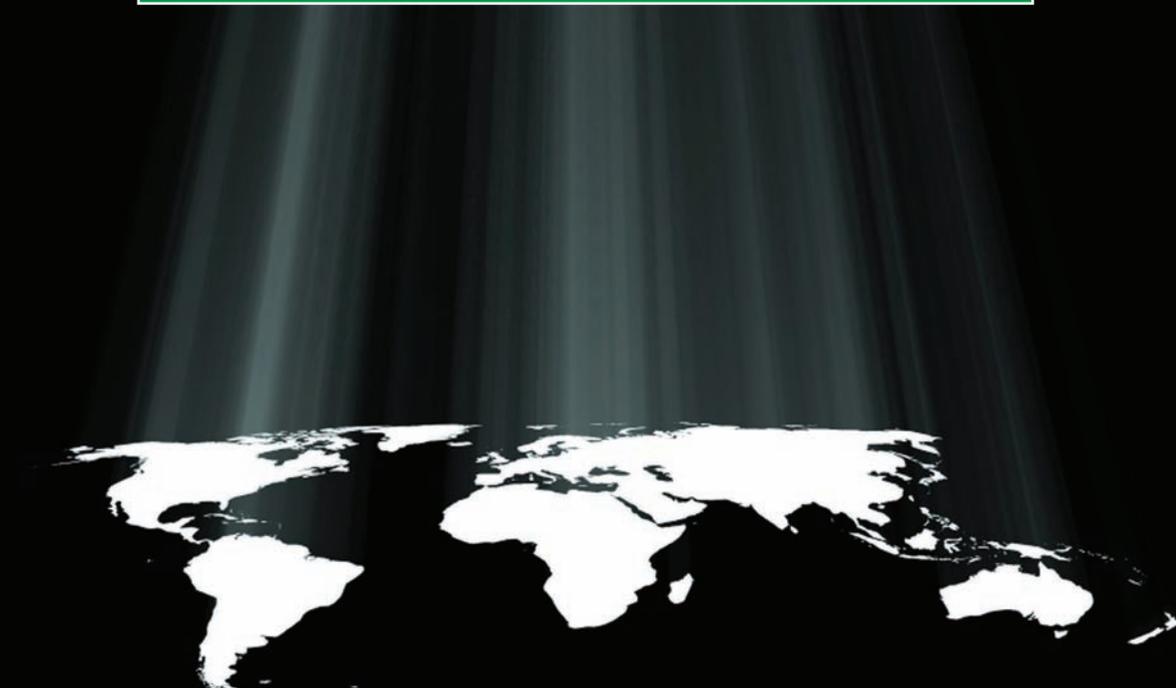


INTERNATIONAL ISSUES IN ADULT EDUCATION

Critical Education *Against* Global Capitalism

Karl Marx and Revolutionary Critical
Education

Paula Allman



Sense Publishers

Critical Education Against Global Capitalism

INTERNATIONAL ISSUES IN ADULT EDUCATION

Volume 3

Series Editor:

Peter Mayo, *University of Malta, Msida, Malta*

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This international book series attempts to do justice to adult education as an ever expanding field. It is intended to be internationally inclusive and attract writers and readers from different parts of the world. It also attempts to cover many of the areas that feature prominently in this amorphous field. It is a series that seeks to underline the global dimensions of adult education, covering a whole range of perspectives. In this regard, the series seeks to fill in an international void by providing a book series that complements the many journals, professional and academic, that exist in the area. The scope would be broad enough to comprise such issues as 'Adult Education in specific regional contexts', 'Adult Education in the Arab world', 'Participatory Action Research and Adult Education', 'Adult Education and Participatory Citizenship', 'Adult Education and the World Social Forum', 'Adult Education and Disability', 'Adult Education in Prisons', 'Adult Education, Work and Livelihoods', 'Adult Education and Migration', 'The Education of Older Adults', 'Southern Perspectives on Adult Education', 'Adult Education and Progressive Social Movements', 'Popular Education in Latin America and Beyond', 'Eastern European perspectives on Adult Education', 'An anti-Racist Agenda in Adult Education', 'Postcolonial perspectives on Adult Education', 'Adult Education and Indigenous Movements', 'Adult Education and Small States'. There is also room for single country studies of Adult Education provided that a market for such a study is guaranteed.

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Paula Allman



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*For Chris
and Danielle, Brett, Branden and Jim*

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FOREWORD

CAPITALISM IN CRISIS

Author's Foreword to the 2010 Sense Publishers' Edition

Critical Education Against Global Capitalism (CEAGC) was first published in 2001, just three weeks before the terrorist attacks of 9–11. Given the title and content of this book, this was clearly very bad timing. To make matters even worse, the hardback edition was dreadfully expensive, probably only affordable by wealthy individuals, who were not likely to have been attracted by the title. However, had they purchased it, read it and then followed the developments in capitalism over the next seven to eight years, it might have saved them a great deal of money. I was very disappointed by the price of the book but had been assured by my editor that there would be a paperback edition within six months. There was no reason to doubt this because the same assurance had been given and upheld by this publisher with regard to my 1999 book. However, approximately six weeks after 9–11 the USA Patriot Act became law, and the fate of the CEAGC 2001/2 paperback edition was sealed. I cannot prove a direct connection between the Patriot Act and the publisher deciding that a paperback edition was no longer viable, but I am certain that there is some connection between that decision and the general atmosphere of paranoia that gripped the U.S. in the aftermath of 9–11. Accordingly, there was a sense that anything critical of capitalism, and therefore the USA, might well have connections to terrorism, or at the very least subversive activities of some sort or another, thereby posing a potentially serious threat to U.S. security. To the contrary, CEAGC is about providing a much more secure future for U.S. citizens as well as the rest of humanity.

Over the next few years and backed-up by very favorable reviews, I tried repeatedly to challenge the publisher's decision but with no success. In 1997, Sense Publishers brought out my book, *On Marx*, which is a very concise introduction to the thinking of Karl Marx and the implications of his thinking for critical education. Throughout that book, whenever I thought the readers might want a fuller, or deeper, explanation, I referenced CEAGC. This was far from satisfactory because I knew readers would have difficulty accessing it; therefore, I renewed my efforts to have CEAGC published in paperback. I approached Peter Mayo, the editor of this series, and Peter deLiefde, the editor of Sense Publications. Finally, thanks to them, there was a positive result.

This paperback edition of CEAGC differs in a few minor and one major way from the original 2001 edition. First, CEAGC is now part of a new series, 'International Issues in Adult Education'; therefore, there is a new series introduction by Peter Mayo that details the scope of the series. This replaces the previous Series Foreword

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by Henry Giroux. In addition, I have made a few grammatical corrections, one or two typographical corrections and have removed the section on Further Readings that was in the 2001 edition. The Index has been shortened but remains very comprehensive. This Foreword, of course, is new; however, the major change is the addition of a substantial Author's Afterword entitled, like this Foreword, "Capitalism in Crisis", which draws upon Marx's explanation of capitalism, as detailed in chapters 2 and 3 of CEAGC, to reveal the causes of the most recent capitalist crisis—the one most people assume began in 2008. In other words, I offer an account of how we, the 'citizens' of global capitalism, wound up in this dire situation—an account that offers a much deeper understanding of the crisis than simply attributing it to culprits, like greedy bankers, subprime mortgages, derivatives and so on, which are some of the causes identified by the media and many politicians. Besides this recent crisis, there have been some other major changes to the human condition since the first publication of this book that I want to highlight. However, first, with respect to the new series in which CEAGC is now included, I want to make a few comments about the relationship between critical education for adults and critical education for younger people.

In this book, I describe an approach to critical education that was developed through my work with adults. I call it revolutionary critical education. It is an approach that aims to prepare people to engage in self and social transformation, and it also is an approach that could become the norm in a socially and economically transformed society. In those future conditions, adult revolutionary critical education would take the lead in the educational development of individuals such that critical education for younger people would aim to develop the social, intellectual and moral-ethical abilities that would prepare them for their future engagement in revolutionary critical adult education activities. As a consequence, education throughout life would be continually fostering the abilities of citizens who would be constantly engaged in democratically creating and recreating their society at every level. This may sound utopian, but I think it is a feasible utopia, which revolutionary critical educators should be striving to make a reality.

It has been nine years since the original publication of CEAGC, but other than a few comments about "Global Capitalism and the Human Condition"—the subject and title of chapter 1—I think this book has withstood the test of time, primarily because it is based on the thought of Karl Marx, which, itself, has withstood the test of time *par excellence*. Of course, there is no mention in chapter 1 of 9–11, 'The War on Terror' or the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq; I do not even mention al Qaeda, Bin Laden or the Taliban. However, some of the points made are relevant to and even portend of these developments and the type of future we might have expected. One does not have to entertain any sort of conspiracy theory to recognize how beneficial these events have been for the 'military-industrial complex' and the survival of capitalism, a survival that, ever since World War Two, has relied considerably on military spending. There was never any possibility that the end of the 'Cold War' would bring about a major reduction in defence spending, or the promised 'peace dividend'. Nevertheless, I suspect that in the 1990s there was a fair amount of nervousness about the future among those in the defence industries.

However, not one night's sleep would have been lost if they had been able to foresee that in the near future there would be a war, 'The War on Terror', that promises to be a perpetual, never-ending war—a war that no sane person would have wished for, but which is surely a dream-come-true for the defence industries.

I want to highlight the intractability of some of the worst aspects of the human condition that I described in 2001 and to comment on some new, or apparently new, developments as well. I begin with the new, actual and/or apparent.

The minority of human beings who live in relative comfort—albeit vastly different degrees of comfort—are much more technologically interconnected—texting and tweeting with abandon—than their counterparts were at the dawn of the new millennium. Moreover, the twenty-four hour news cycle has made many members of this minority more informed about, or at least aware of, the dehumanized conditions in which the majority of humanity attempts to exist—unfortunately, probably numbing this relatively privileged group to the horrors they witness. Adult and child slavery as well as human trafficking in general have become much more visible and widespread, reminding us that the evils we thought were buried in humanity's past can re-surface in equally if not more despicable forms. Piracy also has returned. Finally and shockingly, there is a growing underground market in commodified human body parts due to extremely poor people having to sell bits of themselves so that the rest of their bodies can survive.

On the plus side, it appears that the environmental movement has made great (although far from great enough) strides, significantly breaking down the walls of denial in the United States. At last, with the emergence of bio-fuels, agri-businesses might stop dumping their surpluses in foreign markets—a practice that ruined many local farmers in the recipient countries of the developing and underdeveloped world. However, before concluding that this will mean a better future for these societies, it is important to recognize what this will mean, and already has meant, for food prices. When food that has provided the staple diets of millions of people is sold as fuel, the actual supply of food declines relative to demand, and, as a consequence, prices of staple foods soar often to levels unaffordable by the people whose survival depends on access to these commodities. Although largely drummed out by the most recent financial crisis, it is important to remember that another crisis—The Global Food Crisis—began in 2007 just before the financial one. In cities around the world, people rioted because of the escalating cost—the price—of their staple foods. There is actually a specific connection between these crises, as the food crisis has been exacerbated by financial speculation on commodity food prices. This is one of the many reasons why I refer to the present situation as capitalism in crisis, rather than the global financial crisis. It is the latter, but it is something much larger and more complex as well.

If it were possible to report some improvements to the human condition I depicted in 2001, it would at least provide a glimmer of hope. Not only is it impossible, to my knowledge, to do so, but unfortunately, many of the abysmal aspects of the human condition I described then are even worse in 2010. The total number of human inhabitants on planet earth in 2010 is estimated to be 6.7 billion. According to a recent WFP (World Food Program) Report there are now, for the first time in

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history, 1 billion people, or approximately 1/6th of the world's population, facing chronic hunger—in other words, starvation (reported on CNN news, Sept. 15, 2009). By pointing to the growing middle class in both China and India, organizations that support the global capitalist system try to convince us that poverty is declining. With almost 1/6th of the world's population facing starvation, unemployment rampant and underemployment increasing dramatically alongside decades of declining real wages, such claims are at best fatuous. Furthermore, the polarization of the rich and poor has increased. Just as the poor have become even poorer, the rich have become ridiculously richer—with some of the high-rollers on Wall Street and in other financial centers around the world as well as many company CEOs receiving mind-boggling incomes. It is important to emphasize that this is as much a national as an international phenomenon. The most worrying trend of all, in my opinion, is the escalating numbers of human beings who have become surplus to the requirements of capitalism. They neither produce nor consume within market relations and thus exist on the margins of society and increasingly on the margins of humanity as well.

Even middle class and working class people who are currently employed have little reason to celebrate because they find themselves in a much more precarious situation. As employment becomes less secure, working-people become more vulnerable to exploitation and are in no position to complain or protest about their wages or their conditions of work. Many are beginning to realize that as their jobs become deskilled, or deintellectualized, and also casualized, they are likely to be replaced by cheaper labor either at home or abroad.

Neoliberalism, both the ideology and the policy and practice related to it, is discussed extensively in the chapters that follow. One year ago, it became blatantly obvious that neoliberal ideas were partly responsible for the financial crisis. As a result, it appeared that neoliberalism had received a lethal injection; however, it now looks like the injection did not take. The resilience of this ideology is truly amazing but also frightening. Deregulation, which is a central tenet of neoliberalism, may be curtailed to some extent—we will have to wait and see. The first indication hangs on whether President Obama manages to get any effective regulatory legislation through the U.S. Congress. Other tenets of neoliberalism, such as free markets, free trade, small central government, individualism and so on, have become so embedded in 'global common sense' that they have received scant scrutiny or criticism. In fact, when politicians take action that implies a challenge to any of these ideas, they apologize for having to do so, stressing that the action is only temporary and assuring that all will return to normal once this or that crisis has been resolved.

Globalization continues unabated, driven during the past decade particularly by a plethora of financial products and an intensification of financial globalization. The current financial crisis has revealed just how tightly and precariously integrated global finance has become. As would be expected, groups protesting against globalization or one of its consequences have proliferated; however, these groups and the protests in which they engage are no more focused on challenging capitalism, the true enemy, in 2010 than they were in 2001 (despite the presence of a random

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anti-capitalism banner or t-shirt on some of the demonstrations). Sometimes there is an absence of authentic affinity among members of these groups, and, more often than not, there is even less affinity between the various groups of protestors. A comprehensive understanding of capitalism is the only factor that could provide the unity and solidarity these people desperately need if they are to wage an effective challenge to the injustices against which they passionately protest. CEAGC can provide this understanding of capitalism—what it is, how it works, how and why it develops as it does and what we can and should do to challenge and eventually abolish it along with all the absurd consequences it produces. Adult education (revolutionary critical adult education) has never had a more important role to play—in fact, it has a pivotal role to play—in preparing people to challenge this unjust socioeconomic system that increasingly dominates the lives of all of us and robs us of our humanity by dehumanizing the vast majority of human beings and fragmenting our sense of responsibility for one another and the earth we inhabit. Revolutionary critical adult education also has the equally pivotal role of unleashing the critical and creative potential that resides within us all so that we can become the creators and re-creators of our collective conditions of existence and thereby people capable of developing our own and others' humanity in a profoundly positive direction.

*Paula Allman
Nottingham, England
February 2010*

FOREWORD BY PETER MCLAREN

CHALLENGING IMPERIAL CAPITAL AND THE STRUGGLE FOR CRITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS

Paula Allman's Revolutionary Critical Pedagogy

In her important new book, *Critical Education Against Global Capitalism*, Paula Allman raises a series of crucial questions for the future of educational criticism: How has capitalism managed to become fully internationalized and in the process so completely naturalized that we continue to live within the belly of this beast without prodding it to vomit us up, let alone clawing our way directly through its guts? How are we implicated in this Frankensteinian creation and why do we continue to obey its illogical and predatory demands? How does capital and the unending limits to its ratio of exploitation continue to expand and, in the Gramscian sense, to 'win the consent' of wider communities of the oppressed? How does the material production of the objective world get confused in current educational theorizing with the materiality of discourse, thereby camouflaging the role of social power in maintaining the social division of labor and concealing the socio-historical relations within which discourses, themselves, are produced? How does such a confusion ultimately serve to underwrite a market-driven social order grounded in the exploitation of the direct producers?

In answering these questions, and a host of others, and in challenging the radical ahistoricity and anti-materialism of contemporary theories of education, Allman argues for a materialist praxis geared towards a global transformation. She does this through the pages of a book that is at once an impassioned indictment of the barbaric nature of capitalism and at the same time a celebration of the catalyzing power of revolutionary praxis.

When I first read through the manuscript of this book, I was gripped by a feeling that its publication would mark an important moment in the history of critical pedagogy. After several readings, I feel even more assured that this is indeed the case. It is a book whose time has come. This statement might strike some education pundits as absurd, given that Allman's text reaches back for its moorings into a history of Marxist criticism that some have condemned as hopelessly irrelevant to these 'new times.' Nothing could be further from the truth. In this case, 'going back' to Marx is a singularly progressive move and represents a giant step forward for educational criticism. What is 'absurd' is continuing along the same rudderless path of educational criticism, whose postmodern meanderings have led us back into the jaws of capital once again, after thrilling diversions and James Bond-like adventures with the postmodern theorists. And there is nobody more qualified as a guide in this endeavor than Paula Allman. She has been at the forefront of Marxist

criticism for decades, and her work in the area of revolutionary pedagogy has helped illuminate the work of Gramsci and Freire for generations of educators. She is part of a bold new group of Marxist educationalists in Britain – Glenn Rikowski, Mike Cole, Dave Hill, Andy Green, and others – who are taking Marxist educational theory to new heights and reshaping current debates over educational policy. That I have been given the opportunity of writing the introduction to another of her Greenwood Press books is, for me, a special honor. The reason is simple: I consider Paula Allman to be one of the best critical educational scholars on the planet. For those readers unfamiliar with her work, the evidence for my assessment should be clear after reading *Critical Education Against Global Capitalism*.

If there is an educator that lives and breathes the dialectic, it is Paula Allman. For Allman, it is absolutely crucial that current capitalist social relations, with their irreducible structural tendency to overcapacity, be dialectically grasped and understood. In making this assertion, she takes Marxist historical materialist critique as her mode of theoretical and political engagement. She works from a tradition of reading Marx dialectically (i.e., reading Marx's dialectical critique of capitalism dialectically), a reading that permits her to map the movement and development of the material reality of capitalism. In short, hers is a reciprocal reading that is neither reductive nor teleological nor one that occupies an historical space of irreversible closure. It is, in other words, a decidedly open reading of Marx as well as of capitalism. Only by employing such a critique, maintains Allman, is it possible to identify the myriad roles that capital plays in our lives and to explain the differential educational practices and outcomes that are endemic to capitalist social relations. That is, only by employing historical materialist analysis is it possible to analyze schooling practices from the perspective of the underlying system of exploitation that deploys them. Historical materialist critique makes it aggressively possible to read the world of global capitalism critically, to rudely address the dialectical unfolding of its essence and to lay bare the way it has been internalized and integrated into the labyrinthine dimensions of our everyday subjective awareness.

Allman uses Marx and his primary texts as the key to understanding the workings of contemporary capitalist formations, employing his insights as a solvent to dislodge the crusted over mystifications and misunderstandings that, over the years, have clouded our ability to map the complex workings of capital's internal mechanisms, especially the glacial shifts that mark capitalist social relations over the last half century. The result is a pristine, unvarnished reading of Marx, essential to understanding the ways in which the law of value has insinuated itself into the furthest extremities of our social universe. In keeping with Marx's central insight, Allman asserts that the most fundamental social relations are those in which people produce their material world and those in which they circulate, exchange, and consume the results of that production.

Drawing upon the work of Marx, Paulo Freire, and Antonio Gramsci, Allman has developed a seasoned and sophisticated approach to pedagogy that she calls "revolutionary critical pedagogy", a practice of critique and a critique of practice that she insists can enable us to grasp the world-historical catalytic activity of material production, and the manifold ways in which the material production of the

objective world is linked to the global processes of exploitation based on the laws of motion of capital and the appropriation of surplus labor. This is no small feat, and Paula Allman is one of the few educators today that is up to such a task. This is especially true at this precarious time when the educational left is itself undergoing something of a crisis, when the nervature of a neoliberal politics is beginning to root itself in educational policy-making, and to camouflage itself under a radical leftist posturing. At a time when – at least in the US context – notable radical education scholars have unburdened themselves of former leftist positions, have ridiculed Marxists as Precambrian economic determinists, and have self-extremely dismissed those who call for anti-capitalist struggle as misguided extremists, Allman’s book could not come at a more advantageous moment for the left.

Nobody likes uncomfortable truths, and Allman’s book will surely provoke discomfort among some readers, and rage among others. Hers is not an abstract desideratum. Its unapologetic and concrete sense-making cuts to the bone. The vagaries and vicissitudes of capitalist domination and the conceptual apparatuses that yield our means of rationalizing it are unceremoniously exposed. Capitalism is revealed as a world-system, an abundant and all-permeating social universe that, in its endless and frenetic drive to expand, co-operates in implacable and irreparable denials of social justice and shameless practices of exploitation. Such is the pervasive reach of capital that no aspects of the human condition are left unrent. Indeed, our very subjectivities are stuck in the ‘muck’ of capital. And the momentum that capitalism has achieved makes it unlikely that it can be derailed without tremendous effort and profound sacrifice.

Allman asserts, following Marx, that living labor creates the value form of wealth that is historically specific to capitalism. In other words, the drive to augment value is what drives the capitalist machine. Allman provides a comprehensive understanding of how capitalism works that enables readers to acquire a profound grasp of the process of the globalization of capital. She does this by exploring the inner dynamics of capitalism, how it raises social productivity to an unfathomable level that does nothing to limit scarcity. She also reveals how capitalism’s relations of distribution are simply the results of the relations of production, placing a limit on consumption by limiting the ‘effective’ demand of the vast majority of the world’s population. She reveals, in turn, how material use values are only available in the commodity form, and how use-value is internally related and thus inseparable from the exchange-value of the commodity, which is determined by labor-time. The wealth that is constituted by capitalist societies is not the vast array of use values but – value itself. Capitalism is perhaps best understood as a global quest to produce value.

Allman’s exegesis is exhaustlessly – and relentlessly – focussed on the texts of Marx. This is unusual for a book whose intended audiences include educators and those involved in educational reform. It has been decades since Marx has been put on the agenda of progressive educators in any serious way. During the 1980s – before the disputatious fragmentation and internal dissolution of North America’s education left – Marx was deputized by some scholars to help capture forms of analysis that could help fathom the latent depths behind the manifest surface of the

schooling process, that could reveal the intentions behind received commonsensical norms of bourgeois educational life and the doxa of bureaucratic disciplines that were being apprised to make sense of such life inside classrooms. In those heady days, Marxism contributed to an understanding of the political economy of school tracking and actively challenged the myth of meritocracy. By the time the Soviet Union and the Eastern bloc states collapsed, it was already being argued – even by some on the left – that Marxism was the veteran of too many revolutionary campaigns, it had been beaten about by the winds of too many wars, had become emptied of whatever potential and promise it once offered as a force for liberation, and in the process had become desiccated beyond rejuvenation. And especially in the face of the irreverent children it had spawned as a result of the unholy relationships it had formed in the bohemian salons of the postmodernists, it was now time to throw Marxism into the philosophical dustbin as a signal contributor to one of history’s valiant but failed attempts at achieving social justice for the world’s aggrieved populations. For some of the giddy children of such unions caught up in the post-Marxist cult of novelty, Marxism was too passe and anachronistic, sexy only when worn as an ironic, retro style. Instead of joining the postmodernists in exalting the mundane, thematizing dissolution, celebrating creative disequilibrium, or foregrounding the absurdity of everyday existence, Allman brings humanity face-to-face with its own demons.

Contemporary capitalist relations constitute a crisis-driven pursuit and are exposed by Allman as a resplendent hemorrhaging of the labor-capital relation, where commodities vomited up from the vortex of accumulation are hungrily consumed by tormented creatures, creatures who are deliriously addicted not only to new commercial acquisitions, but to the adrenaline rush of accumulation itself. Here the ‘essence’ of an individual in Gramsci’s sense, is equivalent to the totality of social relations within global capitalist society. Few educators have made the case that individuals are the products of the contradictions within capitalist social relations more boldly and more convincingly than Allman. It is an assumption that guides the entirety of Allman’s text.

Allman’s assumption is especially urgent today, given that we exist at a time in which the labor hour has become denser and less porous, and contains, to use Allman’s words, “more minutes of value-creating labor.” The recent degree of density of the labor hour has become the standard that is reflected in the “socially necessary labor-time” that determines the value of a particular commodity. What is most disturbing – yet totally predicable – is that this new degree of density of the labor hour is celebrated by neoliberal pundits as ‘progress.’ Allman notes, following Moishe Postone, that domination occurs through the reduction of socially necessary labor time (the average time it takes for a laborer of average skill in specific social and historical conditions to produce a particular type of commodity).

The force of value’s domination can best be understood, argues Allman, by examining capitalism’s totalizing and universalizing tendencies; in other words, by comprehending its specific form of global social domination. After Postone, she argues that while capitalist exploitation through the production of value is abstract, it is also quasi-objective and concrete. In other words, we experience abstract labor

in concrete or objective formations that are constituted subjectively in human actions and in human feelings, compulsions and emotions. Value is constituted by abstract labor within social relations of production that are objective and personal. This accounts, in part, for the particularly dynamic ‘hold’ that abstract labor has on each and every one of us.

Allman perceptively notes that capital’s attempt to relocate its contradictions on a global scale is accompanied by processes of reversals, that is, by a re-location of these contradictions back into national, regional and local contexts (but not always those some contexts from which they originated). She maintains that these reverse processes occur simultaneously (and dialectically) with the homogenizing force of globalization and that such reverse processes also occur unevenly, “moving away from the global arena towards more local venues when the local ground has been prepared for new or renewed efforts at successful capitalist accumulation – when, for example, unemployment or the threat of a jobless future has effectively undermined working-class strength and militancy and thus guaranteed greater docility and ‘flexibility’ within the local labor-force.” Such movements, working in conjunction with other ‘flexible’ readjustments in capitalist accumulation strategies, make a considerable impact on ideas. Allman cites as one example, the current post-modernist emphasis on the relativity of truth. Such “ideas” often serve as legitimizing mechanisms within the dominant ideological discourse and give functional ballast to the contradictions that currently proliferate in the world of capitalist social relations. In other words, Allman, maintains that “the re-emergence of capitalist crisis during the last quarter of the twentieth century affected, and continues to affect, the dominant ideology.” Marxist-driven historical materialist analysis is the best way to capture the internal dynamics of this reproductive process.

Throughout *Critical Education Against Global Capitalism* Allman insists on a principled and nuanced reading of Marx that is not compromised by common misunderstandings that have blanketed the field of Marxist scholarship for decades, smothering efforts to bring accurate readings of Marx into the light of day. Her own efforts are both conceptually invigorating and compellingly erudite and demand serious study, not least by critical educators themselves. Allman’s central thesis is that Marx’s efforts were directed at exposing “the inherent and fundamental contradictions of capitalism.” She argues that these contradictions are as real today as they were in Marx’s time. In making this claim, she mines Marx’s notion of the ‘historical specificity’ of capitalist development and capitalism as both a ‘process’ and a ‘relation’ that has preconditions. Capitalism’s preconditions become transformed, over time, into a complex result. By examining the constituent results of the complex and concrete social totality – the ‘fertile dungheap’ of capitalism’s contradictions in which all of us live and labor – Allman argues that it is possible to dialectically ascertain the preconditions or the essence of capitalism. She enjoins readers to dismiss the criticisms of Marxism as essentialist and teleological and to rely not on the perspectives of Marxists but on the writings of Marx himself, writings that constitute a critique of relations specific to capitalism. Allman practices what she preaches. By getting under Marx’s theoretical skin, so-to-speak, and by analyzing the manner in which Marx thinks, and by explaining how Marx uses specific

concepts, Allman is able to provide us with a brilliant exegesis of the three volumes of Marx's *Capital*, revealing the inherent unity of Marx's dialectical conceptualization of capitalism.

The most stubborn and pernicious manifestations of capitalism's contemporary logic is that of neo-liberalism, what Allman describes as "an effective and efficient pedagogue of capitalist truths" and a "tyrannical schoolmaster." She lists neo-liberalism's "valedictorians" as "the 'Third Way' politicians" who quench the thirst that their constituents have for social justice with the "velvet version of neo-liberalism" or "watered-down meanings of fairness, social justice, and human rights." This, of course, translates into "business as usual but clothed in the regressively transmuted language of social democracy."

With the aid of dialectical thinking, Allman takes readers into the engine room of Marx's thought, and moves gracefully between the pistons of Marx's pounding insights, focussing as she goes on the most essential ingredient of Marx's dialectical conceptualization, the concept of 'internal relations', specifically the dialectical contradiction, or the internally related dialectical nature of capitalism itself. She reveals how the value form "moves between and binds all the social relations and habituated practices of capitalism into an interlocking network that constitutes what is often referred to as the social structure of capitalist society." It is absolutely essential, notes Allman, to understand that the fundamental problem with capitalism is not in the arena of distribution or consumption, but lies within the social relations of production. Allman's is a dialectical conceptualization of capital that perceptively uncovers the antagonistic terrain of capital that is inherent in the labor-capital relation itself. The internal relations of capital are rife with dialectical contradictions that This mediative role is far from innocent, and affects our dreams, desires, and beliefs about the meaning and purpose of life. Allman notes, for instance, how capitalists are concerned mainly with how much surplus value they can realize in the name of their commodities. Life is reduced to acquisition, to accumulation, to the winning and holding of power. Life becomes death, and death becomes life. It is the philosophy of Wall Street's funeral directors presiding over the cremation of democracy.

One of Allman's many important contributions to our understanding of Marx and Marxism occurs when she identifies several fundamental misperceptions that continue to plague socialists and liberal critics of capitalism. Both groups often advocate a fairer distribution of wealth, arguing that the current inequitable distribution that characterizes contemporary capitalist societies results from property relations, in particular, the private ownership of the means of production. It is at this particular juncture that Allman parts company with many of her fellow Marxists. Reading capital in a way that is consistent with Marx's use of the labor theory of value or law of value to explain the laws, tendencies, and motions of capitalism and to analyze the historically specific form of wealth in capitalist societies, she identifies – correctly, in my estimation – the real culprit as the internal or dialectical relation that exists between capital and labor within the capitalist production process itself – a social relation in which capitalism is intransigently rooted. This social relation - axiomatic to the production of abstract labor – deals

with how already existing value is preserved and new value (surplus value) is created. It is this internal dialectical relationship that is mainly responsible for the inequitable and unjust distribution of use-values, and the accumulation of capital that makes the fat cats rich at the expense of the poor. It is this relation between capital and labor that sets in train the conditions that make possible the rule of capital by designating production for the market, fostering market relations and competitiveness, and producing the historically specific laws and tendencies of capital. True, private property is a factor. But private property, commodities, and markets all pre-date the specific labor-capital relations of production and serve as pre-conditions for it. And once capital develops they are transformed into the results of that relation. This is why Allman doggedly pursues the abolition of the labor-capital relationship as the means for laying the groundwork for liberation from scarcity. Allman believes that the future of humanity turns on a credible and effective challenge to capital. This book contributes mightily to such a challenge.

Allman also addresses the misconception of historical inevitability. She rejects the existence of an historical and progressive inevitability, arguing against the notion that socialism will grow automatically and inevitably out of the contradictions of capitalism. History does not unfold “according to either its own inherent teleology or in accord with some external teleological force.” She notes that “Marx was well aware that barbarism was just as likely to be the successor to capitalism as socialism.” In fact, she argues that Marx would not have been motivated to undertake his vast and world-shaking intellectual project had he not feared that sophisticated forms of barbarism would be the likely successor to capitalism.

Allman also criticizes the familiar Marxist insistence that the industrial proletariat be the poster boy for the future of socialism. This is because the future of socialism means the abolition of the capitalist production process and the value form of wealth. Nor did Marx argue that socialism would entail only the transfer of the already existing means of production from private to social ownership. Allman steadfastly follows Marx in calling for a movement or process leading to an alternative, socialist society, and from there to a movement leading to a communist social formation, one that would involve the creation of new social relations and the transformation of people, processes, and objects within these newly created relations. Such relations would be collective, collaborative and harmonious in which human beings and the products of their labor would be transformed for the betterment of humanity and the natural world. Allman is sincere and passionate in her vision for achieving the full development of human potential and the full unfolding and enrichment of individuality. Of course, to advocate for communism is a staggering admission today. Yet if there is no alternative but an alternative to capital, then history will surely absolve what in the minds of many educators would appear as reckless and dangerous advice.

The picture that Allman paints of capitalism disabuses us of any pretensions to which we may still serenely cling – that it can be reformed and made productive for the elimination of worldwide scarcity or redeemed for salutary or civilized ends. In fact, it is functionally deracinating, a social relation that breeds poverty, racism, sexism and all and every manner of exploitation. In Allman’s Marxist

imaginary, capitalism is a traumatic moment, an unhealable wound, a catastrophism of seismic proportions. Her reaction is one that is uncommon today, at a time when capitalism seems as natural as the air that we breathe. But is it unreasonable? Do we transgress the sacred territory of convention to consider the case that capitalism persistently correlates with oppression? That it is an irredeemable abomination? Or that democracy as it is currently practiced in developed nations is an artificial overlay on more fundamental relations of exploitation marked by race, gender, and class injustices? This is the challenge that Allman puts before the reader. Throughout *Critical Education Against Global Capitalism*, capitalism is presented in all of its fine-grained detail and spine-tingling horror and forcefully execrated by the author in a relentlessly logical way, regardless of the discomfort that this logic may present for the reader. In its synchronization of two agendas – that of illustrating Marx’s dialectical understanding of capital and its application in the development of a revolutionary critical education – it constitutes a challenge to the repressive bourgeois order. Capital is not an inert thing, or corporate raider dressed in a business suit preening around Wall street. It is demarcated by Allman as both a relation and a process that takes place within a specific historical epoch. As a relation and a process it is difficult to identify. What we see are its effects. What we need to understand are its causes.

I agree with Allman that teaching practices that are grounded in a synthesis of Freire, Gramsci, and Marx can indeed work in a formal context. Allman’s discussion and analysis of her own teaching is highly illuminating. Her perspicacious grasp of Freire is especially welcome, given the often grave misperceptions about Freire’s pedagogy that have proliferated over the last several decades, following in the wake of what has been a steady domestication and embourgeoisement of his work. Following in the footsteps of Freire, Allman successfully activated in her classroom a pedagogical site that facilitated the development of critical consciousness, a mode of dialectical engagement with everyday life that disposed her students to reflect upon their own historical experiences. They achieved this through the act of decoding everyday life and in the process were liberated to deal critically with their own reality in order to transform it. Students learned that they do not freely choose their lives, that their identities and their objects of consumption are adaptive responses to the way that the capitalist system manipulates the realm of necessity. With an perceptive understanding that Freirean pedagogy is decidedly prescriptive and that Freirean educators are unwaveringly directive, she created the context for her students to name their world and through dialogue come to creatively reshape their historical reality. She carefully delineates Freirean pedagogy from its imitators who would turn the teacher into a passive facilitator; she does this by arguing that, after all, is it not prescriptive that we should ask students to ‘read the world’ critically in order to transform it in a way that will foster humanization? Is it not also prescriptive to demand that the world need transforming and that education should play a critical role in this effort? Furthermore, shouldn’t educators use their authority that comes from their own critical reading of the world and their understanding of Freire’s philosophy of education? Isn’t the most facilitative, non-prescriptive and non-directive form of progressive teaching doubly prescriptive in

the sense that it is a prescription for non-prescription as well as for political domestication and adapting successfully to the social universe of capital and the law of value? Of course Freirean educators direct and prescribe, but in a way redolent of humility and a spirit of mutuality.

Allman recognizes only too well that most critics who decry capitalism complain endlessly about its effects while falling abysmally short of advocating for the overall dismantling of capitalist social relations of production. Regrettably, such critics stubbornly reveal 'a general acceptance of the concept of liberal democracy or a resigned acceptance of the common sense notion that this is as democratic as it is possible to be in complex social orders' (p. 224).

Allman advocates the practice of ideology critique, of unpacking the mystifications and lies that comprise the "Achilles' heel" of capitalist hegemony. There currently exists, notes Allman, propitious conditions for challenging the capitalist myth of progress by undressing capitalism as a positive force and revealing the mangled flesh of its underside. Real progress is not something that is irreversible. In fact, under capitalism, progress is likely to be highly reversible. Not surprisingly, notes Allman, do we find the persistence of the idea that we live in a world where there exists more variety and choice for all. And that this is a good thing. In reality, however, only the rich have more choice because their choices are directly linked to their purchasing power. More specifically, those who possess most of the choices in today's capitalist society are "those with purchasing power, who are ever-needy, multi-needy and ever-ready to shop." What is consistently ignored in this proposition is that millions of people have little or no purchasing power and whatever purchasing power they may have is steadily diminishing under neo-liberalism. What has happened here is that the idea of "having more" has been decoupled from the eradication of scarcity and recoupled to the idea of variety and choice. Allman asks: More choice for whom? And for what purposes? And in whose interest will this increased choice serve?

What Allman refers to as "revolutionary critical thinking" is grounded in Marx's revolutionary theory of consciousness that grasps the internal relations between thought and human practice, or consciousness and material reality. It is dedicated to disabusing educators of the misguided idea that liberal democracy can be made to work by holding capital accountable and forcing it to become more responsible, or, in words made infamous by George W. Bush, more 'compassionate.' Hers is a critique dedicated to denaturalizing the terms and categories used to legitimize and promote bourgeois institutions and state apparatuses but also one that links this internal critique of the bourgeois social order to wider social, historical and economic processes. It is an approach that decries attempts merely to revise, delimit or dehierarchize existing power arrangements or challenge their functional effectivity without challenging the way power is constituted within the social division of labor in the context of the separation between the ruling classes who own the means of production and the working classes who do not. In short, it is a pedagogy as a form of revolutionary praxis, one that links all thought and action to transformative movement, to a movement that breaks through the fetters that constrain our ability to denounce exploitation and to struggle against it. Allman's approach stands in

stark political contrast to postmodernist critical practice, which merely re-orders the antimony between capital and labor into a perfumed equilibrium, and which “mimics the surface movements” that exist within capital’s desperate attempt to order, to displace and to temporarily resolve its internal contradictions.

Allman speaks against the “risable utopia” prompted by people who cling to the “ludicrous notion” that “liberal democracy can continue to buffer us from the worst excesses of capitalism and that it can enable us to continue to live as civilized beings regardless of the deepening and expanding of capital’s contradictions and the attendant crisis in capitalist social relations.” With eloquence and acumen, she attempts to “envision a future beyond the ideologically reinforced horizon of capitalism and its political handmaiden, liberal democracy.” While some of the limits to our emancipation are not of our own making, they still can be forcibly challenged. The limits within which we make ourselves can be smashed in the final instance by educative acts of critical consciousness and collective acts of revolutionary struggle. What happens, for instance, when the working-class no longer valorizes for capital? We need to work towards the direct appropriation by workers of the value they produce, thus abolishing the regime of value and of work. Of course, this entails, among other things, the massification of productive forces, with the direct appropriation by workers of their product. Allman still believes that the struggle of the working-class – the class that includes all those who are as well as all those who are potentially productive laborers in the production of surplus-value within the labor-capital relation – constitutes an irreducible limit to capitalist development and the seedbed for internationalist revolutionary alliance-building. Here she looks to a working-class management of its own power that does not require the mediation of a vanguard party since, in Allman’s view, the vanguard must be interchangeable with the masses.

Allman advocates for a “counter-capitalist, pro-humanity form of world-wide togetherness, or universality.” To bring about such an epochal shift in the capitalist social relations that dominate humanity will require us to reject and dismantle “the habituated structure of human social relations that we are all involved in reproducing and sustaining” through our daily grind of “uncritical/reproductive praxis.” This, in turn, will require the practice of coherence, that is, the formation of a coherent identity based on developing ideas, values and beliefs that are fundamentally “logical and ethically consistent” and which can help us work through the contradictions of “our multi-layered identities” in order to make sense of the diversity and flux of the contemporary lifeworld. Of course, Allman is aware that the creation of the coherent revolutionary self knows no final closure and is “constantly in the ‘making’ within a process that involves our constant striving to reach out to and become internally related to every other man, woman and child that inhabits this globe.”

Allman follows Marx in calling for a revolutionary praxis leading to an alternative society that would involve the creation of new social relations and the transformation of people, processes, and objects within these newly created relations. This will entail a collective, collaborative, and critical movement to create new harmonious relations in which we and the products of our labor are transformed for the

betterment of humanity and the natural world. Only within such a context, can the full unfolding and enrichment of our individual and collective potentialities be made possible.

In the final instance, the struggle to “obliterate capital’s horizon” must be an educative one, and Allman places considerable importance on the development of a revolutionary critical pedagogy. For Allman, schools must become theaters for social action, political precincts in which a broad struggle for bringing about a new society can be waged, a society free from exploitation, free from want, and from its historical role of training students to be servants of abstract labor. Of course, the struggle for educational reform is a necessary but insufficient struggle. To create a world outside of the social universe of capital means smashing the totality of interlocking internal relations that keep capital in endless motion. Saying “no” to capitalism means “living the no” by “struggling to transform it into an affirmation of humanization.” This mandates pushing human possibilities to their limits, in order to achieve what Marx describes as the abolition of “the existing state of things.” Revolution, Allman maintains, requires us to fight the self-expansion of value and “involves not just the transformation of our social and economic conditions but also the transformation of ourselves and the way we relate to one another as social beings”.

Allman’s vision is a coherent one, as is the praxis that she has so meticulously mapped out in the pages that follow. It is a praxis that calls for a radical re-envisioning of educational theory, the basis of which appears in the chapters ahead. They may be the most important chapters currently available for the formation of future educators. Engaging them with coherence will require a willingness to break with old ideas, the courage to face overwhelming odds, and a determination to follow the path of revolutionary knowledge into uncharted territory. Allman assures us that with Marx, Freire, and Gramsci taking turns at illuminating the path ahead, our journey will take us into unknown battlefields, where wars of position will be waged and battles won.

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INTRODUCTION

The cruel absurdity of capitalism has spread unrelentingly throughout the global reach of human existence, wreaking havoc and despair everywhere. Abolish it we must, but to do this, first, we need to understand it. This book is about that understanding and also about critical education and the crucial and essential part it has to play in mounting an effective challenge to capitalism. I write with a sense of urgency because there are millions of human beings who desperately await this challenge.

Humanity enters its third millennium engulfed in a world of escalating social divisions, injustice and oppression, with an environment in varying stages of ecological decay. Daily we are bombarded by the schizoid media images of capitalism's extremes. Within the space of a minute, we are confronted with first the ravaged faces and wasted bodies of some of the thousands suffering famine and starvation or the millions living in the world's urban slums and ghettos (millions who find hunger an inescapable fact of life), and then suddenly, before we have time to take in the enormity of their situation, our attention is switched to the gleaming, yet vacuous smile and sumptuously adorned figure of some insatiably extravagant, super-wealthy, scandal- and neuroses-prone individual who is one of the select members of the global upper class. Are we meant to ignore the unintentional juxtaposition of these images, the stark and absurd differences they portray, in much the same way that the differences in their real-life circumstances go unquestioned and unheeded daily? Is this part of our conditioning, a conditioning that allows us to tolerate and accept such immoral and illogical contrasts and absorb them unconsciously into our notions of normality and inevitability? How do we accept and live with such absurdity, with the devastation and destruction that capitalism brings with increasing regularity to both humanity and the planet? It makes no logical or ethical sense that this is the human condition at a point in history when human beings have the potential to eliminate scarcity and eradicate every kind of human deprivation, and when we also have the potential to find ways to prevent further ecological damage and possibly even rectify much of the damage that has already occurred. It is not those who live in their privately guarded citadels of wealth who have created this potential; it is the culmination of human ingenuity and endeavor over many centuries. This potential was created by human beings, and it could be used to meet the needs of all human beings, while also improving and then sustaining the health of the planet; yet so long as we exist under the domination of capital, human need and environmental health must be denied.

The way out of this labyrinth of devastation and destruction is through a process of revolutionary social transformation aimed at the abolition of the absurdity—the illogical 'logic'—of capitalism. Critical education is essential to this process, to its instigation and also to nourishing its continuing development and expansion. Critical education, of course, is only one of the many components that will be needed to form a movement capable of challenging and then transforming capitalism, but it is the one that is the focus of this book. Without critical education—albeit a particular type of critical education—we will never know exactly what to challenge, nor will

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we have a clear idea of what must be transformed in order to create a future of social and economic justice for all of humanity.

The process of revolutionary social transformation must begin in the hearts, minds and social relations of people, and in that sense it has already begun. Individuals and groups, in various locations throughout the world, have begun to challenge capitalism. In some cases they are taking on struggles that have existed since the dawn of capitalism; in other cases, challenges have been mounted that are directed specifically at capital's most recent and devastating manifestation, neo-liberalism. In response to this growing discontent, we are fed with a steady diet of ideological red-herrings designed to garner our acquiescence or at least our resignation. Slogans such as 'the death of the subject' and 'the end of history' are meant to silence our anxiety and extinguish our hope. We are chastened to be patient and flexible as we enter the 'new reality' of the 'information age' and the 'postmodern' era, carefully herded like sheep toward the one inescapable conclusion that capitalism desperately needs us to draw—the conclusion that 'there is no alternative' to capitalism. By explaining how capitalism works, how it grows and develops and what it requires to sustain its growth and development, I intend to reveal the ideological underpinnings of these ideas and also to reveal the necessary role they play in assuring capital's survival.

I begin from the premise that a socially and economically just and an authentically democratic alternative to capitalism is possible, but that it can only be created by people who understand why capitalism invariably leads to crisis and why of necessity it is driven to produce wealth for a minority and either endemic insecurity or perpetual poverty and scarcity for the vast majority, and people who also understand why its remedies for environmental destruction must be inextricably linked to profit margins. The future of humanity and the planet depends on these understandings. This is why a global process of critical education—or what in this book I call revolutionary critical education—is required. There have never been more propitious conditions for this type of education because never before has the contradictory and absurd nature of capitalism been so transparent. My argument is that all efforts, large and small, to challenge capitalism must be educational in nature. As Antonio Gramsci (1971) stressed, every social relation formed in the struggle against capitalist hegemony—that is, the economic, social and political forms of domination and manipulated direction it exerts on our lives—must be an educative relation, a reciprocal relation of mutual learning (p. 350). Critical education means different things to different people, but in this book I use it to refer to education that is aimed at preparing people to engage in revolutionary social transformation and that is also, in and of itself, a form of revolutionary social transformation. This is why I frequently qualify and emphasize my meaning of the term by calling it *revolutionary critical education*. I propose an approach to critical education that might serve as a central core within our transformational strategies and struggles; however, it is not my intention to suggest that this is the only approach. It is offered as a point of departure for what I hope will soon be a rapidly developing global dialogue among educators dedicated to a better future for all human beings.

I also begin from the premise that the only way we can unlock the mystery of capitalism and expose the ‘truth’ of capital is through the explanatory power of the writings of Karl Marx. In today’s vernacular, Marx ‘outed’ capital well over 100 years ago, but his explanation has been both ignored and misinterpreted by not only his detractors but also many socialists and even a considerable number of Marxists as well. To continue along these lines can only spell peril and destruction for the lives of millions of human beings. Making one’s own way through Marx’s economic texts is an extremely rewarding exercise, but also one that is time-consuming and which appears at first sight to be a daunting task. In a previous book (Allman, 1999), I offered an introduction to Marx’s ideas that was intended to entice readers to undertake this task and to also render it less daunting by presenting his ideas in a form that would hopefully make his own texts more accessible. That book was also intended to be the type of introduction that would assist those who at present would go no further, yet whose educational work would benefit from an enhanced critical grasp of capitalist reality, thus offering the first steps towards what Paulo Freire would call a ‘critical reading of the world’. In this book, I invite readers to join me in a slightly more arduous journey, one that will take them quite a distance towards ‘critically reading’ the world of *global* capitalism—far enough, in fact, to fully grasp the absurdity of capitalism and the impossibility of humanity’s survival if it remains shackled to this inherently crisis-prone and totalizing system of social and economic injustice and domination. Of necessity, therefore, I will be dealing with a level of theory that some consider to be quite difficult; however I am fairly confident that even readers totally unfamiliar with Marx will not find it onerous or unnecessarily difficult and theoretical. As with my previous book, I do not argue my interpretations against those of other secondary-source authors because my intention is to communicate, as clearly as I can, Marx’s ideas and theoretical explanations directly to the reader. I learned from my students long ago that certain texts come across as highly theoretical and therefore inaccessible simply because writers interrupt their conversations with the reader to engage in conversations and debates with other authors. Therefore, what I intend to offer is Marx—or, more precisely, his explanation of capitalism—without interruptions.

The interpretation of Marx’s economic texts, presented here, falls within a specific tradition—one based on a dialectical reading of his works. As Milonakis (1997) has noted, this approach—that is, a dialectical ‘reading’ of Marx—is “a long and respectable tradition...[however] it has not really emerged as a coherent alternative” to other approaches (p. 303, fn.). Nevertheless, it is a tradition that can be traced back to Marx’s lifelong friend and collaborator, Frederick Engels, who in his own writings on nature (Engels, 1954) may have carried the dialectic further than Marx ever intended—that is, in a mode closer to the dialectic in the writings of the German philosopher G.W.F. Hegel than to Marx’s distinctive use of dialectical thinking. Many interpreters of Marx recognize the dialectical nature of his early writings but think that dialectical thinking or conceptualization was something he moved away from or only used in a minor way in his economics. This has led to disastrous consequences for both theory and practice, and it is also

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puzzling to the extreme since Marx clearly states that dialectical conceptualization is fundamental to his exposition of capitalism (Marx, 1873, p. 102, in Marx, 1867).

One reason why the dialectical tradition is rather loosely composed or lacking in coherence is that many individuals who can be located in this tradition have interpreted Marx more in terms of Hegel's dialectic than his own. The distinction between the two is important but also elusive as evidenced by the fact that Engels seemed unaware that he had lapsed back into a more methodical and abstract Hegelian approach in his study of nature. And Lenin and Mao, who were, like Engels, clearly materialist thinkers in the manner of Marx, sometimes seem closer to Hegel than Marx in their application of dialectical thinking. Marx acknowledged his debt to Hegel, but also clearly demonstrated that he had moved beyond or away from Hegel's philosophical idealism. The important differences between Hegel's and Marx's dialectics pertain mainly to two areas. Hegel's dialectic depicts the movement and development of ideas and how they determined the historical unfolding of the real, or material, world; whereas Marx's dialectic pertains to the movement and development of the material reality of capitalism, movements and developments that result from human beings actively producing their material world and with it their consciousness as well. In other words, according to Hegel, dialectical laws are abstract and divorced from human intention and behaviour; whereas for Marx the dialectical movement and unfolding of the material world is concrete and thoroughly human—a result of human agency or action. For Marx the dialectic was also a method of presentation, or the manner in which he conceptually presents this movement and development to his readers (Marx, 1873, p. 102, in Marx, 1867). Moreover, Hegel's dialectic is teleological and thus moves or unfolds towards a predetermined end. In contrast, Marx's dialectic is open and allows for reciprocity wherein that which determines is also mutually determined or shaped at the same time; and thus there is no outcome that is inevitable or irreversible.

Another factor that leads to the looseness or lack of coherence in the tradition is the fact that many of those who clearly interpret Marx in the dialectical way he intended people to interpret him, make no mention of the dialectic and sometimes seem almost unaware that their interpretations adhere to Marx's dialectical understanding of capitalism. This should not be surprising. Marx found his dialectic in the material reality of capitalism. However, in his explanation of capitalism, Marx does not refer specifically to its dialectical nature; he simply presents it. Therefore, it could be that those who make no mention of the dialectic are simply following Marx's lead. It is also entirely possible that they do not mention the dialectic in order to avoid a Hegelian rendering of their interpretations. I fear, however, that if this is their reasoning, they are doing a disservice to Marx. It is my contention that the dialectic is the key to comprehensively understanding his economic texts and thus his full explanation of capitalism; and I present my discussion of his explanation in a way that conforms with and also highlights his dialectical presentation.

Bearing in mind what I have said, I think it is important to identify some of the people who, I think, figure centrally in this tradition. When appropriate in my discussion of Marx's explanation of capitalism, I mention or reference those authors

who not only specifically concur with a particular aspect of my explanation but also accentuate it in their own work. In general, those whom I mention have assisted me in deciding which aspects of Marx's writing should be emphasized. It is also important to note that I became aware of this tradition after reading Marx rather than before; therefore, with the exception of the first two people I mention, they did not influence my original interpretation of Marx. It was the writings of Derek Sayer (1983; 1987) and Jorge Larrain (1979; 1983) that encouraged me to undertake my own reading of Marx and that also greatly assisted me in that reading. I would locate their interpretations of Marx within the dialectical tradition, although I am not sure whether either of them would agree. However, some of the earliest members of this tradition would have no reluctance—for example, Rosa Luxemburg, Georg Lukács, Antonio Gramsci and Isaac I. Rubin. And this is probably equally true of some slightly later Marxists—particularly Karel Kosík, C. L. R. James, Raya Dunayevskaya and Roman Rosdolsky. Contemporary Marxists whom I would locate in this tradition and whose interpretations of Marx are similar to some aspect or another of my own include, in addition to Sayer and Larrain, Bertell Ollman, David Harvey, Moishe Postone, Alex Callinicos, Peter Hudis, Christopher Arthur, Tony Smith and Thomas Sekine. There are also contemporary Marxists whose dialectical interpretation of Marx informs their analyses of history or their contemporary studies of political economy—people such as Ellen Meiksins Wood, the late E. P. Thompson, David McNally, Ben Fine, Dimitris Milonakis and also Werner Bonefeld and John Holloway as well as other members of the Conference of Socialist Economists who write under the rubric of 'Open Marxism'. This list is in no way exhaustive. It is simply a list of those who have enhanced my understanding of contemporary capitalism. I include it here simply to position my own analysis within a particular framework and also to acknowledge all of those who have in one way or another either confirmed or assisted some part of my interpretation of Marx or who have shed further light on some specific aspect of the history, development or contemporary nature of capitalism.

Although this book focuses primarily on Marx's theoretical explanation of capitalism and therefore his economics, it is informed throughout by his revolutionary theory of consciousness. This is a theory that Marx had formulated prior to undertaking his empirical studies of capitalism; and it directly underpins almost everything he wrote from 1846 onwards, including his economic texts. Marx's explanation of capitalism is not just an explanation of people's economic relations and behaviour. It is equally and importantly about why people tend to think about their material conditions and activities in a certain way—a way that helps to perpetuate and sustain the capitalist system. Marx's focus on consciousness is one of reasons why his explanation of capitalism is so important for critical educators. Moreover, it is this revolutionary theory of consciousness that also makes critical education such an essential and crucial requirement for all struggles aimed at revolutionary social transformation. I have discussed this theory in considerable detail elsewhere (Allman, 1999), and recap the most important aspects of that discussion in chapter 5 of this text. However, because of this theory's centrality to Marx's thinking and as a consequence this book, even at this point it is important and necessary to make

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some introductory comments about its main components. To make these comments, I must use certain concepts whose full meaning will only become clear when I am able to explain them fully in subsequent chapters.

Marx first wrote about his theory of consciousness in a book he co-authored with Engels (Marx and Engels, 1846)—a book that unfortunately was not published until 1932. His theory of consciousness postulates an *inner* connection, or relation, between human practice and conscious thought. As with all of Marx's theoretical formulations, this is not a deterministic relation but, rather, a dialectical one—one involving a reciprocal relation between sensuous human activity and thought, wherein each of the components in the relation mutually shapes and is shaped by the other. In that Marx is postulating an inseparable unity between thought and practice, his revolutionary theory of consciousness is actually a theory of praxis (Allman, 1999). However, it is also a theory that implies two very different forms of praxis, and herein lies its crucial significance for educators.

'Praxis' is a term often used to indicate a sequential linking or application of theory to practice and vice versa. In contrast, Marx's theory of consciousness/praxis intimately and internally, and thus dialectically, relates all thought and practice. And the implication of this is that we engage in a form of praxis that is uncritical and thus reproductive when we simply enter into the material conditions and relations we find at hand and accept them as natural and inevitable. Even when we sometimes resist our positioning within a certain social relation, we remain locked into an uncritical/reproductive form of praxis so long as our resistance is only aimed at either bettering our position or changing our positioning within the relation. Praxis, on the other hand, can assume a critical and revolutionary form when we become critically aware of the constraining nature of the relation itself and when we then focus on the relation and direct our energies to abolishing it or transforming it. In other words, critical/revolutionary praxis begins when we critically grasp the dialectical, or internally related, nature of our material conditions and social relations and develops in full as we then seek to abolish or transform these conditions and relations, replacing them with ones that can enable us to create a socially and economically just society—a much more humane society in which all people can realize their full potential as human beings. In so doing, we release the critical and creative potential of our consciousness and enhance the development of our critical intellect—our critical understanding of our reality and ourselves.

It is also important to mention at this point that Marx's revolutionary theory of consciousness/praxis contains a negative concept of ideology (Larrain, 1983). 'Ideology', or 'ideological', refers to any thought, behaviour or even symbols that serve to distort our dialectical understanding of reality. It is not a concept of 'false consciousness', a notion often incorrectly attributed to Marx. An ideological statement, for example, reflects or refers to aspects of our reality that are real, and in that sense true, but which are only the partial truth, or fragments, of something that we can not fully comprehend unless we can grasp it in its entirety. In this way they distort the truth and thus prevent us from fully comprehending a situation—in other words, they tend to frame our thinking within certain horizons or parameters (Hall, 1982). However, since they refer to or reflect something that is real, even if it is

only partial, they normally manage to convince us that the version of reality they portray is the truth of our reality. The ideological forms of consciousness/praxis that arise from capitalist reality actually reflect and thus seem to connect with and make sense of the fragmented way in which we tend to experience capitalist reality—that is, our spatially and temporally disconnected experience of its dialectical nature. This is why they are able to work so powerfully, yet often subtly, as justifications that legitimate the capitalist form of existence. Ideological thinking arises quite naturally from capitalist reality; and therefore does not necessarily require a perpetrator. Marx took great pains to show how even many critics of capitalism were often seduced into ideological understandings of their circumstances (see for example, Marx, 1863a, 1863b and 1863c).

I discuss ideology in more detail in the chapters that follow and also the importance of ideology critique to revolutionary critical education. In offering this brief précis of Marx's theory of consciousness/praxis, I have had to use, as I forewarned, several concepts that are related to his dialectical mode of conceptualizing capitalism. Almost all of the concepts that form some part of his intellectual framework are related to one another—for example, he sometimes uses different concepts in order to beckon us to look at the same phenomenon from yet another angle so that we can form a more complete understanding. It is, therefore, almost impossible to discuss one of his theoretical formulations in isolation from other aspects of the total framework. By the time I return to a more comprehensive discussion of Marx's theory of consciousness/praxis and his negative concept of ideology in chapter 5, these concepts will have been fully explained, and therefore, it should be much easier to discern the important implications of this theory for critical education. Hopefully, however, it is already clear that critical/revolutionary praxis is the type of praxis appropriate to critical education and that ideology critique is one aspect of this type of praxis.

Before embarking on the journey that will hopefully lead to a critical understanding of global capitalism, I smooth the way by first explaining some of the conventions I am using and then offering a brief overview of the chapters.

The first convention I want to bring to your attention is one that I find unavoidable but also highly problematical and perplexing. One of the most important and fundamental ideas that we can glean from Marx's explanation of capital is that it is both a process and a relation—a social relation between human beings—and not a thing. Unfortunately if I, or any writer, were to spell this out every time we wanted to say that this process or this relation does something—in other words, every time we wanted to use a noun—our sentences would become extremely cumbersome and awkward. Therefore, the convention is simply to say capital does such and such; but, of course, this is problematical because it reinforces the tendency to reify capital—that is, to attribute a thing like status to something that is actually a social relation. Even worse, perhaps: it also tends to imbue this 'thing' with the intentions and capabilities of a human individual. Whenever I can, I avoid this convention, but as it is sometimes unavoidable, all I can do is urge readers to remember that capital is not a thing. To a certain degree there is a similar problem when we use capitalism as a noun. This can lead to the idea that we are talking about a system

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that exists as something separate from human beings and their social relations and practices, or, worse still, some sort of a structure—albeit it a social structure—that again we imagine as something distinct from human sensuous activity. Again all I can do is to urge readers to conceptualize these terms in a different way—to understand that capitalism is, first and foremost, ourselves—that is, human beings—as we exist and live our lives within a network or web of habituated social relations and practices. Following Marx, I also, at times, use ‘capital’ and ‘capitalism’ interchangeably; however, I only do this when it is appropriate to do so, and often, when I use these terms in this way, it is to imply that they are inseparable—in other words, as I will be explaining, without capitalism there would be no capital.

The second convention is just the opposite in the sense that it is, I think, extremely helpful. It is a convention I have adopted from Derek Sayer (1987) and one that assisted me greatly in my own study of Marx’s writings. When I reference Marx, I use the date that is, according to Sayer, the last date on which he worked on a particular source prior to its initial publication. By using this convention, it is possible to locate Marx’s writings within the specific historical context in which they were written. The use of these dates is also important with Marx’s work for two other reasons. First, some writers, following Althusser, talk about distinct breaks in Marx’s thinking—for example, they distinguish between his philosophical earlier works and his later economic writings in a way that suggests that he actually conceptualized or thought in entirely different ways during these phases of his life. I totally disagree with this interpretation and feel that the best way to argue against the idea of a ‘break’ is for readers to always be able to see just *when* Marx said *what* and thus to be able to trace the continuity in his thought.

The second reason is connected with the fact that some of Marx’s important economic texts were never completed—that is, made ready for publication—by Marx, himself. He drafted all of the volumes of *Capital* during the same period, but he spent so much time first preparing Volume 1 (Marx, 1867) for publication and then amending subsequent editions, purportedly to make them more accessible for his intended working-class audience, that the task of doing the same for volumes 2 (Marx, 1878) and 3 (Marx, 1865) was left to his friend and collaborator Engels. The fourth volume, which had been drafted in full by 1863—the three part text called *Theories of Surplus Value*—was likewise left to Karl Kautsky to publish after Engel’s death. The importance of this is that he had fully worked out his complete analysis of capitalism and had committed that analysis to writing, at least in draft form, before he published the first volume. Knowing this should affect the way we understand the relationship between Volume 1 and the others—an understanding that I share in chapter 2. In terms of trying to be helpful, I also frequently cite page numbers in references when I have not quoted directly from the text so that readers can easily locate the idea in the original source and read about it in more depth or check out my interpretation.

The final convention I should mention is also intended to be helpful; however, I realize that some readers might not agree. When I quote Marx, Gramsci and Freire, or for that matter any writer for whom I think this is warranted because of

their philosophical and political stance on other matters, I alter the implied gender bias of their language by placing a more neutral term in brackets. Sayer (1991), for whom I have the greatest respect, has criticized this practice and has even called it patronizing. He argues that we should not try to cover up or sanitize the language of people who, according to him, saw everything in terms of the social experience of men. I can see his point, but I also think that we might be falling into the danger of overgeneralization in assuming that every writer who used ‘men’ in a philosophical sense to connote humanity should be tarred with the same brush. I am quite sure that at least some of the writers we classify as ‘modernists’ were able to see beyond the narrow horizon of Western civilization and the even narrower experience of only the male members of our species. In other words, it is entirely possible that when they used conventional expressions such as ‘men’ and ‘mankind’, they truly thought in terms of human beings of all genders and all ages. We will never know. I began using this convention not just to sanitize or neutralize their language but for another reason altogether. I found far too many feminist writers and activists dismissing outright the writings of Marx, Gramsci and Freire on the grounds of the male bias in their language. Although there are feminists, like bell hooks (1993), who handle this problem with great wisdom and sympathy, I have always felt it better not to be drawn into the fray and distracted by what I think is an extremely counterproductive and self-defeating position when it comes to the eradication of all forms of human oppression. Therefore, while heeding the points that Sayer has made, on balance, I have decided to stick with the convention of bracketing-out pronouns that might distract readers from these men’s valuable contributions to human liberation. I hasten to add that I would use the same convention when quoting, for example, Rosa Luxemburg, or any other great female thinker of the modern era.

You might be heartened to know that this introduction is almost finished; I have only to add a brief overview of the book’s contents and also my sincere wish that readers will stay with me through the more difficult bits, especially the perhaps tedious, but I assure you, necessary arithmetic in chapter 3. I should note, since I have raised this point about arithmetic, that an aversion to mathematics was something I had to overcome in order to come to grips with Marx’s explanation of capitalism. Because I am fully aware of the struggle this can entail for others like myself who lack confidence in their numeracy skills, I have used the same figures that Marx uses in order to facilitate any cross-referencing that readers may wish to do. I also—and this may be irksome to those of you who are more numerate—tend to spell out the mathematical procedure involved in arriving at the figures I cite. To the more numerate readers, I apologize.

In chapter 1, I begin with a brief sketch of some of the worst and also most ludicrous absurdities that have resulted from the globalization, or full universalization, of capital, and I also offer a brief summary of how various people are interpreting the process of globalization. Then, two relatively lengthy chapters (chapters 2 and 3) are devoted to Marx’s dialectical explanation of capitalism. My intention, as I said before, is to offer a fairly comprehensive and detailed account of his explanation, one that takes you far enough to be able to understand, and

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hopefully to be capable of enabling others to understand, why capitalism is inherently and necessarily a global system. This account also indicates why we are currently experiencing the full impact and suffering the repercussions of capital's inherent need to become, more than ever before, a fully internationalized and integrated system of socioeconomic control and domination—the global system that, as many commentators have suddenly remembered, Marx and Engels (1848) presciently forecasted over 150 years ago.

My presentation of Marx's explanation follows the same pattern or format he uses in his three volumes of *Capital*. This is a pattern that traces the dialectical unfolding of capital's essence, its inherent contradictions, from the simple commodity form to a fully developed capitalist system, and one that in so doing clearly reveals the *raison d'être* of globalization. In other words, I will be following the way in which Marx presented his dialectical conceptualization of capitalism. Many socialists and even some Marxists admit to finding the three volumes of *Capital* difficult to read and understand. In a sense they are right, but this is not Marx's fault or the reader's for that matter. In the three volumes of *Capital*, Marx is explaining a very complex system, a system that forms the basis of our concrete reality and that we participate in each day, but one that works according to concrete laws or tendencies, which can only be grasped by a mode of conceptualizing that conforms to the inner essence or underlying contradictions of the system. This essence cannot be perceived directly because in its pure and simple form it is submerged beneath the immediate, 'noisy', frenetic, hustle-bustle of our daily experience of capitalism and the world of ever proliferating commodities it creates. However, if we use the 'key' that Marx left us to unlock the complexity of his explanation and thus the complexity of capitalism—that is, if we use or follow his dialectical mode of conceptualization—the difficulty disappears, and capitalism is left exposed in naked simplicity. All that is required of us is a bit of perseverance in grasping and then using this 'key'— a perseverance that I attempt in every way to assist and which, I trust, will come easily to those who have been awakened to the cruelty and absurdity of capitalism.

After discussing Marx's explanation of capitalism, I then go on, in chapter 4, to examine some of the contemporary challenges to capitalism and to explore why, on the basis of Marx's explanation of capital, these challenges cannot possibly be the solution to our problems. Those who clamor for the reform of capitalism are among the challengers. Some of these people think that many of the social democratic reforms and policies that are no longer feasible on a national scale can still be made to work effectively if applied on a global scale. Throughout this book, I stress that capitalism cannot be permanently reformed. We may have to struggle for reforms in order to make life temporarily more palatable, but increasingly it will be difficult to remedy the ills of society by traditional social democratic measures such as governmental interventions of the type inspired by the economic theory of John Maynard Keynes. Keynesian-style interventions in the global economy will run the same course that they did in national economies and probably will do so much more swiftly. The only answer, or beginning of an answer, lies in revolutionary social transformation.

As I also contend that critical education is absolutely fundamental to the process of revolutionary social transformation, the rest of the book—that is, chapters 5, 6 and 7—is devoted to a discussion of critical education. In chapter 5, I discuss the theory, principles and aims of a particular approach to critical education—the approach I call revolutionary critical education. Chapter 6 is about the experience of trying to apply and also develop this theory as well as its aims and principles—in other words, it describes the critical/revolutionary praxis through which I attempted to apply and also further develop and refine this approach to critical education. And finally, in chapter 7, I suggest various strategies that critical educators might begin to implement in their own contexts. I also suggest how our strategies might become allied on a global scale. The strategies and the alliance I propose are intended to contribute toward the eventual abolition of capitalism and the beginning of a new and better future for humankind.

I only hope that those who share my commitment to the abolition of capitalism and all other forms of inhumanity and oppression will stay with me until the end and that they will take my discussions and suggestions as they are intended—that is, not as definitive answers but merely as catalysts to the development and proliferation of critical/revolutionary praxis throughout the world.

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CHAPTER 1

GLOBAL CAPITAL AND THE HUMAN CONDITION

An Absurd Way to Begin a New Millennium

One of the most important functions of those involved in critical education is to problematize reality—to ask probing questions about what is happening and about how we understand and feel about the events that are taking place. This is not a rhetorical exercise, nor one based on naïve curiosity. It derives from the critical curiosity of teachers' and learners' cointentional “act of knowing” reality (Freire, 1974). Teachers or political activists who initiate a process of critical education need to have a certain level of critical understanding before they can effectively engage others in problematizing reality. In this chapter I provide a point of departure for that understanding by first pointing to some of the aspects of contemporary capitalism that have been widely documented and then by discussing the different ways in which this reality—the reality of global capital—is being interpreted. I begin with the type of facts that are frequently cited with reference to the plight of many of the world's children.

WHAT IS HAPPENING—SNAPSHOTS OF ABSURDITY

It is estimated that there are 100 million children living in the streets, for whom home or shelter is, at best, a cardboard box or doorway, and that millions more are living in houses with no running water, electricity or sanitation. Two hundred million children are engaged in the global labor force (Berger, 1998/99)—many working long hours for a pittance in unsafe, unhealthy and often illegal conditions. We know that many are dying needlessly of malnutrition, some as frequently as one every hour in countries that are forced to devote over half their annual incomes to repaying IMF and World Bank loans (Pilger, 1998). Nor is it only the children of poor countries that suffer. “One in five children in the US live below the poverty line” (Hirschl, 1997, p. 170). These and many other dismal statistics that reveal what for many of the world's children is the sheer horror of being born are often responded to by charity bonanzas. Events like Britain's annual ‘Red Nose’ Day, despite good intentions, raise but a fraction of what poor countries return daily in debt repayments to Western banks (Pilger, 1998).

Perhaps the most frequently reported aspect of contemporary reality is the increasing gap between the very rich and the very poor—the polarization of wealth and poverty. Throughout most of the twentieth century, commentators have focused on the division between the developed and the underdeveloped countries of the world or the center and periphery, and while this remains a central focus, the

polarization of rich and poor people, both inter- and intranationally, is not only more frequently reported but more readily apparent. For example, statistics like the following are frequently cited. There are now 350 people in the world whose assets total one billion or more (U.S.) dollars and who are, therefore, worth more than 45% of the world's population (Harris, 1998/99, p. 29). According to MacGregor (1999, p. 94), who derives her statistics from the 1998 *UN Human Development Report*, the 15 richest people in the world have assets that exceed the total annual income of sub-Saharan Africa. The same report reveals that the United States has both the highest per capita income of any OECD country and the highest rate of poverty (MacGregor, 1999, p. 94).

Most commentators point not just to the polarization but the growing distance between the extremes of wealth and poverty. Others have been quick to stress that this is not entirely new, suggesting that the gap is no greater than it was between the new industrial working class and the bourgeoisie in nineteenth-century Britain. Nevertheless, it has been generally assumed that civilization has advanced at least to some degree and that for either ethical or merely pragmatic reasons nation-states would never again permit extreme polarization in their midst. Rightly or wrongly, there has been an assumption that social exclusion would be eliminated as far as possible, if for no other reason than to maintain some basic level of social cohesion. Hutton (1998) has expressed concern that, in certain ways, both extremes, the very rich and the very poor, are becoming marginal to the rest of society. Those at the top of the income/assets league table live in a totally privatized world where they have little need to be concerned about the rest of society. With their wealth becoming less and less dependent upon what the vast majority of their fellow citizens produce and consume and with private security forces protecting them from the escalating violence of society, they can live in rather splendid and luxurious isolation (Hutton, 1998; and also Reich, 1991). The poor also live in isolation, albeit involuntary isolation, having been excluded from the market and as a consequence a society and culture that increasingly gravitate around it.

Revolutions in technology, especially in electronic digitization, have played an important part in many of the changes that have occurred since the end of World War II. A global telecommunications infrastructure has been created that has facilitated the internationalization of production and trade, extending not only the reach of global capitalism and the world market but increasing the velocity of both trade and the turnover time of production and circulation. The impact has been felt especially in the arena of financial capital, where the increasing velocity of trade has led to a proliferation of financial products and the amassing of enormous profits.

The same advances in telecommunications have also facilitated a much greater degree of human communication and have opened up much greater access to information. It is estimated that 122 million people use the internet (Kundnani, 1998/99, p. 52). This experience and the assumption of its generality create the impression that people have become more integrated than they were previously. While this may be true for some people, it remains a fact that 50% of the world's people have never even used a telephone (Harris, 1998/99, p. 30). From a global perspective, we find not a more highly integrated world but one in which the life experiences of

a relatively small percentage of the world's population become further and further removed from the life experiences of the vast majority. The same is true in terms of the global market and capitalist relations of production. While both are more expansive and inclusive than ever before, effectively penetrating the entire globe, millions of people are virtually excluded and deemed excess to capital's requirements as either producers or consumers. As David Harvey (1995) puts it, capitalism is "pulling everyone (and everything that can be exchanged) into its orbit...while rendering large segments of the world's population permanently redundant..." (p. 11). The global penetration of capital has been going on for a long time. John Holloway (1995) stresses, that "capital moves," especially financial capital, but now with the aid of the electronic superhighway it moves much faster than ever before, compressing geographical space by the reduction of time (Harvey, 1989). Or, as Marx so aptly pointed out over a hundred years ago, capitalism "strives to annihilate...space with time" (1858, p. 539).

Remarkable advances have also been made in biotechnology. The potential for increasing food production, preventing, curing and controlling disease and even providing alternative sources of energy that could drive the machinery of the future is amazing; however, the ways in which these advances are currently being employed are both disturbing and imminently dangerous (King, 1997). These advances are seen primarily as information commodities, capable of producing superprofits for the firms who manage to be the first to use or sell them. As a consequence, there is a vicious competitive struggle going on to secure patents on a number of life forms, from the simple seed so fundamental to agricultural production to the genes of human beings. Dan Schiller (1997), drawing on the important findings reported in Kloppenburg's book *First Seed*, published in 1988, says that what the giant transnational pharmaceutical and agricultural corporations want and increasingly demand is "free access to the plant germplasm located in the gene-rich equatorial zones while at the same time insisting that international laws of intellectual property be strengthened and harmonized to protect the profits they [make] from the hybrid seed and drugs they [sell] back to these same regions" (p. 115). In other words, they want to protect their profits by patenting and thus monopolizing this knowledge. According to Sivanandan (1998/99), for the most part the big corporations have got just what they were demanding. He says that this was one of the main results of the Uruguay round of GATT in 1994. Corporations were allowed to patent both products and processes based on genetic materials derived from crops and also wild plants found in 'Third World' countries and to sell them back to the country of origin, which, according to patent law, could not develop their own equivalent products. King (1997) argues that the discoveries being made in biotechnology are far too important in terms of the consequences for both humanity and the ecosystem to abdicate responsibility for their control and accountability to market forces. Public debate and discussion about the ethical and practical implications of these issues has been almost negligible—far too little and often too late.

When the Berlin Wall fell in 1989, the victory of capitalism and liberal democracy were triumphantly proclaimed. The Cold War was over, and we were promised a lasting peace (not to mention a peace dividend, to which I will come later).

Ironically, perhaps, it has been a matter of increasing concern that in the established democracies fewer people are bothering to vote than ever before—politicians who receive the majority of the vote are often being elected by a minority of their citizens. And it is widely known that far too many aspects of our lives are controlled, or at least strongly influenced, by nonelected and unaccountable institutions—quangos within the nation-state and supranational institutions, organisations and agreements like the IMF, the World Bank, GATT and so on. Of course, the latter are the creations or collective creations of nation-states (in most cases governments that have been ‘democratically’ elected), but democratic control over these by the citizen is so far removed as to be virtually nonexistent. Habermas (1999) warns that democratic legitimation will be eroded “the more matters are settled through inter-state negotiation, and the more important these decisions are, the more political decisions [will be] withdrawn from the arena of democratic opinion-formation and will-formation—which are exclusively national arenas.” (p. 49)

Unemployment and the changing nature of employment are two of the most perplexing problems of contemporary capitalism. New technologies are rapidly reducing national workforces. New jobs are created but not in numbers sufficient to replace those that have been destroyed, and many jobs have been de-skilled, either or both manually and intellectually. The general trend seems to be the creation of either high-tech jobs that require considerable skill and or knowledge or low-skill, low-pay jobs that are often part-time and/or temporary—frequently referred to as contingent jobs. Sally Lerner (1997) raises the question of “whether ‘jobless growth’, underemployment and ‘contingent’ employment will become the norm” in the near future (p. 178). Harris (1998/99, p. 28) reports that by 1995, 60% of all new jobs in the United States were contingent jobs. One thing, however, that people in almost every kind of work share to some extent is a growing sense of insecurity. It’s not just cheap, low-skilled labor that has been forced to compete in a global labor market but relatively well-paid, high-skilled labor as well. The high-skilled jobs in Silicon Valley that pay salaries of \$60,000 are being performed elsewhere in the world for \$12,000 (Davis and Stack, 1997, p. 135). With the exception of company CEOs in large corporations who have become accustomed to 50 % bonuses on base annual incomes, to say nothing of a wide range of fringe benefits (Hutton, 1998), the net effect for many people who are fortunate enough to be in employment has been the driving down of wages and salaries and the increasing insecurity of job tenure. From the perspective of those at the bottom, the net effect has been much worse. In the OECD countries, 100 million people are income poor (often referred to as the working poor) and 37 million are unemployed (MacGregor, 1999, p. 94).

One of the most deplorable verities of the contemporary world is the continuing existence of scarcity—hunger, homelessness and all manner of unmet human needs—when technological advances mean that we now have the productive potential that could eliminate most types of scarcity and to do so in ways that need not be detrimental to the environment. The revolutions in electronics (especially digitization) and biotechnology allow for massive increases in productivity using fewer and, most importantly, sustainable levels of natural resources for raw materials and sources of energy (King, 1997; Schiller, 1997). However, as long as goods

and services are available only when their price is met, scarcity will continue to exist no matter how anachronistic it has become. After pointing out several examples like—pharmaceutical companies choosing to develop vaccines for livestock rather than human beings because people only need inoculating once in a lifetime whereas new populations of cows, pigs and sheep, destined for slaughter, need annual inoculations, thus making farm animals a much more profitable market—King sums up the absurdity of the situation.

Leaving decisions as to whether to produce a product that might save 20,000 people to investors is socially irrational. Biotechnology was the product of public investment and was almost completely socially developed. Fifty years of taxpayer investment after World War II led to the breakthroughs that are now occurring. The public has already paid for the development of technology, and its privatization thus represents a form of misappropriation. [p. 153]

King's point applies equally to most other advances in U.S. technology. However, I want to take this argument further by suggesting that if the technological capacity exists, then it is socially irrational to have to choose between improving food production and curing or preventing disease. Moreover, it is also socially irresponsible and a gross—indeed, a criminal—infringement of human rights.

Over twenty years ago Susan George made points similar to King's with reference to 'The Green Revolution' that promised a massive increase in agricultural productivity. Her important book, *How The Other Half Dies* (first published in 1976), revealed many startling facts about the conditions that create and sustain world hunger. She called it a process of "planned scarcity" —planned in order to maintain food prices and profitability and thereby the production of food within market relations (George, 1986). Agricultural production in the United States only managed to remain profitable by first becoming large-scale in terms of food production and then becoming larger still by incorporating food production, processing, packaging and often distribution under the umbrella of giant food corporations. For various political and economic reasons, the U.S. government has for a long time considered it important to subsidize agricultural production, as have a number of other governments, primarily in the developed world. The United States has been able to use its surplus production (a direct result of the subsidization) to open the doors of many other countries not only to American commerce but also its power and influence as well (George, 1986).

The full story is a long and complex litany of U.S.-style neoimperialism, which many other nations in the developed world adopted apace once they recovered their productive capacity after World War II. Pilger (1998) recounts incidences of U.S., so-called, 'Food for Peace' surpluses being dumped on countries and forcing down local prices to the extent that small farmers are ruined or forced to sell their land to foreign multinational agribusinesses. According to Sivanandan (1998/99), the 1994 GATT agreement prohibited all but the poorest 'Third World' countries from imposing import duties on foodstuffs, thereby opening them up to cheap U.S. and European grain exports. The result, he notes was the "killing off [of] locally produced

food such as rice, grain and cassava, etc. (along with the local farmer)” (p. 12). All of this, of course, impacts on and contributes to the increasing polarization of people and nations and the devastation of the lives of millions of the world’s children that I mentioned before.

Richard Wilkinson (1998) has argued convincingly that unequal societies produce more mental and physical health problems and, in connection with these, more violence too. The increasing levels of inequality as well as the increasingly insecure position of individuals, firms and even nations are linked to the liberalization or deregulation of trade and finance. Deregulation began in the early 1970s and has continued unabated ever since, accelerating especially in the 1980s under the neoliberal agenda set by Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher and becoming entrenched in the IMF and other supranational institutions that operate in the interest of the international capitalist class (Burbach and Robinson, 1999). According to many commentators, deregulation became necessary in the 1970s in order to facilitate the movement of capital and thus stimulate productivity and profitability, both of which had begun to stagnate for a variety of reasons in the mid- to late 1960s. The resulting flow of financial capital, seeking the most profitable investments, was greatly facilitated by the newly established global telecommunications infrastructure and, in turn, contributed to the further growth and consolidation of that structure. This symbiotic relation also led to a proliferation of financial commodities and increases in the volume of trade as well as the velocity of financial transactions, effectively compressing the time and space involved in these transactions to ‘zero’. Kundnani (1998/99) is one of many writers who cite the amazing statistic that “\$1.4 trillion is traded via the global computer network daily” (p. 52). Tickell (1999) says that since the 1970s, derivatives (futures, options, etc.)—a general category of financial products—have become “a ubiquitous feature of business life....[Between 1985 and 1995] the nominal value of derivative contracts [grew by] 2800%” (p. 251).

Deregulation has led to increasing inequality and uncertainty in numerous ways that are not always immediately obvious. It has made it extremely difficult to interpret various statistics that might indicate the overall health of the global economy or of national economies and even various corporations—for example, figures pertaining to corporate profits or national GNP/GDP. In the 1970s and continuing ever since, ‘asset stripping’ became an easy way to restore corporate profitability and a strategy by which corporate raiders like Tiny Roland and James Goldsmith amassed huge fortunes. Politicians, especially Margaret Thatcher who sold off public assets ostensibly to restore and maintain the ‘health’ of the British economy, applied the same idea in the 1980s on an even larger and more socially irresponsible scale. Deregulation paved the way for ‘asset stripping’, making it much easier for ‘corporate raiders’ or multinational and other large corporate bodies to raise the funds necessary for buying the assets. It has also fostered a situation in which a great deal of economic activity, reflected in corporate profit figures and the growth of national economies, has more to do with the buying and selling of assets and the plethora of financial products than it does with the production of goods and nonfinancial services. As Fine, Lapavistas and Milonakis (1999) note, since the economic downturn of the early 1970s, the financial system has demonstrated that it can maintain its profitability

independently of industrial profitability and accumulation, and they stress that this “disparity of dynamism between industrial and financial accumulation [is] a new development in the history of capitalism” (p. 72). All of this has become a matter of concern to many politicians and economists, adding to the general state of confusion and feelings of helplessness that have been created by the seemingly uncontrollable dynamic of the world market. One of the grimmest consequences, of course, has been the massive job losses that have resulted from the selling off, downsizing and geographical relocation of huge chunks of the manufacturing sector of developed countries.

Relaxation of exchange-rate controls was the first and probably the most consequential act of liberalization/deregulation. It makes almost every nation participating in the world market vulnerable to the vicissitudes of financial speculation. In 1994, Mexico would have been bankrupted by the rapid disinvestment in the peso if it had not been for a rescue package concocted mainly by the American banks who also stood to lose if Mexico went ‘bust’ (Harris, 1998/99; Richards, 1997). And a similar round of disinvestment, in 1997, was an important factor in bringing about the end of ‘The Asian Miracle’—the miracle that over recent years has often been held up as proof of capitalism’s worldwide success story (Hutton, 1998; Lo, 1999). Rapid investment and disinvestment would, of course, be much more difficult if it were not for deregulation. Harris (1998/99) sums up the vulnerability of many nation-states when he quotes Walter Wriston of Citibank giving a new meaning to the idea of ‘economic democracy’—a meaning that Harris notes, excludes 99.9% of the world’s population:

It’s a system whereby international financiers take a vote on the soundness of each country’s fiscal and monetary policies. This giant vote counting machine conducts a running tally on what the world thinks of a government’s diplomatic, fiscal and monetary policies and this opinion is immediately reflected in the value the market places on a country’s currency. [p. 32]

This type of thinking, having grown out of the period of deregulation, might have reflected the stance of a number of people like Wriston in 1992, but by 1997, George Soros, who had grown very rich by speculating on the world financial market, was warning of the need to regulate the global ‘free market’ (Hobsbawm, 1998). And he was not alone. By the time of their deaths in 1997 and 1998, respectively, both James Goldsmith and Tiny Roland, two of the biggest promoters and strongest bastions of neoliberalism—free markets and deregulation—and two of the most notorious corporate raiders of the 1970s and 80s, had begun to call for government intervention, warning that it was essential for governments to regain control over the economy (*The Mayfair Set*, BBC2, 8 August, 1999). This is not, in fact, a very surprising stance for capitalists to take. Ever since at least the early 1900s, the overall strategy of capitalists has been to adapt the system in ways that allow them to exercise greater control over fluctuations in the market. Often this has involved them leaning on their national governments to persuade them, when persuasion was necessary, to intervene by instituting regulatory measures.

What is perhaps more surprising is that social democratic leaders, who currently hold power in several Western governments, have made few if any moves to heed

these warnings. Larry Elliot, The Financial Editor of the *Guardian* newspaper, speaking on BBC2's *Big Ideas* program on September 3 1999, said that there was little doubt that the United States would remain the dominant economic power in the world for the foreseeable future because it had the biggest and most advanced corporations in the leading sectors of the world economy—a fact he attributed to the U.S. government's investment in defence. In other words, America's longstanding and enormous commitment to defence spending had given U.S. corporations a clear advantage in utilizing 'cutting-edge' technology, and therefore, according to Elliot, it was the government's investment in the economy rather than the free market that had made the United States the world's leading economy. There is, however, a fundamental difference between the way in which U.S. defence spending had an unplanned effect on American economic activity and the type of planned intervention now being called for by those who want to see their governments reassert their control over national economies. There is no guarantee that planned intervention in a nation's domestic economy would reap the same advantages at this conjuncture, when the influence of the world market has become more important. Chris Harman (1996) makes a similar point and argues that investment in defence creates very specific conditions for growth in national economies that do not pertain if investment is focussed elsewhere. It is more likely that there is no way to control uncertainty and avoid insecurity in the real world of global capitalism. In chapters 2 and 3, I explain why this is the inescapable truth of capitalism.

No portrayal of the contemporary world, even one as brief as that offered here, can fail to mention culture. Cultural patterns reflect some of the most paradoxical aspects of global capitalism. Simultaneously we find processes that seem to be creating a homogeneous or more uniform world culture, yet also a world of greater heterogeneity or diversity in the form of a heightened awareness of national as well as ethnic identities and differences. Although this seems paradoxical, it makes a great deal of sense, given what has already been mentioned with reference to growing uncertainty and insecurity. When people experience change that threatens their economic security and general well-being, they will often seek the known and familiar havens of cultural practice. Many of those who have little hope of future employment may seek refuge in areas that seems to be the only remaining sources of identity, such as family, ethnicity, nationality and religion. The degree to which the process of differentiation becomes conflictual will depend to some degree on the type of homogenization that is occurring.

Pilger (1998) calls this homogenization "Americanization"—a process that is about promoting worldwide consumerism of "packaged American culture" (p. 69). He depicts it as a shallow culture based on self-aggrandizement and violence that more often than not drowns out the local competition. Harris (1998/99) likens the homogenization process, in which he includes a number of things that would create uniform standards beneficial to trade and commerce, to the nation-building stage of capitalism, now being played out on a worldwide basis. He points out that international capitalism requires a world system of uniform standards and that one of the main functions of the IMF has been to eliminate any national variations— cultural as well as organizational and regulatory—that would impede the flow of capital.

It is little wonder that we now find, throughout the world and often in the most unlikely places, MacDonald's Golden Arches, Whoppers, Coca-Cola or Pepsi and what some have labelled the Disneyfication of culture. These can be seen as cultural appetizers meant to break down cultural barriers to a steady diet of U.S. commodities. It is little wonder that this type of homogenization or cultural imperialism has encountered various forms of resistance. It is probably one of the many contributory factors that has led to the expression of religious fundamentalism and the growth of ethnic and nationalistic conflict that has become a very real and alarming feature of the contemporary world—a feature that provides some of the rationalization for governments continuing to spend vast sums on defence.

This brings me to a final point about our contemporary reality, a point about one of the most insidious and dangerous threats to humanity's well-being now and in the future—a threat that, far from being new, has been plaguing the world for at least half of the twentieth century and that, contrary to popular opinion, continues to do so with undiminished tenacity. In 1989, President Bush claimed that the Cold War had come to an end and promised that a 'peace dividend' would be forthcoming. However, as we enter a new millennium, it is clear that the 'arms race' continues unabated. By 1994, Britain's arms industry had become revitalized, employing one worker in every ten, and the government was spending about 10 billion pounds sterling annually on defence, which is far above the European average (Pilger, 1998, p. 6). Nor has defence spending slowed in the United States, according to Pilger; although we may not hear as much about it, Reagan's Star Wars Program continues under the new acronym, THAAD (Thermonuclear High Altitude Area Defence), and in response the Russians are developing their own system (Pilger, 1998, p. 8). There is little doubt, according to most commentators, that arms production and arms trade will continue to figure centrally in U.S. and U.K. economic and political strategies and probably will remain important to many other countries as well. Both the United States and the United Kingdom sell arms to countries that have appalling human rights records, and both have used arms sales to gain political influence, particularly in the oil-rich Middle East and what were until recently the fastest growing East Asian countries (*The Mayfair Set*, BBC2, 8 August 1999; Harman, 1996). Harman points out that the "bombing of Baghdad is as much a part of the logic of the system [global capitalism] as the Multifibre Trade Agreement..." (1996, p. 30). Others have, since then, made the same point about the war in Bosnia.

This brief sketch has pointed to only a few of the most insidious and worrying aspect of our contemporary reality. The explanation I offer for why these things are happening will unfold in my discussion of capitalism in the next two chapters. Here, I present a summary of the interpretations others have made.

WHY IS IT HAPPENING?—A NEW BALL GAME? A NEW STADIUM? OR BOTH?

Globalization is purported to be the dominant force of our times. Ostensibly, it is the unavoidable result of human progress—a process to which people and nations must adapt. In the long term, it is suppose to bring about the best possible results

for the majority of people. This is the view, the globalization theory or orthodoxy, we hear from the media and many politicians. David Held (1998) calls it the “hyper-globalist view” of reality (p. 24). Drawing, in part, on Held’s account, the gist of this view goes as follows: Economic processes—both financial and production processes—have become globalized. This has come about because multinational and transnational corporations have become the indispensable means for promoting global production, growth and employment and for diffusing technological advances and expanding the distribution of goods and services through the world market. Although multinationals and transnationals often have a specific national base, their strategies for growth and profitability are global. Production is therefore geared primarily toward the global rather than the domestic market. Financial institutions have also become increasingly global, both in size and orientation. Advanced technology and deregulation have accelerated the mobility of capital flows, and the number of financial commodities has expanded dramatically as a consequence, opening up new avenues to profitability and wealth and also facilitating a greater than ever volume of world trade. This has led to nation-states becoming more tightly integrated; therefore, national economies and societies have become much more sensitive to one another. While this means that it is no longer feasible for national governments to pursue independent economic policies, it also has made the likelihood of wars between nations untenable. Even though nation-states may have lost certain powers, they still have an important role to play. Global competition and standards of efficiency may be inescapable, but governments can do a great deal to make their nations more competitive. They will be more competitive if they promote liberal democracy and civic responsibility as well as certain desirable “macro-economic policies aimed at low inflation, balanced budgets, the removal of trade barriers and exchange controls, maximum liberty for capital, minimum regulation of labour markets, privatization and, in general, a streamlined adaptive welfare state to propel citizens into work” (Held, 1998, p. 25). The main obligation that states have toward their citizens is to make sure they are “empowered” to face the challenge of global competition. And this means making sure that they have the proper flexible and adaptable skills and attitudes that will enhance their employability.

As Held points out the “hyperglobalist view” is neoliberalism writ large, an economic theory of the best way to foster capitalist growth and development that has become especially dominant since the 1970s. It is the view held by the dominant actors in the global economy—the most powerful nation-states and the institutions and organizations that represent their interests and impose their will on all the other states that wish to participate in the global market—the United States, G8, OECD, IMF, World Bank, Tri-Lateral Commission, and so on. (Held, 1998, p. 25). Held and many other critics of “hyperglobalism” point out that it is a political project, rather than some inevitable or natural force, and, as such, it has to be supported and promoted if it is to be sustained. However, this criticism should not be taken to mean that it is a false view of the contemporary world.

It is better understood as an ideological explanation and an ideological project, one that tells only part of the story and therefore distorts the full truth of reality.

Nevertheless, it is based on enough truth to persuade many people that this is the way things are and, moreover, must be. And when an ideology becomes as dominant—or hegemonic in the Gramscian sense of convincing people and winning consent—as this one is, it also becomes a material force capable of shaping our lives. Even though it has its origins in economic processes, it can acquire a quasi-independent force of its own that begins to act back on and shape the ongoing development of those processes. Globalization has thus become an important area of debate and discussion. I will try to recount the various types of interpretations and responses it has engendered from the Left, but I must begin by trying to clarify why the Left has been far from unified in their response. Please note that when I refer to ‘groups’ in the following discussion, I am categorizing people who share similar views and analyses rather than a collection of people who necessarily share a common identity.

Even before Marx, socialism was proposed as the only democratic alternative to capitalism; however, the advocates of socialism have always been divided on many issues, often very important ones. One of the most fundamental of these, and one that lies at the heart of many other disputes, is the actual meaning of socialism. A majority of the Left have always defined socialism as primarily an alternative system of distributing the results of production, which is brought about by abolishing the private ownership of the means of production. Others have understood socialism to be a process of total social, political and economic transformation—one of the results of which is the equitable distribution of the wealth produced by society. Wealth, however, is conceived not in monetary terms, but in terms of the goods and services produced by society, and just what these are to be and how they are to be produced is decided democratically by the members of the society. Private ownership of the means of production is inconceivable, of course, within such a society. This was the idea of socialism that Marx and Engels promoted. They actually referred to it as the first stage of communism rather than socialism, and they thought that it would necessarily entail the changing of many social relations and, thereby, the changing of people as well, so that they would relate to one another in a more humane way than is possible within capitalist social relations (Marx and Engels, 1846; 1848). These different meanings of socialism lead to two quite different conceptions of the state and its role.

‘Distributional socialist,’ or social democrats, assume that the state is a semi-autonomous democratic institution that can be used by politicians of the Left, when in power, to legislate measures designed to bring about a more equitable distribution of wealth and the creation, generally, of a more just and equal society. ‘Transformational or revolutionary socialists’ do not see the state as a neutral institution. Modern nation-states are seen as a form of social organisation that developed together with capitalism and that have been both necessary for and largely beneficial to its development (Wood, 1995; 1999). Even when the governments of capitalist states are controlled by social democratic parties, the capitalist ‘rules of the game’ apply, such that when concessions of a distributional nature are made, they are set within limits determined by the ‘health’ of the capitalist economy. In other words, the capitalist economy—the logic of capitalism that must be adhered to—frames the

'horizon' of democratic debate and limits the parameters of socialist inspired policy (Hall, 1982). With these distinctions and qualifications in mind, it becomes much easier to understand why the response of the Left to globalization has been so varied and why it often appears confusing and contradictory.

From the social-democratic, or 'distributional' Left, there are basically two types of responses to globalization, both of which advocate the need for governmental intervention. They argue that intervention is needed to rectify the effect of unfettered market forces, or, alternatively, governmental capitulation or overreaction to neo-liberalism's 'hyperglobalist' agenda. Both camps are highly critical of purportedly social democratic governments like Bill Clinton's democratic administration and Tony Blair's 'New Labour Party'. One group bases its argument on the considerable empirical evidence that refutes the claims that the world market has become more open and highly integrated than previously in world history—especially the idea that global integration is greater than it was in the period leading up to 1914 (see, for example, the evidence reported by Hirst and Thompson, 1996, that refutes these claims). They stress important evidence like the tendencies for multinationals to locate their foreign direct investments primarily in developed nations rather than dispersing these investments globally. Their overall assessment of 'globalization' is that it is a myth. They argue that governments are still quite capable of applying Keynesian measures to control and direct their national economies and create more equitable societies but that politicians lack the will to do so.

The other group appears to accept certain aspects of this argument. They do not think, however, that the process of globalization is entirely a myth, just not as advanced or as pervasive as the hyperglobalists claim. Nevertheless, they think that a process of globalization is taking place and will continue to do so along the lines projected by the globalization thesis. Therefore, they argue that nation-states must act in concert to establish supranational and international modes of regulation and governance at both regional and international levels in order to curb the worst effects of global market forces and also to preserve, sustain and further develop democracy. In the latter group there is a further split between those who think that there is no longer any alternative economic system to capitalism and the market (e.g., Anthony Giddens, 1998) and those that think that eventually we will develop a democratic world government that will establish a worldwide socialist economic system of fair distribution and justice (e.g., Samir Amin, 1997). All those whose responses to globalization take one or another of these forms think that parties of the Left currently in power in many Western states could be taking a much greater defensive or offensive position (to use Habermas's, 1999, distinction) than is currently the case. They stress the need not only for measures aimed at greater social cohesion and justice but also at much greater environmental protection and sustainability.

Revolutionary/transformational socialists—those whose thinking basically adheres to Marx's and Engel's concept of socialism (see Allman, 1999) and who therefore never considered the Soviet Union or its satellite states as representatives of that concept—agree that since World War II, capitalism has increasingly become the fully internationalized system that had been predicted by Marx and Engels in the *Communist Manifesto* of 1848. Here too, however, we find differences in interpretation with

reference to both globalization and other issues. One group, although fundamentally disagreeing with globalization orthodoxy, agrees that a process of globalization is taking place and that nation-states have been extremely weakened—virtually transcended as a result. At best “national governments as territorially bound juridical units...[have been] transformed into transmission belts and filtering devices for the imposition of the transnational agenda” (Robinson, 1996, p. 19).

In contrast to the hyperglobalist view or any view of globalization per se, another group stresses the international nature of capitalism. By this they mean the penetration of capitalist relations internationally and the expanding scope and depth of the global market as well as the more highly integrated relations between nations, rather than the global transcendence of the nation-state. They argue that capitalism will always need the nation-state and political leaders of the state who will act in the interest of the growth and development of capitalism within their countries (e.g., Wood, 1999). Revolutionary/transformational socialists are also divided over other issues in ways that may reflect fundamentally diverging interpretations of Marx’s economic writings. Where they stand with respect to the dynamic of capitalism ostensibly lies at the heart of their differences and disagreements. However, it is entirely possible that, at least in some cases, these differences are more apparent than real—that is, they may be more a matter of emphasis and focus rather than something of a more substantive nature.

One influential ‘group’ includes people like William Robinson, A. Sivanandan and Roger Burbach whose writings often focus on ‘Third World’ issues and the neoimperialism, particularly, of the United States and certain European nations. These authors have stressed the importance of the technological revolution that has displaced labor in the North, or more highly developed nations, and led to the increasing exploitation of labor in the South, or the underdeveloped and newly developing nations. In their writings they suggest that advances in technology have facilitated and accelerated the rapid movement of capital across the globe, creating “seas” of ‘Third World’-type poverty within even the most highly developed nations of North America and Europe and “lakes” or enclaves of the superwealthy within Latin American, Asian and even some of the poorest African nations (Robinson, 1996, p. 23). Most of the writers in this group argue that an “epochal shift” in capitalism has occurred and that a new global class of capitalist elites has been formed, which is contesting the power of the traditional nationally based bourgeoisie throughout the world (Burbach and Robinson, 1999). These authors suggest that the ‘hyperglobalist’ view, or neoliberalism, is the ideology that specifically serves the interest of this new class.

Because various authors in this grouping emphasize the role that advances in telecommunications—the electronic, especially the digital revolution—have played in the process of globalization, others have accused them of ‘technological determinism’ (e.g., see the debate between Sivanandan and Wood, 1997). Wood, especially, refers to Sivanandan’s remark that “[i]f ‘...the steam-mill gives you the industrial capitalist,’ the microchip gives you society with the global capitalist” (p. 20). In other words, the dynamic of capitalist development is technological advance. While this may not be the actual stance that Sivanandan and others are

taking, the problem with an undue emphasis on technology is that authors who take this stance seem to come unstuck over what is happening with Marx's 'Law of Value'. I discuss this 'law' in detail in chapters 2 and 3, but here, it will, hopefully, suffice to say that what it basically involves is the idea that one of the historically specific features of capitalism is that *live* human labor is the source of all value and hence the basis of profit and thus all capital accumulation. Obviously this is a most important 'law' in Marx's economics. For socialist who think that it is only the industrial proletariat, or workers who produces material objects, who produce value, the technological replacement of labor means that the capitalists' search for profitable investment must switch to the newly industrialized or underdeveloped nations, where cheap labor rather than advanced technology can be used to produce material objects that will be competitively priced on the world market. In this sense, therefore, technology has initiated the whole globalization process. To survive capitalism needs human labor to produce value; and since labor in the developed world, or the type of labor that produces value, can no longer do this in sufficient numbers, capitalism must spread out to the far reaches of the world. Following on from this line of thinking, some have argued that since the majority of workers in the developed world no longer serve as a source of value but are still needed by capitalism as consumers, governments will have to pay their citizens a "social wage," and thus a type of socialism—consumer socialism—will come about by default (Gorz, 1985).

Other revolutionary/transformational socialists have focussed on the 'laws' or inherent tendencies (e.g., laws of movement, especially the 'Law of Value' mentioned earlier) that constitute capitalism as a historically specific form of socioeconomic human organization. They stress that these have always governed the movement and development of capitalism, and they use them to explain the dynamic or trajectory of what Ellen Meiksins Wood (1999) refers to as the "universalization," or full internationalization, of capitalism. Most writers in this group specifically refer to one particular tendency—the *falling rate of profit* (e.g., Brenner, 1999; or for a critique of Brenner and a more dialectical interpretation of the situation, Fine et al., 1999). Here too, however, we find further differences that pertain to the other laws—that is, tendencies or dynamics—that they see as particularly related to or interacting with the falling rate of profit at this conjuncture in history. Some writers emphasize the drive to accumulate and concentrate capital and to dominate markets and the competition between capitalists that this fosters as each firm strives to maximize profitability as a basis for further accumulation and growth. Others suggest that the main dynamic of internationalization or globalization, a term used with reservation, is the struggle between capital and labor; while still others argue that the competitive struggle for investment and power between financial and industrial capital is the driving force. Those who focus on the class struggle between labor and capital argue that it was the effectiveness of working-class action against capital that ended the long period of capitalist prosperity after World War II, setting off a fall in the rate of profit and sending some sectors of manufacturing capital on the 'move' in search of cheap and unorganized labour.

On the other hand, writers who focus on the struggle for dominance between financial and industrial capitalists, with each competing for the overall power to

control the flow of capital investments, stress how technology has aided financial capital in this struggle. With the ability to transfer capital rapidly via the electronic superhighway and thus holding out the promise of increasing profitability through speculative ventures, financial capital has managed, as mentioned previously, to lure investment away from the industrial base. Therefore, financial capital, with the aid of technology and by unleashing the forces of the world market and propelling the process of globalization, has gained the upper hand. They argue that while industrial capital may once have had the power to influence the policies of national governments, it is now financial capital's power of disinvestment that can force the hand of governments. And neoliberal policies that governments have been forced or persuaded to adopt have primarily served the interest of this faction of the capitalist class—note, however, not creating a new class but bolstering the power of a faction of the capitalist class already in existence in many nation-states, albeit a class faction heavily involved in international finance.

In my opinion, the writers, who begin from the premise that capitalism moves and develops according to its own historically specific 'laws' and tendencies, offer the most effective explanations. However, even they, to my knowledge, have not proffered a fully comprehensive interpretation of contemporary global capitalism; and as a consequence, there does not as yet exist a fully effective challenge to the hyperglobalist view. Nevertheless, they do show us how best to approach the problem. This is especially true of Fine et al. (1999), who in critiquing Brenner (1998) remind us that the approach must be based on Marx's 'Law of Value', which allows us to connect "the competitive struggle between [various] capitals with the capital-labour relation and [establish] the link between horizontal inter-capitalist relations with vertical class relations and class conflict" (p. 81). Having said this, there are valuable insights that critical educators can draw from all of these interpretations. It is important to recognize, however, that none of them deal with all of the variables that need to be considered or the relation between the variables. When it comes to that type of analysis, Marx's economic writings remain the most comprehensive interpretation, for two reasons: (1) Since we are seeking to understand capitalism—a dynamic process and not a fixed structure or 'thing'—there can be no final or conclusive interpretation or answer, so to speak; this is not what we should be seeking. What we need are 'tools' of analysis that we can employ in understanding capitalism as it moves and develops in a dialectic process of progress and regress. This is what Marx offers us. And (2) Marx's comprehensive exposition of capitalism remains the only one that enables us to identify the panoply of variables that must be considered if we are to grasp the true nature of capitalism in a way that will allow us to first challenge and then transform it into an entirely new form of human social-economic organization.

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