A Critical Pedagogy of Resistance
34 Pedagogues We Need to Know

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The diverse range of critical pedagogues presented in this book comes from a variety of backgrounds with respect to race, gender, and ethnicity, from various geographic places and eras, and from an array of complex political, historical, religious, theological, social, cultural, and educational circumstances which necessitated their leadership and resistance. How each pedagogue uniquely lives in that tension of dealing with pain and struggle, while concurrently fostering a pedagogy that is humanizing, is deeply influenced by their individual autobiographical lens of reality, the conceptual thought that enlightened them, the circumstances that surrounded them, and the conviction that drove them. To be sure, people of justice, people who resist, are framed by a vision that embraces an inclusive, tolerant, more loving community that passionately calls for a more democratic citizenship. That is just what the 34 critical pedagogues represented in this text heroically do. Through the highlighting of their lives and work, this book is not only an excellent resource to serve as a springboard to engage us in dialogue about pivotal issues and concerns related to justice, equality, and opportunity, but also to prompt us to further explore deeper into the lives and thought of some extraordinary people.

A Critical Pedagogy of Resistance: 34 Pedagogues We Need to Know is an ambitious undertaking. Kirylo’s narrative enterprise, which seeks to chronicle the lives of transformative pedagogues, is a project whose time has come. This text is an excellent resource for all those interested in the aesthetic that, as Kierkegaard believed, exercised power for the common good.

Luis Mirón
A Critical Pedagogy of Resistance
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This book series is dedicated to the radical love and actions of Paulo Freire, Jesus “Pato” Gomez, and Joe L. Kincheloe.
Cultural studies provides an analytical toolbox for both making sense of educational practice and extending the insights of educational professionals into their labors. In this context *Transgressions: Cultural Studies and Education* provides a collection of books in the domain that specify this assertion. Crafted for an audience of teachers, teacher educators, scholars and students of cultural studies and others interested in cultural studies and pedagogy, the series documents both the possibilities of and the controversies surrounding the intersection of cultural studies and education.

The editors and the authors of this series do not assume that the interaction of cultural studies and education devalues other types of knowledge and analytical forms. Rather the intersection of these knowledge disciplines offers a rejuvenating, optimistic, and positive perspective on education and educational institutions. Some might describe its contribution as democratic, emancipatory, and transformative. The editors and authors maintain that cultural studies helps free educators from sterile, monolithic analyses that have for too long undermined efforts to think of educational practices by providing other words, new languages, and fresh metaphors. Operating in an interdisciplinary cosmos, *Transgressions: Cultural Studies and Education* is dedicated to exploring the ways cultural studies enhances the study and practice of education. With this in mind the series focuses in a non-exclusive way on popular culture as well as other dimensions of cultural studies including social theory, social justice and positionality, cultural dimensions of technological innovation, new media and media literacy, new forms of oppression emerging in an electronic hyperreality, and postcolonial global concerns. With these concerns in mind cultural studies scholars often argue that the realm of popular culture is the most powerful educational force in contemporary culture. Indeed, in the twenty-first century this pedagogical dynamic is sweeping through the entire world. Educators, they believe, must understand these emerging realities in order to gain an important voice in the pedagogical conversation.

Without an understanding of cultural pedagogy’s (education that takes place outside of formal schooling) role in the shaping of individual identity--youth identity in particular--the role educators play in the lives of their students will continue to fade. Why do so many of our students feel that life is incomprehensible and devoid of meaning? What does it mean, teachers wonder, when young people are unable to describe their moods, their affective affiliation to the society around them. Meanings provided young people by mainstream institutions often do little to help them deal with their affective complexity, their difficulty negotiating the rift between meaning and affect. School knowledge and educational expectations seem as anachronistic as a ditto machine, not that learning ways of rational thought and making sense of the world are unimportant.

But school knowledge and educational expectations often have little to offer students about making sense of the way they feel, the way their affective lives are shaped. In no way do we argue that analysis of the production of youth in an electronic mediated world demands some “touchy-feely” educational superficiality.
What is needed in this context is a rigorous analysis of the interrelationship between pedagogy, popular culture, meaning making, and youth subjectivity. In an era marked by youth depression, violence, and suicide such insights become extremely important, even life saving. Pessimism about the future is the common sense of many contemporary youth with its concomitant feeling that no one can make a difference.

If affective production can be shaped to reflect these perspectives, then it can be reshaped to lay the groundwork for optimism, passionate commitment, and transformative educational and political activity. In these ways cultural studies adds a dimension to the work of education unfilled by any other sub-discipline. This is what Transgressions: Cultural Studies and Education seeks to produce—literature on these issues that makes a difference. It seeks to publish studies that help those who work with young people, those individuals involved in the disciplines that study children and youth, and young people themselves improve their lives in these bizarre times.
A Critical Pedagogy of Resistance

34 Pedagogues We Need to Know

Edited by

James D. Kirylo
Southeastern Louisiana University, USA
For
Walter John
Maria Christina
John James
My voice is in tune with a different language, another kind of music. It speaks of resistance, indignation, the just anger of those who are deceived and betrayed. It speaks, too, of their right to rebel against the ethical transgressions of which they are the long-suffering victims.

Paulo Freire
TABLE OF CONTENTS

Foreword: Radicalizing Democracy ............................................. xiii
  Luis Mirón

Acknowledgments ...................................................................... xvii

Introduction: Resistance, Courage, and Action ......................... xix
  James D. Kirylo

Aim of Book ............................................................................ xxvii

1. Michael Apple: A Modern Day Critical Pedagogue ................. 1
  Lydiah Nganga & John Kambutu

2. Stanley Aronowitz: Intellectual and Cultural Critic ............... 5
  Gabriel Morley

3. Lilia Bartolomé: Calling Attention to the Ideological Clarity of Teachers 9
  Tunde Szecsi

4. Deborah Britzman: Critical Thinker, Researcher, Psychoanalyst 13
  Gerlinde Beckers & Aino Hannula

5. Judith Butler: Philosophy of Resistance ................................. 17
  Lynda Robbirds Daughenbaugh & Edward L. Shaw, Jr.

  Janna Siegel Robertson

7. Antonia Darder: A Passionate, Courageous, and Committed Critical Pedagogue 25
  Linda Pickett

8. John Dewey: Pragmatist, Philosopher, and Advocate of Progressive Education 29
  Elizabeth Wadlington

  John C. Fischetti

    Kris Sloan
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

11. Ignacio Ellacuría: Historical Reality, Liberation, and the Role of the University  
   *Michael E. Lee*  
   Page 41

12. Ana Maria Araújo Freire: Scholar, Humanitarian, and Carrying on Paulo Freire’s Legacy  
   *Sandra J. Stone*  
   Page 45

13. Paulo Freire: “Father” of Critical Pedagogy  
   *James D. Kirylo*  
   Page 49

   *Kennedy O. Ongaga*  
   Page 53

15. Carol Gilligan: Critical Voice of Feminist Thought  
   *Kathleen E. Fite & Jovita M. Ross-Gordon*  
   Page 57

16. Henry Giroux: Man on Fire  
   *Marika Barto & April Whatley Bedford*  
   Page 61

17. Jesus “Pato” Gomez: A Pedagogy of Love  
   *Gabriel Morley & Cristina Valentino*  
   Page 65

   *Arturo Rodriguez & Matthew David Smith*  
   Page 69

19. bell hooks: Scholar, Cultural Critic, Feminist, and Teacher  
   *Debora Basler Wisneski*  
   Page 73

   *Tondra L. Loder-Jackson*  
   Page 77

   *Debra Panizzon*  
   Page 81

22. Joe L. Kincheloe: With Liberty and Justice for All  
   *John C. Fischetti & Betty T. Dlamini*  
   Page 85

23. Alfie Kohn: Critic of Traditional Schooling  
   *Jerry Aldridge & Jennifer Kilgo*  
   Page 89

   *Patricia A. Crawford*  
   Page 93

25. Donaldo Macedo: The Socio-political Nature of Language  
   *Jan Lacina*  
   Page 97
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>26. Peter McLaren: A Marxist Humanist Professor and Critical Scholar</th>
<th>101</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Matthew David Smith &amp; Arturo Rodriguez</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27. Maria Montessori: Advocate for Tapping into the Natural Curiosities of Children</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William Crain &amp; Kathleen E. Fite</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chandni Desai &amp; Rubén Gaztambide-Fernández</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29. Ira Shor: Shoring up Pedagogy, Politics, and Possibility for Educational Empowerment</td>
<td>113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cole Reilly</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30. Shirley Steinberg: Unwavering Commitment to Social Justice</td>
<td>117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ann Elisabeth Larson</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31. Aung San Suu Kyi: Pedagoge of Pacifism and Human Rights</td>
<td>121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basanti D. Chakraborty</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32. Lev Semenovich Vygotsky: The Mozart of Psychology</td>
<td>125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Renée M. Casbergue</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33. Simone Weil: Education, Spirituality and Political Commitment</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peter Roberts</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34. Cornel R. West: An Intellectual Soul of Justice and Compassion</td>
<td>133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lois McFadyen Christensen &amp; Takisha Durm</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Contributors: 137
A Critical Pedagogy of Resistance: 34 Pedagogues We Need to Know is an ambitious undertaking. James Kirylo’s narrative enterprise, which seeks to chronicle the present lives, and those who have passed away of transformative educators (my phrase) is a project whose time has come. I take this phrase not in its idiomatic sense of a “timely book”; but rather in historicizing the present moment of seizing the discursive spaces of education and political agency to take dead aim at the dissolution of global social ills “gone local.”

What do I mean by the last statement? On the surface it’s readily apparent that inequality of all sorts—social, economic, and yes racial/ethnic—have markedly increased in the past decade, although at least in the US context, the wealth of the middle class has trended consistently downward since the 1970s. For example, in the US there are more back males in the criminal justice system than there are students in college.¹ And the poverty rate among children has reached a staggering 16 million. Nearly 50 million Americans representing 16% of the population is poor.²

Extracted globally the percentage increases in hunger, poverty, and populations either homeless or living in squallor have reached frightening proportions. These are not merely the purview of so-called “third world” nations or countries in the southern cone. Indeed cultural and geo-politically advanced industrial societies are similarly characterized. For example Spain has an overall unemployment rate approaching 25%, and among youth the percentage unemployed exceeds 54%.

So, to pose the proverbial questions: What can be done? What do we do? Let’s begin with Kirylo’s project. I want to start with a few simple, though I hope helpful, distinctions.

For conceptual heuristic purposes, I want to distinguish among the following critical strategies: armed resistance, armed loved, and civic occupation.³ Camus (1961) wrote passionately both in literary and journalistic genres about the French resistance to Nazi Germany, as well as the human suffering in his native Algeria. He spoke out “in the service of truth and the service of freedom” (p. vii). Clearly armed resistance—French soldiers bearing weapons—are necessary for “love” to have any real meaning in the context of military totalitarianism and slaughter. But resistance need not take militaristic overtones. Following Freire, the concept of armed love
denotes the passionate—emotionally violent—sensibility, and deployment, of love in the service of social justice. Here the modifier “armed” clearly refers to the metaphorical as distinct from the literal use of arms. The passionate commitment to justice, the use of military and revolutionary arms notwithstanding, however, remains equally intense—if not surpassing armed resistance. Put differently passive resistance and non-violent revolution in the spirit of Mahatma Gandhi, Cesar Chavez, and Martin Luther King come to my mind.

Finally, civic occupation brings in to the present the social practices of critical pedagogy as a means to accomplish social change on the terrain of everyday life. I look to the Occupy Wall Street as a guiding social force. Conceived as a loosely-organized protest movement designed to “shut down” Wall Street by literally occupying public spaces during the height of the financial meltdown—“we are the 99%”—this nascent but growing, social movement carries in my judgment a potentially powerful capacity to enact social change by making visible the growing inequalities in the advanced capitalists societies such as the US and the EU. What can we learn from all of these sources of inspiration?

First, from Cesar Chavez the Chicano political chant, Si se puede. For in the 2012 U.S. national elections perhaps more so than during President Obama’s first election, progressives witnessed the generative possibilities of grassroots politics brought to life. The effect of this movement was captured most vividly by archconservative Governor Bobby Jindal’s colorful phrase, [Republicans] need to “stop being the stupid party.” Whether or not one agrees with the policies and organizing strategies of the Democratic Party, one fact comes to light: forced pragmatically to choose between two visions of America embodied in two presidential candidates, the nation’s Electoral College brought home an electoral landside in the name of narrowing—not widening—inequality of all demographic and ideological stripes. In the lexicon of the 2012 national election it was a victory for the 99% over the champions of the 1% in the likes of Republican governors and former governors such as Bobby Jindal and Mitt Romney.

Shortly after Barack Obama became the first African-American to win the presidency, I published an article somewhat critical of Obama’s pragmatism, especially when it came to making cabinet-level appointments (Mirón, 2009). He seemed to rely on the “Chicago crowd” and former president Bill Clinton’s constituency. These early moves did not bode well for the high hopes many of us had. Now after the second election I am still not satisfied with the president’s policies, for example failure to pass a comprehensive immigration bill and compromising away the single-payer option for Obamacare. Perhaps because I have spent the previous five years in administration, I have come to realize the serious constraints on leadership. It is damned hard to make decisions that are progressive as distinct from regressive, redistributive rather than merely distributive of scarce resources. I consider such development to be a less idealistic vision—though this seems to contradict the possibilities of hope—, ironically, however, as enacting a more lasting and sustainable social change. Although this incremental return to democracy falls
short of the broader societal aim of critical pedagogy to transform electoral politics into an increase in radical democratic social practices (Carr, 2013 forthcoming, Darder & Mirón, 2006), fundamental movement toward this aim is evident. My desire and that of my colleague and friend, James Kirylo, is that this ironic twist\(^6\) will not morph into deep skepticism or cynicism, but rather evolve into an aesthetic that as Kierkegaard believed exercised power for the common good.

NOTES

2. [http://halfinten.org/issues/families/](http://halfinten.org/issues/families/)
3. I do not wish to conflate, or confuse, “civic occupation” (my term) with civil disobedience or civil unrest/protest.
5. I use this term as a synonym for the Affordable Health Care Act without disparagement. Indeed during the presidential debates, the president said that he liked the term.

REFERENCES

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INTRODUCTION

Resistance, Courage, and Action

The history of the human family is fashioned with a potpourri of interesting, exhilarating, and disturbing events. There have been the highest of highs with rudimentary discoveries such as capturing the creative ways of how the flames of fire can be used to the advent of the wheel to the modern miracle of medical advancements to the incredible ever-rapid progress of technology and, most wonderfully, to the realization of how humankind demonstrates profound love for one another through acts of great kindness, compassionate service, and heroic sacrifice.

And then there have been the ongoing conflicts, frustrations, and the lowest of lows. Whether it be addressing the continuing conundrum of making peaceful and just sense between Israel and its middle eastern neighbors to our dealing with the continual repercussions of the ill-advised invasion of Iraq to confronting religious zealots of any stripe who harm and tyrannize, to calling out political leaders who utilize power to corrupt, to critically questioning economic systems that structurally exploit groups of people, to going against the tide of cultural and social mores that marginalize and alienate, to standing against loathsome attitudes and practices that are racist, prejudicial, patriarchal, and discriminatory, to challenging educational systems that systematically leave some in and some out, the human family—seemingly inherently—is in a constant mode of conflict and strife.

As we stand back and examine the human condition, it is naturally a good thing to affirm and celebrate our goodness, intelligence, and innovation, and it is also ethically responsible to scrutinize, challenge, and oppose people, structures, and systems that oppress and dehumanize. Particularly with respect to the latter, enter in critical pedagogy.

The notion of critical pedagogy as a recognized concept is a relatively new phenomenon that particularly emerged from the thought of Paulo Freire and others (McLaren, 2000; Kincheloe, 2008b); however, the consciousness of it as a way of thinking and acting has been around through the ages. When we look back in time where oppressive powers of any kind were at work, human beings have resisted. For example, if we explore the Exodus story, it is one of a people resisting the dominant group, or if we research the life of Bartolomé de Las Casas, who in the mid-1500s, was a powerful voice for the rights of indigenous populations during the barbaric invasion of the conquistadors and colonial Christendom in Latin America, or
INTRODUCTION

if we study Fredrick Douglass, who in the 1800s escaped from slavery, which enabled him—through his perceptive intelligence, inspirational oratory skills, and commitment to equality—to devote his life’s work toward eradicating slavery, the oppression of women, and injustice of any kind, or if we consider the work of Erich Fromm who, during much of the 20th century, blended his thought through the prism of spirituality, psychology, education, and social theory to challenge demagoguery and to promote the possibilities of hope and authentic human freedom, or if we pay close attention to one of the founders of feminist thought, Susan B Anthony, who was an influential leader during the 19th century in promoting the rights of women, powerfully advocating for equality and justice in the midst of patriarchal structures. Throughout time, whether those dehumanizing forces perpetuated slavery, racism, patriarchy, bigotry or any number of oppressive, exploitive and unjust practices, groups of people responded and courageous leaders emerged with bold voices with what Freire (2005) refers to as a proclamation of denouncing injustice while simultaneously announcing for a more just world.

To be sure, people of justice, people who resist are framed by a vision that embraces an inclusive, tolerant, more loving community that passionately calls for a more democratic citizenship. Freire (2005) puts it this way,

Citizenship implies freedom—to work, to eat, to dress, to wear shoes, to sleep in a house, to support oneself and one’s family, to love, to be angry, to cry, to protest, to support, to move, to participate in this or that religion, this or that party, to educate oneself and one’s family, to swim regardless in what ocean of one’s country. Citizenship is not obtained by chance: It is a construction that, never finished, demands we fight for it. It demands commitment, political clarity, coherence, decision. (p. 161)

As Freire discernibly suggests, being in the world implies equal opportunity to participate in its movement, which is a central idea in the construct of critical pedagogy. That is, as Macedo (2006) argues, the concept of critical pedagogy is a continuous unfolding process of becoming, where we are active participants that not only includes an ongoing process of encountering pain and struggle, but also a space that is comprised of “hope and joy shaped and maintained by a humanizing pedagogy” (p. 394).

REPRESENTED CRITICAL PEDAGOGUES

The diverse range of critical pedagogues presented in this book comes from a variety of backgrounds with respect to race, gender, and ethnicity, from various geographic places and eras, and from an array of complex political, historical, religious, theological, social, cultural, and educational circumstances which necessitated their leadership and resistance. How each pedagogue uniquely lives in that tension of dealing with pain and struggle, while concurrently fostering a pedagogy that is humanizing, is deeply influenced by their individual autobiographical lens of reality,
the conceptual thought that enlightened them, the circumstances that surrounded them, and the conviction that drove them. This underscores Kincheloe’s (2008a) assertion that the continuous evolution of critical pedagogy is informed by multiple discourses and is dictated by historical circumstances, new theoretical insights and new challenges, problems, and social situations. In other words, critical pedagogy is an empowering way of thinking and acting, fostering decisive agency that does not take a position of neutrality in its contextual examination of the various forces that impact the human condition. And, in particular, when repressive forces are at work dehumanizing, oppressing, and marginalizing people, critical pedagogues are those who emerge as powerful humanizing agents to resist and call for a more just, right, and democratic world. That is just what the 34 critical pedagogues represented in this text heroically do.

Throughout the world, there are, of course, hundreds of well-known and not so well-known critical pedagogues from across a variety of disciplines and experiences who have significantly contributed to critical thought and action. It is thusly obvious that volumes can be written about the variety of critical pedagogues who have appeared on the scene over the ages. Notwithstanding the pre-defined space limitations authors are typically allocated, a challenge of producing a text such as this was determining who should be included, a task that naturally took some thoughtful consideration. The idea behind that consideration was not so much of a fear of who would be left out (that was an unavoidable given), but, rather an imaginative vision of who would be included and whom would well represent a critical pedagogy of resistance from a variety of contexts, circumstances, and points of view, while also representing the numerous critical pedagogues who do not appear here. So the number 34 was not a predetermined magic figure of how many pedagogues would be included; rather, 34 was the natural stopping point at which, to reiterate, seems to collectively exemplify the face of a critical pedagogy of resistance.

The following are the critical pedagogues represented in the book: Michael Apple, Stanley Aronowitz, Lilia Bartolomé, Deborah Britzman, Judith Butler, Noam Chomsky, Antonia Darder, John Dewey, W.E.B. Du Bois, Michael E. Dyson, Ignacio Ellacuría, Ana Maria Araújo Freire, Paulo Freire, Henry Louis Gates, Jr., Carol Gilligan, Henry Giroux, Jesus “Pato” Gomez, Antonio Gramsci, bell hooks, Myles Horton, Ivan Illich, Joe Kincheloe, Alfie Kohn, Jonathan Kozol, Donaldo Macedo, Peter McLaren, Maria Montessori, Edward Saïd, Ira Shor, Shirley Steinberg, Aung San Suu Kyi, Lev Vygotsky, Simone Weil, and Cornel West. From examining these various individuals, it is clear that all have in one way or another lived, experienced, or observed oppressive forces at work, prompting all of them in their own unique ways to speak out, to act, to push back, and to resist. Within that examination of the highlighted pedagogues, it also appears that two groups of individuals loosely emerge. There is one group in which its members personally experienced and lived under terrifying and dangerous oppressive circumstances whereby their very lives were threatened (as in the case of Paulo Freire, Aung San Suu Kyi, and others), and even taken out (as in the case of Ignacio Ellacuría), and another group who has lived
INTRODUCTION

(and continues to do so) under a constant cloud of losing their jobs, status, and the distorting of reputation for taking positions of resistance. Yet they all audaciously remain in the struggle of calling out powerful, well-financed entities that make every attempt to marginalize their thought.

I am reminded of the Brazilian theologians Leonardo and Clodovis Boff, both of whom significantly contributed to the thought of liberation theology and the concept of “preferential option for the poor.” In their work *Liberation theology: From Dialogue to Confrontation* (1986), they discuss that there are three ways to demonstrate a commitment to the poor: (a) visiting the poor; (b) conducting scholarly research, writing, and teaching about the living conditions of the poor; and (c) permanently living among the poor. Taking my cue, therefore, from Boff and Boff and applying the same strand of thinking that guided their thought, all the critical pedagogues highlighted in this text, in one way or another, have monumentally demonstrated their commitment to justice and a more right world by (a) regularly visiting blighted communities and immersing themselves in the struggle to speak out against tyrannical thought of any kind; (b) writing, researching, and teaching the political, social, economic, and education conditions that enable injustice, and what can be done to thwart those toxic conditions; and, (c) permanently living in shattered communities or circumstances in an effort to be an instrument of service and a light of hope toward facilitating a more humanizing reality. In the final analysis, all of the highlighted critical pedagogues collectively stand in solidarity with all peoples who have been given what Kincheloe (1992) describes as the “short end of the historical stick” and “have not found their way into the ‘official’ story” (p. 644).

Moreover, as one explores this text, s/he will also discover a common disposition that is woven throughout the lives of all the represented pedagogues. First, each is clearly driven by an unwavering conviction to promoting justice and democratic spaces; second, each in their own unique way possesses a deep love for humanity; third, each is guided by a strong sense of hope for a better today and tomorrow; and, finally, most of the contemporary critical pedagogues herein have been linked or influenced by the work of Paulo Freire. Particularly with respect to the latter, Freire’s impact on the thinking of many featured in this text cannot be overstated: his general influence on educational, philosophical, and theological thought has been nothing short of remarkable, marking him as one of the most important educators the world has seen in the last 100 years. Perhaps Torres (1982) best captures the point when he declares, “We can stay with Freire or against Freire, but not without Freire” (p. 94).

WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

John Dewey, W.E.B. Du Bois, Ignacio Ellacuria, Paulo Freire, Jesus “Pato” Gomez, Antonio Gramsci, Myles Horton, Ivan Illich, Joe Kincheloe, Maria Montessori, Edward Saïd, Lev Vygotsky, and Simone Weil are no longer with us, but their theories of critical thought significantly remain. They challenge us to continue our movement forward in order to build a world that promotes authentic freedom and
equal opportunity for all. And challenges remain. The work of Michael Apple, Stanley Aronowitz, Lilia Bartolomé, Deborah Britzman, Judith Butler, Noam Chomsky, Antonio Darder, Michael E. Dyson, Ana Maria Araújo Freire, Henry Louis Gates, Jr., Carol Gilligan, Henry Giroux, bell hooks, Alfie Kohn, Jonathan Kozol, Donaldo Macedo, Peter McLaren, Ira Shor, Shirley Steinberg, Aung San Suu Kyi, and Cornel West continues to tirelessly confront those challenges as, indeed, all of us should necessarily do in our own ways.

Steinberg (2007) reminds us that an aspect of critical pedagogy gives us a certain pass to be angry, an anger that calls out “uses of power and at injustices through the violations of human rights” (p. ix). Moreover, Freire (2005) makes the salient point that our denunciation of injustice should be framed within what he calls an “armed love” (p. 74). In that traditional space called a classroom, critical educators have a unique responsibility to be mindful that the notion of pedagogy is perpetually joined at the hip with forces related to the economic, social, and political sphere (Giroux, 2007; 2011). And where economic injustice is evident, where violations of human rights are occurring, where equal-access and opportunity have been subverted, and where freedoms have been violated, critical educators should not only examine the impact this has on students and society as a whole, but they should also act with an honorable anger and with what Darder (2002) characterizes as a “pedagogy of love” (p. 30).

We are living in interesting times. That many children around the world are dying from preventable diseases or illnesses (e.g., pneumonia, diarrhea, and other infirmities), exploited on multiple levels (e.g., child labor, forced prostitution, and other disturbing practices), and remain in a state of hunger are all troubling reminders that we have more critical work to do; that we have political parties that can no longer speak to each other, obliterating any kind of impulse of the rightful place of humility, which clearly signals to us that the concept of authentic dialogue continues to be needed at the table; that there is an arsenal of nuclear weapons in possession of various countries, constantly making it clear that the annihilation of the human family is a very real threat if we don’t collectively get our act together; that discrimination, prejudice, and bigotry of any kind still exist makes evident we still have work to do in fostering unity in our diversity; and, finally, that the gap between the rich and the rest of us (as Smiley and West (2012) put it) is ever widening, squeezing out even more what is left of the mythical middle class, should provide a clarion call to challenge economic systems that exploit and systematically leave some of us in and a whole lot of us out. And the particular threat that is leaving a whole lot of us out is driven by an avalanche of neoliberal thought.

Largely backed by corporate capital in advancing its point of view, neoliberalism possesses an ideology that promotes privatization, individualism, competition, and profit, all of which are having a disturbing impact on dismantling anything public, and even calling into question the survival of our very democracy and that critical space called the public square. Giroux (2011) makes the point that neoliberalism cultivates a way of thinking and acting whereby “…the language of the social is
INTRODUCTION

either devalued or ignored altogether as the idea of the public sphere is equated with a predatory space rife with danger and disease—as in reference to public restrooms, public transportation, and urban public schools. Dreams of the future are now modeled around the narcissistic, privatized, and self-indulgent needs of consumer culture and the dictates of the alleged free market” (p. 112).

Particularly with respect to education, a neoliberal trajectory can be characterized as the marketization of education whereby students are viewed as commodities, teachers as mechanical functionaries, and the primary purpose of schooling is singularly tied to the economic growth of the community (Kirylo, 2013). This marketization views education as a positivistic endeavor, advocating rigid standardization while at the same time dismissing the relevance of cultural sensitivities and developmentally appropriate approaches to teaching and learning. The individual is valued over the group; competition trumps collaboration; self-centeredness outmatches cooperation; and, the notion of the common good has no place. Moreover, this marketization seeks to defund public education through the advocating of vouchers, so-called choice, and corporate takeover of schools. Finally, this marketization of education is working to not only irresponsibly marginalize the purpose and necessity of academic freedom and tenure, but is also working hard to systematically deprofessionalize the notion of teacher education, even advocating for the eradication of its very existence. To be sure, this entire scenario is a very real and present danger that is working to dismantle anything public. All of this should grab our collective attention simply because if we allow this course to continue, we will see more power handed over to the few who already possess the majority of it; we will see the furthering of the economic divide; and, we will see the continual erosion of authentic democratic participation.

RESISTANCE, COURAGE, ACTION

In light of the entire reality described above, where do we go from here? We not only reinvent Freire’s thought and work within our own circumstances, but we realize as Steinberg (2007) suggests that “critical pedagogy takes language from the radical—radicals must do” (p. ix). We must all actively remain immersed in our communities, our realities, and where injustice is perpetrated we need to resist, take courage, and act.

REFERENCES

INTRODUCTION


AIM OF BOOK

The aim of this book is threefold. First, the highlighting of the variety of critical pedagogues is intended to not only serve as a springboard to engage us in dialogue about pivotal issues and concerns related to justice, equality, and opportunity, but also to hopefully lead us to further explore deeper into the lives and thought of some extraordinary people. In fact, it is worthy to point out that this text is unique in the sense that the diverse group of individuals discussed represents a variety of disciplines, points-of-view, and who have lived (or are currently living) in varying eras, yet all of them should necessarily fall under the umbrella of being characterized as critical pedagogues. To state another way, there are represented individuals highlighted in this text who are not “educators” or “teachers” in the conventional connotation and still others who may not be viewed conventionally as critical pedagogues, and, finally there are those who have been highlighted whom one would logically expect to see in a text such as this. Yet, despite that diversity, all of them have in common a distinctive story that can powerfully, uniquely, and contemporarily teach us in collectively processing dilemmas, questions, and concerns of the social, political, education, and cultural order.

Second, the intent of this book is to affirm and challenge our own thinking. That is, through the work of the highlighted critical pedagogues, a variety of themes are explored which are linked to education, race, ethnicity, gender, theology, language, power, and justice, among other topics. All of us naturally have a certain lens of the world, and there will likely be aspects in this text that will comfortably affirm that lens; however, there also may be some strands of thought articulated that may take us out of our comfort zone and challenge us, which hopefully will lead to deeper reflection into and exploration of our personal worldview.

Finally, the aim of this book is to inspire. Indeed, the ultimate goal of a teacher is to inspire. Inspiration inevitably prompts us to think, to move, to act. Through the remarkable lives and thought of the cross-section of critical pedagogues highlighted in this book, the hope is that we are all moved to continue the work of making a more just, right, and democratic world.

A WORD ABOUT THE CHAPTER CONTRIBUTORS

The diverse range of chapter/co-chapter contributors who earnestly participated in this project come from various parts of the world. For some, English is their second or third language, which is quite impressive because of the necessary skill, time, and commitment that is needed, particularly when working with technical or content-related vocabulary and concepts. While there are some format similarities within all of the chapters, each contributor, however, was naturally led by his/her own imagination, writing style, and approach as to what he/she thought was necessary
AIM OF BOOK
to emphasize in order to capture the essence of the critical pedagogue discussed. Because each contributor was given a limited word count range with which to work, each was challenged in her/his own way to centrally capture the thought and life of their chosen pedagogue. To be sure, many of the critical pedagogues in this book have such notability and presence that there are volumes written about their lives and work, and to somehow succinctly encapsulate that in a confined space takes some creativity. In that light, the chapter contributors must be complimented for their efforts because they each did a tremendous job on that score. Moreover, a nice feature in all of the chapters is the accessible language, style, and approach that was taken which should be appealing to a wide-range audience. This latter point cannot be overstated because it can be demanding to write in a clear and concise way about topics and themes that can be quite complex and multi-nuanced. As a point of reference, the logical ordering of the chapters is simply arranged alphabetically by the critical pedagogue's last name. In the end, all of the chapter contributors did a remarkable job in celebrating and recognizing a group of critical pedagogues we all need to know and who have made a difference in the world.
Michael Apple, a professor of educational policy since the early 1970s at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, is internationally recognized for his pioneering work in what has become known as critical pedagogy, a lens from which power and inequality is explored. Because traditional educational practices in the U.S. confer cultural legitimacy to groups in power and privilege while generating and supporting structural inequalities for groups that have been historically disenfranchised, Apple supports an education for social and cognitive awakening.

Apple’s interest in critical pedagogy was shaped by his life experiences. In addition to growing up poor, Apple realized the intersection between poverty and educational injustices while teaching in inner city schools. Equally awakening were his experiences as a graduate scholar at Columbia University where he recognized the disconnect between curricula and learners’ lived experiences. Consequently, he joined his family’s tradition of social activism and struggle for social justice. In particular, Apple questioned the value of an education that did not address social injustices, and grappled with societal labels of “less than” with respect to people in poverty (Apple, 2012a).

EDUCATION IS NOT A NEUTRAL ENTERPRISE

As a critical pedagogue, Apple postulates that traditional education is not neutral. Rather, it is political, designed to advance the interests of the groups in power and privilege (Apple, 2012b). To the extent that education is not neutral, Apple supports educational activism which embraces principles of critical pedagogy whereby rational educators are fully aware of societal power dynamics that illuminates abuses of power, domination, and exploitation, particularly as it relates to curricula practices (Apple 1996). For example, to interrogate curricula practices, Apple (2000) asked educators to seek answers to the following questions: What counts as legitimate knowledge? What knowledge is of most worth? Whose knowledge is of most worth? (p. 44). Unless existing curricula and policies are examined, then education will continue to support an unjust infrastructure.

Because Apple argues that education in the U.S. is unjust, he contends a “them vs. us” mentality is prominent in educational policies and practices. Further, Apple asserts that traditional schooling is designed to control people’s thinking.
and behavior. In other words, U.S. schools possess what can be characterized as knowledge legitimacy, i.e., they decide the curricula to adopt, which is typically a European-based curricula perspective. By assigning Eurocentric canons higher status, other curricula are deemed inferior and of less epistemological value. To reverse this trend, therefore, Apple recommends a systematic critical analysis of educational policies that have guided education in the U.S.

By and large, U.S. education serves the interests of privileged groups. Consequently, it has had a disempowering effect on groups that have been historically disenfranchised (Apple, 2000). To exemplify the point and from a personal perspective, Apple tells of his son, a person of color, undergoing a state of utter powerlessness as a result of unjust school experiences. Yet, not only from a personal point of view and from his own research, Apple asserts that the privileged still believe strongly in the fairness of existing educational policies and practices. Nieto and Bode (2012) make the point that because the privileged have access to multiple resources, they lack critical consciousness relative to the “resource, opportunity and expectation” gaps the underprivileged experience, thus limiting their chances for academic success (p. 13). In that light, Apple recommends an objective analysis of educational practices in the context of sociocultural and sociopolitical/economic factors, and calls for activism against educational systems that reinforce, reproduce and preserve inequalities through curricula and evaluative activities.

Because power influences educational policies and practices, and because he critically questions neoliberal and neoconservative philosophies, Apple supports a restructuring of traditional schooling to create a space for transforming education, one that does not romanticize the notion that “everyone is the same” (Apple, 2004, p. 27). In other words, while people are created equal, they have different lived experiences, ultimately necessitating an education for critical consciousness which is transforming and empowering. Indeed, without critical awareness, people are likely to believe that “things are the way they are because they cannot be otherwise,” (Freire, 1997, p. 36). So, like Freire, Apple supports an education that confronts issues of dominance and subornation.

Predictably, Apple’s support for an education that challenges the status-quo is resisted by groups in positions of power as was evident in South Korea where he was once arrested. Nevertheless, because Apple believes in the liberating nature of an education for critical consciousness, his work has a global appeal especially in the current context of globalization. To be sure, globalization is influencing educational systems in variety of ways. However, due to increasing global injustices, the notion of a global critical pedagogy possesses its rightful place. As a consequence, Apple challenges educators worldwide to implement transformative education in order to nurture epistemological spaces essential to freedom, democracy and social justice. Additionally, he reminds educators to maintain their movement toward critical consciousness while confronting issues of power and privilege (Apple & Beane, 2007). As Apple (2011) contends, “part of the task of the critical scholar/activist in education is to make public the success in contesting the unequal policies,
curricula, pedagogy and evaluation” (p. 29). An education for critical consciousness is essential to the establishment of a more just and equitable society. To Apple, such an education is inclusive. Therefore, it respects the contributions, histories and experiences of all people, both privileged and marginalized. However, because education is political, Apple asserts that educational policies and practices should be scrutinized continually using educational and social justice lens, and in a spirit of collaboration between all stakeholders.

CONCLUSION

Michael Apple is a modern day critical analyst. As an educational theorist who grounds his scholarship in daily struggles for social justice, Apple believes in critical curricula, implemented in democratic spaces. Apple’s childhood experiences with injustice heightened his consciousness relative to the intersection between educational practices and social injustices. Therefore, in his quest for a more just world, Apple advocates an education that not only challenges the status quo, but also fosters a way of thinking that is reflectively critical and transformative.

REFERENCES

Stanley Aronowitz is a prominent American leftist scholar who writes widely on issues related to sociology, science, labor, and education. A former New York gubernatorial candidate who ran on the Green Party ticket in 2002, Aronowitz considers his primary role as that of public intellectual and cultural critic. He is commonly considered a leading figure in the critical postmodernist vein along with other radical theorists like Henry Giroux and Peter McLaren. A staunch supporter of the labor movement, Aronowitz began his career as an adult educator organizing for labor unions where he insisted that learning should be practical. Further, he concludes that all education is political and should serve to empower the oppressed.

Aronowitz has been professor of sociology and urban education at the Graduate Center of City University of New York (CUNY) for nearly three decades. In addition to his teaching and research, Aronowitz is also director of the Center for the Study of Culture, Technology and Work at CUNY. Formerly, he taught at the University of California – Irvine and Staten Island Community College. Additionally, Aronowitz was instrumental in founding the academic journal *Social Text*, which examines social and cultural issues around the world. In 2005, he co-founded the journal *Situations: Project of the Radical Imagination*, which attempts to insert imaginative thought into political theory in an attempt to discover new ideas.

Born in 1933 in New York to Jewish working class parents, Aronowitz was inundated from an early age with a working class ethos. He attended public schools in New York until he was enrolled at Brooklyn College where he was promptly suspended for participating in a sit-in. His demonstration against authority continued when he refused to re-enrol at the college after being granted permission by the administration to return to school. Instead, Aronowitz spent the next 15 years primarily working in steel mills and factories around New York and New Jersey. It was during this time he developed strong ties to the labor movement and began to understand the struggle among the social classes in America. Also, during this time, Aronowitz became interested in community organizing and turned his skills toward union work. He traveled the country organizing and educating workers for a variety of labor organizations, including the Amalgamated Clothing Workers and the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers’ Union. Aronowitz returned to school in the late 1960s and earned an undergraduate degree from the New School in 1968. Seven years later he graduated from Union Graduate School (now Union Institute) with a Ph.D.
Aronowitz has authored or co-authored 25 books about social class, education, and American culture. His first book, *Honor America: The Nature of Fascism, Historic Struggles Against It and a Strategy for Today*, was published in 1970. Three years later, Aronowitz published *False Promises: the Shaping of American Working Class Consciousness*, a text on the labor movement. *False Promises* was a breakout work for Aronowitz. He gained acclaim for its critical assessment of the unions during the 1960s and 1970s, arguing that union leadership was not leading workers, but instead was focused on being a mouthpiece for mediation to placate employers. Aronowitz urged more radical leadership from union bosses in order to gain more rights for workers.

From his earliest days as an organizer, Aronowitz understood the power of education. As his awareness of the battleground of education policy and practice evolved, Aronowitz began to critique the structure and purpose of schooling. His first book about education, *Education Under Siege* (1985), co-authored with Henry Giroux, examined public school funding and the politics of education. The authors collaborated again a few years later in a follow-up book, *Education Still Under Siege* (1993), which explored the reform changes that had taken place in schools across the country during the period when Ronald Reagan was president. Aronowitz and Giroux (1993) argued that political conservatives had usurped the meaning and purpose of schooling and were privatizing education toward individualism to satisfy corporate capitalism. Essentially, the principles of democracy and civic-mindedness were being replaced in classrooms with a sense of competitiveness and a winner-take-all approach to education. The authors further noted that such conservative reforms are ongoing because radical educators have provided no compelling counter-vision to the conservative push to link business and education.

Expounding upon his argument about the politicization of education, Aronowitz began to look at the effects of a trend in higher education away from the liberal arts toward a more specialized curriculum designed to train students for specific skills or jobs. He viewed this as a continuation of the privatization of schooling in order to meet marketplace demands. In *The Knowledge Factory: Dismantling the Corporate University and Creating True Higher Learning* (2000) Aronowitz expands his critique of education arguing that higher education in America has become less about learning and more akin to vocational training for individuals in order to learn specific skills for private interests. He maintains that this approach to higher education misguides students into thinking that they must comply with corporate authority, establishing an ongoing social structure that is reluctant to challenge the status quo. Instead, Aronowitz encourages colleges and universities to engage students in meaningful critical conversations about social, economic, and political realities that confront systems of power.

Nearly a decade after writing *Education Still Under Siege* (1993), Aronowitz returns to his critique of k-12 schooling in the face of more conservative education reforms implemented during the George Bush presidency, most notably high-stakes testing. Aronowitz (2004) critiques education and schooling because he believes children are being prepared for a life of labor and are being trained by schools to fall
into order within the proper cultural, economic, and social classes. He maintains that evidence shows schools are not equitable and do not provide a level playing field for all socioeconomic groups despite claims otherwise. This imbalance renders individuals inert and, therefore, ties them to the same social class they have always known. In reality, Aronowitz (2004) says, there is very little upward mobility within social classes.

In his most current work about education, Against Schooling: For an Education that Matters (2008), Aronowitz focuses on what he perceives as the most damaging conservative reform in schooling – high-stakes testing, which is a direct result of increased corporatization of schooling. Standardized testing and the ancillary economic windfall that is coupled with it is clear evidence of the privatization of education, according to Aronowitz. He refutes claims that education needs to be regulated through current standards that are determined somewhat indiscriminately by politics and wealthy business interests. Aronowitz posits that schools are no longer enlightening, but have become bureaucratic institutions with the aim of reproducing workers for the ruling class. Interestingly, Aronowitz is able to draw a link between his criticism of labor and education. He notes that most working class children will become less well off than their working class parents because of a drop in the number of industrial jobs, and because of low wages paid to workers as a result of the decline in unionization.

In an attempt to offer a radical challenge to the current educational status quo, Aronowitz (2004) proposes a three-fold reform. First, as a society we need to define our expectations related to education taking into consideration cultural context. Aronowitz feels the current curricula needs to be situated in a social context in order to make it relevant to learners. Second, an overhaul of education schools is needed to reverse the current teacher training methodology. Aronowitz suggests that teachers need to be trained as intellectuals, which requires teacher training based on subject disciplines as opposed to teaching methods. Finally, Aronowitz calls for a movement of people who must insist that schools receive adequate funding and dismiss high-stakes testing. He argues that standardized testing does not work as an assessment tool because it overruns the curriculum and relegates teachers to trainers who merely prepare students for tests.

Aronowitz has spent his career critiquing society, politics, economics, science, and education. He advocates for greater civic participation from individuals and a more intensive focus on democracy at all levels in all endeavors because in his estimation the impetus for social change is situated in shared cultural, economic, and political experiences (Aronowitz, 1992). Changing the structure of schooling, for Aronowitz, is paramount to the success of any future social change.

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My love of literacy and learning helped to produce a proud Mexicana/Chicana who was serious about her commitment to her community...Life has taught me that solidarity must extend beyond one’s particular ethnic group to various groups who share – even more than skin color – past and current experiences of subordination and oppression...Clearly, home and family environments are critical factors in every child’s success. Teachers need to free themselves from adhering rigidly to their own methods and work to incorporate students’ home experiences into reading pedagogy. My teachers would have learned a tremendous amount if they taken the time to tap into my ‘funds of knowledge’... Luckily for me, my family literacy practices and my eventual politicization compensated for the shortcomings of the school.

Bartolomé, 2011, 58–59

The above autobiographical reflection allows one to take a glimpse into the personal and professional life of Lilia Bartolomé, a Professor of Applied Linguistics at the University of Massachusetts in Boston. Bartolomé grew up in a barrio of southeastern San Diego in a bilingual and bicultural family with a mother from Sinaleo, Mexico, and a father with roots in the Philippines. These life experiences nurtured her dedication not only to her ethnic and linguistic community but also to all people who have been historically disenfranchised. Liberation philosophies and critical pedagogies promoted by Paulo Freire, Henry Giroux, Gloria Anzaldúa and others shaped Bartolomé’s identity and her voice as a progressive Chicana professor with a strong research agenda for fostering multiculturalism. In her works of more than two decades, a strong cohesive theme emerges: the demand for teachers’ political and ideological clarity in order to effectively and equitably educate all children, but especially those of a minority status. This chapter offers a synopsis of this theme in light of her works.

MINORITY STUDENTS’ RIGHT TO NATIVE LANGUAGE

The achievement and graduation rate of Latino students in the United States is alarmingly low, indicating a major deficiency of the current educational system. Bartolomé critically examines the reasons for this failure and presents
a multifaceted, historically-embedded analysis of the past and present of the
American educational system and society, proposing a well-grounded radical
stand about the future. Specifically, based on research evidence about the
academic and psychological advantages of bilingual education, she advocates for
the right of students to learn in their native language. The native language, which
is a crucial component of students’ reality, prior experience and background
knowledge, should serve as a foundation and a tool in their learning. Moreover,
literacy programs should be based on the heritage language so that students can
develop their own voice, a positive self-concept, and cultural identity in order to
reconstruct their histories and cultures. Thus, Bartolomé urges teachers to become
mindful of the cultural and linguistic heritage of children who are considered
minorities; moreover, she intensely contends that pure knowledge of ‘teacher-
proof’ strategies is insufficient without the teachers’ authentic love (cariño),
respect and positive attitude toward students. In particular, effective early
childhood programs should offer heritage language instruction saturated with
these components – love, respect, and positive attitude – in contrast to English-
only instruction (Bartolomé, 1998; 2008a).

Bartolomé also calls attention to the political and ideological contexts of
minority education – the widespread English-only legacy – which institutionalizes
a racist approach of banning the use of non-English languages and confirms the
unjust, asymmetrical power in education. In accordance with Gloria Anzaldúa,
a Chicana poet and activist, Bartolomé perceives this linguistic assimilation of
non-white immigrants more precisely described as domestication, because of the
broken promise of people of color getting a share of the power, if they give up their
native language. Her concern about the English-only legacy is timelier than ever,
considering the recent anti-immigration and anti-bilingual movements in states such
as Arizona, Alabama, and California. When teachers, policy-makers, and others are
cognizant of the consequences of poverty, such as the dehumanizing and oppressive
conditions in the lives of children that are minorities, they might understand that
the implementation of the English-only programs – pedagogy of exclusion in
reality – will not guarantee higher achievement for them. Consequently, Bartolomé
demands the deconstruction and reconstruction of the political and ideological
aspect of bilingual education, rejecting the notion that bilingual education is strictly
a pedagogical issue rather than political and ideological. Because it is essential that
teachers develop an understanding of the links between language, power, politics
and ideology in schools, she argues for the infusion of critical pedagogy and the
study of ideology in teacher preparation courses (Bartolomé, 2006; Bartolomé &
Leistyna, 2006).

IDEOLOGY AND TEACHER EDUCATION

Further broadening the scope of her research, Bartolomé comprehensively demands
the critical need for examining the ideologies that guide teacher education. When
teacher candidates, who are largely white middle class women, unconsciously hold and/or uncover dominant discriminatory ideologies, such as meritocracy, assimilation, and deficit views of students that are oppressed, they are also likely to accept the unequal power distribution in schools and society as natural and unchangeable. This lack of ideological clarity, that is the inability to recognize the historical, economic and social conditions that mold our lives, might lead teachers to exhibit disrespect, unfair treatment, and ‘miseducation’ toward students that have been historically disenfranchised, ultimately causing harm to their intellectual pursuits and emotional well-being.

Often these teachers, whose performance evaluation might heavily be based on student achievement on standardized tests, blame the students and their culture and language for poor academic attainment instead of critically reflecting on the socio-historical context and the consequences of discriminatory ideologies. Therefore, teacher education programs should necessarily cultivate an environment whereby teacher candidates explicitly scrutinize their own ideological dimensions toward school-aged youngsters, specifically naming and critiquing discriminatory ideologies as well as identifying effective counter-hegemonic orientations. In fact, Bartolomé implemented this theoretical argument in practice by infusing the study of ideology in teacher education courses, and, as a result of this infusion, she observed prospective teachers growing into committed educators of students that are minorities (Bartolomé, 2010).

Bartolomé fiercely dispels the notion that education is mainly a technical issue, asserting that the uncritical replication of methodologies in the spirit of “methods fetish” cannot assure academic growth. Instead, she argues only ideologically clear educators can implement emancipatory and humanizing pedagogy, and that teacher candidates should be empowered with skills for critically selecting culturally and linguistically responsive approaches to instruction (Macedo & Bartolomé, 2001). In other words, Bartolomé makes the case in her research that effective educators recognize that teaching is not an apolitical endeavor, but an ethical and moral undertaking, rejecting the subordinate status of those students who have been classified as minority. To this extent, effective educators are those who act as cultural brokers, mentors, advocates and critical pedagogues for their students, equalizing “the unequal playing field.”

To that end, therefore, ideological clarity, ethics, solidarity and courage should serve as four cornerstones in teacher preparation programs. The mission with these four pillars in mind should necessarily be embraced and infused throughout the curriculum to avoid a superficial tourist approach to cultures, languages and minority groups. Only teachers who possess an intimate understanding of the point of these four pillars have the potential to protest and advocate for students that have been historically oppressed. Indeed, Bartolomé’s argument resonates with Freire’s, which works to persuade teachers to see through the ‘dense of fog of ideology’ and to act courageously to create a less biased and more democratic society (Bartolomé, 2003; 2004; 2008b; Freire, 1997).
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4. DEBORAH BRITZMAN

Critical Thinker, Researcher, Psychoanalyst

Deborah Britzman is one of the representatives of critical pedagogy who enters the classroom with courage to encounter its lively world where the complex interfacing of emotions, resistances, and perplexities unfold among the people that comprise a classroom setting. She keeps the door open and admits the presence of societal and cultural discourses, histories, myths, and a plethora of backgrounds which can be hidden and problematic but discoverable if one dares to see and examine them in a classroom environment. The focus of Britzman’s work is to bring this almost neglected world to the stage and empower teachers to work within the realities of the classroom. Her familiarity with critical theory, the ideas of Frankfurt School and Feminist Theory is obvious. In examining the affective world of education, Britzman utilizes psychoanalysis in combination with queer theory to scratch off the surface of normalized and accepted schooling routines in order to explore what is occurring underneath those routines and other daily happenings.

BRIEF BACKGROUND

Britzman earned a Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Massachusetts in 1972, and went on to teach high school English for seven years. It was during that time she was shocked to realize she had students who could not read, leaving her stumped on how to help them (Britzman, 2009a). Following a year of reading and reflection, Britzman enrolled at the University of Massachusetts-Amherst and earned a master’s degree in reading and anthropology and later a Ph.D., completing an ethnographic study examining reading and literacy. Britzman began her career in higher education at Binghamton University, State University of New York in 1985, later moving on to accepting a position at York University in Toronto. It was during a fourth year in higher education that she began closely reading Freud and the important relevance of psychoanalysis. Discovering that all her areas of “experience” were becoming irrelevant because they were grounded solely in a United States setting, Britzman desired to employ a new area of study that was not so directed or dependent on her North American context (Britzman, 2009a). As a consequent, because of her deep interest in psychoanalysis, she decided to further her learning in that area. Currently, Britzman holds the honor of Distinguished Research Professor.
at York University in Toronto and the designation of psychoanalyst in addition to her small private clinical practice.

CRITICAL THINKER, PSYCHOANALYSIS, AND EDUCATION

Exploring the emotional life and extending her search into the unconscious, Britzman brings an original vision to critical pedagogy. She is interested in the significant themes related to power, social justice, knowledge, feminist and queer theories, generating a critical point of view that focuses on the affective components of learning and on educational ethics. Britzman’s reading of Paulo Freire’s *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* had a significant impact on the way she thought about what it means to read, particularly with respect to Freire’s notion of what it means to read the world (Britzman, 2009a). Freire’s focus on the psychological, social, and economic aspects of reading and its relationship to the subject (reader) illuminated for Britzman the existential dynamic involved in the teaching and learning process. Reading became liberated from print and placed into the problem of interpretation which made literacy an interpretive art. Freire led Britzman to the works of Herbert Marcuse, Erich Fromm, Hannah Arendt, Herman Melville, and others, thus leading to a world of literature (learning) and a deep abiding interest to the status of the conflict in education (Britzman, 2009a).

Taking a psychoanalytical approach to education, Britzman explores how students live within a larger social context (school) that is often conflictive: communities, cultures, histories. She examines how students live within and with their individual selves as well; a psychological world that is just as conflictive as the external one. Dynamic and shifting, internal and external realities organize the self and the psyche (Britzman, 1998; 2003a; 2011). Psychoanalysis is a process for education to begin to notice the emotional world of students as a basis of understanding themselves and others. For example, Freud examined the unconscious, and within that realm he explored education as an experience that included our emotions and desires, themes that are rarely explored within the teaching and learning process. As a consequence of this lack, unexplored patterns of adaptation established in childhood educational experiences persist and remain as superficial filters well into adulthood.

Particularly for those entering teacher education programs, unexplored patterns of adaptation or infantile theories of learning ultimately limit one’s ability to critically think and examine complexities inherent in education (Britzman, 2009a). Therefore, what naturally confronts that tension is to facilitate a critical environment that taps into our capacity to think, which is the experimental form of action. Moreover, an environment that fosters imagination is needed which is the grounds of our capability to read (learn), to take in the world, to construct what exists in the mind, and what comprises our desires. Reading frees the psyche, its grace, flexibility and imagination, and status of ideas. Without critical thought and imagination, the capability to bring things together, to feel, to love, to put meaning to the world would not exist (Britzman, 2009a).
Contrasting education with dreams,Britzman (2009b) argues that education leads one to the boarders of unconscious; it requires associations, interpretations and narratives capable of bringing to awareness for future constructions, things that are farthest from the mind. For Britzman, psychoanalysis is the approach needed to best understand the emotional meaning of education. This is realized in her written work where she—exploring psychoanalytic concepts as resistance, object relations and transference—gives a unique view to understand both dynamics of learning and phenomena that exists in a classroom (Britzman, 2006; 2007; 2011).

One of these phenomena is the resistance of one’s personal development toward the quest for knowledge. This emerges from the need for security, whereby the act of learning is unfortunately linked to one’s painful emotional experiences of helplessness, dependence and frustration (Britzman, 1998; 2006; 2007). Therefore, the concept of “difficult knowledge” means interference to one’s personal security, leading toward internal conflict. That is, the passion to accept one’s state in ignorance and to be simultaneously drawn to the internal invitation to know creates a contradictory situation (Britzman, 2003a). But without these resistances and desires, the pursuit toward knowledge remains untouched. Indeed, the dynamic interactions with individuals’ internal and external realities and their conflicting substances are present in school. Therefore, it is all the more critical that the classroom setting is viewed as a space where pupils act on their ontological search and epistemological yearnings, establish their relationships with others, and discover the affective aspects of being (Britzman, 1998; 2003a; 2009b).

LEARNING AN IMPOSSIBLE PROFESSION

In her work *Practice makes Practice A Critical Study of Learning to Teach*, Britzman (2003b) frames her thought in critical theory and draws from ethnographic methods to study student teaching as a personal experience of learning and as the social reproduction of a practice. A teacher’s struggles for constructing a teaching “voice” is not merely a personal phenomenon, but a struggle with authority, knowledge, and power to establish one’s identity in the contradictory realities of school environments with its administrative and contextual strains and unwritten expectations.

According to Britzman (2003b), “The mass experience of public education has made teaching perhaps the most familiar profession” (pp. 26–27); consequently, teaching is overpopulated with cultural myths and unconscious rules. And through the experiences of Jamie Owl and Jack August, Britzman (2003b) illuminates how student teachers’ (novices’) efforts to think and act like teachers are undermined by social, cultural, historical, and political variables outside of their control. School institutions have traditions and practices that include language of power and authority, which tend to produce silence and exclusion. Even the curriculum might ignore emotions, sexuality, experiences, and knowledge of the very human being desirous of becoming a teacher (Britzman, 1998, 2003b). Thus, the existential tension of becoming a teacher means whether to conform to the given, normative
practices of school, and thus joining the reproductive practices, or to begin to search out for the possible, more interactive world with diverse voices (Britzman, 1998; 2003b).

In searching, a teacher is never fully developed. Uncertainty and unevenness; the wandering mind, the responsibility and the affective relationships constitute the essence of education. A teacher works with human minds, and she or he guides newcomers to a world which she or he has not created. This is an ethical dilemma of education, to be dependent on and responsible for an unknown (Britzman, 2003b; 2006; 2007; 2009b; 2011). In the end, Bitzman’s thought significantly contributes to our understanding of the complex world of teaching and learning.

REFERENCES