

The struggle against imperial punditry and reactionary anti - humanism: critical pedagogy, latina/o education, and class struggle in the age of empire

A luta contra o império da erudição e o e o anti-humanismo reacionário: pedagogia crítica, educação latina e luta de classe na idade do império

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ABSTRACT – Much of the ‘mainstreamed’ critical educational work in the United States, along with work in related fields, now appears woefully detached from historical specificities and basic determinations of capitalist society. In this article, McLaren and Jaramillo posit an alternative social vision of what the world should and could look like outside the value form of capital. Using the politics of Latino/a education as an illustrative example of the ways in which empire impacts one of the largest minority student populations in the U.S., McLaren and Jaramillo move to defend revolutionary critical pedagogy against reactionary anti - humanism. Rather, this article extends previous considerations of revolutionary critical pedagogy as a dialectics of praxis founded upon the principles of Marxist - humanism. Critical revolutionary pedagogy is ultimately philosophically - driven, formulated to help teachers and students grasp the specificity of the concrete within the totality of the universal.

Key-words – Critical Education; revolutionary critical pedagogy; dialectics of praxis; teacher education.

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RESUMO – Muitas das mais usuais idéias do trabalho da educação crítica nos Estados Unidos, juntamente com o trabalho em campos afins, agora aparecem lamentavelmente separadas das especificidades históricas e determinações básicas da sociedade capitalista. Neste artigo, McLaren e Jaramillo presumem como um fato uma visão social alternativa do que o mundo deveria e poderia parecer sem o conceito e valor do capital. Usando as políticas da educação latina como um exemplo ilustrativo das formas como o império impacta uma das mais amplas populações de estudantes das minorias nos Estados Unidos, McLaren e Jaramillo saem em defesa de uma pedagogia crítica revolucionária contra um anti - humanismo reacionário. Até certo ponto, este artigo inclui considerações prévias da pedagogia crítica revolucionária como uma dialética da praxis fundada nos princípios do marxismo - humanismo. A pedagogia crítica revolucionária é, finalmente, filosoficamente dirigida, formulada para ajudar professores e estudantes a compreender a especificidade do concreto dentro da totalidade do universal.

Descritores – Educação Crítica; pedagogia crítica revolucionária; dialética da práxis; educação de professores.



IMPERIAL OVERLORDS AND SUPERNAL RIGHTEOUSNESS

It is evident everywhere that progressive educators around the world are harboring an anticipatory regret at what the world will surely be like if unbridled capitalism has its way. Already the seemingly frictionless juggernaut of neoliberal capitalism has left in its wake imperialist wars, life - threatening poverty, ecological havoc, the amassing and concentration of wealth in fewer and fewer hands, a ceaseless advancement of insecurity and unemployment for already aggrieved communities, and worsening living standards and quality of life for the mass of the world's population. The unbridled exploitation that has marked capitalist globalization has meant a worldwide empowerment of the rich and devastation for the ranks of the poor as oligopolistic corporations swallow the globe, industry becomes dominated by new technologies, income distribution from the bottom to the top becomes more extreme, and trade unions become progressively weakened and non - combative. The transnational private sphere has been colonized by globalized capital, as corporations, financial institutions, and wealthy individuals seize more and more control of the production and distribution of surplus value. The creation of conditions favorable to private investment has increasingly become the cardinal function of the government. Deregulation, privatization of public service, and cutbacks in public spending for social welfare have been the natural outcomes of this process. The signal goal here is competitive return on investment capital. The pettifogging advocates of capital armed with one - dimensional banality continually traduce the principles of participatory democracy and present us with what McLaren (2000) has referred to as a 'democracy of empty forms' – a formal democracy. In effect, financial markets controlled by foreign investors regulate government policy and not the other way around since investment capital is for the most part outside all political

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control. Even citizens in the affluent West can no longer be offered any assurance that they will be able to find affordable housing, education for their children, or medical assistance. And it is the International Monetary Fund and the World Trade Organization who oversee regulatory functions outside the purview of democratic decision - making processes. It is these bureaucratic institutions that have set the rules and that arbitrate between the dominant economic powers, severely diminishing the power of governments to protect their citizens, and crippling the democratic public sphere in the process.

We are now in the midst of 'epidemics of overproduction', and a massive explosion in the industrial reserve army of the dispossessed that now live in tent cities - or *casas de carton* - in the heart of many of our metropolitan centers. As we recoil from the most vicious form of deregulated exploitation of the poor that history has witnessed during the last century, we continue to witness a re - feudalisation of capitalism, as it refuels itself with the more barbarous characteristics of its robber baron and Dickensian - era past.

The left's struggle against what appears to be an intractable and immovable force reflects the world - historical agon between socialism or barbarism, only this time such a battle is occurring at a time of unparalleled advantage for capital in a world where a single superpower has set its military into furious motion as neoliberalism's global enforcer. Efforts by the transnational ruling class that range from attempts at smashing unions, increasing utilities costs in townships such as Soweto, privatizing the water system in Bolivia's Cochabamba, to the marketing of antibiotics such as Zithromax, Augmentin, Biaxin, to pediatric patients by drug companies whose marketing researchers help them exploit the developmental vulnerabilities of children, have made it clear that they would sell the tears of the poor back to the poor themselves if it would result in a high enough profit margin. Here in the United States, it doesn't help the cause of patriotism much to learn that most U.S. flags that have peppered the homes, storefronts and cars across the country since 9/11 are made in China, and that Steve Walton, the poster - boy for the phrase, "Buy American", now watches the WalMart chain he founded import 60 percent of its merchandize from China, much of it under sweatshop conditions. But does outsourcing to China really matter in a country where most of the apparel industry in the United States is made under similar sweatshop conditions, when even the Department of Defense buys some of its uniforms from sweatshop industries.

Meanwhile, at home, a general intensification of labor proceeds apace: a relentless over - extension of the working day, cutbacks in resources and social programs, tax breaks for the very rich, egregious violations of laws by corporate executives, and a lack of waged work. All of this is taking place under the banner of the preferred euphemism for imperialism: fighting terrorism and bringing about

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free market democracy. It's hard to posit a socialist alternative to such global misery without feeling like Sisyphus with his block of stone toiling in the realm of the dead, or like Tantalus stranded in America, locked in a strip mall diner and each time he reaches for a burger and fries, his formica table top arches out of reach.

Capitalism embraces us in its clammy tentacles even as we rebel against it. While free market democracies are spreading globally like fungus spores in a tornado, those whose labor - power is now deemed worthless have the choice of selling their organs, working the plantations or mines, or going into prostitution. The United States is free to export its pollution to Latin America, where maquiladoras factories dot the free trade zones. In Africa, thriving businesses sell "dead white men's clothing" in places such as the Congo, Nigeria, Lagos, Liberia, Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania and Malawi and Togo where global capitalism has turned Africa into the world's recycling bin that includes not only second - hand clothes, but also expired medicines, antiquated computers, polluting refrigerators and air conditioners and old mattresses and used vehicles imported from Japan (MAHARAJ, 2004).

A description of capitalism by Tony Wilden, taken from his famous 1980 book, *The Imaginary Canadian*, still seems germane a quarter of a century later:

Capitalism has sown the whirlwind; the peoples of the world are forces to reap it. Capitalism is closer to being totally out of control than it has ever been before. It is a system that can never be satisfied, no matter what we do. The colonisation of the wretched of the earth continues to increase. Feudal, slave, and other kinds of fascist relations – in the family, in the factory and the field, in the corporation, in the schools – was ever more oppressive. At the same time, capitalism's suicidal attempt to colonise nature proceeds as yet unchecked. There is no longer any doubt that the short - range survival values of capitalism are in direct, and violent conflict with the long - range survival – as human beings – of everyone on earth... In order for the production of exchange values to keep growing, it becomes necessary to invent practically useless use values – and to create and recreate an environment of consumers who think they need them. Capitalism ignores constraints on such growth invented by non - capitalist societies in their quest for long - range survival, the ultimate use value. Unfortunately, these other societies did not know how to survive capitalism – and we don't know either, as yet (1980).

Because in this historical juncture transnationalized fractions of dominant groups have become the hegemonic fraction globally, scholars such as sociologist William I. Robinson (1996, 2003, 2004) argue that social groups and classes have been transformed into central historical actors rather than 'states' as power is

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produced within the transnational capitalist class by transnationally oriented state - managers and a cadre of supranational institutions such as the World Bank, the World Trade Organization, the Trilateral Commission, and the World Economic Forum. Of course, there is still a struggle between descendant national fractions of dominant groups and ascendant transnational fractions. The class practices of a new global ruling class are becoming condensed in an emergent transnational state in which the transnational capitalist class have an objective existence above any local territories and polities. The purpose of the transnational ruling class is the valorization and accumulation of capital and the defense and advance of the emergent hegemony of a global bourgeoisie and a new global capitalist historical bloc. This historical bloc is composed of the transnational corporations and financial institutions, the elites that manage the supranational economic planning agencies, major forces in the dominant political parties, media conglomerates and technocratic elites. This does not mean that competition and conflict have come to an end or that there exists a real unity within the emergent transnational capitalist class. Robinson correctly notes that competition among rivals is still fierce and the US is playing a leadership role on behalf of the transnational elite, defending the interests of the emergent global capitalist historical bloc.

By employing a renewed historical materialist conception of the state in this current epoch of neo - liberal globalization, Robinson is able to achieve two important results. First, he is able to de - reify the state/nation - state binarism in order to identify the social classes operating within formal state institutions and, second, he is able to analyze the constellation of social forces in co - operation and in conflict as they develop historically. In arguing for a conception of globalization that transcends the nation - state system, Robinson has effectively reconceptualized the dominant Weberian conception of the state through a Marxist problematic as the institutionalization of class relations around a particular configuration of social production in which the economic and the political are conceived as distinct moments of the same totality. Here, the relation between the economy and states is an internal one. There is nothing in this view that necessarily ties the state to territory or to nation - states. While it is true that, seen in aggregate nation - state terms, there are still very poor countries and very rich ones, it is also true that poverty and marginalisation are increasing in so - called First World countries, while the Third World has an expanding new strata of consumers. The labor aristocracy is expanding to other countries such that core and periphery no longer denote geography as much as social location. The material circumstances that gave rise to the nation - state are, Robinson argues, being superseded by globalization such that the state — conceived in Marxist terms as a congealment of a particular and historically determined constellation of class forces and relations (i.e, a historically specific social relation inserted into

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larger social structures) — can no longer simply be conceived solely in nation - state - centric terms.

Of course, there are scholars who would argue — incorrectly in our view — that Robinson is making a case for the growing unimportance and irrelevance of the nation state in global politics. This would be to misunderstand what Robinson is trying to say. Clearly, in Robinson's work, the nation state plays a central role, but one that is being reconfigured by current forces and relations of globalized capital.

It is important to note that we live at a time in which world capitalism has taken on the physiognomy of eternity, of a sacred infinity. The victory of Western 'civilization' over 'barbarism' is the world historical theme that camouflages the fact that the real battle is the 'transformation' — by any means necessary (i.e., regime change, war) — of countries who refuse to play by the rules set by capital's free marketeers. (And here the terms 'civilization' and 'barbarism' carry much different meanings than when those terms were used by Marx, as we will show later in the essay.) The current opening up of Iraq to 'free' market democracy is but the latest example. But here the attempt to reap huge profits on foreign investment is not without its "historical irony" since the "Green Zone neocons and their masters in Washington" have not been afforded all that they so cravenly desired. According to Naomi Klein,

The great historical irony of the catastrophe unfolding in Iraq is that the shock - therapy reforms that were supposed to create an economic boom that would rebuild the country have instead fueled a resistance that ultimately made reconstruction impossible. Bremer's reforms unleashed forces that the neocons neither predicted nor could hope to control, from armed insurrections inside factories to tens of thousands of unemployed young men arming themselves. These forces have transformed Year Zero in Iraq into the mirror opposite of what the neocons envisioned: not a corporate utopia but a ghoulish dystopia, where going to a simple business meeting can get you lynched, burned alive, or beheaded. These dangers are so great that in Iraq global capitalism has retreated, at least for now. For the neocons, this must be a shocking development: their ideological belief in greed turns out to be stronger than greed itself (2004).

The sight of the Highway of Death (the destruction that took place on the road from Mutlaa, Kuwait, to Basra, Iraq) after the Persian Gulf War, where U.S. forces slaughtered tens of thousands of retreating Iraqi soldiers (and most likely fleeing civilians) in an infamous strike that was described as "shooting sheep in a pen", apparently was not enough for the likes of the hard - line neocon movement around Bush Jr. Nor apparently was the American - led embargo of Iraq that in over ten years killed half a million Iraqi children (an action of violence that

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rivalled any committed by the homicidal maniac, Saddam). But now that Iraq is in U.S. hands, some of the most fervent war - mongers among the Bush advisors— Bush, Perle, and Rumsfeld—for whom brokering a political compromise is tantamount to anti - Americanism, worry that opportunities to use the terror of al - Qaeda to launch a holy war against more evil Islamic nations are perilously waning, and further opportunities to redraw the map of the Middle East through naked military power might be lost (at least until the next major terrorist strike on US soil). When, in 1973, Henry Kissinger (then Nixon's National Security Advisor) referred to military men as “dumb, stupid animals to be used” as pawns for foreign policy, he was reflecting what is still the prevailing attitude within the U.S. military industrial complex. One of the most alarming aspects of life in the United States after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001— that “saber slash across the cheekbones of history” (MCLAREN, 2003) — for us has been the religious punditry that characterizes Bush's claim to be a special envoy of God. In the eyes of many United States citizens, this claim has provided Bush with the moral authority not only to order the nation's “dumb, stupid animals” into war, but to turn the carnage inflicted by the world's most fearsome military machine into a mass graveyard for evil - doers who have been deemed by his administration hawks and Likudites as enemies of civilization. Unerring on punctilio when it comes to internalizing the monstrous banality of a Manichean universe of demons and deliverers, Bush has been effective in putting God's imprimatur on capitalism as the structure preferred by goodness. Bush is able to sell capital to the public more effectively through the words of religious prophesy than a mountain of U.S. greenbacks stamped with “In God We Trust”. For the true believers, God apparently regulates the world through the deregulation of the economy, where human beings can rise out the ashes of poverty and into the wellspring of the American middle - class dream, if only they would commit themselves to the trickle - down inevitability of capitalist self - interest and trust the global robber barons to make life better for everyone. When a war can be prosecuted against sovereign nations “by the working class against the working class, for the rich” (WYPIJEWSKI, 2004), then it is a win - win situation for God's capitalist militia. After all, trusting in God is the most assured way to become rich, as the evangelical mega - churches so vociferously proclaim in their ‘prosperity preaching’ throughout the country. A recent comment by Jonathan Steinberg (2004) is apposite: “Poverty still exists in America, as Bush argued in the State of the Union address of 2003, because the poor fail to find true Christian charity among their neighbors. Hence, his ‘compassionate conservatism’ requires ‘faith - based initiatives’ by local churches and not progressive taxation.” And this view pervades the ranks of the U.S. public at a time when the poor are becoming more like contemporary analogates of the Dickensian outcast, the forgotten and

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the excluded, social excrement that fill the sewers where Marx's reserve army of labor are barracked.

THE BEAST IS US: LIVING IN THE DIGESTIVE TRACT

Much (but of course not all) of the 'mainstreamed' critical educational work in the United States, along with work in related fields, now appears woefully detached from historical specificities and basic determinations of capitalist society to be of much serious use in generating the type of critique and practice that can move education reform past its log - jam of social amelioration and into the untapped waters of social transformation. What is not on offer is an alternative social vision of what the world should and could look like outside the value form of capital. The construction of a new vision of human sociality has never been more urgent in a world of reemerging rivalries between national bourgeoisies and cross - national class formations where the United States seeks unchallenged supremacy over all other nation states by controlling the regulatory regimes of supra - national institutions such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. It is a world where the working - class toil for longer hours to exact a minimum wage that amounts to pin money for the ruling elite. Even if the ruling class somehow felt compelled to reconfigure its tortured relationship with the working class, it could not do so and still extract the surplus value necessary to reproduce and maintain its own class formation built upon its historical legacy of class privilege and power. It is also a world undergoing an organic crisis of capital as domestic class fractions within the United States not only struggle to avoid membership in Marx's reserve army of labor, but are thrust, nolens volens, into service as the new warrior class destined to serve as capital's imperial shock troops expected to fight wars of preemption and prevention declared by the U.S. administration under the cover of the war on terrorism. When, as leader of the most powerful nation that has every existed, you declare war not only on terrorists but also on those who might one day become terrorists, you are, in effect, declaring war on the structural unconscious of the nation that you are supposed to be serving, nourishing the psychic roots of national paranoia. It is a war of both direction and indirection, a war without limits and without end, a war that can never be won except on the Manichean battleground that exists not in 'the desert of the real' but in the maniacal flights of fancy of religious fundamentalism. The powers and principalities that duke it out with flaming swords beyond the pale of our cynical reason can only be glimpsed in the reverse mirror image of our particular liberties and values that we attribute to the resilience and successes of free market capitalism. But the issue exceeds that of the role of the United States. The detritus of capitalist security states is growing more and more visible throughout the world, as the poor in numerous developed and developing

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countries continue to be exterminated by war, genocide, starvation, military and police repression, slavery, and suicide. In a very real sense, capital performs itself through our laboring and toiling bodies. And in the process we become 'capitalized', that is, we are transformed into commodities, into human capital. As actors in the labor process, we become machines for capital accumulation, we become the jaws of the hyenas whose driving compulsion is to devour surplus value; we are transformed into the living dead, a personification of dead labor in the theater of the damned. We are being integrated into the system because the social character of our performances appear to be the objective character of the performances themselves. This mis-recognition becomes the necessary condition for our subjection to our own past performances and to the service to capital provided by such performances. The ideological character of our performances can only be understood when we consider our performances to be social relations, alienated expressions of our enslavement to the commodification process that produce our performances. Capital offers hope to humankind but as it fails to deliver on its promise, the search for alternatives to its social universe continues.

Many students of pedagogy might well consider if it is part of one of George W. Bush's faith-based initiatives to disregard U.S. and international law by ordering the torture of foreign prisoners. When the Defense Department's chief counsel assures the president that inflicting mental and physical pain could be made legal, and that Bush and his torturers would remain immune from any charges related to the treatment of 'illegal combatants', and when the president is tacitly complicitous in redefining torture and refuses to disclose any of the 24 supposedly human interrogation methods for foreign prisoners, we have good cause to consider what it means to be an envoy of God, a Joan of Arc in Texas chaps occupying the Oval Office. Or are we dealing here with just your rank-and-file imperialist claiming the sovereign right of nullification, or perhaps even the Divine Right of Kings? When the best minds that Bush can muster in his circle of advisors and among the military elite are reading *The Arab Mind* by Raphael Patai in order to understand Iraqis, and giving credence to the insights generated within its pages (such as "Arabs only understand force" and that the "biggest weakness of Arabs is shame and humiliation"), then perhaps we can better understand the horror that has come to be known as Abu Ghraib.

The torture at Abu Ghraib prison was not an aberration but rather a continuation of the legacy of the treatment of prisoners throughout the United States, the most brutal of which occurred under Bush hijo's watch in Texas when he served as governor. It is extremely unlikely that Governor Bush was unaware that female prisoners were regularly kept in portable detention cells in the summer heat for hours with no water so that they would more easily submit sexually to their oppressors; there is little reason to believe that Governor Bush did not see

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the tape of prison guards in the Brazoria County Detention Center in Angleton, Texas, forcing inmates to crawl while kicking them and poking them with electric prods. Surely he heard the remarks of Attorney Donna Brorby, who described the super - max prisons as “the worst in the country, where guards reportedly gas prisoners and thrown them down on concrete floors while handcuffed” (FOCUS, 2004). But many teachers and students remain unaware that the type of torture that occurred in Abu Ghraib, is similar to the type of torture inflicted upon indigenous and Third World peoples by the U.S. military and the C.I.A. Such torture, like forced masturbation, was copied from the Nazis. The 1983 Honduran Interrogation Manual and the 1984 Contra Manual remains as powerful evidence of a long - standing practice of torture by the U.S. military. More recently, a CIA torture manual used to instruct five Latin American nations’ security forces was revealed to the public in January 1997 by a Baltimore Sun report. A year earlier, a U.S. government investigation to the U.S. Army School of the Americas (renamed in 2001 as the Western Hemisphere Institute for The School of the Americas (SOA)) in Ft. Benning, Georgia, led to “the release of no less than seven training manuals used at the school which taught murder, torture, and extortion as a means of repressing so - called subversives, according to a Congressional report” (Office of the Americas, 2004, p. 2). That the U.S. military and its “independent contractors” teach and participate in torture and offer advice on how to circumvent laws on due press, arrest, and detention, should come as no surprise to observers of the current conflict in Iraq. Critical educators have condemned not only the 37,000 innocent civilians killed to date in this war, but also the hypocrisy that underlies the claims by the U.S. that Iraq is on its way to becoming a sovereign democracy. Clearly, the impending democracy that will soon be Iraq is belied by the choice of the current Iraqi leaders. Tariq Ali is (2004) worth quoting in extenso.

Of the two Iraqis plucked from obscurity to be the front men for the occupation, “President” Yawar is a relatively harmless telecoms manager from Saudi Arabia. He was perfectly happy to don tribal gear for official functions and photo ops with Rumsfeld and the boys. “Prime minister” Allawi was at one time a low - grade intelligence employee for Saddam, reporting on dissident Iraqis in London. Subsequently, Anglo - American intelligence outfits recruited him. After the first Gulf war he was sent to destabilize the regime. His hirelings bombed a cinema and a bus carrying children. Before the war Allawi helped manufacture the 45 - minute WMD delivery systems warning for the dodgy dossier men in No 10. After the occupation he was rewarded and put on the “governing council”. He then hired a lobbying firm, which spent \$370,000 campaigning in Washington for him to be made prime minister, and also got him a column in the Washington Post. As “prime minister” he cultivates a thuggish image. On July 17 in a remarkable despatch from Baghdad, Paul McGeough, the Australian

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correspondent, (and former editor of the Sydney Morning Herald) alleged: “Iyad Allawi, the new prime minister of Iraq, pulled a pistol and executed as many as six suspected insurgents at a Baghdad police station, just days before Washington handed control of the country to his interim government, according to two people who allege they witnessed the killings”. “They say the prisoners - handcuffed and blindfolded - were lined up against a wall in a courtyard adjacent to the maximum - security cell block in which they were held at the al - Amariyah security center ... They say Dr Allawi told onlookers the victims had each killed as many as 50 Iraqis and they 'deserved worse than death'”. McGeough's report continued: “The prime minister's office has denied the entirety of the witness accounts in a written statement ... saying Dr Allawi had never visited the center and he did not carry a gun. But the informants told the Herald that Dr Allawi shot each young man in the head as about a dozen Iraqi policemen and four Americans from the prime minister's personal security team watched in stunned silence.” McGeough appears regularly on TV and radio to defend his story, which does not go away.

The U.S. leadership can continue slaughtering Iraqis with impunity because it is not the killing which has become a problem for them in the war on terror, it is maintaining the perception that the U.S. is innocent of evil in doing so. By declaring a permanent war on terrorism, the Bush regime has made it difficult, if not impossible, to be identified with the terrorists. To accomplish this, the Bush regime promotes using the term inside a tautology, where terrorism is simply what terrorists do to do - gooders like us. It cannot afford to allow the term to be defined, because then the term could be used to implicate the actions of the United States. That is why, according to John Collins “the safest definition, now as in the 1970s, is that ‘terrorism’ involves organized opposition to the policies of the United States or its allies” (2002, 165). Collins (2002) maintains that “‘terrorism’ is nothing more than a name given to a small subset of actions within the much larger category of political violence. What distinguishes ‘terrorism’ from other acts of political violence, of course, depends on who is doing the defining (or nondefining).” Collins writes that any explicit definition of “terrorism” could be used to identify and condemn the actions of the United States and many of its allies. Maintaining the illusion of U.S. blameless, there, requires that terrorism not be defined at all” (166). Whoever can back the term “terrorism” up with the biggest army controls the meaning of the term.

CRITICAL REVOLUTIONARY PEDAGOGY AND UNIVERSALISM

Critical pedagogy has been dismissed by many left progressives by virtue of the fact that it constitutes a master narrative of emancipation that critics charge is polluted by Western modernist assumptions and working - class triumphalism. Of

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course, the primary object of attack is the old bearded devil himself, Karl Marx, who has been making something of a comeback in the anti - imperialist literary in education and the social sciences in general. In this section we attempt to rescue critical pedagogy from these and similar charges by offering a counterpoint to attacks on the universalism and Eurocentrism that is said to pervade Marx's works. By grounding critical pedagogy in Marx's critique of political economy, we are better able to challenge the assault on human rights and dignity, not least of which has been directed at Latina/o populations.

In the United States, the strategy embedded in the mainstream lines of descent emanating from Freire and his exponents and commentators of critical pedagogy has been to make the very concept of class a contestable social concept and an occasion to circumvent serious debate over the causes of exploitation and dynamics of the rule of capital and to increase the plausibility of the liberal imperative of overcoming low "social economic status", a notion that distantly mirrors the liberal mandate for advancing equal opportunity rather than fighting for social and economic equality. We would be grievously underestimating the degree to which critical pedagogy colludes with ruling class ideology if we ignore its political inertia, theoretical flabalanche and progressive domestication over the years. When the concept of class has been domesticated, then certainly it is much more difficult to discuss what is happening on the world historical stage in places such as Iraq as an imperialist war.

Capitalist society requires that we routinely perform our labor in schools, in factories, in churches, at the voting booth, and on the picket line, and that we educate ourselves to enhance our labor - power (McLaren and Farahmandpur, 1999; 1999a; 2000; 2001; 2001a; McLaren and Martin, 2003; McLaren and Jaramillo, 2003; see also Rikowski, 2001; 2001a). Consequently, we have borrowed the term used by Paula Allman (1999; 2001) - 'critical revolutionary pedagogy'—in order to emphasize critical pedagogy as a means for reclaiming public life which is under the relentless assault of the corporatization, privatization and businessification of the lifeworld (which includes the corporate - academic - complex). This is not a reclamation of the public sphere through a reinvigoration of the social commons but its socialist transformation (McLaren, in press). The term critical revolutionary pedagogy seeks to make the division of labor coincident with the free vocation of each individual and the association of free producers. Here the emphasis not only is on denouncing the manifest injustices of neoliberal capitalism and creating a counter - force to neo - liberal ideological hegemony, but also on establishing the conditions for new social arrangements that transcend the false opposition between the market and the state.

Accompanied by what some have described as the 'particular universalism' of Marxist analysis as opposed to the 'universal particularism' of the postmodernists,

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critical educators collectively assert—all with their own unique focus and distinct disciplinary trajectory—that the term “social justice” all too frequently operates as a cover for legitimizing capitalism or for tacitly admitting to or resigning oneself to its brute intractability. Consequently, it is essential to develop a counterpoint to the way in which social justice is used in progressive education by inviting students to examine critically the epistemological and axiological dimensions of social democracy so that they might begin to reclaim public life from its embeddedness in the corporate - academic - complex (MCLAREN and HOUSTON, in press).

Amidst the Bush regime’s star - spangled war on hope and freedom, the post - Marxists and anti - Marxist educationalists have intensified their assault on attempts to rethink critical pedagogy from an anti - capitalist perspective. J. Martin Rochester’s (2004) “Critical Demagogues: The Writings of Henry Giroux and Peter McLaren” published in the Hoover Institute’s flagship education journal, *Education Next*, represents a neo - conservative assault on critical pedagogy for contributing to the development of a left - wing anti - intellectualism by means of emphasizing ideology over inquiry. For Rochester, critical pedagogy is nothing less than a “chiliastic movement”. Instead of participating in pernicious forms of ideological indoctrination, the role that Rochester has set for pedagogy should be, “to reaffirm education as that which promotes, in the words of an 1830 Yale University report, ‘the discipline and furniture of the mind’” (2003). Rochester contends that it is impossible to teach a social justice agenda and at the same time foster “a solid foundation of knowledge and understanding, a love of learning, and the tools for pursuing that learning.” The latter, not the former, should be the first principle of education. The debates over values and truths should, Rochester argues, “be guided by a disposition toward objectivity, the spirit of free inquiry, and academic integrity rather than by chiliastic movements.” According to this logic, not even history - shaking movements such as a national literacy movement can ever be guided by anything but craven self - interest and therefore revolution always makes for bad pedagogy. What doesn’t get explored by Rochester is exactly what is meant by the term ‘ideology.’ As criticalists know, ideology achieves its purpose when it is able to erase evidence of its presence, and often we are aware of its presence only retroactively, when it has exhausted its welcome and is replaced with another offspring. Rochester lives in a perfumed world where pedagogy is taught from the Mount Olympus of objectivity, a perspective that itself is shrouded in a debilitating epistemological positivism.

For anti - Marxists like C.A. “Chet” Bowers (in press; 2003, 2003a, 2001), master narratives, universalism, and objectivity - disparaged as European Enlightenment ideals - must be rejected for their Eurocentrism associated with European economic, social, and political dominance. Bowers is part of a group of

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enduringly deep - seated antagonists of critical pedagogy, the writings of which he lumps together as a convenient way of minimizing the often considerable differences (differences that include basic assumptions about the role of capital) that mark the various strands of critical pedagogy. Bowers' simultaneous tongue - lashing of Marxist universalism and tongue - polishing of postmodern 'difference' resembles that of postmodern scholar and critical pedagogy opponent, Patti Lather (1991; 1998).

All that is bad about critical pedagogy can be laid at the feet of its peccant father, Paulo Freire, whose work amounts in Bowers' view to little more than a cultural imperialist assault from the south. What gives Bowers the megrims and compels him to bloviate in his trademark fashion of substituting substantive critique with flummery is critical pedagogy's supposed attack on all things traditional; and what makes Bowers' work a form of reactionary anti - imperialism is not his focus on conserving natural systems (we agree that it is necessary to recognize what needs to be conserved and to discriminate between forms of conservatism that promote justice and those that perpetuate injustice) but in his failure to offer more than a hidebound denunciation of critical pedagogy as an ethnocentric critique that fails to comprehend the cultural roots of ecological crisis (citing, all the while, his own work as the antidote), that colonizes the commons with universalistic 'god words' and 'cliches', that works against self - sufficiency of indigenous groups, (and retards their revitalization in the process), and that asserts that any and all traditions must be overthrown by means of critical thinking. Not only has Bowers recycled the same perversicacious critique of critical pedagogy for decades (which would be understandable if critical pedagogy had remained frozen in time), in misprizing its Marxist dimensions (which are not as readily embraced by all critical pedagogues) he has misunderstood the dialectical theory and humanism that undergirds its most radical formulations – a dialectical humanism that speaks both to innovation and to conservation. Ensorcelled by the mistaken assumptions he has harbored for so long about Marxism, Bowers prolongs his own ignorance and that of his gullible readers about the fundamentals of Marx's work. Skimming the surface of critical pedagogy like a hovercraft navigating a swamp, his work either over - generalizes or cites ideas out of context. His detached regard for philosophical understanding is perhaps best seen in his erroneous view that Marx accepts "that change is linear and inherently progressive in nature" (in press), leading to some future industrial Cockaigne. Further, Bowers stubbornly rejects the notion (if indeed it registers in his thinking at all) that dialectical reasoning involves a two - way movement from practice and from theory that breaks through the false universalism of bourgeois liberalism that he so distains as 'politically correct'. Consequently, his oleaginous punditry, marked as much by an aura of self - importance as by an anti - modern and counter Enlightenment antifoundationalism, balefully discovers commonality

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with reactionary incarnations of postmodernism. His anti-liberal agon hides itself under a veneer of progressive conservatism but which echoes the views of the philosopher, Carl Schmitt, who famously remarked: “whoever invokes humanity lies” (cited in SKOLNIK, 2004, p. 5). Yet in Bowers’ very denunciation of Marxist “interpretive schema”, “formulaic thinking”, “cultural assumptions”, “lexicon”, and “the ‘transformative’ dynamics of the industrial culture”, he recuperates his own abstract valorization of ‘difference’, effectively making the relative absolute, and the absolute relative. It is difficult to read Bowers’ blustering, fuel-injected tirades without feeling that acrimony intensifies his own delectation.

Postmodernists often associate universalism with European imperialism and colonialism that marked the Spanish, Portuguese, and British conquest of the Americas, and consider such universal values to exercise forms of violence against indigenous voices and traditional practices. However, Willie Thompson reminds us that atrocities committed by these imperialists were not justified by a reliance on specific universal discourses similar to the Enlightenment ideas. In fact, Enlightenment thinkers frequently stressed the significance of other cultures’ moral and ethical commitments by comparing and contrasting them to their own European origins. According to Thompson (1997),

The Spanish conquistadors did not require the Enlightenment to commit genocide upon the populations of the Caribbean, Mexico and Peru and subject the remnant to slavery, nor Genghis Khan to do similar things in Central Asia during the earlier period. These acts were committed by cultures with no pretensions to universalism (unless Christianity is to be regarded as such, in which case the root of all evil has to be sought a lot further back).

Without universal criteria for evaluating the validity of truth claims, the post-Marxist, antifoundationalists paint themselves into a political corner when confronted by depredations associated with capitalist social relations. Universal rights are central to the development of a democratic socialist society and should not be jettisoned outright as anti-Marxists such as Bowers would often have us do. Not every truth claim is equally valid, since truth claims conceal asymmetrical social and economic relations. Teresa Ebert (1996) is worth quoting on this issue:

The question of knowing the “truth” is neither a question of describing some “true” metaphysical or ontological “essence” nor a matter of negotiating incommensurable language games, as Lyotard suggests. Rather it is a question of dialectical understanding of the dynamic relations between superstructure and base: between ideology - (mis)representations, signifying practices, discourses, frames of intelligibility, objectives - and the workings of the forces of production

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and the historical relations of production. Crucial to such a dialectical knowledge is ideology critique - a practice for developing class consciousness.

By contrast, the post - Marxist emphasis on monadic local efforts at improving resource allocation and warning the public against excessive consumptive practices is not enough to challenge imperial capital's superexploitation of labor (see EBERT, 2001). The challenge, it seems to us, must occur on the terrain of the nation state, which has grown more dependent upon capital than ever before. According to Ahmad (1998).

The currently fashionable postmodern discourse has its own answer: it leaves the market fully intact while debunking the nation - state and seeking to dissolve it even further into little communities and competitive narcissisms, which sometimes gets called "multiculturalism." In other words, postmodernism seeks an even deeper universalization of the market, while seeking to decompose "social humanity" even further, to the point where only the monadic individual remains, with no dream but that of, in Jean - François Lyotard's words, "the enjoyment of goods and services." Or, to put it somewhat differently: the postmodern utopia takes the form of a complementary relationship between universalization of the market and individualization of commodity fetishisms. This, of course, has been a dream of capitalism since its very inception.

An antifoundationalist cynicism surrounding the telos of human progress often leads post - Marxists such as Bowers to condemn Marxism for its teleological emphasis on historical inevitability. However, the Marxist humanist emphasis on teleology is decidedly nonteleological; it arches toward an eradication of social injustice, poverty, racism, and sexism while recognizing that history is mutable and contingent. Not everything about history was progressive according to Marx. The engine of historical materialism that drove Marx's critique of political economy held that historical progress is never secured or guaranteed but rather moves in and between contradictory and conflicting social spaces and zones of engagement. What concerned Marx was how historical contingencies and social circumstances impacted the way in which human beings engaged the present. Peter Hudis (2004) describes Marx's concept of progress as "development"—that is, as an "immanent unfoldment of the reaching beyond the immediate found in given social formations, which can move in one direction or another, all depending on the inter - action between subjective revolt, material conditions, and conceptual understanding" (personal communication).

Alex Callinicos (1989) situates Marx's concept of development within the overall concept of historical materialism as follows:

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historical materialism is a non - teleological theory of social evolution: not only does it deny that capitalism is the final stage of historical development, but communism, the classless society which Marx believed would be the outcome of socialist revolution, is not the inevitable consequences of the contradictions of capitalism, since an alternative exists, what Marx called “the mutual ruination of the contending classes”.

The question of universalism is directly posed by Samir Amin (1996): “How are we to create conditions that allow the genuine advance of universalist values beyond their formulations by historical capitalism?” (8). The answer is not to be found in local or regional communal struggles alone. For instance, Boris Kagarlitsky (2000) advocates a “hierarchy of strategic priorities” that is committed to “a real equality of people in the movement” (71). He articulates the struggle as encompassing a multiplicity of social movements, all centered around the defeat of capitalism:

We must realize our ecological project; we must affirm women’s rights and minorities’ rights through and in the process of anti - capitalist struggle, not as a substitution or alternative to it. Finally, this does not mean that other movements, not addressing the central issues of the system, must necessarily be seen as enemies or rivals of socialists. These movements are just as legitimate. Everyone has the same rights. It means simply that no one must expect the socialist left to drop its own culture, tradition and, last but not least, its identity for the sake of “democratic equivalence”.

We abominate a post - Marxist rejection of universalism, calling instead for what Kagarlitsky (2000, 75) refers to as an “open universalism” based on a dialogue of cultures. As McLaren and Farahmandpur (in press) have noted, “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.” Clearly the limitations of the Enlightenment project of universalism need to be recognized and problematized. We are not defending Eurocentrism here, far from it, as it is clear that Eurocentrism has provided much of Western history with a flimsy veneer for genocidal acts. 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.

Bruce Robbins (1999), correctly asserts that all universal standards are in some sense provisional. In other words, they deal with “provisional agreements arrived at by particular agents” (74). He further maintains that universal standards

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“are provided in a situation of unequal power, and they are applied in a situation of unequal power” (74). There is no such thing as a clean universalism that is not tainted by power and interest of some sort. Robbins concludes, “All universalisms are dirty. And it is only dirty universalism that will help us against the powers and agents of still dirtier ones” (75). While we resist efforts to police the expression of non - European viewpoints, we find the politics of postmodern pluralism—that is, providing voice to those marginalized social groups who have been denied political participation—to be 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 naive. We argue that the struggle for diversity must be accompanied by a transnational revolutionary socialist politics. Kenan Malik (1996), asserts convincingly that postmodernism’s refutation of universalism is, for the most part, similar to the crude nineteenth - century racial theories that rejected universal categories and instead emphasized relativism. Malik further adds that “in its hostility to universalism and in its embrace of the particular and the relative, poststructuralism embodies the same romantic notions of human difference as are contained in racial theory” (4). Malik asserts, “While difference can arise from equality, equality can never arise from difference” (4).

Marxist - humanist scholar, Peter Hudis, has written brilliantly about the cultural and political roots of Marx’s alleged Eurocentrism. While there is no question that Hegel was unforgivably Eurocentric (as especially seen from his comments on Africa and China) we follow Hudis (2004), in rejecting the view that Hegelian dialectical reason—which Marx held to be “the source of all dialectic”—is as culture - bound and antagonistic to the internal development of non - European societies as many post - Marxists maintain. Of course the work of Hegel and Marx emerged from a specific European context shaped the variegated aspects of their work. The question that needs to be asked is posed by Hudis as follows: “whether the central concepts that defined Hegel or Marx’s thought are fundamentally opposed to the internal dynamic and development of non - European societies. “ Hudis argues that studying the philosophic traditions that have unfolded in the non - Western world will support the view that the dialectical mode of thinking that was universalized by Hegel into a philosophic system has roots within non - European societies, including in the Middle East. According to Hudis, the bulk of Marx’s writings on non - Western societies do not support the view that Marx held to a unilinear concept of historical progress that emanated from Europe. The tendency to single out—such as his 1853 writings on India—while ignoring the full range of his work on such subjects persists to this day. Hudis postulates that the Islamic Abu Ya’qub al - Sijistani, a member of the Ismaili underground mission — the da’wa, as it is known in Arabic — that

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operated in the Iranian province of Khurasan and Sijistan during the tenth century, was the first to use the term “negation of the negation” in extant philosophic literature. Later developed by Hegel, albeit in a radically different context, the concept of the negation of the negation served “as the core of his effort to transcend the antinomies of post - Kantian philosophy” (HUDIS, 2004). Marx also made use of the concept of “the negation of the negation” in his Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844 and also highlighted the concept in his greatest theoretical work, Capital, in discussing “the expropriation of the expropriators.” The fact that Al - Sijistani dealt with a very different set of problems than did either Hegel or Marx, and that he took the concept of the “negation of the negation” in a decidedly direction than Hegel himself should not distract us from recognizing that long before Hegel made ‘the negation of the negation’ a central part of his thought, a major thinker in the Muslim world wrote that there “must be a complete negation...in which two negations, negation and a negation of the negation oppose each other.” In light of this, the notion that dialectical, negative reason is a “western” fabrication that stands opposed to the development of non - European societies needs to be seriously rethought (HUDIS, in press).

By exploring a few aspects of Marx’s “Notebooks on Kovalevsky,” which he wrote in the fall of 1879 (keeping in mind that the bulk of Marx’s Notebooks was published in 1975 as an appendix to Lawrence Krader’s *The Asiatic Mode of Production*; the full text, which is over 100 pages long, was published in German in 1977 by Hans - Peter Harstick as *Karl Marx über Formen vorkapitalistischer Produktion: Vergleichende Studien zur Geschichte des Grundeigentums 1879 - 80*), Hudis draws attention to Marx’s intensive study of non - Western societies in the 1870s, a study that was animated by the question of “how developments in the non - European world could feed into the development of a global revolution against capital.” According to Hudis, Marx’s writings on Russia in the 1870s and 1880s, his studies of India, Indonesia, and the Muslim world from this period remain little known or discussed. In his 1879 Notebooks, Marx’s comments on Kovalevsky’s *The Communal Possession of the Land* is of signal importance. Hudis reports the following:

Marx agreed with Kovalevsky’s view of the regressive impact of imperialism upon these societies, in contrast to some of his views expressed in his writings on India in the early 1850s. For example, in reference to Kovalevsky’s discussion of the means used by the French to rob the Algerians of their land, Marx added: “The means sometimes change, the aim is ever the same: destruction of the indigenous collective property (and its transformation) into an object of free purchase and sale, and by this means the final passage made easier into the hands of the French colonists.”¹ Kovalevsky’s description of the French effort to

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destroy the clan - community landholding patterns in Algeria evoked from Marx the comment: "The Shameless!"

Hudis further points out that Marx agreed with Kovalevsky's positive view of a communal possession of the land as a possible foundation for a "higher stage of social development." Marx agreed with Kovalevsky's argument that "the British and French imperialists propagated the idea that the monarch was the landowner in order to proclaim themselves the rightful inheritor of the communal lands upon subjugating the native rulers" (HUDIS, 2004). Hudis concludes that, "what Marx most appreciated about Kovalevsky was his refusal to accept at face value the categories used by Europeans to explain non - European societies". Hudis notes that "Marx also attacked the European effort to either impose their laws on Algerian society or to accept 'indigenous' ones on the basis of whether it suited imperialistic self - interest..." But at the same time, and this is important, Marx did not refrain from identifying "the presence of internal contradictions within indigenous communal formations" (HUDIS, 2004). Hudis explains:

While Marx, as we have seen, rejected the notion that such formations were "backward" in comparison with European private ownership, he did not view indigenous communal formations uncritically. He repeatedly called attention to such factors as castes, chiefs, and inequities of wealth and rank within the community. This is seen in his underlining of Kovalevsky's passing comment that some members of the community acquired fertile lands while others did not, leading to increased social stratification.

Therefore, by the 1870s (and most likely as early as the mid - 1850s) Marx "viewed the imperialist destructive of precapitalist social formations as being regressive" (Hudis, 2004). In fact, he viewed such native communal formations a possible basis for creating a socialist society without going through capitalistic industrialization. However, Marx refused to uncritically glorify indigenous communal forms and remained critical of the dualism that characterized many of them. Hudis writes:

On the one hand, they provided a basis for collective interaction and reciprocity that could become a foundation for a future socialist society. Yet on the other hand the indigenous communal formations were also afflicted with an array of social inequities and incipient hierarchies—especially when it came to relations between men and women. Marx paid careful consideration to these internal contradictions in his Ethnological Notebooks especially. Unlike Engels, who tended to uncritically glorify the indigenous communal forms in "primitive" society in his *Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State*, Marx pointed to the incipient formation of class, caste, and hierarchical social relations within

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them. Though he singled out the superiority of Iroquois society compared with to much of contemporary European societies in his *Ethnological Notebooks*, he did not assume that the presence of communal ownership of land automatically provided women with sexual equality. In several places in his *Ethnological Notebooks* he pointed out limitations to the freedom of women, since even though they had access to political decisions their votes were often only consultative.

While Marx's statements on India in 1853 do indeed give the impression of a Eurocentric bias, it is certainly not because his so - called obsession with a traditional Western notion of progress made him indifferent to the suffering of Indians from British imperialism. Peter Hudis offers a summary worth quoting in full:

Marx had a concept of progress insofar as he viewed tendencies of future social development immanently contained in the present which, given the right set of circumstances, “burst forth” from their integument (it’s a notion of immanent development that he absorbed from his studies of Aristotle as well as Hegel, quite early on, in the early 1840s). That Aristotelean - Hegelian notion of “progress” does not, however, imply a mechanistic or unilinear concept of progress as such. Marx was always interested in historical periods of transition, as that is when the embryonic forms of the future show themselves in specific social formations and provide indications—not out of telological necessity, but as indications of a future course of development. When Marx looked at India in the early 1850s, the negative aspects of what he called “the asiatic mode of production” predominated; and so, as a result, the impulse that would set into motion the explosion of its own internal contradictions was seen as coming from outside, from the impact of imperialism. I don’t think that’s because Marx ever viewed the third world or communal social formations as “backward”: I can just imagine him as a young man walking the streets of Trier and noticing this and that residue of earlier communal forms with admiration. Rather, Marx tended to emphasize the negative aspects of the AMOP in the early 1850s because there wasn’t yet a revolutionary movement in view in India with which to discern an internal way out of its contradictions. Western imperialism was therefore seen as a disruptive force that would “shake” the “East” out of its “slumber” and awaken its own immanent possibilities for social progression. It comes out sounding Eurocentric, because, after all, the stress is placed on the acts of the Europeans as the “prime mover”; and since the Europeans had by then absorbed the prejudice that historic initiative begins and ends with them, Marx’s comments easily get read as being in the traditional line of western rationalist thought (personal communication).

It is important to understand how Marx’s aversion to ‘naturalism’ and his particular characterization and defense of ‘civilization’ shaped what liberation

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theologian Jose Miranda (1980) calls his “intransigent occidentalism.” Marx admittedly held to the notion that “barbarians” must enter “civilization”, but before one renders judgement on this viewpoint it is important to understand what Marx actually meant by the term ‘barbarians’ and what he meant by ‘civilization’. In his classic work, *Marx Against the Marxists* (1980), Miranda explains the rationale behind Marx’s use of these terms to those who might be scandalized by their seemingly racist and Eurocentric characteristics. Primitive communism and the absence of private property were not as important to Marx as becoming civilized, or being uprooted “from the idiocy of natural circumstances” (MIRANDA, 1980). Capitalist development, in Marx’s view, helped to break down the isolation of certain areas of the world. A fundamental aspect of Marx’s thesis was that “the true bearer of western civilization is the socialist revolution” (250). Marx believed that Western civilization would absolutely perish without communism. Marx was concerned, first and foremost, with challenging the dehumanizing conditions that force individuals to enter into relations independent of their will. The fight against barbarism was, for Marx, the fight against the ruling classes who, as “accomplices of the barbarian powers” wished “to snatch the banner of western civilization away” (250, 251). Marx believed that “capitalism produces the material means to eliminate not only its own form of human exploitation but also all the forms of exploitation that have existed in history” (273). Barbarians were not limited to non - European peasants. There was no racism involved here. According to Miranda, Marx labeled both Europeans and non - European indigenous groups barbarians if they displayed “the conduct of ruffians and swindlers, the assertion of the right of the strongest” (253). Marx’s concept of civilization essentially represents, in Miranda’s view, the conditions for a moral life, a place where people are “capable of making decisions for themselves” (254). Clearly, Marx felt that peasant life was an “endlessly repeated and loathsome cycle” (MIRANDA, 255) where the conditions were not nearly ripe enough to become a self - reflective subject of history. Yet Miranda emphasizes Marx’s belief that all people are capable of developing themselves and reaching full civilization and communism. And here the term civilization is meant to refer to “the higher interest of human self - realization” (MESZAROS, 1986). This struggle can only lead to victory if it is carried out by representatives of a universal class who are not capable of nor inclined to act according to exploitative or sectional interests. Meszaros writes that

Marx is... not concerned with establishing a social order simply on the basis of the de facto effective power of the majority to subdue the sectional interest of the formerly ruling minority, but with the superiority de jure of socialism over capitalism, defined as the ability to release the energies of self - realization in all individuals, as against capitalism which must deny to them the possibility of self

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- realization in the interest of the unhampered 'self - expansion of capital', no matter how destructive its consequences (1986).

THE RUSE OF REDUCTIONISM

We must refrain from falling into the trap of approaching Marx's concept of the 'economic structure of society' from a technological - reductionist interpretation that we see in the puerile understanding of Marx by Bowers and others. The work of Istvan Mezsaros (1986; 1995; 1999; 2002; 2003) is helpful here. According to Mezsaros, the widespread idea that Marxism is a crude economic reductionism according to which the functioning of the superstructure is directly and mechanically determined by the economic structures of society, represents a truncated interpretation of Marx. And with respect to the unfolding of history, Mezsaros is correct when he states that a Marxist conception of progress does not view history as some kind of "hidden destiny" that is "foreshadowed from time immemorial" but rather "the objective telos of the unfolding historical process that itself produces such possibilities of human self - emancipation from the tyranny of the material base which are by no means anticipated from the outset" (1986, 181). He offers a further clarification:

Nor is it [history] simply a self - propelling material determination that produces the positive result of the 'suspension of the basis itself'. On the contrary, at a crucial point in the course of the historical development a conscious break must be made in order to alter radically the destructive course of the ongoing process (1986).

Mezsaros also notes that

capital's universalizing tendency can never come to real fruition within its own framework, since capital must declare the barriers which it cannot transcend—namely its own structural limitations—to be the 'sacred limit' of all production. At the same time, what indeed should be recognized and respected as a vitally important objective determination—nature in all its complexity as 'men's real body'—is totally disregarded in the systematic subjugation, degradation and ultimate destruction of nature (183).

Clearly human emancipation is not guaranteed by history, by some "spontaneous unfolding of material inevitability" (185). Any radically new mode of social intercourse and mode of production can only bring about "free, unobstructed, progressive and universal" development of social life if it is

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accomplished outside of the current law of value. Meszaros warns: “Without a conscious break from the tyranny of the material base necessitated by this transfer, the ‘universalizing tendency’ we can witness in the ever - more - chaotic interlocking of the global intercourse can only assert its destructive potentialities, given the impossibility of a viable overall control on the basis of capital’s own ‘presuppositions’ (184).

EMPIRE, THE CRUSH OF CIVILIZATION, AND THE POLITICS OF LATINA/O EDUCATION

The politics of imperialism and empire that has accompanied the virulent backlash against Marxist - driven instantiations of critical pedagogy is also impacting the agonistic terrain of Latina/o education in the United States.

The defining principle underlying national policy initiatives (i.e. English - Only propositions, anti - Immigrant initiatives and the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001) that both implicitly and explicitly target the education of Latina/o students is what we have termed “the politics of erasure.” Unilaterally designed to erase students’ native language, national origin, and cultural formations, these initiatives arise out of an era marked by heightened nationalism and its attendant “fear factor” that views anyone outside of the xenophobic U.S. monoculture as a threat to the univocal cohesion and integration of U.S. citizenship. As a direct result of their magnitude and growing presence in the public domain, Latina/os have become both objects of inclusion (through assimilationist efforts) and exclusion (by restricting their access and opportunity to a quality education) in educational politics. On the surface, the politics of erasure seeks to incorporate a burgeoning Latina/o population into the economic, social and cultural spheres of U.S. society. But the repressed underside of such initiatives are reminiscent of efforts designed to safeguard the cultural and linguistic homogeneity of what Gilbert Gonzalez has termed the “Ideology and Practice of Empire” (2001). Within this framework, education is perceived as the main apparatus of assimilation, acculturation, (read exploitation) for a growing Latina/o population into the economic and social dimensions of an increasingly imperial and militaristic Pax Americana. Unearthing and naming the ostensibly hidden narratives and ideological underpinnings of education policy is a necessary counter - point to the reigning initiatives that evoke, at times, the popular support of Latina/os (and predominantly immigrant families) in pursuit of achieving the material benefits associated with American nationality. It is essential, therefore, that policy initiatives be understood in terms of their historical specificity and in terms of their functional imperatives for nation - states “administering a commodity - centered economy and its class - determining division of social

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labor” (cited in SAN JUAN, 2002). In education policy, the rhetoric of positive nationalism, i.e. equal opportunity for all, occludes both the racialized ideologies and class interests of the political elite who act – either willingly or unknowingly - in the service of maintaining internal cultural homogeneity and the empire chic status of the United States.

As an instructive example, consider the recent arguments posited by Harvard professor Samuel Huntington, who the New York Times (BROOKS, 2004) referred to as “one of the most eminent political scientists in the world.” Huntington’s commentary in *Who Are We?* Is predictably aligned to the ideological imperatives of U.S., citizenship. Concerned with the “persistent flow of Hispanic immigrants” who, “unlike past immigrant groups...have not assimilated into mainstream U.S., culture, forming instead their own political and linguistic enclaves,” he writes: “There is no Americano Dream. There is only the American Dream created by an Anglo - Protestant society. Mexican - Americans will share in that dream and in that society only if they dream in English” (2004). In linguistics we would refer to the aforementioned coupling as cognates but in Huntington’s context that speaks directly to the reactionary segments of the population that he depicts), they represent two separate and incommensurable worlds divided by language, culture, and values. In his enfeebled defense of the Anglosphere as the sacerdotal eyrie of U.S citizenship, Latina/os, and primarily those of Mexican decent, are characterized as a monolithic cultural group that “lack initiative, self - reliance, and ambition” and have “little use for education; and acceptance of poverty as a virtue necessary for entrance into heaven” (cited in HUNTINGTON, 2004). Such views are neither new, nor limited to depicting the Latina/o population. The rise of industrialization, the emergence of World Wars, the collapse of statist Communism and reformist Social Democracy and the creation of the U.S. as the world’s sole superpower has advanced an “us” versus “them” discourse that legitimizes political, military and economic domination. Directly linked to economic exploitation is the cultural process of “othering,” a process that is innately racialized, that places whiteness and the cultural values associated with it at the commanding heights of “civil” society, while serving as a functioning principle of the imperial nation - state that seeks “asymmetrical distribution of social wealth and power” (SAN JUAN, 2002: 93). According to E. San Juan, the object of nationalism signifies a community “just like us” which is inextricably linked to the nation state’s formation of classes and social groups. He writes,

What defines patria, or home for the victorious conquerors is their own self - validating attributes of gender, kinship or parentage, skin color, and the inexorable “natural” or naturalizing markers demarcating them from the subjugated and subordinated peoples.

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San Juan elaborates on this position by unfolding the core roots of American national identity. He asserts that the development of American “patria” takes place along two primary dimensions: the systematic inclusion and exclusion of certain segments of the population; and the political management of social life forms according to the hierarchization of morals and codes of conduct (2002). These identity formations are made manifest across multiple dimensions. The media, the electorate, pop culture, and education work symbiotically to sustain and proliferate hegemonic interpretations of what it means to be “American.” Tensions do arise, however, when such formations are threatened by demographic shifts in the population – of seismic proportions – that no longer secure a static or unyielding social configuration. It is during these times of flux and change across the geopolitical landscape that we witness an inversion in dominant discourses. The “colonizers” claim to be the “colonized” and consequently, a systematic and sustained set of political initiatives make their way into the legislative body as a necessary precaution or defense against the inclusion of “other” cultural arrangements.

The once regnant discourses of colonialism and imperialism have politically imploded as reactionary politicians are no longer speaking of conquering land, resources, and/or people adjacent to the southwest U.S. border, but view themselves and the Anglo - American constituencies they represent as having been conquered by a burgeoning Latina/o population. As a result, numerous attempts have been made to erase any remnants of the motherland, and to forcibly assimilate and acculturate Latina/os to the “American Way of Life.” Propelled by both State and National legislative initiatives, a politics of erasure is currently underway in our public schools. Addressing the historical and material antecedents of Latina/os in the U.S., we attempt to highlight the necessity of a humanizing pedagogy of liberation that refutes either/or binaries (either you’re American or you’re not) and adopts a dialectical framework advanced by contemporary social movements and popular education initiatives in Latin America.

“LATINA/O” – HISTORICAL AND MATERIAL DIMENSIONS

To understand the ways in which the education of Latina/o youth is being affected by what we term a “politics of erasure” it is necessary to fully define “Latina/o.” We consider it important to highlight the arguments posited by Martha Gimenez (1997), who suggests that ethnic labels such as “Latino” or “Hispanic” work not only to solidify the negative stereotyping associated with that group (such as Huntington’s views of Latina/o populations), but also to hide and de-emphasize both the differences and similarities across ethnic enclaves. By

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differences, we are suggesting that Latina/os constitute a population of wide variation – across class and other social dimensions – and that they do not, by any measure, share or ascribe to an organic or pure cultural identity. By similarities, we are also suggesting that Latina/os, when viewed as individuals situated along a historical and material continuum differentiated by class status, share traits, experiences, and values with other “non - Latino” groups. The process of Americanization, or what is often termed in academic circles acculturation and/or assimilation is not a uniform process for Latina/os in general. Gimenez is particularly insightful on this point: “Dialectically, however, culture is not a thing one learns or unlearns (thus becoming acculturated): It is the lived experience of people shaped by their location in the class and socioeconomic stratification systems” (1997). Therefore, it is necessary to view Latina/os as a social group in all of their iterations and to consider the material backdrop of their cultural formations (see KINCHELOE and STEINBERG, 1997).

Latina/o, or Hispanic, is a cultural category that denotes both national origin (outside of the U.S.) and generational status (for those born in the U.S.). Peoples of South American, Central American, Cuban, Dominican Republican, Puerto Rican, and Mexican origin (spanning across two continents and nineteen countries) classify as “Latino” as well as native - U.S. citizens from Latin - American backgrounds. What is often missed, however, in census calculations that place the Latino population at over 35 million (SUAREZ - OROZCO, 2001) are the various reasons behind their expatriation. For a limited number, their status in the United States will qualify as exilic, while others are relegated the indelible rank of “illegal aliens” or “immigrants.” As Gimenez (2003) notes, exile, as a political construct, denotes the “forced removal from one’s native country” while immigrants depart their countries of origin “voluntarily in search of economic opportunities and upward mobility.” These two seemingly disparate definitions in fact transcend a false set of alternatives. Gimenez asserts, correctly in our view, that both “exiles” and “immigrants” share more than differ in the extent to which the social, material and political factors demanding their expatriation can be linked to the processes of capitalist exploitation and accumulation. She claims thusly,

As capital speeds around the globe taking advantage of rapidly changing profit making opportunities the economic devastation it leaves behind compels millions of workers to uproot themselves and join local, regional and international migration flows (2003).

Since the industrial revolution, Latin America has been a prime representative of weak capitalism, situated along the periphery within an international capitalist system that forces the superexploitation of its laborers. As articulated by Enrique

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Dussel, “within the international capitalist system, they [Latin - America] end up structurally transferring value to the central capital and its metropolitan centers, to England first, to the United States since 1945, and last to the giants of transnational capitalism such as Japan, Germany and the European Common Market (1995). Consequently, the region is now characterized as a host of economies dependent on the transnational firms and international structures of the World Trade Organization, World Bank and International Monetary Fund. Rendered vulnerable by what Eduardo Galeano (2002) has referred to as the “mythology of the free market and consumer society,” the false prophets of neoliberal policies have ushered in an era (from 1980 onward), characterized by the systematic economic collapse of Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Peru and Venezuela. And in Mexico, the so - called “poster boy” of trade reform and economic liberalization, labor inequality has reached its highest level since 1984 (Bouillon, 2000). Although remarkable forces of working class and indigenous mobilizations have accompanied these economic “crises”², socially and economically, the region is in a relative state of instability and discord. With one - third of the population living in poverty and the wealthiest 20 percent receiving 60 percent of the region’s wealth, Latin America boasts the greatest income inequality in the world next to Sub - Saharan Africa (IDB, 2003). Given these economic and social trajectories, it is not surprising to note that 40 percent of Latinos residing in the U.S. are foreign - born (NCLR, 2004), an overwhelming majority (54 percent) which have come from Mexico. Transnational labor recruiting networks, family reunification, and wage differentials across the southwest U.S. border establish powerful contexts for Mexican immigration (SUAREZ - OROZCO, 2001). Characterized as the “Neo - Bracero” program, the influx of undocumented workers into the U.S. functions to maintain the exploitation of a labor force who sell themselves at subhuman prices in exchange for the possibility of upward mobility or at least a better quality of life. In pursuit of personal and material dignity, it is their children that ultimately embody *esperanza*. Carrying the burden of the past and the hope for the future, children are offered – trustingly – to the institution that promises triumphalist visions of human sociality: education.

EDUCATION AND THE POLITICS OF ERASURE

Among U.S. institutions, public schools bear the greatest burden to bring youth and their families into the neo - liberal regime. For educators such as Aronowitz (2004), schools serve as the primary mechanism to connect children and their families to the full spectrum of social life. Social life, in these terms, includes broad notions of citizenship but it also, and perhaps most importantly, suggests the cultivation of a laboring citizen body. He is worth quoting at length:

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The common school is charged with the task of preparing children and youth for their dual responsibilities to the social order: citizenship and, perhaps its primary task, learning to labor. On the one hand, in the older curriculum on the road to citizenship in a democratic secular society, schools are supposed to transmit the jewels of the enlightenment, especially literature and science. On the other hand, students are to be prepared for the work world by means of a loose but definite stress on the redemptive value of work, the importance of family, and of course the imperative of love and loyalty on one's country (2004).

We agree with Aronowitz' description of the public school and we find it particularly relevant for Latina/os and other immigrant groups struggling assiduously on the margins for full incorporation into the dominant landscape of U.S. society. The notion that schools ultimately shape and form future generations under the mantra of democracy - building or "loving one's country"—is a necessary tool for policy makers and other members of the bourgeoisie elite to justify pedagogical programs and initiatives designed to homogenize and unify a seemingly varied population. But what is often overlooked is the role that schools play in serving as pallbearers of profit maximization and in sustaining a commodity - centered economy predicated on the social division of labor. It is here that the linkages between the expansion of capital and schooling become translucent - in terms of schools transforming into commodities (through increased privatization) and in their role as commodity - producing (human labor - power) institutions. The government itself clearly captures the interplay among schools, labor, capital and citizenship. In a move not unprecedented across presidential administrations, a report commissioned on behalf of the Bush Jr. Administration, "From Risk to Opportunity, Hispanics in the U.S." outlines these very relations. The report states,

If the employment picture does not change, the economic consequences of an uneducated workforce will strain the economy of the United States. Hispanics are not maximizing their income potential or developing financial security. This leads to lost tax revenues, lower rates of consumer spending, reduced per capita savings and increased social costs.

This narrative reduces Latina/o's "failure" in the economy to a litany of discrete factors in education (see MIRON and INDA, 2000). From factors such as limited parent involvement, poor academic instruction and a lack of English or accountability for results, an investment in school "improvement" is considered the only viable alternative toward eliminating the fiscal and social "crisis" associated with the Latinization of America. The Commission asserts, "school improvement may be an expensive short - term investment, but the ultimate profit resulting from an educated Hispanic workforce is much greater" (2004: 3). When

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Latina/o's participation in the labor market is contrasted against indicators that measure their integration in education and other aspects of social life, the stage is set to "reform" or "rectify" the conditions associated with what is perceived as "failed assimilation." Across ethnic groups, Latinos have the highest high school dropout rate, nearly 28 percent, and for newly arrived immigrants the dropout rate stands at 40 percent (NCLR, 2004). Only one in ten Latinos ages 25 and over have received a bachelor's degree or higher, yet in the year 2002, nearly one in five of all those incarcerated in the U.S. were Latino (NCLR, 2004). Close to 5 million English Language Learners reside in the U.S., an overwhelming majority are Spanish speakers, and in the year 2000 - 2001, Latina/os represented 10 percent of the school - aged population, a proportion that is bound to increase exponentially. When the "Latino experience" is viewed against this backdrop, it provides the fuel and impetus for policy makers to create and implement educational initiatives to reverse the trend of so - called failure. Such is the rationale behind increased standardization (as a way to equalize educational inputs and outcomes) of curriculum, testing mechanisms and instructional techniques. For Latina/os and other segments of the population clinging to the rhetoric of positive nationalism, education policies in this vein are configured with irresistible appeal. But ultimately, such efforts come at the expense of an often cruel and violent pedagogy of dehumanization that places the burden on the young and "unacculturated" to adopt "ways of being" that are - indeed—foreign and alien.

The very system that incorporates Latina/os and other immigrant groups into the dominant whitemain society is the same system that seeks to alienate them from their local histories, their culture, and the location where their knowledge is inscribed: language (MALDONADO - TORRES, 2004). Language, which serves to classify, categorize, and label our human essence is a process that relies on the process of internalization. As we are using the term, language represents a core construct of our subjectivity and the bulwark of our identities. In the words of Gloria Anzaldúa, "Ethnic identity is twin skin to linguistic identity - I am my language. Until I can take pride in my language, I cannot take pride in myself" (1987). With language valorized as the essentialized component of nationality and identity, the Latina/o experience in public schools is most visibly affected by English - only movements. Starting in California, with Proposition 227, an initiative that legally dismantled bilingual education instruction, and followed by similar Propositions in Arizona (226), and unsuccessful attempts in Colorado, and Massachusetts, bilingual education is consistently thrust into the fetid sewers of wasteful pedagogy. While language policy has historically been sanctioned at the level of the state, the Federal Government's reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, marked a reversal of language policy that stresses the acquisition of English skills only

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(CRAWFORD, 2002). By eliminating any reference to the term “bilingual,” by mandating achievement tests that measure, primarily, the acquisition of English over subject - matter content (Abedi and Dietel, 2004), and by attaching a strict system of punishment and rewards to test results, the U.S. government has solidified a neocolonial model of education that legitimizes the sustained subordination of groups that fall short from gaining membership to the dominant discourses of U.S. citizenship. Gutierrez et al (2001) have referred to this phenomena as “backlash pedagogy” rooted in “backlash politics, products of ideological and institutional structures that legitimize and thus maintain privilege, access and control of the sociopolitical terrain.” Along a similar vein, Donaldo Macedo (2000) writes that English only initiatives are present - day forms of colonialism, designed to subordinate groups through the loss of their human citizenship. In conjunction with initiatives that support anti - immigrant hysteria (Proposition 209 in California, the elimination of the Immigrant Education Program in No Child Left Behind 2001), and measures to eradicate affirmative action programs, we are constantly reminded that becoming “American,” from the standpoint of education policy, is an atrophic process that denies the full development of human subjectivity.

CRITICAL REVOLUTIONARY PEDAGOGY AS MARXIST HUMANISM

As critical educators, we reject the notion that marginalized student groups must selectively choose between binary oppositions – of Americanism or un - Americanism. We also reject the notion that schools must ultimately service the needs of capital rather than the humanizing needs of children and their families (DE LISSOVOY and MCLAREN, 2003). And at the same time, we are aware of the complex set of social relations that have compelled millions of working class and poor people from Latin America to leave their countries of origin in search of a viable alternative. The powerful notion of comprised national identities and the lived tensions and contradictions confronted in every aspect of social life in the U.S. by “immigrants” or “exiles”, compels us to articulate a humanizing critical pedagogy that is rooted in the cultural, spiritual and linguistic dimensions of everyday life. But a humanizing pedagogy is also grounded in a critique of the material social relations and practices associated with contemporary capitalist formations. We have made an effort to note that the exploitation of human capacity to labor (labor - power) is not limited to regional or national geographical spaces alone. Rather, Latina/os in the U.S. and abroad are implicated in a web of transnational relations linked to the accumulation of capital and extraction of surplus value. Moving from the center to the periphery, it is instructive for us to critically engage social movements and popular education initiatives in Latin America as illustrative sites towards a humanizing critical pedagogy.

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Raul Burgos (2002) notes that popular struggles in Latin America have historically confronted the cultural and ideological force of capitalism. He writes that “Neoliberalism exercises its dominion fundamentally on the cultural level, attacking the constitutive values of popular identity, national identity and the traditions of struggle contained in historical experience.” Clearly there is a cultural dimension to neoliberalism (although we beg to differ with Burgos that its cultural manifestation is dominant over its material conditions). Struggles and popular education initiatives across Latin America have responded to cultural dominion in numerous ways. From the Zapatistas in Chiapas, Mexico, to the piqueteros in the streets of Buenos Aires, Argentina, multiple groups have engaged in a process of reclaiming national and personal identity through collective conscientization. The Zapatistas claim to have “developed an alternative educational autonomous pedagogy that is defined and administered by the indigenous communities and which is independent of the ideological positions of those in power (FLORES, 1999) while the piqueteros use alternative media in their commitment to “horizontal” and “non - hierarchical” forms of communication and organization in their struggle against capitalism and imperialism (SCATAMBURLO - D’ANNIBALE, SUORANATA, JARAMILLO and MCLAREN, in press). These movements differ in multiple ways and face a myriad of contradictions within and against the powers of the neoliberal state apparatus. The point that we wish to emphasize, however, is the ethical radicalism that arises from collective human action such as that of the Zapatistas and the piqueteros. It is a radicalism that refutes ways of being that are imposed, rather than created by the people. It is a radicalism rooted in the socio - historical reality of communities struggling against the totalizing power of global capitalism that, we argue, is the essence of a humanizing critical pedagogy.

A critical humanizing pedagogy respects students’ language and cultural identity. It begins, in the words of Antonia Darder (2002), “with the view that all human beings participate actively in producing meaning and thus reinforces a dialectical and contextual view of knowledge” (135). Cultural workers in this tradition ask students to recollect the past, to situate the present socially, politically and economically, and to strive toward a future built upon a utopian universality that creates the conditions for groups to liberate themselves in their own contextually specific ways from all forms of oppression, domination, alienation and degradation. A pedagogy built upon these perspectives and practices seeks to understand the underlying motives, interests, desires and fears of draconian shifts in education policy and it contests ascribed methods of producing knowledge. Rather than erasing students’ cultural formations, a humanizing critical pedagogy unearths the debris of the dialectically fashioned self of capital from the oppressive strongholds of the state (and the wider empire of capital) and re - articulates what it means to be the subject rather than the

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object of history. However, we clearly need more than a normative foundation for a new cultural cosmopolitanism, we also need a major shift in the mode of production. In addition to cultural solutions we need to seizing political power on behalf of workers. Yet—in itself—this does little to eradicate the capitalist law of value. Moving beyond the capitalist law of value is a challenge to that can be met by adopting a historical materialist critique.

Criticizing the model of “cultural schizophrenia” that informs the ideological ambivalence of “Chicana/o literature” (an ambivalence often compared to Foucault’s concept of “heterotopia” or juxtaposed or superimposed spaces of incommensurability, the cohabitation of conflicting social classes, groups, discourses, etc.), Marcial Gonzalez (2004) advances a historical materialist critique (Gonzalez does this in the specific context of Chicana/o literature) that we believe is efficacious for the de - domestication of critical pedagogy. Historical materialism is important for Gonzalez, as it is for us, precisely because it “attempts to understand the dialectical relation between the particularities of existence and the larger social frameworks that give them meaning” (2004, 180). It also helps us to grasp more fully and more deeply “the relation between universal processes and their local manifestations” (180) in ways postmodernism—with its self - diremption and fetishization of social fragmentation—cannot. Further, historical materialism provides the means for “understanding the complex categories of identity based on race, ethnicity, sexuality and gender, not as autonomous formations but as interconnected processes within the larger dynamics of social relations” (180) so that we are able to recognize “the particularity and relative autonomy of race without jettisoning the causal character of class relations” (181). From such a perspective, reality is perceived not as an absolute truth but as “a set of processes” (181). The purpose of historical materialist critique is not to “correct faulty ideas”(182) analytically, but “to negate them” and demystify them (as ideological correlates of real social contradictions) and in doing so “to transform them qualitatively”.

CRITICAL REVOLUTIONARY PEDAGOGY AS A DIALECTICS OF PRAXIS

In this section we attempt to further situate critical revolutionary pedagogy in a Marxist - Hegelian optic, centered around a philosophy of praxis. To perform our revolutionary agency critically is to revisit the dialectical relation of theory and practice. What is important are the ideas of social change that are given birth in spontaneous movements and struggles, and those developed in theory and made available to the people. Raya Dunayevskaya (1973; 1978; 2000; 2002) has rethought Marx’s relations to Hegelian dialectics in a profound way, in particular, Hegel’s concept of the self - movement of the Idea from which Marx argued the

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need to transcend objective reality rather than thought. Dunayevskaya notes how Marx was able to put a living, breathing, and thinking subject of history at the centre of the Hegelian dialectic. She also pointed out that what for Hegel is Absolute knowledge (the realm of realised transcendence), Marx referred to as the new society. While Hegel's self-referential, all-embracing, totalizing Absolute is greatly admired by Marx, in its, never the less, greatly modified by him. For Marx, Absolute knowledge (or the self-movement of pure thought) did not absorb objective reality or objects of thought but provided a ground from which objective reality could be transcended. By reinserting the human subject into the dialectic, and by defining the subject as corporal being (rather than pure thought or abstract self-consciousness), Marx appropriates Hegel's self-movement of subjectivity as an act of transcendence and transforms it into a critical humanism. In her rethinking of Marx's relationship to the Hegelian dialectic, Dunayevskaya parts company with Derrida, Adorno, Marcuse, Habermas, Negri, Deleuze, Meszaros, and others. She has given absolute negativity a new urgency, linking it not only to the negation of today's economic and political realities but also to developing new human relations. The second negation constitutes drawing out the positive within the negative and expressing the desire of the oppressed for freedom. Second negativity is intrinsic to the human subject as an agent; it is what gives direction and coherence to revolutionary action as praxis. Abstract, alienated labour can be challenged by freely associated labor and concrete, human sensuousness. The answer is in envisioning a non-capitalist future that can be achieved, as Hudis (2000) notes, after Dunayevskaya, by means of subjective self-movement through absolute negativity so that a new relation between theory and practice can connect us to the realisation of freedom.

Of course, Marx rejects Hegel's idealisation and dehumanisation of self-movement through double negation because this leaves untouched alienation in the world of labor-capital relations. Marx sees this absolute negativity as objective movement and the creative force of history. Absolute negativity in this instance becomes a constitutive feature of a self-critical social revolution that, in turn, forms the basis of permanent revolution. Peter Hudis (2000), raises a number of difficult questions with respect to developing a project that moves beyond controlling the labor process. It is a project that is directed at abolishing capital itself through the creation of freely associated labor: the creation of a social universe not parallel to the social universe of capital (whose substance is value) is the challenge here. The form that this society will take is that which has been suppressed within the social universe of capital: socialism, a society based not on value but on the fulfillment of human need. For Dunayevskaya (2002), absolute negativity entails more than economic struggle but the liberation of humanity from class society. This is necessarily a political and a revolutionary struggle and not only an economic one. This particular insight is what, for me, signals the

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fecundating power of Dunayevskaya's Marxist - humanism – the recognition that Marx isn't talking about class relations only but human relations. Domesticated currents of critical pedagogy is too preoccupied with making changes within civil society or the bourgeois 'public sphere' where students are reduced to test scores and their behavior is codified in relation to civic norms. Marx urged us to push beyond this type of materialism that fails to comprehend humanity's sensuous nature and regards humans only as statistics or 'averaged out' modes of behavior. We need to move towards a new social humanity. This takes us well beyond civil society. We need to work towards the goal of becoming associated producers, working under conditions that will advance human nature, where the measure of wealth is not labor time but solidarity, creativity, and the full development of human capacities. This can only occur outside the social universe of capital.

Sentenced to extinction in the 1950s, Marxist theory is today needed more than at any time in human history. Marx's new society based on being rather than having, creating rather than controlling, relating rather than dominating will neither emerge from endless negation nor the spontaneous activities of the multitude, but, as Hudis (2003; 2003a) notes, will require an articulation of a positive vision of the new, a competing vision of a future alternative to capitalism. This means taking seriously the notion of praxis, and recognizing that theory is more than the trajectory of ideas moving from theoreticians to the masses. It also means recognizing that movements from practice by the masses are also forms of theory. Hudis (2003a) maintains that "the movement from theory to practice must be as explicitly rooted in the dialectic of absolute negativity as the spontaneous movements are rooted in it implicitly". Indeed, this reflects the concept of praxis that undergirds our commitment to critical revolutionary pedagogy (SCATAMBURLO - D'ANNIBALE and MCLAREN, 2003). Critical revolutionary pedagogy, built upon the concept of absolute negativity, is needed to combat the ideological crisis that has occurred as a result of the defeat of communism, socialism, national liberation movements and the radical wings of social democracy. Through critical revolutionary pedagogy we can stare back at the mannequins that have taken over the Bush Jr. administration and send a chill along their snaked spines, stem the flood of tautologies about the hieras gamos (sacred marriage) of capitalism and democracy, discover the fossils of heresy in the founding moments of capitalism, smash TINA (There Is No Alternative to capitalism) into the shards of its broken promises, impede the reproduction of capital's value form, and finally put a wrench to the central piston of capitalist reproduction. It will help us disable the Bush administration from conflating leftist revolutionaries motivated by modernist ideologies of liberation with Islamic terrorists, equipped with pre - modern Islamic fundamentalist and millenarian ideologies (without recognizing their own fundamentalist and millenarian ideologies in the very process of this conflation, i.e., that the ideology of the

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Taliban is but the reverse mirror image of that of George W. Bush or John Ashcroft). Guided by a cabal - like combination of shamefaced Christian fundamentalists, merchant adventurers, global robber barons, far right neo - conservatives, financial plunderers, ultra - nationalists, arms dealers, oil tycoons and militarists, the pursuit by the U.S. government for the role of master and commander of the global capitalist system proceeds apace. Admittedly, it cannot be stopped by critical revolutionary pedagogy, no matter how powerful its self - reflexive counter - performances, but neither can it be effectively challenged without it. Today it is urgent that we develop a coherent philosophy of praxis, but equally important is our determination to live our dialectical self - reflexivity as we navigate the mine - sown fields of everyday existence and enact our politics of refusal and transformation.

A true renewal of thinking about educational and social reform must pass through a regeneration of Marxist theory if the great and fertile meaning of human rights and equality is to reverberate in the hopes of aggrieved populations throughout the world. A philosophically - driven revolutionary critical pedagogy—one that aspires towards a coherent philosophy of praxis—can help teachers and students grasp the specificity of the concrete within the totality of the universal – for instance, the laws of motion of capital as they operate out of sight of our everyday lives and thus escape our common - sense understanding. Revolutionary critical pedagogy can assist us in understanding history as a process in which human beings make their own society, although in conditions most often not of their own choosing and therefore populated with the intentions of others. And further, the practice of double negation can help us understand the movement of both thought and action by means of praxis, or what Dunayevskaya called the ‘philosophy of history’. The philosophy of history proceeds from the messy web of everyday social reality—from the arena of facticity and tissues of empirical life—and not from lofty abstractions or idealistic concepts gasping for air in the lofty heights of Mount Olympus (the later being an example of the bourgeois mode of thought). Critical revolutionary educators engage students in a dialectical reading of social life in which ‘the labor of the negative’ helps them to understand human development from the perspective of the wider social totality. By examining Marx’s specific appropriation of the Hegelian dialectic, students are able to grasp how the positive is always contained in the negative. In this way, every new society can be grasped as the negation of the preceding one, conditioned by the forces of production – which gives us an opportunity for a new beginning. I think it is certainly a truism that ideas often correspond to the economic structure of society, but at the same time we need to remember that history is in no way unconditional. In other words, not everything can be reduced to the sum total of economic conditions, to an . The actions of human beings are what shapes history. History is not given form and substance by abstract

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categories. Both Freire and Dunayevskaya stress here that the educator must be educated. The idea that a future society comes into being as a negation of the existing one (whose habits and ideas continue to populate it) finds its strongest expression in class struggle. Here we note that dialectical movement is a characteristic not only of thought but also of life and history itself.

CONDITIONING REVOLUTIONARY CONDITIONS

If dialectic praxis within the larger project of class struggle is to serve as the centerpiece of critical revolutionary pedagogy, it is imperative that we chart out the lineaments of our anti - capitalist, pro - socialist struggle. While it is important to acknowledge that the globalization of capital can be resisted, it is equally important to be aware of the strengths and limitations of our counter - hegemonic strategies and tactics. In short: we need a theory of counter - hegemony. The following quotation by Robinson expands on this position:

Globalization is the resistible renewal of capitalism. Globalization is always partial and incomplete, although the aspiration is one of universality and generalization. Any theory of historic change must address the question of how alternative projects arise, how resistance is articulated and how dominant structures are subverted. Theories of capitalist hegemony are incomplete without corresponding theories of counter - hegemony (2003).

Here, Robinson rehearses Gramsci's distinction between a war of maneuver (frontal attack) and a war of position (struggle of trench warfare, or of attrition) as follows:

A war of maneuver, associated with the traditional notions of revolution, can potentially succeed when the power that sustains the existing system is situated in a limited number of identifiable sites, like the police, military, etc. But the expansion of the state into new "private" and community realms under capitalism that Gramsci theorized, and the rise of a civil society in which the power of the dominant groups is anchored in ideological and cultural processes, implies that power is no longer limited to a number of sites and is more dispersed and multidimensional. The formal distinction between a war of position and a war of maneuver is clearly methodological, not real (organic), in the sense that social struggles involve both dimensions simultaneously. Which may be the most salient in strategies and practices of struggle is a matter of historical conjuncture and collective agency (319 - 320).

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Robinson convincingly argues that we must begin our anti - capitalist struggle with a strategic war of position, the exercise of resistance in the sphere of civil society by popular classes who are able to avoid co - optation and mediation by the nation state—and this means resistance at the points of accumulation, capitalist production and the process of social reproduction. Robinson revealingly elaborates this position:

Social conflicts linked to the reorganization of the world economy will lie at the heart of world politics in the twenty - first century. The challenge is how to reconstruct the social power of the popular classes worldwide in a new era in which such power is not mediated and organized through the nation - state. The universal penetration of capitalism through globalization draws all peoples not only into webs of market relations but also into webs of resistance (2003).

Drawing on the work of Kees van der Pijl, Robinson argues that all three moments in the process of the subordination of society and nature to the reproduction of capital—original accumulation, the capitalist production process, and the process of social reproduction—generates its own form of “counter - movement” of resistance and struggle; consequently, it is to the social forces from below engaged in resistance at all three of these moments to which we should turn in anticipation of developing our own counter - hegemonic impulse. Robinson has established four fundamental requirements for an effective counter - hegemony that are worth repeating here. First, he argues that we urgently need to build a political force upon a broader vision of social transformation that can link social movements and diverse oppositional forces. The resistance of popular classes needs to be unified through a broad and comprehensive “strategy of opposition to the broader structures that generate the particular conditions which each social movement and oppositional force is resisting” (2003). Robinson puts the challenge thusly:

The challenge for popular social movements is how to fuse political with social struggles through the development of political instruments that can extend to political society (the state) the counter - hegemonic space currently being opened up in civil society through mass mobilization. Popular classes have nothing to gain by limiting their struggles to local and isolated “sites” of oppression and forsaking the development of a larger project of transformation, a project which includes a struggle against the state (322).

Here it is important to “address how oppression and exploitation, and the immediate conditions around which popular sectors are struggling, are linked to and derive from a larger totality, that totality being global capitalism” (2003). The

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organization forms of a renovated left must include a commitment to the autonomy of social movements, to social change from the bottom up rather than the top down, to democratic principles and practices within organizations themselves, and to an abandonment of the old verticalism in favor of non-hierarchical practices.

The second requirement for an effective counter hegemony is building a viable socioeconomic alternative to global capitalism. To this end Robinson asserts:

Beyond calling for a mere change in the particular form of accumulation, a counter-hegemonic alternative needs to challenge the logic of the market in its program and ideology. If not, some new ideology and program designed from above by global elites, such as the so-called “Third Way” promulgated in the United States and the United Kingdom in the late 1990’s, may well allow the global capitalist bloc to retain the initiative as crises extend and to forestall the possibilities of more fundamental change. An anti-neo-liberal agenda, however important, must develop into an anti-capitalist – that is, socialist – alternative (323).

The third requirement is that popular classes need to transnationalize their struggles. This is talking about nothing less than the expanding of transnational civil society that serves as an effective counter-movement to global capitalism. He warns that

The crisis and eventual collapse of neo-liberalism may create the conditions favorable to winning state power promoting an alternative. It is not clear, however, how effective national alternatives can be in transforming social structures, given the ability of transnational capital to utilize its structural power to impose its project even over states that are captured by forces adverse to that project (2003).

The answer, for Robinson, calls for challenging the global elite “by accumulating counter-hegemonic forces beyond national and regional borders; to challenge that power from within an expanding transnational civil society” (2003). In this wake of this aim, his fourth requirement calls upon organic intellectuals to henceforth subordinate their work to and in the service of popular majorities and their struggles.

In his latest book, *A Theory of Global Capitalism*, Robinson further elaborates on what a counterhegemonic movement should look like. He importantly notes that fundamental change in a social order becomes possible when an organic crisis occurs, but that such an organic crisis of capitalism is no guarantee against social breakdown, authoritarianism or fascism. What is necessary is a viable alternative that is in hegemonic ascendance – a viable alternative to the existing capitalist social order that is perceived as preferable by a majority of society. While the

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socialist alternative is unlikely to be considered 'a viable alternative' by the majority of society any time soon, this should not dampen our efforts to bring us closer to that goal.

It is precisely an unyielding commitment to and responsibility for the Other that gives critical revolutionary pedagogy—nourished by Marxist roots—its ethical exigency, its affirmative starting point, and it prevents critical educators from being caught in an endless vortex of negativity that has trapped many critical theorists. In the language of dialectics, critical revolutionary educators negate the negation inflicted upon the oppressed. And they do so from the perspective of the affirmation of the oppressed. Not only does this negation of the negation have a roborant effect on critical praxis, it is the very bulwark of revolutionary activity.

Yet as long as critical educators ignore the strategic centrality of class struggle (see SCATAMBURLO - D'ANNIBALE and MCLAREN, 2004), the more difficult it will be for critical pedagogy to become a powerful propellant on the ongoing struggle for a social future and the more impossible it will be to achieve a qualitatively different society in which the communist principle of distribution prevails: from each according to her ability, to each according to her needs.

When we argue that critical revolutionary pedagogy need to return to its Marxist roots, we do not use the concept of 'returning' in the sense of 'going back' to some prior moment of a linear sequence in time. To 'return' is not to 'regress' but rather to move forward in awakening ourselves to our relationship with living history, which is both the source and destiny of the human subject: the self - transcendence of our species being.

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² See McLaren, P. and Jaramillo, N. "Critical Pedagogy as Organizational Praxis: Challenging the Demise of Civil Society in a Time of Permanent War".

