxist humanism is not the only approach to appreciate the importance of spontaneous self-activity or to argue that mass practice gives rise to new theory or that the experiences of resistance on the streets are expressions of theory. But Hudis does point out some very unique features of Marxist humanism that maintain, for instance, that the movement from practice is a form of theory, that theory is not the same as philosophy and that the philosophy that is needed in these very dangerous times, at this historical juncture, is Marx's philosophy of "revolution in permanence" developed to its next stage of dialectical development. Now these are very difficult conceptual, political and pedagogical issues and my task is to try to make sense of them for a revolution in education, one that is part of the larger revolution in permanence of which Marx speaks. To accomplish that, I will work on my own as well as collaboratively, and rely on the expertise of many of my mentors, and try to be worthy of the task at hand.

There is a lot we can do before the revolution, but we can't abandon it. If we realize that there can be no educational reform without a major transformation in human relations, and that this transformation is impossible without a major transformation in the means of production, then we will be focused solely on pedagogies based on deepening democracy, improving civil society, invigorating culture, bringing about equality of distribution of resources, and the like. Well, as admirable as these reform efforts are, they still are structurally rooted in capitalist social relations, in the capitalist law of value and without transforming the economic structure of capitalism, educational transformation is too self-limiting to make enough of a difference!

Book Review

McLaren, Peter & Farahmandpur, Ramin (2005). Teaching against Global Capitalism and the New Imperialism: A Critical Pedagogy. **Lanham, Maryland, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, xiv+299 ppISBN 0-7425-1039-5 (cloth); 0-7425-1040-9 (pbk)**

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书　　评

彼得·麦克拉伦、拉明·法拉曼普尔（2005）：

《反对全球资本主义和新帝国主义的教学：一种批判教育学》

马里兰，兰哈姆：罗曼和利特菲尔德出版社。

评论人：常君睿　杨昌勇

解读资本主义全球化和新帝国主义时代的批判教育学

　　我们有四个理由同意为这本书撰写书评。首先，长期以来我们一直对批判教育学有着浓厚的兴趣，彼得·麦克拉伦（Peter McLaren）是这个领域众多杰出学者之一。1999年，本文作者之一的杨昌勇在其博士学位论文《当代西方"新"教育社会学进展评析》中专门研究过批判教育学。该论文现以《新教育社会学：连续与断裂的学术历程》为书名在中国出版（杨昌勇，2004）。第二，作为伊利诺大学厄巴纳-香槟分校东亚与太平洋研究中心的访问教授，杨昌勇的研究课题是《教育社会学：美国的一种后现代实践及其理论》，彼得·麦克拉伦和拉明·法拉曼普尔（Ramin Farahmandpur）的著作《反对全球资本主义和新帝国主义的教学：一种批判教育学》（2005）由此落入我们的研究视野。第三，作为一个年轻的学者和博士研究生，常君睿正在尝试将批判教育学的理论与方法应用于她对中国乡村学校艺术课程的研究。第四，作为中国的教育研究者，我们对彼得·麦克拉伦及其合作者拉明·法拉曼普尔运用马克思主义在社会主义教育学方面的努力很感兴趣。我们很乐意接受并为这本新书写书评。

　　在过去的几十年里，全球化作为一种不可避免的历史现象，增强了世界的相互依赖和交流，同时也在不同国家、地区和种族之间及内部引发了严重冲突。彼得·麦克拉伦和拉明·法拉曼普尔在这本书里，不仅对批判教育学——它力图唤起学习者的批判意识、努力向压迫人的社会环境进行挑战和变革以创造一个更加平等的社会，而且也对新全球化理论——它力图帮助那些有觉悟的人们努力为全球正义与世界和平而斗争——做出了重要贡献。通过把资本主义、全球化和国家赞助的恐怖主义联系起来，他们从马克思主义理论转向了批判的革命教育学，为作为变革性知识分子的教师在公共学校、尤其是在教育学院中应当做些什么提出了建议。通过把全球化、帝国主义、恐怖主义和美国的对外政策联系起来，他们提醒教师和学生如何在教学和学习中维护自身的权利。此外，他们还提醒作为多数的、自觉的公民如何向政府施加民主压力。总的说来，他们以

恰切的方式将这些因素联系起来，打开了批判教育学的新视角，开创了批判教育学的新领域。

彼得·麦克拉伦和拉明·法拉曼普尔的这本书由九个篇章、导论、罗伯尔托·伯尔斯（Roberto Bahruth）教授写的前言和朱哈·舒尔兰杜（Juha Suoranta）教授写的结语等组成。他们在回顾和修改近年来发表的论文的基础上完成了此书，从批判教育学的视角，系统地组织了他们对全球资本主义和新帝国主义的思考和再思考。下面几点尤为重要。

1. 对美帝国主义核心特征的探讨

被压迫者教育学和批判教育学不仅仅是一种教学与教学方法的理论改革。它们是在哲学、社会学和心理学基础之上建构起来的教育理论与社会理论，在实践上锐意社会改革。近年来，批判教育学通过探讨美帝国主义的核心特征而形成了一种国际视野，并试图发展一种实践哲学和一些行动策略。

彼得·麦克拉伦和拉明·法拉曼普尔反对这样一种观点：资本主义是社会和人类的最高形式，随着后帝国主义的到来，帝国紧随帝国主义之后，当今世界进入了一个"和平的资本主义共存"时代，国家权力已经退化，或者说其角色已经极大地削弱了，相反，他们赞同列宁的帝国主义理论和阿布·曼内赫（Abu-Manneh）对新近新帝国主义的分析，相信"在推进美帝国主义的全球统治计划中，国家继续扮演着关键角色，它通过两个紧密相联的过程起作用：全球化和新自由主义"（p.3）。在这本书中，全球化是当作批判帝国主义的一种委婉说法来使用的。作者们指出了美帝国主义的不同表现，从冷战（里根政府）到伊拉克战争（布什政府），它们维护了美国在全球的霸权和统治。美国的"单边主义"外交政策，使它成为世界上唯一的、无竞争对手的帝国势力，这对美国和世界其他国家来说都是危险的。一般而言，新右派持有一种追求地方分权、私有化、市场化和自由化的新自由主义的政治和意识形态观点，其结果是那些物质生产的控制者也控制了精神生产，它们造成了这样一种局面：一方面是政治上的民主，而另一方面则是社会上的法西斯主义。的确是这样，在国际竞争中，政治民主在粗暴和血腥的军事压力下萎缩了，它还常常使用"人道主义者"的借口，但有时则是在明显的谎言掩盖下进行的。因此作者们声称：

> 如果我们对自己当下所见证的、在布什统治下作为一种低调的法西斯主义的美国放弃变革的话，那么我们就玩忽职守了，事实上，这个时期也许正在更加有效地酝酿着法西斯主义（p.6）。

2. 对"客观性"和"中立性"研究原则的反思

作者们明确表示他们探究了美帝国主义的主要特征，并将这些主要特征置于一种特殊的问题背景之中，以便从逻辑上表述他们的学术、政治以及意识形态观点。"客观性"和"中立性"的研究原则在他们的研究中是明显的。"客观性"和"中立性"作为通常被接受的研究原则自有其合法性和合理性。然而，遵守这些研究原则不应该妨碍批判的科学家追求真理和社会正义、承担道德和伦理的责任。事实上，包括教育理论和研究在内的社会科学和研究都存在于社会环境之中，都有其目的、责任和政治价值。

根据新自由主义的逻辑，市场应当而且实际上就是教育及教育改革的资助者，私人利益应该在市场过程中得到回报。事实证明，是那些为数极少的富有者控制着公共与社会生活。在此情况下，有些教育家却害怕面对政治和意识形态矛盾，为了保护自己，他们躲进了学术象牙塔。然而，一些马克思主义教育家却勇敢地面对着这种现实。

许多持有并非终身教席的马克思主义教育家，在大学课堂里通过教学开辟了反对全球资本主义和新帝国主义的新阵地，但是，质疑、更不用说揭露帝国主义和教育之间关系，对他们来说，变得日益危险了（p.7）。

彼得·麦克拉伦和拉明·法拉曼普尔也对某些教育家们把政治和意识形态问题从教育学问题中剥离出来的行为进行了批判。有些教师教育项目，没有成功地与学生进行有关阶级剥削和压迫的对话，而许多进步主义的教师教育项目，也常常忽视了文化、种族和性别压迫的阶级压迫根源。作者们充满激情地呼吁批判教育学应当唤起学生和教师的政治意识，并进行富有成效的反思性实践。

3. 对新帝国主义时代的马克思主义的重新思考

1980 年代末，柏林墙的倒塌、苏联的解体等一系列事件改变了整个世界的学术和政治氛围。从那以后，公众几乎不大关注马克思主义，有的马克思主义学者甚至改变了他们的立场或退缩到"客观的"研究中去了。马克思主义陷入了历史的低潮，而世界进入了资本主义全球化的新时代，美国则进入了一个新帝国主义阶段——"单极"霸权的时代。新帝国主义的问题变得比以往任何时候都更加严峻。然而，现在依然有一些学者在努力将马克思主义再度引入教育，彼得·麦克拉伦和拉明·法拉曼普尔在这方面所做的工作就是必要的、有成效的、也是有意义的。正如他们所说："在这种特殊的历史交替时期，对资本主义进行马克思主义的分析，还从来没有如此迫切地需要过，尤其是自从掀起金融和投机资本的全球攻势以来"（p.15）。

作者们指出，一群马克思主义教育学者，尽管为数不多，不仅对新自由主义自由市场规则、而且也对植根于身份认同政治学经常采用社会运动形式的后马克思主义方案形

成了一股挑战力量。这些马克思主义的批判学者包括迈克·科尔（Mike Cole）、戴夫·希尔（Dave Hill）、托尼·格林（Tony Green）、格伦·雷考茨基（Glenn Rikowski）、安迪·格林（Andy Green）、亨利·吉鲁（Henry Giroux）和彼得·麦克拉伦（Peter McLaren）等人。

作者们把马克思主义作为分析框架。就像马克思当年通过对"血醒的、肮脏的"资本的分析来揭露早期资本主义的特征那样，彼得·麦克拉伦和拉明·法拉曼普尔则通过对当前"非人道的"资本及这种资本的新形式——跨国集团的分析来揭露全球资本主义的特征，认为这种晚期资本主义变得比以往任何时候都更加难以控制。他们说：

> 我们追随马克思（特别是他的劳动价值理论）的断言：资本主义经济根深蒂固的矛盾存在于劳动和资本之间、存在于生产资料占有者和为了获取工资而被迫出卖劳动的工人之间。这些矛盾进一步反映在贫富之间悬殊的差距之中。（p.45）

正如列宁通过资本主义的社会生产关系中的矛盾来分析作为"垂死的资本主义"的帝国主义的特征那样，作者们则通过资本主义的社会生产关系中的新矛盾形式分析了新帝国主义——全球帝国主义或"全球化"——的特征。他们认为新帝国主义是"一种老式的军事和金融实践以及发达国家以市场规律强加于人类自身的新尝试的综合"（p.40）。他们认为列宁的"写作是对迄今为止出现过的帝国主义国家和政治的最重要的分析"（p.62）。

彼得·麦克拉伦和拉明·法拉曼普尔提醒我们，马克思主义并没有死，尽管它似乎已经丧失了划时代的历史地位，在当前的教育研究和教育批判中仅表现出微弱的生命力，然而它却显示了马克思主义的回归，对批判教育学来说，马克思主义的分析将起到强壮剂的作用。他们对马克思主义的态度以及对马克思主义的运用，无疑对资本主义国家内部和外部的人民都具有重要的作用。

4. 对后现代教育理论的批判

在1980 年代，后现代主义对教育已经有了明显的影响。有些教育家——包括左派的和右派的、马克思主义教育家、批判教育家、激进的教育家以及进步的教育家——都接受了后现代的理论和方法来分析、理解和批判资本主义社会。从那以后，后现代主义在教育领域变得时髦起来。但是，后现代教育学者又可划分为几种不同的方向，每一种方向都有各自的视角和立场（Hill, D., etc, 2002）。

总体上看，就像作者们所注意到的，后现代理论在多种方面对教育领域做出了重要贡献。虽然如此，后现代理论有其严重的缺陷并且妨碍了教育家们的研究和实践。就像

有许多马克思主义一样，也有许多后现代主义。作者们对后现代理论的批判就在于它们未能对资本主义进行有力的挑战。

　　　　后现代理论家们，不仅在解释文化表征与结构如何受资本主义的束缚方面可悲地玩忽职守，从最坏的一面而言，他们还常常把社会主义与斯大林主义的历史混为一谈，从最好的一面而言，他们又常常把福利国家的改革主义与斯堪的纳维亚国家如丹麦、瑞典混为一谈。(p. 18)

　　后现代教育家们接受了市场经济而未能挑战新自由主义的经济观和资本主义的剥削关系，在他们茫然的眼神中，社会发展已经迷失了它的方向和可能性；他们的社会策略充斥着无法解决的矛盾；他们在立场上滑向了与新右派自由市场经济的意识形态相似的个人主义的教育消费主义。

　　许多后现代主义者把马克思主义当作过时的教条而抛弃了，他们不能理解马克思历史唯物主义和辩证法在社会分析和解释中的能力，他们也不能理解在当今发展马克思主义的概念、理论和实践、特别是为社会正义与世界和平而进行的阶级斗争迫切地需要的是什么。

　　后现代主义者强调微观政治学，过高地估计了语言、话语和文化中的推论性斗争。相反，他们否认社会斗争，在他们看来，没有什么阶级或群体能够进行任何有效的集体行动以变革存在于资本主义的社会生产关系。马克思主义和后现代主义都承认阶级、种族和性别间的相互联系，但是他们的政治和意识形态倾向性是极为不同的。在马克思主义的看来，历史是人们在自己的社会环境中追求他们的目的的具体活动。马克思主义理论的目的，不仅要解释世界，而且还要改变世界。

　　后现代教育理论的批判是重要的，因为早在1980年代，后现代主义所具有的诸如去中心、解构等特征帮助了教育家们理解和批判既存社会，这使得后现代教育家们具备了一种类似于激进的教育家、批判教育家、进步主义教育家和马克思主义教育家那样的批判的和激进的特征。尽管如此，后现代教育理论在政治和意识形态倾向性上与新自由主义和新右派具有密切联系。作者们的批判把批判教育学从后现代教育理论中分离出来了，阐述了一些用后现代理论和方法写作的进步教育家的差异和特征，这些教育家们包括斯坦利·阿罗诺维茨（Stanley Aronowitz）、 亨利·吉鲁（Henry Giroux）、威廉·多尔（William Doll）、 乔·金奇洛（Joe Kincheloe）、罗宾·帕克·厄舍（Robin Parker Usher）、理查德·爱德华兹（Richard Edwards）、安迪·哈格里夫斯（Andy Hargreaves）、理查德·史密斯（Richard Smith）和 菲利普·韦克斯勒

（Philip Wexler）等（pp.33-34），更为重要的是，他们的批判揭示了批判教育学与后现代教育理论之间在政治和意识形态倾向性上的不同。

5. 对马克思多元文化主义的发展

尽管多元文化主义自从形成之后就有进步意义，但在资本主义全球化时代，多元文化主义的原初意图已经被颠倒了，这其中的缘由是复杂的。在马克思主义者看来，文化是深深地根植于它的物质基础的一种表意系统，阶级、种族、性别中的压迫和认同等社会问题伴随着资本主义的社会生产关系的再生产而发生，白人至上主义和西方中心的文化总是企图统治整个世界。新自由主义所鼓吹的、复苏的新保守主义所附和的"世界新秩序"和"机会平等"的神话，看来对世界大多数人民而言，的的确确是一种空洞的承诺，而对霸权主义者来说却是福音。

麦克拉伦和法拉曼普尔用了两章的篇幅来讨论多元文化主义，它强调了在对反对资本主义的斗争中的重要作用的多元文化教育学。在第四章《批判的多元文化主义和资本全球化：抵抗政治学的一些蕴涵》中，他们论证了资本主义如何"通过野蛮的财富过度积累、对第三世界国家和西方工业国家、后工业国家的工人阶级和少数群体的经济剥削和文化剥削"（p.99）而得以生存，并由此加深了道德和伦理上的颓废。由此，"我们不相信自由市场体制能够促进民主，我们也不认为全球化与政治阴谋无关"（p.101）。在对新保守主义和新自由主义进行的这种批判基础上，作者们建构了一种作为批判的多元文化教育之基础的批判多元文化主义

> 我们相信，为了有效地进行反对资本主义的社会、政治和经济斗争，我们必须首先在统一的多元民族/种族对抗政治学上定位、识别、审视和变革压迫的意识形态基础，这就要求使意识形态批判成为多元文化教育的基本组成部分。（p.109）

在第五章，题为《全球化、阶级和多元文化主义：来自红色笔记的片断》，麦克拉伦和法拉曼普尔对包括全球经济、政治和文化在内的整个资本主义全球化进行了更加深刻而尖锐的批判，以发展一种马克思多元文化主义或革命的多元文化主义。它"为被压迫者从自身的条件出发、用自己的方式来挑战统治的社会关系所产生和再生产的各种阶级、种族和性别压迫而打开了社会的和政治的空间"（p.147）。只有通过这种途径，人们才能推动社会和经济平等的建设。

6. 对革命的教育学实践和教育实践的推进

教育学实践的主体是教育学者和学者型的教育工作者，教育学实践主要是指教育中的理论建构。我们可以简要地将教育学实践分为这样四类：岗位性教育学实践、参与性

教育学实践、鼓动性教育学实践、关切性教育学实践。教育实践的主体是教育工作者，特别是教师，他们将教育学理论作为一种理想来接受，并有意识地将其应用于日常的岗位性教育工作之中。从批判教育学的观点看，教育学实践和教育实践的主体都应当是变革性知识分子。

批判教育学如今有许多同义词，如革命的教育学、革命的批判教育学、批判的革命教育学、革命的工人阶级教育学、社会主义教育学、马克思主义教育学和"违法的教育学"（contraband pedagogy）。这些同义词不仅显示了批判教育学的特征，而且也显示了它的理论建构、实践目的和倾向上的不同维度。作者们说：

> 我们认为，理论必须为实践服务，反之亦然，因为在实践中提出的问题必须由理论来回答，这一情况强化了理论与实践之间的辩证关系。但无论怎样，教育学的理论维度与实践维度决不能相互贬低，这是因为它们共存于一种辩证的张力之中（p. 7-8）。

批判教育学的目的是要把人类及其劳动从资本的桎梏中解放出来，就教育学实践的实施来说，很重要的一步就是批判的教育理论家们把马克思主义重新确立为其教育理论和研究的基础，他们必须把马克思主义不仅仅用来理解、批判社会压迫和社会剥削，而且也要反思批判教育学的起点和目的，以培育和推动新时代的社会行动。

我们相信，人不仅是环境和教育的产物，也是环境和教育的创造者。教育一方面受社会的制约，另一方面又改变着社会。教育使人类生活保持连续，又赋予人变革的品质，它张扬着人向善的本能，同时又遏制人试恶的冲动。教育学实践的核心是"合理性"的建构。社会中不同"合理性"之间的竞争既是社会现象也是教育现象，批判某种"合理性"和为某种"合理性"辩护既可能是社会实践也可能是教育学实践。社会的进步、社会的发展和人的解放、人的自我实现正是在教育、社会和人之间的辩证张力中推进的。是突变还是渐变，是前进还是倒退，取决于当时的社会历史条件、取决于人的能动性的发挥程度以及它与社会历史规律的符合程度。（杨昌勇，2004，p. 239）

对批判教育学来说，在新帝国主义时代培育和发展一种反对新帝国主义斗争的解放力量，的确是一项艰巨的任务。为了寻求有效的实践策略，一些批判教育家提出了一些重要原则（Brandt, D., 1991），还有一些批判教育家们已经进行着可贵的实践（McLaren, P. 1998），那么这一著作又有什么新进展呢？通过阅读，你会找到答案的。

彼得·麦克拉伦和拉明·法拉曼普尔的这一著作，对国家的和国际的形势极其敏感，它对穷人、被剥夺者和被压迫者充满了同情，它的确是一本值得每个人认真细读的

书，而不仅仅只适合于那些涉及到教育和对教育感兴趣的人。这本书促使读者继续深入思考新帝国主义时代的社会问题与社会发展。

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Miscellany

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International Journal of Progressive Education (IJPE) (ISSN 1554-5210) is a peer reviewed interactive electronic journal sponsored by the International Association of Educators and in part by the Graduate School of Library and Information Science at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. IJPE is a core partner of the Community Informatics Initiative and a major user/developer of the Community Inquiry Laboratories. IJPE takes an interdisciplinary approach to its general aim of promoting an open and continuing dialogue about the current educational issues and future conceptions of educational theory and practice in an international context. In order to achieve that aim, IJPE seeks to publish thoughtful articles that present empirical research, theoretical statements, and philosophical arguments on the issues of educational theory, policy, and practice. IJPE is published three times a year in four different languages; Chinese, Turkish, Spanish and English.

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