Unaccomplished Utopia

NeoConservative Dismantling of Public Higher Education in the European Union

Foreword by José Gimeno Sacristán

João Menelau Paraskeva (Ed.)

Miami University, Ohio, USA

This is a stimulating and original collection of chapters produced by an impressive group of international scholars. It provides a vital critical perspective that will strengthen our understanding of what the very important Bologna project means for Universities in Europe and beyond – Roger Dale, University of Bristol, UK.

This book is an imperative read. It presents a powerful set of challenging and straightforward analyses of the current neo-Rightist attack on Higher Education and the Public Sphere in the European Union by The Bologna Process. In an era of Public Education characterized by a flood of magical neoliberal solutions, this volume exposes the real political aims behind the illusions created by the Bologna Process. Sans euphemisms, João Paraskeva and his colleagues have insightfully unveiled how these current technocratic instruments, while assuming unique, neutral, and scientific solutions, have hijacked this debate. Jurjo Torres Santome – University of Corunha, Spain.

All too often EU’s higher education policies are left untouched by the critical eye as if the totalizing machine of the EU was handed over from above as a generous gift from the politico-administrative elite to the ordinary people walking in the markets of educational vanity. Fortunately, authors of this volume have the courage to see through the many illusions installed in the apparently all-European, “harmonizing”, educative apparatus. - Juha Suoranta, Professor of Adult Education, University of Tampere, Finland.

Creating access to Higher Education is not easy. It is even harder to create an accord where more than 20 EU Countries come together to change their paradigm, to change their approach, and to create a common fabric of higher education in the European Union. The contributors of this volume have reached out to critically analyze this accord and to help us better understand the lethal costs associated with it, in terms of the labor, identity, and academic freedom. – Sheila Macrine – New Jersey City University, USA.

João Menelau Paraskeva begins his new book with a clear assessment of the pedagogical proposals of what he terms the neo radical centrist globalization forces: these proposals are dismantling public Higher Education in the European Union. His collaborators provide complementary data and reflections along the same lines, public universities in the European Union are at the threshold of becoming organizations chained to the market undermining any other social and pedagogical function. For some this diagnostic of universities turned into subservient educational institutions, more oriented to for-profit ventures and the commodification of knowledge, may seem an exaggeration. It is early to assess to what extents all the claims made in this book are going to be fully developed with the dangerous implications noted in it, but there is no doubt that its warnings are serious, well-researched and presented in a thorough manner. Paraskeva is a sensible scholar and is offering a sensible book about the marketization of the European public university that educators around the world should take seriously – Gustavo E. Fischman Arizona State University.
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João Menelau Paraskeva
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Stories can galvanize us, especially when connected with individual or collective needs. However, such encouraging stories drain into frustration when people realize either that what was conceived is impossible to realize or because the strategies and actions undertaken have not been the most adequate, and in some cases they constitute a societal affront. This is the case of the Bologna Process.

The Bologna Process raises puzzling sensations and contradictory ideas. Initially it looked like a story full of hope. Who would have the audacity to disagree with having University interconnected with the knowledge society and with a citizen’s Europe? However, as we have been witnessing – and as the analysis in this volume sharply show – the development of such University did not take into consideration the necessary means to accomplish such a challenge. It was and is a mirage. It has become a painful and pointless experiment. Moreover, to think that it is possible to impose any project on the academic community and expect that such project will work is a mistake. Challenging academic freedom has always had a price.

The Bologna Process as João Paraskeva and his colleagues sharply showed in this volume, is a dangerous political strategy that neglects explicitly not only larger cultural apparatuses, but also the symbiosis simmered by regional, local, national, transnational and global dynamics. Under the Bologna Process academic communities projected and developed experiences imposing new models without having a clear sense – and in some cases the foggiest idea – of what would (and could) be established. Almost nonsensically masters were created before even knowing what degrees were going to precede them. Soon we realized that in the Bologna Process, essential aspects of the original project were deliberately forgotten and the project fell into a technocratic interpretation of how to improve and ameliorate teaching at the lowest possible cost. As the authors of this volume accurately disclose, the Bologna Process is above all anchored into an economic reductionism, equated by the current hegemonic forces which express a dangerous cultural vision for the European Union. Such a vision, quite triumphant unfortunately, (despite several forms of resistance) is profoundly classed, gendered and raced and cannot be detached from the politics of commonsense. Along with the Bologna Process emerged a new bureaucracy guaranteed by a huge array of what one might call ‘bolognologos’ and ‘bolognocrats’ determining ‘the’ orthodoxy to follow, and marginalizing crucial aspects that were worthy of public discussion. The Bologna Process was not a bottom-up movement.

The bureaucracies originated and established in the name of the Bologna Process, in many cases without knowing the letter of the original agreements,
demonstrate how particular interests groups emphasize specific issues, such as those related with their own subsistence, fostering academic endogamy, rationalizing the academic life and imposing intricate pedagogical procedures. In fact, such corporative interest groups wisely appropriated the spirit simmered from the Bologna Process given the lack of definition showed by the political power of governments that regulate the process with disorderly measures. These groups wrapped the Bologna Process in an apparently rigorous discourse yet quite empty of political content. In so doing, they legitimized a technical sanctuary flooded by commonsensical arguments that in fact ‘do (not) make (any) sense’ and that have devitalized the nature of the project.

The Bologna Process imposes a ‘new’ language, a set of ‘new’ terminologies (that are not always innovative) reinforcing the imposition of a top-down model and pushing it to a debatable position full of frustrations and flooded with skepticism. Painfully, one perceives how the analysis of particularly successful experiences were diminished and how program evaluations were conducted without paying attention to a huge amount of credible data that have been produced over decades, in Europe and elsewhere.

For us Bologna will never be what Bologna should really be. Bologna is a pale caricature of what the huge secular majority dreamed and fought for – a university and a Union for the people, by the people. That is to say, there is a huge gap between the intentions that underpin the Bologna Process and what really occurred in each country and in each university. As Joao Paraskeva and his colleagues clearly demonstrate in this volume, more than convergence with Europe, there has ultimately been divergence. The entropic tendency of our universities and higher educational systems should not have been ignored. Each university and each specialization in each one of them has expressed the singular form of the arbitrariness and interests of dominant groups in each university. In this context, little or no consideration was given to the learner. In many cases, the students were understood as an obstacle. In fact, it is truthful to say that each university has invented its (own) Private Bologna.

The Bologna statement implied the need for convergence among educational systems of higher education, creating a common European space for Higher Education in the Union. As this volume insightfully examines such a common space is a fallacy and needs to be seen as an answer to what represented the University in the European culture as well as the challenges faced by a Union without borders for the students. It needs to be said however that with regards knowledge circulation that was accomplished well before the Bologna Process. Actually in this regard communications allowed knowledge exchange, the building of a global dimension, showing and stimulating diversity, and not divergence.

It is worthwhile to go back to 1988 when the Assembly of the Presidents of the European Universities proclaimed the Magna Charta Universitatum highlighting universities’ role in the future in a changing and globalized society. The future of humanity, as the Magna Charta Universitatum emphasizes, relies on technical, scientific, and cultural development, which should be the goal of real universities. The ‘cultural, scientific and technical’ order calls our attention. The Magna Charta Universitatum explicitly claims one of the University’s primary missions – the
genuine diffusion of knowledge - needs to be understood within the context of a society which cultural, economic and social future claims the need for lifelong learning. The Charta proposes a University that assures adequate education and training to the future generations helping them respect the natural equilibrium of life. With this in mind, the Assembly of the Presidents of the European Universities proclaim the fundamental principles that should orient the mission and future of the vocation of the European University. Such principles highlight issues such as university’s autonomy, its humanistic tradition, freedom in research and training, and the need to weave teaching and research. To attain these goals, the Magna Charta Universitatum calls for effective means, suitable to present conditions, namely

(a) To preserve freedom in research and teaching, the instruments appropriate to realize that freedom must be made available to all members of the university community; (b) Recruitment of teachers, and regulation of their status, must obey the principle that research is inseparable from teaching; (c) Each university must - with due allowance for particular circumstances - ensure that its students’ freedoms are safeguarded and that they enjoy conditions in which they can acquire the culture and training which it is their purpose to possess; (d) Universities – particularly in Europe – regard the mutual exchange of information and documentation, and frequent joint projects for the advancement of learning, as essential to the steady progress of knowledge.

Therefore, as in the earliest years of their history, they encourage mobility among teachers and students; furthermore, they consider a general policy of equivalent status, titles, examinations (without prejudice to national diplomas) and award of scholarships essential to the fulfillment of their mission in the conditions prevailing today.

In this context, Universities should promote mobility among professors and students. This implies general policies of equivalence regarding, enrollments, statutes, titles, exams, transcripts (still maintaining the national diplomas), and concession of scholarships. Such new legal architecture constitutes the essential instrument to guarantee the exercise of European Universities’ contemporary mission. As this book illustrates, the claim towards mobility attempts to hide segregated and unbalanced social realities not only between nation states, but also within each nation state.

As Vladimir Lenin would put it, ‘what needs to be done’ with all of these proposals that deserve our efforts of building not only a University, but also and above all a united Europe within the diversity of cultures and quite capable and eager of sharing knowledge? This is a crucial question, given the neoliberal hegemonic momentum in which the Bologna Process needs to be contextualized and analyzed. As João Paraskeva and his colleagues unveil accurately, and as some of us were able to argue in other contexts as well, education cannot be equated with and paced by market mechanisms. We have in education other aims, other aspirations, and different goals. Utopia or utopias cannot be detached from the education endeavor. The Bologna Process needs to be situated into a larger context determined by neoliberal policies. Such policies, as João Paraskeva and his colleagues sharply examine, ‘impose a language of economic competitiveness in higher education,
paving the way to produce ‘minds’ and ‘markets’ for the European knowledge-economy’ and simultaneously reinforce violently a ‘Fordist and Taylorist mode of production of knowledge’ – rearticulated through concepts such as ‘competition’, ‘quality’, ‘accountability’, ‘meritocracy’, and ‘competences’. In fact, as this book demonstrates the Bologna Process highlights the societal and academic contradictions between ‘utilitarianism and the enlightenment tradition’. It unplugged abruptly a commendable utopia that secularly wrapped public higher education in Europe and it needs to be understood as the new ‘panopticon’ which attempts to dismantle laudable utopias edified by millions of people in the struggle for a more just and democratic society.

In an era paced by xenophobic neoconservative impulses deeply associated with religious fundamentalisms this volume is crucial. Not only does it unveil messages and persuasive silences underpinning the Bologna Process, and indicate directions to follow, but it is also a flag of hope. Hope that we all need to re-conquer utopianism, understanding public higher education not as a privilege for the happy few, but as a people’s right and as an engine in the struggle for social justice and democracy in Europe.

NOTES

1. The university is an autonomous institution at the heart of societies differently organized because of geography and historical heritage; it produces, examines, appraises and hands down culture by research and teaching. To meet the needs of the world around it, its research and teaching must be morally and intellectually independent of all political authority and intellectually independent of all political authority and economic power. 

2. Teaching and research in universities must be inseparable if their tuition is not to lag behind changing needs, the demands of society, and advances in scientific knowledge. 

3. Freedom in research and training is the fundamental principle of university life, and governments and universities, each as far as in them lies, must ensure respect for this fundamental requirement. Rejecting intolerance and always open to dialogue, the university is an ideal meeting-ground for teachers capable of imparting their knowledge and well equipped to develop it by research and innovation and students entitled, able and willing to enrich their minds with that knowledge. 

4. A university is the trustee of the European humanist tradition; its constant care is to attain universal knowledge; to fulfill its vocation it transcends geographical and political frontiers, and affirms the vital need for different cultures to know and influence each other.


INTRODUCTION: UNACCOMPLISHED UTOPIA

Neoconservative Dismantling of Public Higher Education in the European Union

The current outrageous revolution facing the higher education system in the European Union is a striking evidence of the avaricious effects of what I called (vide also Paraskeva, 2007; 2009) neoradical centrist policies, something quite predictable, especially after the fall of the Berlin wall (cf. Torres Santome, 2005). As McLaren and Farahmandpur (2002, p. 37) accurately remind us,

the defeat of socialist regimes in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, followed by the blue wave of pinstriped warriors from Wall Street, armed with laptops, and taking up positions in Red Square where steely-eyed statues of Lenin once stood, leaves little doubt as to who won the major ideological battle of the twentieth century.

Such ideological (and cultural) battle(s) have been the very DNA of what Sousa Santos (2008) calls globalizations. That is an intricate multifarious social terrain in which nonmonolithic hegemonic and counter-hegemonic forces (or what Sousa Santos (2008) calls insurgent cosmopolitanisms) collide vividly before, among other issues, social and cognitive justice, equality, freedom, democracy, human rights, and common good. Whereas the first is usually understood as “neoliberal, top-down globalization or globalization from above” (Sousa Santos, 2008, p. 396), the latter consists of “the transnationally organized resistance against unequal exchanges produced or intensified by globalized localisms and localized globalisms” (Sousa Santos, 2008, p. 397). Taking the educational field as an example, while one should not minimize the interesting gains in this battle portrayed by insurgent cosmopolitanism movements and organizations (e.g., examples such as The Miami University Center for Community Engagement’), it is undeniable that neoliberal globalizations forms, or what I called neoradical centrist globalization, have been able to express a triumphal position.

One of the social spheres that have been under attack by neoradical centrist forces is higher education. Within the European Union, the Bologna Declaration (BD) and the creation of a Common European Higher Education Area (CEHEA) is just but one graphic example of how the higher education system has been the target of neo radical centrist impulses.

In fact, higher education in the European Union is at a critical defining moment with the creation of a CEHEA, in which the BD (1999) constitutes a towering document aiming at the construction of the European Union’s knowledge-based economy and society. The BD is a political document written in 1999 in which
29 European ministers responsible for higher education in the European Union claimed the need to build a common area in European higher education by 2010. Such an attempt emerged actually one year before the BD was signed, when education ministers Claude Allegre (France), Jurgen Ruttgers (Germany), Luigi Berlinguer (Italy), and Baroness Blackstone (UK) signed the Sorbonne Declaration (SD) in Paris, committing themselves to “harmonizing the cartography of the European higher education system.” The ideological meaning of the word ‘harmonizing’ should not be minimized here.

According to the BD, the higher education system in the European Union needed to be drastically changed, (in some cases almost dismantled). A new market-driven system needed to be implemented—one that would foster mobility and employability both for students and teachers, and for researchers and administrative staff within the Union, and guarantee that competition occurs not only among European higher education systems, but also among international higher education systems. This volume tries to document such aspects that are not only quite elusive and need to be perceived as turmoil of new technicalities subjugated to market mechanisms and desires, but also represent a vivid example of the continuous ferocious attacks, with no apologies, as Giroux (2007) would put it, of rightist policies to the public and common good, as well as an ideological attempt to reinforce the process of Westernizing the West, by legitimating particular kinds of knowledge and skills (Apple, 2000). One would have to be profoundly naïve not to see such strategy as profoundly eugenic, as an attempt to perpetuate Western white heterosexual supremacy (Bonilla-Silva, 2003; Kincheloe, Steinberg, and Gresson III, 1996; Gillborn, 2006; 2008). The password has been already registered: “harmonizing”. Memmi (2000, p. 93) is profoundly accurate when he claimed that “racism and the general structure that underlies it and of which it is a particular case, summarizes (…) the systematicity of social oppression”. That is, Memmi (2000, p. 93) argues,

raceism subsumes and reveals all the elements of dominance and subjection, aggression and fear, injustice and the defense of privilege, the apologetics of domination with its self-justifications, the disparaging myths and images of the dominated, and finally the social destruction or social nullification of the victimized people for the benefit of their persecutors and executioners.

The way the BD has been conceptualized and “imposed” does not foster a society that challenges Memmi’s claim. Quite the opposite. The market is not a neutral plethora. The market is raced, classed, and gendered. In fact, and to use Giroux’s (2007, p. 111) metaphor, higher education in the European Union is in shackles, and “what was once the hidden curriculum of many universities – the subordination of higher education to capital – has now become an open and much celebrated policy of both public and private higher education.”

The BD and the consequent creation of the CEHEA is a vivid example of what Nóvoa felicitously (2000, p. 39–47) called “rationalities behind the educational discourse of Brussels.” Such rationalities are quite rooted in Brussels’s intricate creed for social regulation, a belief that is anchored in “a economic logic, a
We are clear before a conservative reform that completely restates and reshapes the role of the state thus paving the way for new public managerial forms (Whitty, Gewirtz and Edwards, 2000), praising and prizing issues such as excellence, quality, diversity, autonomy, accountability, competitiveness, and mobility. As this volume shows, not only are such issues subsidiary concepts of the BD aiming at the eager needs of the market and its endless greed for economic competitiveness, but they also need to be perceived as new quasi compulsory set of cards that forces significative changes both at the level of curriculum form and content naturally exclusively focused and aligned with market needs. The dangers of such commodification and corporatization of the higher education system not only brings to the pulpit the perilous claim of knowledge (production) as a tagged commodity, and creates an unbalance cultural and economic equation between technical overdevelopment and social underdevelopment, but also depoliticizes its curriculum as well as frames it as a pale neutral commodity (Apple, 2000). Moreover, the colonization of higher education institutions by market mechanisms not only needs to be understood as a brutal attack on the public sphere (öffentlichkeit), but also raises serious concerns over academic freedom and the role of intellectuals. As Miyoshi (1998) argues, uncertainty prevails in the work of intellectuals who are not allowed to conceptualize their own scholarship, decide what to teach, what not to teach, who can teach, and who cannot teach.

Needless to argue that behind such rhetoric is what one might call financial asphyxiation, which pushes public higher educational systems into savage agony and forces it to a kind of capitulation. Portuguese higher education is just one crystal example of such reality. The University of Minho (one of the top universities in the country) needed to close its doors in December 2008 for two weeks to avoid bankruptcy. Several rectors of the most well-known Portuguese higher education institutions resigned given the financial asphyxiation. Portugal, unfortunately, is not an isolated example within the European Union. Those were the days in which so many generations dreamed about an institution that would foster equality, social justice, and common good. The end of a unaccomplished remarkable utopia is near. Giroux (2007, p. 10) is quite accurate over the dangers of the university as a brand name corporation.

While the university should equip people to enter the workplace it should also educate them to contest workplace inequalities, imagine democratically organized forms of work, and identify and challenge those injustices that contradict and undercut the most fundamental principles of freedom, equality, and respect for all people who constitute the global public sphere.

What is frightening is that the marketing processes of the higher education system in the European Union is happening precisely before the financial collapse of some of the very towering market secular icons, as one witnesses with the bailouts at Wall Street. In a paper presented at the Union for Radical Political Economics at the Left Forum, held in New York on March 11, 2007, Foster (2007) was quite
sentient in claiming for the need to pay close attention to what he called the financialization of capitalism.

Drawing from Gerald A. Epstein (2005), Foster (2007) argues that Changes in capitalism over the last three decades have been commonly characterized using a trio of terms: neoliberalism, globalization, and financialization. Although a lot has been written on the first two of these, much less attention has been given to the third. Yet, financialization is now increasingly seen as the dominant force in this triad. The financialization of capitalism—the shift in gravity of economic activity from production (and even from much of the growing service sector) to finance—is thus one of the key issues of our time. More than any other phenomenon it raises the question: has capitalism entered a new stage?

In the past, George Counts (1932, pp. 25-52) in his noteworthy analyses over the interplay between schooling and the capitalist society, anticipated the ineptitude and inefficiency of capitalism.

Capitalism is proving itself weak. (…) It fails to meet the pragmatic test; it no longer works; it is unable even to organize and maintain production. In its present form capitalism is not only cruel and inhuman; it is also wasteful and inefficient. It has exploited our natural resources without the slightest regard for the future needs of our society; it has forced technology to serve the interests of the few rather than the many; (…) it has plunged the great nations of our earth into a succession of wars more devastating and catastrophic in character.

However, while the bailout momentum shows that “the neoliberal mantra that There Is No Alternative has been replaced by a new, equally insistent and increasingly pervasive call for reform and regulation” (Giroux and Giroux, 2008, p. 2), it is indisputable that, before the current financial and credit crises, we need to pay a close attention over “how the educational force of the culture actually works pedagogically to reproduce neoliberal ideology, values, identifications and consent” (Giroux and Giroux, 2008, p. 3). That is, before the latest neoliberal globalization metamorphosis, before such new multiple crack stage “how exactly is it possible to imagine a more just, more equitable transformation in government and economics without a simultaneous transformation in culture, consciousness, social identities and values?” (Giroux and Giroux, 2008, p. 3).

According to Boltanski and Chiapello (2007), capitalism actually exhibits a new spirit, coined among other issues by a new management doctrine. In fact, as they claim, whereas until in the 1970s capitalism was deeply paced by a crude Fordist model of development (meaning exploitation), since the beginning of the 1980s it was able to develop its model now deeply focusing in the employees initiative and responsibility, accountability, and its (quite relative) autonomy, obviously with huge material and psychological damages (Boltanski and Chiapello, 2007). Sousa Santos (2005a) was quite accurate when he claimed that before the current neoliberal globalization forms one has to be profoundly sentient not only about
what it shows but especially about what it silences. This volume actually tries to address some of the most laudable silences behind the BD in several European Union states, namely, Germany, Portugal, Spain, Greece, and the UK, and the lethal consequences of a higher education system tuned by market desires.

In Chapter 1, *The Idea of the University, the Concept of Education, and Politics*, Heinz Sunker claims that in the European and German tradition the idea of the university is strongly mediated with the idea of education in the shape of Bildung, i.e., individual formation for individual and societal purposes. Bildung aims at maturity and responsibility, reflexivity, and social judgment. It is not an end in itself but considers the educated citizen as the precondition for a democratic society. Since processes of marketization and commodification in higher education are taking place, this idea is under siege. What is brought to the fore is the capitalist interest in value realization, i.e., making money with science. This leads to a dangerous gap again between a technical overdevelopment and a social underdevelopment. A repoliticization of the university in an enlightened meaning could be the one and only chance to reopen the universities as social sites for Bildung.

In Chapter 2, *Academic Capitalism in Portugal—Westernizing the West*, I analyze the interplay between the BD and what Slaughter and Rhoades (2004) call academic capitalism as it has been developed in Portugal. I contextualized the BD within the context of what I called neoradical centrism policies that is forcing a new dangerous role for higher education within the European Union. In doing so, I was also able to claim that the current transformation in the higher education system of the European Union needs to be seen not only as an attempt to market higher education, but also as an ideological and cultural strategy that attempts to Westernize the West.

In Chapter 3, *The Role of the Bologna Process in the Global Struggle for ‘Minds’ and ‘Markets’*, Susan L. Robertson and Ruth Keeling, examine three interlinked higher education policy spaces—in Europe, the United States, and Australia. In doing so, not only do they trace how the multilateral Bologna Process to create a unified higher education architecture in Europe has been reshaped and redirected by the European Union’s Lisbon 2000 strategy for competitiveness and the relaunched Lisbon 2005 agenda, but they also argue, among other issues, that the revamped Lisbon strategy has confirmed a neoliberal language of economic competitiveness in higher education policies at the European level, a strategy that allowed higher education to be co-opted as a platform for the European Union’s wider regionalizing and globalizing strategies. Also, they were able to show how the growing range of educational initiatives at the European level has affected—both directly and indirectly—American and Australian policymaking in higher education. The chapter ends examining how internal pressures in the three regions have coincided with these external influences and relations to create a critical ‘tipping point’ in global understandings of international relations in higher education.

In Chapter 4, *Greek Higher Education Area and the Bologna Panopticon: Processes of Governmentality, Performativity, and Surveillance*, Maria Nikolakaki and George Pasias engage in a critical analysis of educational policy documents on the BD, focusing mainly on the Greek case. The authors put forward a critical
interplay between the university and the ‘policies of knowledge’ in contemporary societies. In doing so, they were able to show the processes of reform in higher education in Greece and the effects of Bologna on governmental policies in Greek tertiary education during the last decade.

Tristan McCowan, in Chapter 5, The Elusive Notion of Quality in the Bologna Process, shows how terms such as ‘quality’ are ever-present in the documents emerging from the Bologna processes, yet are rarely defined. The absence of a prescriptive definition appears at first sight a democratic solution, allowing for a diversity of visions to coexist. However, emphasis on the comparability of quality control necessarily gives preference to certain conceptions of quality. The Quality Assurance Agency in England is assessed as an example of a national agency closely linked to the Bologna vision. While not always explicitly stated, quality assurance in Europe appears closely linked to the overarching goal of the economic competitiveness of the region. The conflation of quality with standards of employability poses a threat to the role of university both in the pursuit of understanding and in providing a space for critical and active engagement in the political sphere.

In Chapter 6, The Will of Distraction: Competencies in Universities, José Felix Angulo Rasco examines how the competencies movement has to be seen as the main axis of the Spanish higher education reform. It shows that the idea of competence is a subsidiary concept in the main papers of the Bologna Process, but it is also an old movement that has in the Competencies Based Teacher Education—a form of training—one of the most important ancestors. The chapter also points out that behind this movement it is possible to find the amazing pressure to merchandise higher education. The author ends suggesting that competencies separate the discourse and the reform from some important issues that will be key questions in the nearest future. Taking into account the complex world in which our universities exist, we do need ideas with a big heuristic power.

Finally, in Chapter 7, The Empire Strikes Back: Rediscovering the Technical Logic of the European University System, José Ignacio Rivas Flores and Analía E. Leite Méndez analyze the implementation of the BD in Spain. According to them, the BD is creating new rules of the game that are causing substantive changes in university syllabus design, in the curriculum proposals, in the working methods of teaching staff, and in the teaching strategies. The chapter explains that this process is becoming an excuse for an increase in exclusively technical and bureaucratic control; for absorption into a university thrown exclusively into a productive and work-related world; for intensifying the work of the teaching staff without an improvement in their working conditions; and all in all, for losing democracy in exercising citizens’ rights in decision-making processes, independent thought, and the freedom of action. Instead, there is the option to “improve” didactic strategies in accordance with innovative teaching proposals focused on the work of the student. The authors face it from two dimensions: political and epistemological proposals. We conclude saying that any relevant change should be based on a deliberative and participative process, on debate and criticism, and on diversity and difference. But these concepts are missing from the dynamics of implementing the European credit system.
As this volume documents, “neoliberalism contrary to what is commonly maintained, is not a new form of liberalism, but rather a new form of conservatism,” (Sousa Santos, 2005b, p. vii) in which one cannot minimize the discreet yet influential role developed by specific and powerful fundamentalist religious groups that are steadily assuming prominent power positions. (cf. Apple, 2001). Actually the role played by O(ctor)pus Dei nowadays, a Vatican within the Vatican (cf. Hutchison, 2006) and a kind of sophisticated expression of light Christi-fascism (Kincheloe and Steinberg, 2007), forces us to pay close attention to the compounded relations between religious fundamentalist groups and the market and the state. Deeply cautious of avoiding a deterministic claim, one can argue however that Marx and Engels (1970) were not so wrong when they claim that the religious world is but the reflex of the real world.

It is undeniable that the current reform facing the higher education system in the European Union has been driven by market impulses. Such impulses completely curb academic freedom; the disinterested pursuit of knowledge and truth; the search for truth, rigor, or its social contributions (Giroux, 2007); the pursuit of the difference between knowledge and truth (Zizek, 2008), the importance of understanding critically not only who benefits from particular kinds of official knowledge (Apple, 2000), but also what kind of rules on which the truth is based; and the conditions in which the truth is told (Popkewitz, 2001, p. 260); such market impulses destroy an environment that cultivates humanity (Nussbaum, 1997), a real pedagogy of care (cf, Noddings, 2003; Valenzuela, 1999), an emancipated critical transitive consciousness (Freire, 2003), and the university as a juicy democratic forum (Aranowitz, 2000). Behind the marketization of the higher education system is a clear attempt to reinforce white supremacy (Steinberg and Kincheloe, 2001), a particular historical engineering process (Chomsky, 1992; 2002), one that is anchored in a pedagogy of the big lies (Macedo, 2006), a sort of obsessive epistemological diet, as Steinberg (2006) would put, which is not innocent, and claims absolute truths. Knowledge and truth become technified, a-dialogical, a-dialectical, and a-critical. Such an epistemological and cognitive diet, as Macedo and Chomsky (2000) argue in their dialogue, threatens democracy, since it fosters processes of “indoctrination that works against independent thought in favor of obedience” (Chomsky, 2000, p. 24), a “form of selective moralism (…) that discourages critical thinking” (Macedo, 2000, pp. 26–27). As Nobel laureate Harold Pinter (2006, p. 811) argues “there is no hard distinctions between what is real and what is unreal, nor between what is true or false. A thing is not necessarily either true or false; it can be both true and false”. Apple’s (2001, p. 5) X-ray fits rather well in the conservative reform facing higher education in the European Union.

Education is too often thought of as simply the delivery of neutral knowledge to students. In this discourse, the fundamental role of schooling is to fill students with the knowledge that is necessary to compete in today’s rapidly changing world. To this is often added an additional caveat: Do it as cost-effectively and as efficiently as possible. The ultimate arbiter of whether we have been successful at this is student’s means gains on achievement tests. A neutral curriculum in linked to a neutral system of accountability, which in
turn is linked to a system of school finance. Supposedly, when it works well, these linkages guarantee rewards for merit. ‘Good, students will learn ‘good’ knowledge as will get ‘good’ jobs.

To recapture and contextualize some of the arguments raised by Dale, Esland, and MacDonald (1976, p. 1) in the classic *Schooling and Capitalism—A Sociological Reader*, students “are assumed to achieve both knowledge and skills and through their direct self development to be educated in the culture of their society”.

Moreover, what is bizarre with the predicable advent of the BD, is the dangerous reawakening of what Kincheloe (1993, p. 14) calls cognitive passivity and the technical training as the very core of teacher education which is “saturated with cognitive experiences that encourage conservative, individualistic, competitive, and decontextualized tendencies in the thinking of teachers”. Such technical and depoliticized rationale is profoundly aligned with market aims. As Giroux and Giroux (2008, p. 3) accurately pointed out neoliberalism transforms economic agendas throughout the overdeveloped world; [as well] transform[s] politics; restructure social relations; and produce an array of reality narratives (not unlike reality TV) and disciplinary measures that normalize its perverted view of citizenship, the state, and the supremacy of market relations.

Higher education is understood by marketers as a powerful weapon to accomplish and crystallize such missions. One of the main goals of such missions is to reconceptualize higher education but not as an undisputable human right. Giroux (2004) did not think twice in denouncing the effects of such dangerous perspectives.

As higher education increasingly becomes a privilege rather than a right, many working class students either find it impossible financially to enter college or because of increased costs have to drop out. Those students who have the resources to stay in school are feeling the tight pressures of the job market and rush to take courses and receive professional credentials in business and the bio-sciences as the humanities lose majors and downsize. Not surprisingly, students are now referred to as “customers,” while faculty are rewarded less for their scholarship than their ability to secure funds and grants from foundations, corporations, and other external sources. Rather than being rewarded for critically inventive teaching and rigorous research, faculty are now valued as multinational operatives, even as the majority of their colleagues are increasingly reduced to contract employees. Some university presidents even argue that professors be labeled as “academic entrepreneurs”.

The current attack on the higher education system in the European Union reinforces the need for strong critical actions that would fight to rescue public higher education from market-greedy impulses. Such a struggle aims to build a new public community university, which, among other towering issues, will engage critically in “political and moral practices that provides the knowledge, skills, and social relations that enable students to expand the possibilities of what it means to be
critical citizens, while using their knowledge and skills to deepen and extend their participation in a substantive and inclusive democracy” (Giroux, 2007, p. 180). This is above all a struggle over cognitive justice as well. As we have had the opportunity to examine in great detail elsewhere (Paraskeva, 2008, 2009), the very best way for schools to fight for a real just and equal society – especially before the current impact of neo-radical centrist’s policies and strategies – is to engage in a struggle that respects what Sousa Santos, Nunes and Meneses (2007) call epistemological diversity. Their analyses deserve to be unfolded, as they (2007, p. ix) argue, that there is no such thing as “global social justice without cognitive justice.” In fact, by claiming as ‘official’ particular kinds and forms of knowledge, schooling participates in what Sousa Santos (1997) called espistemicides – a lethal tool that fosters the commitment to imperialism and white supremacy (hooks, 1994).

That is, Sousa Santos, Nunes, and Meneses (2007, p. ix) claim quite astutely, that the “suppression of knowledge [from indigenous peoples of the Americas and of the African slaves] was the other side of genocide.” Their argument is worth quoting at length here:

Many non-western (indigenous, rural, etc) populations of the world conceive of the community and the relationship with nature, knowledge, historical experience, memory, time, and space as configuring ways of life cannot be reduced to Eurocentric conceptions and cultures (…) The adoption of allegedly universal valid, Eurocentric legal and political models, such as the neoliberal economic order, representative democracy, individualism, or the equation between state and law often rests (…) on forms of domination based on class, ethnic, territorial, racial, or sexual differences and on the denial of collective identities and rights considered incompatible with Eurocentric definitions of the modern social order (Sousa Santos, Nunes and Meneses (2007, pp. xx–xxi).

Thus, one cannot deny “there is an epistemological foundation to the capitalist and imperial order that the global north has been imposing on the global south” (Sousa Santos, et al., 2007, p. ix). What we need, argues Sousa Santos (2004), is to engage in a battle against “the monoculture of scientific knowledge” and fight for “ecology of knowledge’s”, which is

An invitation to the promotion of non-relativistic dialogues among knowledge’s, granting equality of opportunities to the different kinds of knowledge engaged in a ever broader epistemological disputes aimed both at maximizing their respective contributions to build a more democratic and just society and at decolonizing knowledge and power (Sousa Santos, Nunes and Meneses, 2007, p. xx)

Thus the target should be fighting against the coloniality of power and knowledge. In doing so, one will end up challenging particular floated notions, concepts, and practices of multiculturalism which are profoundly
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Eurocentric, created and describe cultural diversity within the framework of the nation-states of the Northern hemisphere (…) the prime expression of the cultural logic of multinational or global capitalism, a capitalism without homeland at last, and a new form of racism, tend[ing] to be quite descriptive and apolitical thus suppressing the problem of power relations, exploitation, inequality, and exclusion (Sousa Santos, Nunes and Meneses, 2007, pp. xx–xxi).

We actually need a multicultural approach that takes an emancipatory content and direction aimed mainly at the articulations of difference. Thus, we will be allowing for the fruitful conditions of what Sousa Santos (2004) calls the sociology of absences. In other words, what we have here is a call for the democratization of knowledge that is a commitment toward an emancipatory, nonrelativistic, cosmopolitan ecology of knowledge.

Bringing together and staging dialogues and alliances between diverse forms of knowledge, cultures, and cosmopologies in response to different forms of oppression that enact the coloniality of knowledge and power. [We need actually] to learn from the South (since) the aim to reinvent social emancipation goes beyond the critical theory produced in the North and the social and political praxis to which it has subscribed Sousa Santos, Nunes and Meneses (2007, p. xiv)

This is quite a Herculean task, but one that we cannot deny if one is truly committed to a real and just society. Actually, as Cox (2002, p. 76) reminds us, “Globalization is [also] a struggle over knowledge of world affairs.” The struggle against the Western eugenic coloniality of knowledge is the best way that will transform schools and its social agents into real leaders in the tough endeavors to democratize democracy. As Sen (1999) claims the emergence of democracy was an event of the twentieth century and the real issue is to perceive how a particular community prepares itself through democracy and not try to scrutinize whether or not it is ready for a democratic society. This is “is a paradoxical time,” argues Sousa Santos (2005b, p. vii), on the one hand, “our current time is marked by huge developments and thespian changes, an era that is referred to as the electronic revolution of communications, information, genetics and the biotechnological.” On the other hand,

It is a time of disquieting regressions, a return of the social evils that appeared to have been or about to overcome. The return of slavery and slavish work; the return of high vulnerability to old sicknesses that seemed to have been eradicated and appear now linked to new pandemics like HIV/AIDS: the return of the revolting social inequalities that gave their name to the social question at the end of the nineteenth century; in sum, the return of the specter of war, perhaps now more than ever a world war, although whether cold or not is as yet undecidable (Sousa Santos, 2005b, p. vii).
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The role of teachers as public intellectuals, Giroux (1994) argues, is to decentralize the curriculum in such a way as to decanter it from its Westernizing forms and content. The real issue is, “how to democratize the schools so as to enable those groups who in large measure are divorced from or simply not represented in the curriculum to be able to produce their own representations, narrate their own stories, and engage in respectful dialogue with others” (ibid, 1994, p. 18). Anchored in Euben’s approach, Giroux (1994, p. 18) further argues that one good way to do it is to understand consciously the difference between political and politicizing education.

“[While the former] which is central to critical pedagogy, would encourage students to become better citizens to challenge those with political and cultural power as well as to honor the critical traditions within the dominant culture that make such a critique possible and intelligible [meaning] decentering power in the classroom and other pedagogical sites so the dynamics of those institutional and cultural inequalities that marginalize some groups, repress particular types of knowledge, and suppress critical dialogue can be addressed, [the latter] is a form of pedagogical terrorism in which the issue of what is taught, by whom, and under what conditions is determined by a doctrinaire political agenda that refuses to examine its own values, beliefs, and ideological construction” (Giroux, 1994, p. 18).

We need to rescue public higher education from market mechanisms and retune it with the sublime principles of the common good, freedom, social justice, and equality. We are actually talking about a different higher educational system, one that needs to be seen as a base for the people, not only to seize power, but also to transform the very idea and practice of power. The task before us is tough and difficult yet it needs to be done. It is a struggle to save democracy. We are facing, probably, one of the most crucial battles of our generation: to democratize democracy. This volume needs to be seen in such context.

The volume is being published in a particularly sad and frustrating period of (radical) critical pedagogy. The death of Joe Kincheloe leaves all of us with an intricate mix of anger, revolt, sadness, frustration, despair, and with our souls raped with an atrabilious color of pain. As one of the great Portuguese thinkers, Eduardo Prado Coelho, would say ‘Joe’s death is a scandal. We are all devastated by the tragedy that took Joe away from us. For me and for many of us, Joe is an example of humility, integrity, generosity, care, sharing, an insightful and sharp critical thinker, and a committed and engaged intellectual. We have now the Herculean task to respect, celebrate, and develop his thoughts and work.

Like any political project, this book is a collective work and would not have been possible without the support and solidarity of several friends and colleagues with whom I have been quite fortunate to interact. However, and without any intention of unfolding any hierarchy, I owe a great deal to Joe Kincheloe, Shirley Steinberg, and Donaldo Macedo. It was with them that I first debated and analyzed this political project in a series of interesting discussions. I owe a great deal of gratitude also to Lilia Bartolome, Jurjo Torres Santome, David Hursh, Sheila Macrine,
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NOTES

1 I am in debt to Richard Quantz and Tom Dutton for bringing this to my attention. For more detailed information about this interesting community project, please refer to www.fna.muohio.edu/cee

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Joao Paraskeva
Oxford, Miami, 2009

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HEINZ SÜNKER

1. THE IDEA OF THE UNIVERSITY, THE CONCEPT OF EDUCATION, AND POLITICS

Around 130,000 German students currently study in higher education in Germany and elsewhere. This figure, which lies around 80% above the enrolments of the period just before World War II, will in all probability rise even further in the immediate future, and then, without a rigorous change in the entrance requirements, gradually decline in the following years. These figures are the key to the current problems in the German higher education system. The naked quantitative situation constitutes a failure not just for every individualizing higher education instance. In particular, there is already such an extraordinary overflow in almost all academic fields, with a further intensification in the coming years expected, that the application of new methods of selection has well and truly become, well beyond all pedagogic considerations, a political and social task of the first order in the struggle against the proletarianization of intellectual labour (Löwe 1931, p. 1).1

Just as Löwe began with this sentence, his text “The current education problem in the German university” in 1931, taking up the leitmotif of a debate that centered on “overflow” and “proletarianization of intellectual labour” and was, inter alia, partly responsible for the affinity of university staff with fascistic ideology and their role in National Socialism (cf. Grüttn 1995; Kater 1975), in the early Federal Republic of Germany, under postfascist conditions, there was also a discussion of the “responsibility of the University” (Guardini, Dirks and Horkheimer 1954). With a focus on a critique of instrumental reason, which dealt with the “reduction of the intellect to the instrumental and thus of the human being to a pure function” (Horkheimer 1954, p. 72) and was bound with a critique of utilitarian ideology, in which the concept of “truth gets falsified into that of usefulness” (Guardini 1954, p. 17), the ideology of community was opposed in order to defend the concept of society (Dirks 1954, p. 38f), the formation of which within a humane, democratic orientation also becomes part of the responsibility of the university and its students. The earlier history of the university up to 1954, of action, ideology, and consciousness, can be read as a negation of the task of contributing to humanity and progress; this also makes it clear that throughout its history the university could only in exceptional cases be considered a place of enlightenment and reason. The state of the university after the Bologna Declaration (BD) shows the problem of contradiction between utilitarianism, i.e., qualification...
of labor force for capitalist reasons, and the enlightenment tradition, i.e., the
defence of the individual against social control, once again. Additionally, in the
German case, Bologna will subvert the egalitarian approach in the German
university system favoring the Anglo-Saxon ranking games, i.e., in reality, an
improvement of the reproduction of social inequality via the university system (cf.
Karabel 2005). This is also the background for analyses of science and higher education policy,
with which a new attempt is made since the middle of the 1960s in Germany, in the
context not just of the student movement to realize the ideas of the “University in a
democracy” and “against the subordination-factory,” which is also integrated with
the concept of the democratization of all areas of life. It is not just for the sake of
remembrance, but with a view to an adequate analyses of contemporary relations of
knowledge and capital—attempts to subsume knowledge to the capital relation,
within its systemic boundaries—that it is important to take up the development of
attempts at materialist analysis today: this is essentially the concern of books such as
Unwissen als Ohnmacht. Zum Wechselverhältnis von Wissenschaft und Kapital/
Ignorance as Impotence. On the Interdependence of Science and Capital
(Roth and Kanzow); Materialien zur Wissenschafts- und Bildungspolitik/Politics
of Science and Education (Hirsch and Leibfried); Wissenschaftlich-technischer
Fortschritt und politisches System/Scientific-technical Progress and the Political
System (Hirsch); Wissenschaft und Kapital/Science and Capital (AK-Fraktion
München); Technologie und Kapital/Technology and Capital (Vahrenkamp); and
Wissenschaft und gesellschaftliche Reproduktion/Science and Social Reproduction
(Rolshausen).

When one then thematizes the connections between the university, science,
education, and processes of social development, one examines the relations between
the education system and society, educational politics, and the reproduction and
transformation of social relationships. This is particularly pertinent when one
speaks of neoliberal interventions in the university system—and their consequences
(Hartmann 2001; Schöller 2001). With respect to the current situation in the German
universities, we can refer to an incisive observation by Lorenzer, formulated already
some years ago in his text “Der Zerfall der Universität und die Möglichkeiten
kritischer Wissenschaft/Eclipse of the University and the Possibilities of Critical
Science,” the tenor of which can claim even greater validity today given the distinction
between short-term and long-term studies and the accompanying “Verschulung/
Scholarisation” of university life:

The more directive the transfer of knowledge becomes through the design of
structures and assessments, the more significant free provision becomes for
the transmission of knowledge. The more inexorably university education
becomes training for academic apprentices, the more such transfer subsumes
all the achievements that have been so undermined in the public ‘institutes of
learning’, that the name for it can no longer be used without ironic undertones:
‘education’ (Lorenzer 1989, p. 117).
This assessment is to be read on the one hand against the background of a critical theory of society, expressed in exemplary ways by writers interested and engaged with educational theory such as Adorno and Heydorn, in overviews and analyses such as “Theorie der Halbbildung/Theory of Semi-Education” (Adorno 1972), or “Überleben durch Bildung/Survival through Education” (Heydorn 1980b). On the other hand, it is to be understood against the background of the classical German idea of the university, to be found in exemplary form in the work of Wilhelm von Humboldt.

Alongside the conception of a responsibility to the whole society—in Humboldt, expressed with reference to the “whole nation”—the issue here concerns questions of the organization as well as the content of university life and work. Humboldt formulated principles that are still today advanced, and that revolve around a rejection of all situations that “misuse the time devoted to education for training and ruin minds” (Humboldt 1956, p. 73). These principles are aimed at ensuring that the relations between teachers and learners take the form of establishing autonomous maturity. The university is thus a place concerned with facilitating educational processes aimed at self-determination. He came to the striking formulation that the university means “the emancipation of real learning” (Humboldt 1956a, p. 78). Translated into a concept of the university, this means that:

The university is reserved for what only human beings can find by and within themselves: insight into pure knowledge. This self-activity in the real understanding requires freedom, and is assisted by solitude. And from these two requirements flows the entire external organization of the universities. Listening to lecture is only a peripheral matter, what is essential is that people live for a number of years for themselves and for science, in close community with like-minded individuals of the same age, conscious that in this same place there are a number of already fully-developed intellects dedicated solely to the elevation and spread of knowledge (Humboldt 1956a, p. 79).

This is also the foundation for his identification of the tasks of the members of the university: “The university teacher is, therefore, no longer the teacher, and the student is no longer the learning, but researches himself, with the professor guiding and supporting his research” (Humboldt 1956, p. 71).

Even though today we know about the social-historical context of these ideas of Humboldt’s and other early-bourgeois theorists, (Nitsch et al. 1965, pp. 6-38; Hohendahl 1985), the challenge accompanying this position remains on the agenda for the self-understanding, praxis, and organization of the university. This becomes meaningful particularly in the wake of developments both internal and external to science, which Habermas has drawn attention to in his text “Vom Sozialen Wandel akademischer Bildung/On the Social Change of University Education”:

The philosophical conviction of German Idealism, that science forms humans, is also no longer relevant for the empirical-analytical ways of working. Once theory could have practical effect through education; today it is a matter of theories which can impractically, that is, with no express reference to the actions of people living with each other, be directed towards technical power.
Certainly the sciences now transfer a specific capacity: but capacity for conduct that they teach is not the same capacity to live and act that one used to expect from the scientifically educated (Habermas 1971, p. 362).

This analysis refers, first, to a fundamental transformation of the understanding of education, which leads to education becoming a scientifically constituted understanding of the world as whole, which is meant to be translated into human action, akin to polite behavior, a well-trained personality characteristic.

In education, the objective moment of scientific knowledge is put into the service of the pure subjectivity of a well-behaved attitude (Habermas 1971, p. 364). Second, it leads to every scientific task resulting from the distinction between orientation knowledge and applied knowledge (Mittelstraß 1989, p. 45 ff.), “the scientific opposite, i.e. translating the relations made applicable in the nature of things back into the network of lived relations” (Habermas 1971, p. 371).

Against the background of these perspectives and their associated analyses, the contradictions in university life today appear clearer than ever: not only with reference to the potential for democratization and its contested “limits” in university contexts but also with reference to the consequences of internal (Bourdieu 1988, p. 77 ff., p. 99 ff., p. 151 ff., p. 253 ff.) as well as external, i.e., explicitly political and economic interests (Lenoir 1992; Simpson 1998).

What is then “at stake” is made clear by the history of the twentieth century. The inability to adequately form and regulate social relations, based on what Castells, in the tradition of critical analysis of society, calls “the extraordinary gap between technological overdevelopment and our social underdevelopment” (1998, p. 359), contributes to the responsibility for the catastrophe.

II

Despite talk of the “illusion of equality of opportunity” in education (Bourdieu and Passeron 1971), it remains, against the background of what is sketched in the above text, an inescapable insight that educational policy is social policy, in a two-fold sense: as a crucial contribution to the reproduction of social inequality, its establishment, or as a contribution to the democratization of society in the sense of the “education for all,” Humboldt’s classical approach, which is important to remember and hold on to.

This is why in the last 40 years, questions concerning the mediation between the constitution of society and educational institutions, the determination of relations between education system and society, educational politics, and the reproduction of social inequality have been extensively discussed and various analyses contributed from the social sciences and educational theory. The debate around democracy, society, and education was and is here bound up with the discussion of “educational emergency” (Picht) or the “civil right to education” (Dahrendorf) (see Sünker 2006: Chap. 1). It gains in currency in view of the newly emphasized socio-political conflicts around attempts to impose market and commodity forms also, already structuring social relations, in the field of education (Henig 1994; Meiksins Wood 1995; Whitty 1997; Shumar 1997). Here it concerns developments that touch on the idea of the
university and, directly and indirectly, the lives of those who make it up. Debates are thus conducted under headings such as “The Knowledge Factory: Dismantling the Corporate University and Creating True Higher Learning” (Aronowitz 2000), “Bargain Sale at the University” (Warde 2001), “College for Sale” (Shumar 1997), or “The Capitulation of the Intellectuals” (Accardo/Corcuff 2001).

Even if one remains skeptical—in terms of democratic theory as well as practically (Bowles and Gintis 1987)—about the claims made about capitalism in relation to “civil society,” one can draw on a range of German and international discussions in which problems of educational research, politics, and theory are or could be interconnected (Bourdieu 1973; Apple 1985; Wexler 1987, 1999; v. Friedeburg 1989; Giroux/McLaren 1989; Farnen/Sünker 1997; Sünker/Krüger 1999; Fischman et al. 2005). The German—by now already classical—tradition of the twentieth century concerns above all the contributions of Heydorn (1979), Siemsen (1948), and Adorno (1972) to a critical theory of education with a social theoretical emphasis. The Anglo-Saxon and French discussions, in contrast, deal with contribution to a socio-politically oriented sociology of education. If one engages with a critique of power and domination, while the other, in the context of analyses of current developments, with a critique of market ideology in the field of education, they do still essentially complement each other.

The discussion of the shared themes of “state, society, education and individual” has shown that up to the present day one can still see to an overwhelming extent that the education system has a reproductive function for the societal status quo—this is true from the playgroup to the university (Vincent et al. 2004; Schölling 2005). What remains debatable is the way in which the dialectic inherent in the institutionalization of education (Heydorn 1979)—spanned between poles, determined by social practice: “liberation” and “maintaining power and domination”—can be developed in the direction of a transcendence of this simple function of reproducing relations of social inequality. This requires a theory of education processes, which takes the societal constitution of subjectivity as its starting point as well as being capable at the same time of establishing a capacity for resistance against societal relations of power and domination; this leads to the task of establishing a social scientific foundation of educational theory, without losing sight of its social philosophical elements.

Heydorn attempted to address the task of identifying or investigating the mediations between social structures, the structuring of social relations between the members of a society, and the conditions of the constitution of subjectivity, when, already in his early writings, he pointed to the connections between the priority of a capitalist utilitarian logic, the market form of social relations, and the reduction of social existence to “bare functionality” (1994a, p. 232). Its underlying functionalism leads to the “question of a schooling which secures maximum human efficiency in a technological society, a society resting on conformity, exchange and mobility within largely determined social boundaries” (1994b, p. 284). This means, in words reminiscent of Bernfeld’s analysis, that “education, as always throughout history, secures the ideology and power of an existing society; it has to avoid those reflections which might bring about the de-mythologisation of power. This is how it ends up caught in a clear contradiction” (1994b, p. 285).
This in turn demands an analysis of the dialectic of the institutionalization of education, as Heydorn has done via an overview of societal and educational history, in order to conclude that “Institution and maturity find themselves in an unbridgeable opposition to each other” (Heydorn 1979, p. 317; Sünker 2000; Harvey 2000, p. 182ff). In what is probably the most advanced social scientific study of organizations in which the organization is seen as the embodiment of domination (Türk 1995), Heydorn proposes that “Institution is domination; institution becomes superfluous” (1979, p. 331) and “maturity is the transcendence of all institutions as tutelage through domination” (1979, p. 335). In opposition to the domination characterizing the dialectic of the institutionalization of education, he declared that “education will once again become what it first was: self-help” (1979, p. 324).

This is the level to which Heydorn has taken his analysis of social reality, dealing with the interdependence of societal constitution and educational institutions (Sünker 2006: Chap. 7). This generates the need to situate educational history and to conceptualize educational theory within the framework of the history of society, in order to develop insights into the mutual mediations between micro, meso, and macro social processes. In order to avoid subjective or objective misinterpretations, we need a critical theory of education, which works with the help of an impetus toward cultural revolution and a resolution of the concept of totality informed by the concept of contradiction (Sünker 1989b, p. 25ff, p. 69ff). Here the concept of cultural revolution refers to a revolutionization of everyday life, the basis of individual and social existence, with the help of which it is possible not only to conceive of the abolition of superfluous structures of domination but also to insist on the possibility of unfolding emancipatory human needs, accompanied by the competencies required for constituting social relationships, something which cannot be achieved in the framework of the existing social formation (Heydorn 1979, p. 12f; 1980a, p. 165; Lefebvre 1978, p. 107ff; Adorno 1966, p. 97f). In Heydorn’s approach to educational theory, he links this perspective, which he calls the “totality of subjectification” (Heydorn 1980b, p. 297), to a general socio-political conception that connects the transcendence of alienation, the “revolutionising of human labour” and leisure time, as well as needs, with the development of a radical democracy (1980b, p. 295). He also takes up this position to oppose the metaphysical tendencies of educational theory with the principle of immanence, and thus the capacity for history to be changed through human praxis.

If “education for agency” is to be understood as a “means of liberation” (1979, pp. 45 and 324), we need on the one hand an analysis of the connections between schooling and the constitution of society, and on the other hand a theory of history, which is not based on a philosophy of history but which links its analysis to an examination of concrete historical relationships and forms of human interaction. The analysis of the history of relations between education and society results in the idea that education remains unrealized, because the human condition remains constituted by “imposition” or “determination” (1979, pp. 31, 115, 300, and 335) to this day. This means that the question of the potential for human history to encompass freedom remains on the agenda (1980a, p. 178). Because education is understood
as the “actualisation of potential” enabling people to realize their humaneness, becoming “their own actor” (1980a, p. 164), the original impetus of the educational idea can be interpreted as the human understanding of one’s own freedom, “as an attempt to end one’s submission to authority” (1979, p. 32). Maturity in the form of human self-disposition thus constitutes the primary reference point, being the “fulfilment of the human dream and the dialectical correlate of development” (1979, p. 322). For this reason, Heydorn believes that “education is rationally mediated spontaneity” (1979, p. 24). Especially with respect to the German approach in dealing with the Bologna Declaration one can argue that this aims at destroying the last chances for spontaneity in late capitalism: following the Bologna Declaration mainly means to install a fordist mode of production (of knowledge).

This mode of argumentation enables Heydorn to refer to the field of human subjectivity and praxis as well as to the historical and social structural context: he mediates this with the idea that education can become comprehensive and universal, which in turn rests on the possibility of an institutionalized process of education for ever-increasing numbers of people (Heydorn 1980b, p. 287) as well as being supported by more recent research in industrial sociology. Even if within the socially determined empirical restriction of the potential for maturity, the relationship between practical domination and people’s simultaneous subjectification is undermined, there is still a development taking place in the underlying structure of society.

The degree of structural rationality achieved is linked to the abstract character of production in the sense that “the comprehensive character which education has acquired in view of technical development” corresponds to a comprehensive paralysis of its potential for enlightenment and for establishing individuals as self-determining actors (1980b, p. 290). Society’s contradictory constitution and reality also includes education, with the following consequences in relation to socio-historically achieved potential: “The universality which education has achieved shows that the moment education overcomes its historical class divisions, it can become universal for a liberated species” (1980b, p. 291).

In order to make this perspective more precise, to explain the extent to which the growing significance of institutionalized education and the increasing achievement of human content are related to each other (1980b, p. 287f), it is necessary to identify anew the contemporary dimensions of the hidden content of the concept of education (1980b, p. 291) and to sketch the contours of a concept of education “demanded by the present” (1980b, p. 295).

In this respect, the reference to the formation of consciousness takes on an unprecedented historical significance (1980b, p. 294). When Heydorn ends his article on survival with “Consciousness is everything” (1980b, p. 301), this rests on the notion that thought processes that demythologize society—supported by its rational structure—(1980, p. 300) are both necessary and possible, and on the insight—following a train of thought in Hegel’s analysis of the master–slave relationship (Sünker 1989, p. 103ff) that humans only become subjects by mentally penetrating their material conditions, thus transforming them (1980, p. 294). Precisely because education is, for Heydorn, only one rather than an independent
revolutionary element in the movement of history (1980a, p. 100), he insists that
the institution of education offers “a self-transforming contribution, which cannot
be exchanged” (1980a, p. 167) for the realization of a perspective that keeps this
freedom in view. In order to counter the strategies of the paralysis of conscious-
ness, we need to examine the ways in which educational theory can be used to
concretize the identification of the dialogic structure of pedagogic processes and
relationships, which revolve around mutual recognition and the mautetic.

III

In the context of the problem of hegemony, that is, the dominant constitution
of contemporary social formations—within which the state is seen as “contested
terrain”— if our focus is on marketization and its associated disempowerment, the
debates and processes of deregulation in education take on particular significance.
The Anglo-Saxon contributions in particular, because of their experience with
Thatcherism and Reaganism—but also in New Zealand—as well as the accompanying
renaissance of neoliberal economics with its consequences for all social relations, have
analyzed the ideology of market apologists as well as the consequences of market
strategies in the educational field—and thus also the “seductive appeal” of the market
metaphor (Hennig 1994; see also Dale 1990; Fiske and Ladd 2000).

In view of the globalization of the capital relationship, the associated strategies
of the capitalistic formation of world society or the world system, and the catastrophic
consequences for the majority of people (Castells 1998; Duchrow 1977; Amin 1992;
Wallerstein 1991, pp. 227-272), on the one hand, as well as the ever-intensifying
divisive processes with Western-capitalist societies (which can be referred to as the
“two-thirds society,” resting on post- or neo-Fordist modes of regulation and
accumulation regimes), a particular strategic significance attaches to strategies of
depoliticization in the educational field accompanying ideologies of the market
(Whitty 1998). As Heydorn suggested more than 35 years ago (1994a, p. 291; see
also McLaren 1993, pp. 81-144), regardless of all other transformations, the
leitmotif of strategies aiming at securing domination remains an interest in
adaptation to the production process on the one hand and the development of a
socially conformist worldview on the other.

In the sociology of education as well as in political science, it is thus clear that
when one looks at social reality in the United States and the United Kingdom, in
contrast to the modish preference for institutional autonomy and parental choice
and in opposition to the celebration of variety and choice, this approach can make
no contribution to a reinforcement of the position of most citizens in a class society
characterized by unequal access to cultural as well as material resources (Whitty
1997, 1998; Henig 1994). Instead it is always true that in reality, market strategies
lead to an intensification of disparities, so that the disadvantaged, because of their
weak market position, fall behind in their social position, and are certainly not able
to improve it. The complement to this securing of social inequality—on an economic
as well as ideological basis—are fundamental redefinitions of the understanding of
the state and state activity, as well the possible forms to be taken by the relationships between state and “civil society.”

The growing tendency to base more and more aspects of social affairs on the notion of consumer rights rather than upon citizen rights involves more than a move away from public-provided systems of state education towards individual schools competing for clients in the marketplace. While seeming to respond to critiques of impersonal over-bureaucratic welfare state provision, this also shifts major aspects of education decision-making out of the public into the private realm with potentially significant consequences for social justice (Whitty 1998, p. 100).

Pointing in same direction is the identification of the danger of a destruction of social and political institutions and the public sphere, all of which provide the preconditions for real changes in the social system (Henig 1994, p. 193; Barber 1998, p. 225ff).

In this sense, the propagation of the ideology of the market can clearly be seen as a contribution to processes of the paralysis of consciousness which, according to Heydorn, become necessary for the securing of power and domination because of the rationality of social processes and forms of production under late capitalism. An interesting point here is that the “return” of a public or government-run education system (the distinction can only be indicated here) to a “marketised civil society” decisively undermine the potential for democratic debates, decision-making processes, as well as collective action (Whitty 1998, p. 101). It can also be said that “atomised decision-making within an already stratified society may appear to give everyone formally equal opportunities but will actually reduce the possibility of collective struggles that might help those least able to help themselves” (Whitty 1998, p. 100; see also Shumar 1997).

Against the background of an analysis of hegemonic relationships, we can conclude that the ideology of the market and marketization strategies achieve their aim to the extent that they destroy a public sphere in which general interests do not simply stand in the shadow of private interests, but receive the worst end of the bargain. The difference in character between public and private institutions, between public and private action, the difference between public and private interests, as well as the awareness that individuals cannot be held accountable in a private capacity and in the context of private activities and institutions, and in the field of education, produces a need—despite all the critiques of the state—to think about possible alternatives, beginning with a defence of current structures, because these are still founded on universalistic principles (Gutmann 1988; Shor 1992; Whitty, Gewirtz and Edwards 1994; Whitty 1997, p. 33ff).

A perspective of this sort is what Steinvorth points to, to the extent that he is concerned with institutions and rights that are decisive for the securing of equal freedom and democratic equality, ranging from systems of education (for him, conceptually central) to insurance, and from the right to work to health care. His ideas are organized around two legal images: that of the generational participation in the culture of the “previous generation” and that of the “elementary education” in
everything “which enables one to participate in political decision-making processes” (Steinvorth 1999, p. 221).

In summary, for Steinvorth it is a matter of the “principle of democratic minimalism.” This principle forbids a distribution of resources that fall below the standard required to secure “the capacity to participate in the culture and politics of one’s own society” (1999, p. 277); this is, however, urgently necessary in view of the state of the world, mass unemployment, environment destruction, and the scarcity of natural resources. In addition, “without this capacity, people are excluded from all decisions which concern them and which constitute the framework for their self-determination” (1999, p. 277).

Correspondingly, the state—bearing in mind that it is not a neutral instance, but more based on organized violence and functionalized education (Langewiesche 1995; Meiksins Wood 1995)—is obliged to achieve social justice, in the sense of institutionally securing these resources and making them universally accessible in the form of social rights—including in opposition to property rights and with the help of taxation (1979, p. 222). However, in contrast to Steinvorth, today it seems to be important, given the state of development of societal productive power such as the capacity to improve the socially available welfare, to take the minimalist argument as our starting point and to radicalize it; this extends to the question of whether, at least in the industrial capitalist countries, the idea of a universal university education should not be placed on the agenda. In opposition to the “Illusion of equality of opportunity,” the task that thus faces us in terms of state and society is that of securing or at least fighting for everyone’s educational conditions and educational processes—in the interests of all members of society, and thus of a substantively democratic society. Global responsibility and the survival of the species appear to be linked with each other for the first time in world history, so that only the participation of everyone in the regulation of social interaction and the formation of societal relations will offer a perspective.

When Castells closes his three-volume study of the structure of “informational capitalism” with the proposition that survival now requires a “responsible, educated society” (1998, p. 353), this also shows that the universities are the location for a public sphere of discussion and—in a double sense—decision, which could be engaged with socially and politically relevant questions concerning the mediation between the academy and politics.

NOTES

1 Löwe continues: “If one goes further and analyses the streaming mass in terms of its social composition and its mental structure, there arise difficult problems connected with the idea of social mobility, but above all questions concerning the inner constitution of the German university: its educational goal, its methods and not least the future of scientific research work under the changed conditions of the academic environment” (1931: 1).

2 On April 25, 1933, the “Act against the overflow of German schools and universities” was passed, with which the admission of new Jewish pupils was restricted to 1.5%. Thanks to Armin Nolzen/Warburg for this information.
In the German context, this discourse is strongly related to the concept of Bildung, which is distinguished from Erziehung. In English, both words are translated as “education.” But there is a very different semantic: “Erziehung” is connected with affirmation, “Bildung” with emancipation, political judgement, and competence of action (cf. Sünker 2006: Chap. 5).

Karable’s great study shows how the reproduction cycle works with respect to different historical conditions. It’s all about power relations and class relations (see 2005: 537). Under the heading “Equality of Opportunity and the Preservation of the American Social Order” (2005: 540) he deciphers the social logic of these processes. In the United Kingdom, this development is based on a political change of the “Labour Party”: the demand “for equality of condition was replaced by a clamor for equality of opportunity” (2005: 556).

Here we should also include the analysis of the ideology of “excellence,” which forms the basis for meritocratic arguments attempting to secure and extend elite ideologies (Fischer/Mandell 1994). On the reality of the US system of elite universities, see Karable’s (2005) The Chosen.

A complement to this assessment of Habermas’s is—with particular reference to German history—always the formulation of a critique of the Bildungsbürgertum/Educated Bourgeoisie (Bollenbeck 1999).

Siemsen put it as follows in his account: The situation ends in a flight toward “some sort of social bond, whether it is the blind subjection to a state authority, a party or a Führer” (1948: 5).

This can be understood as a prolongation of the “normal” commodification of culture and schooling in late capitalism as J. Kincheloe has shown in his study “The Sign of the Burger” (2002).

Even though it was written 60 years ago, but especially today, Polanyi’s assessment of the relationship between economy and society and his harsh criticism of the market principle remains current given not only the still existing influence of neoliberal ideologies today. He wrote: “However, the market form, which is linked to a specific objective, namely exchange, trade, has the capacity to bring forth a specific institution: the market. This is ultimately the reason why the dominance of the economic system by the market is of immeasurable significance for the whole structure of society: it means nothing less than the construction of society as an extension of the market. The economy is no longer embedded within social relations, but social relations are embedded in the economy.” (1978: 88f).

The most recent analyses—especially of US society—shows that the destruction of the public sphere has in the meantime become so extensive that Boggs (2000) speaks of The End of Politics.

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