

EDUCATIONAL FUTURES: RETHINKING THEORY AND PRACTICE

# Critical Theories, Radical Pedagogies, and Social Education

**New Perspectives for Social Studies Education**

Abraham P. DeLeon and E. Wayne Ross (Eds.)



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# Critical Theories, Radical Pedagogies, and Social Education

EDUCATIONAL FUTURES  
*RETHINKING THEORY AND PRACTICE*  
Volume 45

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# Critical Theories, Radical Pedagogies, and Social Education

*New Perspectives for Social Studies Education*

## **Edited by**

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SENSE PUBLISHERS  
ROTTERDAM/BOSTON/TAIPEI

A C.I.P. record for this book is available from the Library of Congress.

ISBN: 978-94-6091-276-4 (paperback)

ISBN: 978-94-6091-277-1 (hardback)

ISBN: 978-94-6091-278-8 (e-book)

Published by: Sense Publishers,  
P.O. Box 21858,  
3001 AW Rotterdam,  
The Netherlands  
<http://www.sensepublishers.com>

*Printed on acid-free paper*

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

### *Through Collaboration, All Things are Possible*

Although a bit cliché, the statement above best reflects what this project has meant for us. Emailing Wayne on a whim after being inspired by the collection he put together for *The Social Studies Curriculum: Purposes, Problems and Possibilities*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (State University of New York Press, 2006), he was, to my amazement, interested in the project of a young and hungry scholar. We pitched the book to Sense Publishers and they saw promise in our ideas and offered us a contract. We hope this book adds to their impressive library of critical books in education.

Through our collaborative work, we assembled a wide variety of talented scholars that have reaffirmed the importance that radical ways of knowing and critical theories can have in social studies education. As this book fruitfully demonstrates, traditional status quo social studies education reproduces problematic assumptions about the world around us. In a direct way, these scholars challenge this notion and offer us possibilities for something different. This book features new and familiar voices that refuse to accept the status quo in their teaching and scholarship. We want to extend our deepest gratitude for their hard work and patience with us during the editing process. In addition, we would like to thank Youmna Dbouk for her work editing the manuscript. We hope this collection inspires you to ask questions, take action, and create new possibilities for your praxis.

Abraham P. DeLeon: For Stephanie: thank you for your patience and love. For Mr. Bad Ass: thank you for your enduring companionship. For my family and friends: you have my heart. For my intellectual mentors: I extend a deep thank you for helping me see the world differently. For the rebels, malcontents, weirdos, anarchists, punks, and social visionaries: *infiltrate*.

E. Wayne Ross: The highlight of this project for me, both personally and intellectually, was the opportunity to collaborate with and learn from Abe. He is a principled, activist-scholar with bold and fresh ideas that push hard against the established boundaries of the field, which can only benefit from the insights and challenges his work produces. I continue to gain much from my longtime intellectual partnerships and friendships with Kevin Vinson, Rich Gibson, Perry Marker, Steve Fleury, and David Hursh. My most important collaborator is my soul mate, Sandra Mathison, words cannot express what she means to me.



## INTRODUCTION

### ON THE EDGE OF HISTORY

#### *Towards a New Vision of Social Studies Education*

*Savages, while differing from civilized men in the methods that they use and in the results that they reach, still deal with causes. They think themselves surrounded by occult influences and mysterious powers ... at the opposite pole of thought are the conceptions of unity, law, and order, which constitute the core of modern science and philosophy.*

B. A. Hinsdale, *How to Study and Teach History* 1894, p. 102

Historical study has a long tradition within public education and B. A. Hinsdale's work was one of the founding texts in developing what we consider today to be "social studies". Although "social studies" as a disciplinary mechanism within public schools did not formally emerge until the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (or the official 1916 NEA report that established the scope of social studies education), the teaching of history was a staple in most public schools as a vital and important component of a liberal education that introduced students to the classics of Western culture (Ross, 2006b; Thornton, 1996). Steeped in a Eurocentric framework as Hinsdale's comments reflect, public schools in the United States developed their curriculum and standards around these narrow conceptions. "Stereotypic images, carefully constructed and equally carefully defined, are, therefore, mechanisms of control linked to structures in the society which provide stability, power and status" (Mangan, 1993, p. 8). With the rise of neoliberal capitalism and intensification of industry over the past century since Hinsdale penned his comments, public education has slowly shifted towards a framework rooted in high-stakes testing and the discourse of "accountability" (Gabbard & Ross, 2008; Mathison & Ross, 2008; Ross & Gibson, 2007). This is, of course, also influenced by the larger epistemological trend that places quantitative, empirically based forms of research and knowledge as some of the only legitimate forms of understanding the world. However, with the rise of *No Child Left Behind* (NCLB) and its narrow understandings of reading, math, and science, social studies and the arts have virtually disappeared as time is now spent on test preparation and these other academic areas (Au, 2009; McGuire, 2007). We, of course, understand that this is a larger trend of modernity, but it is also how these particular content areas help reproduce a highly militarized, hierarchical, and industrialized State (Saltman & Gabbard, 2010). It is not an accident that schools help reproduce the prevailing status quo that is steeped in a politics of exclusion that seeks to marginalize, displace, oppress, silence and stifle dissent against the prevailing social order. Schooling is implicated within this hegemonic system and traditional social studies education helps reproduce this reality through its detached narratives of

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progress, modernization, and empty promises of political participation (Ross, 2000). Hinsdale's comments also demonstrate the pervasive nature of systemic racism that permeated early conceptions of indigenous peoples and historically oppressed communities of color. These racialized, classed and gendered ideologies were wholly inscribed into Westernized epistemologies from the rampant colonialism that existed during this time period as well.

The curriculum and pedagogy of social studies education has, unfortunately, primarily been a mechanism that helps (re)produce dominant conceptions of our social world, while at the same time silencing and marginalizing localized, indigenous, and other ways of knowing that falls outside the linear and Grand Narrative of Western history. The recent debate over the Texas social studies curriculum is also alarming as the conservative board that oversees curriculum has decided to omit certain facts, personalities, and realities from an already skewed historical interpretation (Foner, 2010; McKinley, 2010). Vinson and Ross (2001) argue that the paradox of social studies curriculum and practice is that it is marked by both the appearance of diversity (e.g., the various "traditions" or aims proposed for social studies curriculum and instruction) and the appearance of uniformity (e.g., stable curricular scope and sequence and entrenched patterns of instruction).

For example, it has been variously argued that the aim of social studies education should be: (1) cultural transmission; (2) understanding history and the social sciences disciplines; (3) reflective inquiry on social issues; (4) personal development; or (5) informed social criticism (among others), which gives the field an appearance of pedagogical and curricular diversity. Despite the historical debates about the purposes of social studies, the classroom reality—past and present—is that social studies aims to conserve dominant cultural perspectives by uncritically transmitting information from corporate textbooks and government syllabi, while socializing students to enter adult life without a ripple of discontent or change.

Well before conceptualisation and enactment of the current standards-based approach to education reform, the most durable and common pattern of social studies teaching was the uncritical transmission of information. Cuban (1991) found that social studies teachers in the 1980s taught much like their counterparts in the 1940s:

the vast majority of teachers [employ] teacher-centered instruction. The pattern includes activities using the textbook and teacher as sources of information for assignments, recitation ... tests, and individual seatwork. Talking by the teacher ... exceeds talking by students, whose responses are generally confined to answering the teacher's questions. Occasional use of films, videos, and other devices supplements these activities. This core pattern is most frequently enacted when the entire class is taught as a group. Infrequently at the high school level, but with slightly more frequency at the elementary level, small-group work is a vehicle for classroom activities. (p. 204)

Social studies teachers have also consistently relied on textbooks as a primary source of information. These patterns of instruction in conjunction with content analyses of social studies textbooks—which illustrate that many texts are marred by an embarrassing combination of blind patriotism, mindless optimism, sheer

misinformation, and outright lies (e.g., Leahey, 2010)—add to the evidence supporting conservative cultural continuity as the dominant pattern of social studies education. NCLB and the standards-based education reform movement in general have intensified these patterns of instruction and in many cases reduced the content of social studies to what is on government-mandated tests, while social studies has all but disappeared from many elementary schools, which may in fact be a blessing in disguise.

In addition to the considerable uniformity in the pedagogical practices of social studies teachers over the decades, evidence from large-scale studies indicates that there has long been at least superficial uniformity in the social studies curriculum, e.g., basic topics, sequences, course titles, and textbook contents (Vinson & Ross, 2001). Ironically, studies of teacher decision-making indicate that the cultural beliefs of teachers are also the basis of teachers' mediation of curricular topics, sequence, textbooks contents, and other learning assignments, which made the enacted curriculum quite diverse—at least in the past.<sup>1</sup> The use of high stakes testing and other reductive accountability systems<sup>2</sup>, linked as they are to curriculum standards — seriously threatens the diversity that has existed within the formal curriculum, and, more importantly, it threatens potential for diversity in the enacted social studies curriculum.

Fortunately there has been resistance to these dominant conceptions both in activist politics and within the academic milieu. Academics and social activists continue to debate whether and how scholarship and research should be tied to an agenda for social change and justice. Though a central topic in many academic disciplines, this debate is especially salient for educators, who are explicitly or implicitly charged with facilitating the intellectual growth of future generations and the general public. Further, as suggested by educational philosophers such as John Dewey (1916) and Paulo Freire (1970), educators in a presumably democratic society are similarly charged with facilitating a critically engaged public and providing empowering educational experiences for their students. To wit, there is a well-established presence in the more current academic literature that supports building a democratic, critical, and anti-oppressive pedagogy dedicated to cultural, economic, and political critique and the creation of an egalitarian and democratic civil society (Darder et al., 2009).

In recent years, education scholars have proffered critical theories that seriously questioned capitalist, racist, sexist, ableist, speciesist, and other oppressive ideologies and argued for critical literacy and cultural critique (see Darder et al., 2009; Andrzejewski et al., 2009). Such critical pedagogies have been used to challenge educational practices and theories that are mired in domination. Social studies education can engage these social problems in very critical and direct ways because of the interdisciplinary nature of the content, its focus on building civic understanding and participation in students, plus its implicit and explicit inclusion of a historical framework. These foundational principles of social studies allow the integration of more critical approaches.

This book grows out of—and attempts to challenge the limits of—what has been described as the tradition of “informed social criticism” within social studies education (Martorella, 1996). This approach to social studies is rooted in the work of social

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reconstructionists (Brameld, 1956; Counts, 1932) and related to the more recent work of “socialization-countersocialization” theorists (Engle & Ochoa, 1988), critical pedagogues (e.g., Freire 1970; McLaren, 1998) as well as critical sociologists and anthropologists of education (e.g., Anyon 1980; Bowles & Gintis 1976; Willis 1977). This literature explores themes such as the hidden curriculum, socio-cultural transformation, and the nature and meaning of knowledge and truth. The work of Jack Nelson (e.g., 1985; Nelson & Ochoa, 1987; Nelson & Pang, 2006; Stanley & Nelson, 1986), Stanley (1985), and more recently Hursh and Ross (2000), Ross (2006), and Segall, Heilman, and Cherryholmes (2006) perhaps best represent the current status of this tradition.

From the standpoint of informed social criticism, the purpose of social studies education is providing students with opportunities for an examination, critique, and revision of past traditions, existing social practices, and modes of problem solving. Social studies content in this tradition challenges the injustices of the status quo. It counters knowledge that is: (1) generated by and supportive of society’s elites; (2) rooted in rationalistic and oppressive forms of logical positivism; and (3) consistent with social reproduction and the replication of a society that is classist, sexist, racist, ableist, etc. While the means and ends are specific to individual classroom settings and students, it can include, for example, redressing the needs of the disadvantaged, transforming human rights and ecological conditions. Moreover, teachers and students may claim their own knowledges—their content, their individual and cultural experiences—as legitimate bases for action. Instructional methods in this tradition are situational, but are shy away from lecture and information transmission and toward such processes as “reflective thinking” and the dialogical method (Shor & Freire, 1987), socio-cultural criticism, textual analysis/deconstruction (Cherryholmes, 1999), problem-solving, critical thinking, and social action (Stanley & Nelson, 1986).

Building upon the informed social criticism tradition within social studies scholarship and practice this volume attempts to fill a gap in the current literature that exists relative to more radical forms of theory and pedagogy in and outside of academia. This book aims to open the possibility for the inclusion of a wider milieu of radical theories in social studies education (critical race theory, neo-Marxism, anarchism, human rights, disability studies, etc.), while offering alternatives to classroom practice rooted in these same theories of liberation.

In recent political struggles throughout the world, emergent radical (as opposed to liberal reformist) approaches to social change have become a powerful presence in such struggles as the “anti-globalization movement,” grassroots activism over resources, indigenous struggles, and others that increasingly employ a human rights framework to address social problems. This book begins with the assertion that such emergent and provocative theories and practices should at least enter our ongoing discursive forums on social studies education in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The “Battle of Seattle,” autonomous actions by the Animal Liberation Front and Earth Liberation Front, and other global protests have demonstrated the success that radical actions can have in resisting rigid state hierarchies and oppressive regimes. Anarchists, eco-activists, feminists, critical race theorists, queer theorists, and other marginalized perspectives should be included as viable alternatives to the current neo-conservative

and neoliberal agendas expressed by such educational policies like *No Child Left Behind* and high stakes testing. The social studies, with its interdisciplinarity and historical based inquiry, allow us to engage in critical social inquiry and progressive ideas can be introduced into the traditional classroom. In sum, this book is designed to include and address radical theories in the conversation on social studies education, as they exist (discussed or not) in the praxis of many contemporary global (and local) political struggles.

#### OVERVIEW OF THE BOOK

This collection of chapters focuses upon this notion of struggle and social justice. Each author has taken a different theoretical framework and applied it to the context of social studies education. In Chapter 1, Abraham DeLeon explores anarchist theory and how as a tradition it combines theory with praxis, situating our research and classroom practices as acts of resistance to the current statue quo. In this chapter, he advocates for a *politics of infiltration* that is rooted in radicals placing themselves within established institutions and practicing acts of epistemological and ideological subversion and sabotage. According to DeLeon, anarchist theory provides a link currently missing in critical pedagogy when rethinking the notion of autonomous direct action and its ties to political action inside and outside of the classroom.

Chapter 2, takes us to a “transnational, feminist and disability studies” framework that examines two key historical events: Hurricane Katrina and the current wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Through these two historical cases, Nirmala Erevelles attempts to explore the ways in which race, class, gender and disability is lived in the United States and the “Third World” through the concept of *invisibility*.

Rebecca Martusewicz and Gary Schnakenberg, in Chapter 3, examine social studies education through the lens of ecojustice education and both authors explore classrooms where these principles are being lived by teachers who infuse their pedagogies with these ideals. Ecojustice education examines cultural assumptions that help legitimate and justify ecological and cultural destruction worldwide as well as exploring how various communities are resisting these hegemonic neoliberal forces.

In Chapter 4, Rich Gibson asks “Why have school?” as a means of exploring dialectical and historical materialism and asserts that these approaches help reveal the interrelated nature of various forms of oppression and how these can be transformed. Gibson’s chapter illustrates how dialectical materialism can be employed as an “action-research” approach that supports equality and justice in the social studies classroom.

In Chapter 5, Anthony Brown and Luis Urrieta, Jr. engage social studies education through critical race theory. More specifically they examine how the discourse of race frames the notion of citizenship within the context of the United States and the discipline of social studies. Through an examination of contemporary and historical examples of Latin@ and African American experiences, the authors highlight ways these groups have challenged the way “citizen” was conceived.

The concept of *the spectacle*, plays a key role in the analyses offered in Chapters 6 and 7. Kevin D. Vinson, E. Wayne Ross, and Melissa Wilson explore the work of Guy Debord (particularly his book *The Society of the Spectacle*) and

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the Situationist International and for their applicability for social studies education. They argue that a Debordian vision of critical citizenship allows students to build and develop critical social understandings and is a way to live these transformative notions through practice. Throughout their chapter, they promote the social studies classroom as a space for constructing social meanings and encouraging social activism. In following chapter, Pofilio and Watz describe how a critical evaluation of world's fairs during the Victorian Era in the United States (and similar modern-day political and economic spectacles) have the potency to revitalize the social studies so that students (1) develop the critical literacy skills; (2) learn to interrogate hidden agendas; and (3) recognize the urgency to remake themselves, social institutions, and culture as part of an effort to build a society free from hate, hostility, and injustice.

Next, David Hursh further expands his work on neoliberalism and education. According to Hursh, neoliberalism, or the emphasis on “free markets”, deregulation, privatization, competition and the entrepreneurial individual, has restructured education towards producing a society based upon greed, accumulation and competition and undermines our collective ability to make decisions that promote the common good and environmental sustainability. Through reimagining social studies education, these types of ideologies can be resisted and rethought.

Chapter 9 explores the convergences of human rights and social studies education. William T. Armaline argues that human rights must be fused with a social studies curriculum by deconstructing popular notions like community, justice, and humanity. This approach allows students and teachers to explore the notion and limits of human rights as a political project, specifically considering the rights of children. The potentialities of human rights as a legal discourse are also explored; the chapter closes with a description of how human rights education can resurrect and revise the notions of public and civic education in our contemporary era.

In Chapter 10, Wayne Au argues that social studies education has the potential to build critical consciousness with students that allows students to critically reflect on reality and its potential(s) for social actions. Through poignant examples of actual critical social studies education, Au illustrates how such critical consciousness can be developed.

In the final chapter, Stephen C. Fleury looks back across the arguments and questions presented throughout the book and offers a critical assessment of project of critical social studies education as represented in this volume and in general.

Each of these chapters forces us to rethink social studies education in the current repressive and draconian climate that policies like *No Child Left Behind*, the U.S. Patriot Act and the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan have engendered. These larger societal issues are important for social studies educators to understand and to engage with. In this way, teachers can help deconstruct and name how oppressive ideologies and practices are enacted and deployed. This project has been an exhilarating and inspiring experience for us as editors—an opportunity to work with scholars who are brave enough to resist status quo thinking, but also providing the intellectual and creative space in which to rethink how oppression operates in today's society. We hope that you find the following chapters as engaging and provocative as we do and that they help generate much needed debate (and action) regarding the current

direction of social studies education. Although currently mired in a reproductive framework, social studies has *potentialities* that can be realized through a dedicated cadre of committed, reflective, open and critical social studies teachers who open not only space to critique, but also offer us a space of infinite possibilities.

## NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> See for example: Anyon, 1980; Chant, 2009; Fickle, 2000; Jenne, 1997; Ross, Cornett, & McCutcheon, 1992; Slekar, 2009; Thornton, 2005.
- <sup>2</sup> The mandated national accreditation of teacher education programs has, for the most part, functioned as reductive accountability system that promotes a division of labor in which teachers have lost control of their work as professionals as it is conceived, defined, monitored by the State.

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## 1. ANARCHISM, SABOTAGE, AND THE SPIRIT OF REVOLT

*Injecting the Social Studies with Anarchist Potentialities*

*Anarchism is not, as some may suppose, a theory of the future to be realized through divine inspiration. It is a living force in the affairs of our life, constantly creating new conditions. The methods of Anarchism therefore do not comprise an ironclad program to be carried out under all circumstances. It does, however, stand for the spirit of revolt, in whatever form, against everything that hinders human growth.*

Emma Goldman, *Anarchism and Other Essays*, p. 63

The opening quote by Emma Goldman is the spirit I want to bring to this chapter and the need for radical teachers and scholars to confront the current political climate. I hope by the end of this chapter that I will fruitfully convince you that we need to change our theoretical orientation to one that is adaptable, critical, radical, undomesticated, and necessary in the currently draconian State we find ourselves in today. In short, anarchists and radicals need to think about a *politics of infiltration*. There seems to be a popular perception among radical educators that, somehow, participating in institutional processes is akin to “selling” out. However, I want to challenge these critics to think about our practice in new ways that understands entering these coercive and hierarchical institutions as a form of infiltration, much like how the police and other State agents infiltrate radical political movements (Borum & Tilby, 2004). As educators, we have a special charge not only to prepare students for life after the classroom, but also to help them to be able to change the world around them. By inserting ourselves within these institutions and “being there,” radical educational projects can begin (Fernandez, 2009). Education has a distinct social purpose and the current high-stakes model operating today demonstrates its role in reproducing the Market and the State and we have to resist these in unique and creative ways considering the current attacks on public education especially by powerful conservative political groups. Unfortunately in today’s political climate in North America, the thought of including anarchism or other radical positions will engender a dismissive laugh or a downright puzzled look. What can anarchism add to social studies education?

As I will discuss throughout this chapter, anarchist theory provides ways in which to combine theory with praxis, situating our research and classroom practices as acts of resistance to the current status quo. Heavily involved in activist practices,

anarchist theory provides a theoretical framework in which to situate resistance both within and outside institutional realities. In social studies, this is especially relevant as history, sociology and civics allow for teachers to teach critically about society and history, injecting important questions about racism, sexism, classism, and other social ills. Critical pedagogy and its role in engendering critique and resistance has played a vital role in developing radical theory in education, but needs to be infused with anarchist notions of direct action and critiques of the State.

As a body of knowledge and as a discipline, social studies education is mired in a conservative and reproductive epistemological framework, liberal notions of multiculturalism and narrow definitions of civic engagement (Barton & Levstik, 2004; Evans, 2004; Hursh & Ross, 2000; Levstik & Barton, 2005; Segall et al., 2006). Important work has been done in social studies, with some scholars exploring critical or democratic approaches, and neo-Marxist critical pedagogy (Apple, 2004; Bigelow, 1999a, 1999b; Darder, 1991; Freire, 1970, 1985; Giroux, 1988; Hursh & Ross, 2000; Kanpol, 1999; Kincheloe, 2004; McLaren, 1994; Shor, 1992). Critical pedagogy has also been engaged by other voices in academia, pushing theory in new directions (Ellsworth, 1989; Gore, 1992, 1993; Lather, 2001; Weiler, 2001) and has countered the vicious attacks by right-wing organizations against academic freedom and progressive professors within the United States and elsewhere (Giroux, 2006).

Although there are several edited volumes that deal with radical theory in social studies, they omit anarchist praxis (Hursh & Ross, 2000; Ross, 2006; Segall et al., 2006) and critical pedagogy's neo-Marxist lineage has also been silent about anarchism (DeLeon, 2006, 2008). Anarchists employ a variety of means to achieve their goals, such as direct action, or, "communities of various sorts working together in a circulation of struggles that are simultaneously against capitalism and for the construction of alternatives to it" (Day, 2004, p. 735). For the context of this chapter, direct action *means* anti-capitalist action: whether that means feeding the homeless, freeing animals from cages, or other praxis that makes our communities more humane places to live. Social studies teachers interested in exploring direct action can also look to Graeber's (2009) ethnography about some of the features of anarchist communities he situated himself in.

Critical pedagogy has pushed us towards seeing the inherent political nature of school, but its foundations in neo-Marxist politics limit its ability to respond to the current neoliberal economic, social, academic and political climate. Anarchist theory appears to have a postmodern sensibility not found in neo-Marxist theory, since it focuses on economic terms (modes of production), but does not typically offer a fine grained enough approach to suggest action for non-economic/ State forms of power (the diverse practices of sexism, racism, etc.). Thus, anarchism recognizes all these oppressive expressions of power and promotes action and a more complex understanding against them. Or in simple terms, it pushes us to do things *now*, specifically resisting this "business as usual" paradigm that dominates most departments, schools, and colleges of education.

To address the domesticating nature of institutions, anarchists have employed various techniques of sabotage or "do it yourself" (DIY) techniques of social action (Holtzman et al., 2007). These techniques of disruption are often thought of within

binary terms of “violent” or “non-violent”. However, I urge us as social studies teachers to explore the grey area in-between that positions sabotage as creative and hopeful in remaking our world into something new. Social studies teachers should include sabotage as a viable classroom strategy and we should explore the literature on social movements and protest to give us new ideas as well (Crimethinc, 2001, 2005; Day, 2004; Della Porta & Diana, 2006; Goaman, 2005; Goodman & Jasper, 2003; Naples, 1997; Naples & Desai, 2003). Traditionally, “critical” methods in education have meant pedagogical practices specifically applicable to the classroom. Although critical pedagogy has included calls for teachers to resist in certain ways, sabotage as a “method” rings more clearly and urgently than similar positions in critical pedagogy, while also providing a more activist framework for engendering social change. *This approach also supports the notion that social change will have to occur both within and outside established institutional structures*, echoing Jean Anyon’s call for economic change to accompany urban educational revitalization (Anyon, 2005). Sabotage is a way for anarchists to model direct action in their classrooms and using activist discourses allows students to become familiar with key concepts and strategies used by radical groups, a fact often overlooked or omitted in critical pedagogy (Martin, 2007).

Critical pedagogy forces us to conceptualize how we can teach against the status quo, but lacks simple urgency to counter current neoliberal onslaughts against public education (Hursh, 2008). Critical educators grounded in a neo-Marxist tradition have not engaged anarchist theory in most content areas including educational studies, which provides a framework for creative, direct resistance to neoliberal capitalism (DeLeon, 2006, 2008; Suissa, 2006). Marxists have added a strong and valuable contribution to radical theory in education (see specifically Peter McLaren’s work), however, many people engaged in political struggles today have moved beyond Marxist politics and neo-Marxism as it has become an accepted and co-opted discourse in the academy (Martin, 2007; Shannon, 2009). Over-reliance on a mythical State that may or may not come into being is a tension that I believe neo-Marxists have not fruitfully addressed (DeLeon, 2009).

Anarchist theory and its conceptions of non-authoritative, autonomous, and direct action strategies bode well for activist teachers. Crispin Sartwell (2008) argues that anarchism, “yields a sharp set of critiques of existing institutions and efforts to reform them [and] provides the sort of vigilance that can help keep us free, even in a context where anarchism itself is not seriously contemplated” (p. 7). Sartwell forces us not only to view anarchism as a form of political organization (giving people the freedom to make their own decisions and destinies for example), but also as a mode of social, political, and cultural critique of coercive institutions and hierarchies that prohibit human beings from forming voluntary, free, and open associations. Social studies education needs to provide students the opportunity for a more positive political engagement and the space to think and dream of new possibilities.

Historically and globally, anarchists have participated in democratic schooling, as well as helping to organize and run alternative schools (Avrich, 2005; Gribble, 2004). As a result of an historical presence of anarchists in educational practice,

anarchist theory can fundamentally inform the way we teach social studies and help us rethink our roles and functions as social studies teachers committed to social and ecological justice.

#### ANARCHIST THEORY AND PRAXIS: A BRIEF SUMMARY

Anarchism has a long history in radical social and political thought. From the Spanish Civil war, the Russian Revolution, Paris 1968, to the streets of Seattle in 1999, anarchists have been heavily involved in political struggles (Amster et al., 2009; Guerin, 2005). Whatever the scenario, anarchists have pushed for a more humane and just world. Anarchists combine radical political action with salient critiques of the State and the various oppressive conditions that arise out of coercive hierarchical systems. To anarchists, rigid State structures do not allow human beings the ability to coexist peacefully with their environment, are coercive and oppressively hierarchical which leads to an unhealthy and unnatural system of relationships (Berkman, 2003; Chomsky, 2005; Guerin, 1970). As Sartwell (2008) so eloquently claims, “the state has been able to render us dependent, and the extent to which it has educated, hectoring, indoctrinated, beaten, nurtured, and executed us into taking it to be the only normal condition of human beings” (p. 5). Thus the State and its various coercive apparatuses of control have been brilliantly linked to human “instincts” to form complex institutions and reify hierarchies as “natural” ways to structure social organization.

Anarchism pushes us to recognize instead that this is tied to power relationships and the proliferation of global capitalism in our daily lives, instead of some innate human desire for hierarchical organization.

Anarchist pedagogy breaks free from authoritarian modes of education and the regulatory mechanisms of the state. It actualizes its politics by functioning immanently in the here and now. This is the sense in which anarchist pedagogy is utopian. It is a gesture towards the future, akin to spraying a circle-A on a bank window before the bricks go in (Antliff, 2007, p. 248).

Anarchism and anarchist pedagogies affirm the wild spirit of revolt and resistance, pushing us to recognize the inherent contradictions within capitalism and its supporting ideological systems. It is a “pleasurable activity”, recognizing the inter-related nature of social change and self-realization (Antliff, 2007). By doing this, anarchists are working towards resisting the status quo and disrupting the “business as usual” attitude of most hierarchical institutions, while simultaneously rethinking and envisioning a future free from capitalism. Adding to this however, is also a need to resist Western forms of thinking that result in reifying contemporary educational and economic structures. Because knowledge is bound to power relationships a la Foucault, we have to question what we know because of the power/knowledge relationship inherent in various coercive and oppressive paradigms (Foucault, 2000).

Outdated beliefs, rooted in the State and other hierarchies, support coercive institutions that require conformity and passivity, serving as domesticating institutions to global capitalism (Crimethinc, 2001, 2005; Sartwell, 2008). Hierarchies sustain

traditional power structures and anarchists contend that human beings need to have the freedom to make decisions, participate in the political process and opportunities to build community through activism and political participation (Bowen, 2004; Bowen & Purkis, 2004; Guerin, 1970). Although these types of claims will make some liberals cringe, radical theory in education *should include* room for civil disobedience, sabotage, and direct action, such as what is covered by AK Press and Crimethinc (for example, Best & Nocella, 2006; Crimethinc, 2005). These particular works that I highlighted contain a milieu of examples of direct action techniques that have emerged and can serve as inspiration for us in education about how our praxis can be linked with anti-capitalist direct actions. Anarchists inspire me in ways that earlier radical theory in education was unable to do. Critical pedagogy needs to include ideas and debates for teachers who wish to conceptualize how anarchist direct action strategies can be folded into the work of radical educational scholarship: either through direct action, as a mode of critique, or as developing new and less coercive forms of pedagogy required under today's neoliberal educational regime.

#### TOWARDS AN ANARCHIST SOCIAL STUDIES

Social studies education combines several academic genres and is a great avenue for exploring social problems, forgotten or omitted histories, and civic participation (Loewen, 1995; Hursh & Ross, 2000; Ross, 2006). As I established earlier, some scholars have sought to ground social studies pedagogy in the critical tradition (Hursh & Ross, 2000; Segall et al., 2006). All too often the lived reality of social studies is one of innate boredom where students are drilled about dates, dead white men are worshiped and deified, history is offered as a totalizing narrative, and they are fed a decontextualized and sanitized curriculum. For anarchists, these types of educational experiences serve an important role in domesticating our bodies and minds to the will of capital and the State. To counter this idea, I want to provide some ideas for social studies teachers to ponder long after they read this chapter. What follows are not truths nor are they a prescribed method for teaching in the technocratic sense, but instead are *potential* ways in which anarchist theory can push us to think differently about social studies as a discipline and try to challenge and resist some of its coercive and domesticating functions. Hopefully this also serves as an example of how anarchist theory leads to a praxis that gives us new ideas and perspectives about resistance, sabotage, and direct action.

#### *Social Studies has the Potential to be Subversive*

This point appears fairly obvious to me personally and is a topic that has been explored within the literature about critical approaches in social studies education. However, it has not been addressed by anarchist theory in particular. Although the school will never likely possess revolutionary potential because its ties to the State and its role in reproducing labor for the whims of the capitalist marketplace, we have to act as subversive agents, infiltrating the capitalist training grounds that public schools

represent. A common tactic utilized by agents of the State (such as the police) is infiltration in large protests in which to corner, frame, and provoke a violent response from protestors which leads to arrest, jail time and helps engender a popular representation of protestors as violent (Borum & Tilby, 2004; Graeber, 2009, p. 464).

Anarchists should provide a counter-narrative within these spaces, committing and performing *epistemological sabotage*. Deconstructing state exams, questioning the textbook, providing alternative histories and voices and openly discussing resistance are a beginning, but it also must move to actually showing students how to resist. This comes with great risk as the public school classroom is filled with students who represent varying levels of political ideologies and indoctrination. Thus, this must be done carefully if one is interested in keeping their employment. In my own teaching experiences, establishing trust and an open classroom in which all views are represented will often silence even the staunchest conservatives. In the university classroom, this type of action is a easier, but there is risk involved in speaking out against the status quo and each person must be comfortable with his or her own level of commitment and danger. I cannot, nor should anyone else, decide this for you. However, this models the idea that we need to have a plan and know the limits we are personally willing to push.

You must always have a secret plan. Everything depends on this: it is the only question. So as not to be conquered by the conquered territory in which you lead your life, so as not to feel the horrible weight of inertia wrecking your will and bending you to the ground, so as not to spend a single night more wondering what there is to do or how to connect with your neighbors and countrymen [sic], you must make secret plans without respite. Plan for adventures, plan for pleasure, plan for pandemonium, as you wish; but plan, lay plans constantly (CrimethInc, 2005, para. 1, back cover).

Through this quote, CrimethInc captures the *wild* nature of anarchist theory and the importance of planning actions, adventures, and acts of resistance. By doing this, it keeps us diligent against the domesticating nature of capitalism, but also the importance of planning and following through with subversive acts of resistance. There is also a tension exists in this position as well. In fact, we have to be aware and cognizant of those around us and the actions we plan need to consider these variables. This also speaks to the need for constructing anarchist theory and actions within a context of community action combined with individual pursuits. We need to understand that our actions always occur within an interrelated context.

### *Social Studies can help Expose the Contradictions of the State*

Let's face it, the State rests on hefty contradictions that can be easily deconstructed by teachers and embedded anarchists within hierarchical institutions. The State's reliance on overt and covert mechanisms of control, its role in the reproduction of social problems and in the reproduction of inequality make the State and its institutions a main focal point for anarchists and their direct action politics (Guérin, 2005, p. 151). Exploring State policies and functions for example, teachers can lead critical discussions about how States functions and for what purposes. For anarchists,

the State has a powerful role in the reproduction of capital and in defending the interests of the owning class. Alexander Berkman (2003) reminds us, "... the government needs laws, police and soldiers, courts and prisons to protect capitalism" (p. 16). Berkman's point is that States function to protect the elite owning class and are structured to reproduce capitalist power relationships. As McKay, Elkin, Neal and Boraas (2008) argue further, "the main function of the state is to guarantee the existing social relationships and their sources within a given society through centralised [sic] power and a monopoly of violence" (p. 142). As anarchists have pointed out, the State needs to be dismantled and remade into something new and some anarchists have looked to other historical examples for alternative ways of organization (Arthur, 2008). By helping students to deconstruct the State and its legitimacy, this throws into question one of the most powerful ways that the ruling class has organized coercive social relationships.

### *Social Studies can Explore Social Movements and Other Acts of Resistance*

Because of its ties to sociology and anthropology, social studies provide an avenue in which to examine social movements in their full historical and social context. This means that teachers can openly discuss acts of resistance and their ties to larger projects of economic and social justice. For example, an anarchist teacher can help debunk the myths surrounding important figures such as Rosa Parks, John Brown, Martin Luther King, Jr., Helen Keller and other radicals who have been sanitized to fit the needs of a liberal and status quo social studies curriculum. Linked to this, a curriculum can be centered upon historical justice movements. In much of mainstream social studies literature, some teacher educators advocate using "essential questions" as guiding frameworks for a curriculum (Lattimer, 2008). These can easily be adapted to fit the needs of activist teachers as these "essential questions" can arise from social justice movements, the literature on critical theory or critical pedagogy, and other transformative theoretical frameworks. By adopting more mainstream ideas, these can be easily sabotaged to reflect a radical political and teaching agenda.

### *Social Studies can be Utopian and Introduce Anarchist Communities and their Historical Legacies*

Unfortunately, when one thinks of "utopian", it is immediately dismissed as "unrealistic." However, the utopian ideal that I seek to build in a social studies classroom is one in which students can see alternatives and the space in which to think of new possibilities. Thus, students can explore *potentially* new ways of organizing ourselves that rests outside of discourses of the State. Although Robert Nozick (1974) situates his ideas of utopia and anarchy within the individual and reeks of Western conceptions of individualism, his ideas can be a beginning point and pushed further.

Utopia is not just a society in which the framework is realized. For who could believe that ten minutes after the framework was established, we would have utopia? Things would be no different than now. It is what grows spontaneously from the individual choices of many people over a long period

of time that will be worth speaking eloquently about. Many communities will achieve many different characters. (p. 332)

Although Nozick completely reifies the notion of the individual and some notion of a prescribed “framework”, it provides an interesting starting point. A new society will not emerge after some mythical social revolution, but will take time and effort in remaking the world we inhabit into something new. This is utopian thinking. It is not the idea that we will all live in some “perfect” society once capitalism is overthrown, but there will be struggle, strife, disagreements, and contestation in building something new out of the ruins of the old. However, this is what makes community. We will all have to invest time into making our society into something different. Social studies can help begin the initial conversations by allowing students opportunities in designing their own social systems outside of a Market based society. Once a teacher helps students deconstruct the current neoliberal State, students should have the space in which to dream of new possibilities. Even if these may not be based in reality, it is important that students are given opportunities to think outside given parameters as this demonstrates the need for alternative vision and the importance of imagination and creativity in solving current social realities. This seems to capture the utopian element within anarchist theory without creating rigid frameworks and is an important way in which anarchists can begin dialogues of alternatives within their coercive and institutionalized classrooms.

*Social Studies can Include Narrative Inquiry and Stress the Importance of Autoethnography in Telling Our Own Stories*

A salient critique by scholars of color and other indigenous academics is the way in which Western epistemologies has constructed *the Other* through representations and ways of knowing that did not emerge from themselves, but through the gaze and watchful eyes of European colonizers (Tuhiwai Smith, 1999). However, narrative inquiry and autoethnography have emerged to counter this gaze. Academics who have been othered are beginning to tell stories through their own words, building theory from their lived experiences and using personal voice to construct knowledge.

Autoethnography may teach us about self in that it challenges our assumptions of normalcy, forces us to be more self-reflexive, and instructs us about our professional and personal socialization ... (Hughes, 2008, p. 127)

Other scholars view autoethnographies as opportunities to, “interrogate and critique broader social issues”, but also reify “narrative and storytelling as ways of knowing” (Morimoto, 2008, p. 30) that is, “embedded in theory and practice” (McIlveen, 2008, p. 15). Autoethnography is also positioned as being able to resist,

Grand Theorizing and the façade of objective research that contextualizes subjects and searchers for singular truth ... situating the socio-politically inscribed body as a central site of meaning making” (Spry, 2001, p. 710)

In this way, many scholars view the autoethnographic project as a way to resist standardization, replication, and objectivity that is supposedly found and is often a privileged myth in academic and other scholarly discourses (Adams & Jones, 2008).

As anarchist teachers, this new development in research can be utilized for our advantage and if a teacher works with historically disenfranchised students, can serve as a point of departure from the standard curriculum to explore their own histories and pasts within the context of historical study and social studies in general. Autoethnography simply rejects feigns of objectivity found in Western forms of knowledge. Narratives include no such posture as theory begins from our lived experiences. If they are collected together, they can potentially form rhizomatic representations of contemporary life during late capitalism (Honan, 2007). Narratives simply subvert dominant mechanical academic paradigms. This subversive nature should not be underscored and can be conceptualized as a direct way in which to confront mainstreamed forms of knowledge.

Autoethnography can also potentially challenge privileged academic discourses. Our stories can connect us with each other. Because autoethnography does not assume a posture of objectivity or a rigidly normative stance, this already counters State policies and practices. The State is formulated around claims of hierarchical Truths that order our daily lives and are responsible for disciplining our bodies (Sheehan, 2003). By allowing space for these counter-narratives to exist, these stories can be organized and disseminated to help demonstrate other ways of knowing and understanding. In this way, this takes us out of State and Market discourses and adds a subversive element to how we come to understand the world around and our place within it.

#### RETHINKING THE SOCIAL STUDIES AS AGENT PROVOCATEURS AND INFILTRATORS: A POSTSCRIPT

Hopefully this chapter can begin new conversations in social studies education for those radicals, social activists and anarchists that wish to become teachers but are unsure of the implications of working in a rigid, coercive, and hierarchically based system. This should not deter us from becoming teachers, as students need stable, loving, nurturing, critical and caring teachers to guide them in their learning discovery. Most human beings are damaged, broken, and are often ill prepared for the reality after the school bell. It should be our charge, as radicals imbued with a sense of radical hope and love, to help alter and change these conditions. However, as anarchists, we also need to be embedded within oppressive systems and institutions to help sabotage the system that enslaves us all. With acts of micro resistance, this can be the beginning point of something new. Infiltration, as a strategy, is something that the State has employed against radicals for some time. I think it may be time to turn this tactic back upon them and start thinking about our pedagogy and praxis within this framework.

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NIRMALA EREVELLES

## 2. EMBATTLED PEDAGOGIES

### *Deconstructing Terror from a Transnational Feminist Disability Studies Perspective*

#### INTRODUCTION

Over the past five years, I have found it very difficult as an educator to teach about issues of diversity and social justice without referencing the broader global social context into which we find ourselves relentlessly drawn by contemporary politics. I find it ironic that students and academic colleagues appear eager to discuss issues of diversity and social justice in the abstract - by which I mean that they assert a general openness to difference and social justice but are much more reticent and sometimes even hostile to the idea of exploring how their assertions of goodwill can be translated into transformative action in the concrete worlds (both local and global) where the politics of difference is materialized. By materiality I mean the actual social, political, and economic conditions within which difference is constituted, performed, and most importantly lived. By invoking the term global, I want to explore the complex ways in which the lived experiences of race, class, gender, and disability in the national context of the US exists in critical tension with similar lived experiences of race, class, gender, and disability in the international context, especially that of the Third World I will also engage the critical concept of invisibility as it plays out within the politics of difference.

To be invisible implies that for the Self, the other simply does not exist. To simply acknowledge that the other exists evokes a form of terror – a terror that demands a stifling silence; a desperate looking away; an urgency to bury the evidence of the other's existence. To engage this issue, in this chapter I will foreground two events in our recent history that continue to be spaces of terror: Hurricane Katrina and the Wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. I will foreground both the silences and the invisibilities and reflect on why our terror of the Other forces us to look the other way. Then drawing on a transnational feminist disability studies perspective, I will explore its implications for a transformative pedagogical praxis.

#### IN THE EYE OF THE HURRICANE

On August 30, 2005, the day after Hurricane Katrina made landfall as a Category 3 hurricane on the coasts of Louisiana and Mississippi, most of the nation who lived outside these affected areas watched in shocked outrage the scenes of despair,

terror, and destitution that Katrina forced us to confront. We paid particular interest to the city of New Orleans. We watched in disbelief as television screens replayed in horrific monotony the walls of water that crashed through the city turning neighborhoods into a surging sea. We saw people stranded on rooftops, while others swam through brackish churning streets amidst bloated bodies, animals, and sewage. We waited breathlessly for the help that came too late while casting furtive glances at the crowded horror of the Superdome replete with rumor, fear, despair, and filth. And when the National Guard finally arrived on the streets fully armed with barbed wire and assault rifles to defend the wealth of the city from its impoverished residents (now refugees) and performed daring rescues, we watched spellbound unsure if our trembling was a result of our fear or our exhilaration.

The media chattered incessantly, making certain aspects of story lines hypervisible while rendering other aspects completely invisible. Take the example of the dapper figure of Anderson Cooper from CNN, live in New Orleans - gasping in horrified zeal while intoning, "Walking through the rubble, it feels like Sri Lanka, Sarajevo, somewhere else, not here, not home, not America" (Brinkley, 2006, p. 2004). I have been replaying those words in my mind for quite some time. Was he saying that this just could not be the United States of America? And why his horror at recognizing New Orleans as a "Third World country"? Did "Third World" symbolize for him pathological destitution as represented by the "dead disabled people" and "crazy, desperate people of color" he found in New Orleans? Was he shocked and outraged to confront these images in his own "backyard"? Actually, why was he even surprised? In examining the "news" from all angles (that's why his show is called 360, right??), had he never encountered news stories where poor disabled people as well as people of color with and without disabilities (all US citizens) have died/suffered because of poverty, lack of access to health care, environmental hazards, police brutality, and/or simply gross neglect - many of them in New Orleans and Mississippi in pre-Katrina times? Or was that even worthy of the news? Would exposing the failures of capitalism (otherwise touted as the best system there is) seem unpatriotic or heretical? Was this why it was easier to have a discussion of "third world poverty in the Ninth Ward" under the safe auspices of nature's fury? (Its natural! It could never be man-made!).

In what ways did Cooper and other journalists' preoccupation with "Third World Horrors" prevent them from raising other critical questions? Several journalists did acknowledge, in passing, that the bodies that kept surfacing in the brackish water, in abandoned houses, and on the streets were mostly poor, black, brown, elderly, critically ill, and or disabled. Why was it that this segment of the population did not figure in any official emergency evacuation plan? How did state and local officials envision that people (already marginalized because of inaccessible social structures) would magically propel themselves out of the city? Were there designated spaces that would be accessible to the varied needs of this population? Or did state officials simply assume that citizens who found themselves in these deplorable conditions were also responsible for their own plight? These are the terrible costs of invisibility.

Disabled activist and author Anne Finger (2005) in a blog has written:

Throughout this week, I've been struck by the presence of disability ... I read of a woman in the Superdome grabbing a reporter's arm, pleading for water for her daughter, a wheelchair user. "I'm afraid she's going to have a seizure," the mother cried. On NPR, I hear the voice of a man calling out, "Dilantin! I need Dilantin!" The President of Jefferson Parrish breaking down as he told of a man who'd been reassuring his mother, institutionalized in a nursing home, that help was on the way – only to learn that she had drowned – on Friday. And of course the image of the woman in the wheelchair dead outside the Convention Center. (para. 2)

Finger's quote reminds all of us of that lonely image of a dead woman in the wheelchair who haunted us all in her lonely tragic stillness. The only image of disability flashed so often on our television screens she served as the very embodiment of the metaphor for disaster, despair, and death – metaphors that have historically shaped the public's perception of disability and disabled people (Lubet & Johnstone, 2005). The ultimate symbol of pity, revulsion, and uselessness; it was an image that caused us to either turn away from our television sets and/or startled many of us into a guilty charity. But as Anne Finger (2005) again notes:

... though the impulse to reach out and offer help is a good one ... charity keeps in place the notion that the "problem" is located in the bodies of disabled people; in the individuals who [died] or who were displaced rather than in social structures and in economic policies that often ignore and usually render the objects of charity as invisible. (para. 6)

#### FEMINIST POLITICS AND THE PATHOLOGIZING OF DIFFERENCE

In many ways our own responses to disability mirror the imagery put forth by the media. And it is this very critique that the Disability Rights Movement and scholars in the associated field of inquiry disability studies make. From a disability studies perspective, disability appears on the landscape of difference as a hyper-visible identity, commonly associated with denigrating terms like 'cripple', 'moron', 'gimp', and 'freak'. On the few occasions when disability is celebrated, the focus has generally been on narratives depicting individuals single-handedly overcoming the stigma of disability in order to pass almost as normal, thereby attaining the dubious distinction of 'super-crip' (Clare, 1999). At other times, disability appears as the ultimate symbol of tragedy, despair and misery – a symbol actively propagated by the telethons that raise millions by marketing this particular image. In contrast, conscious of their experiences of social, economic, and political subjugation, disabled scholars and activists have struggled to claim space, voice, and power to disrupt the normative ideals of the social world that has historically ignored them. To achieve this end, they have sought to define a disability culture that is based on the recognition of their differences – not in spite of their disabilities but because of them. As disabled feminist Susan Wendell (1996) explains:

We are dis-abled. We live with particular social and physical struggles that are partly consequences of the conditions of our bodies and partly consequences

of the structures and expectations of our societies, but they are struggles which only people with bodies like ours experience. (p. 24)

These critiques have also implicated feminist scholarship. In an essay that makes the case for the inclusion of feminist disability studies in mainstream feminist discourse, Judy Rohrer (2005) asks that feminists formulate a “disability theory of feminism” (p. 40) – one that “upsets old frameworks and allows new questions to be asked” (p. 41). Rosemary Garland-Thomson explains this further:

Seldom is disability presented as an integral part of one’s embodiment, character, life, and way of relating to the world. Even less often do we see disability as part of the spectrum of human variation, the particularization of individual bodies, or the materialization of an individual body’s history. Instead we learn to understand disability as something that is wrong with someone, as an exceptional and escapable calamity rather than as what is perhaps the most universal of human conditions ... A feminist disability studies teaches us that we are better off learning to accommodate disabilities, appreciate disabled lives and create a more equitable environment rather than trying to eliminate disability. (2005, p. 1568)

While it is true that feminist disability studies poses a fundamental challenge to feminist concepts of the (ab)normal body, there is an implicit assumption in her argument that the acquisition of a disabled identity always occurs outside of historical, social, and economic contexts. This position becomes especially problematic when issues of race, class, gender, sexuality, ethnicity and nation intersect with disabled identity. For example, how can acquiring a disability be celebrated as “the most universal of human conditions” if it is acquired under the oppressive conditions of poverty, economic exploitation, police brutality, neo-colonial violence, and lack of access to adequate health care and education? What happens when human variation (e.g. race) is itself deployed in the construction of disabled identities for purely oppressive purposes (e.g. slavery, colonialism, immigration law etc.)? How can cyborg subjectivities be celebrated when the manufacture of prostheses and assistive technology is dependant on an exploitative international division of labor? How does one “value interdependence” (Rohrer, 2005, p. 47) within imperialist/neo-colonial contexts that locate consumers and producers of goods and services within a network of fundamentally unequal social relationships? (Erevelles, 1996). And finally, how do we build solidarity across difference even while we negotiate the dis-distances that simultaneously separate and divide us within the contemporary context of transnational capitalism?

Like feminist disability studies, third world feminism also offers a critique of the normative tendencies in (western) mainstream feminism. Here, “western” is used to describe a certain normative construction of “woman” (read: educated, modern, having control of one’s body, and the freedom to make their own decisions) against whom the “average third world woman” is compared and who is found to be lacking. Thus, “the average third world woman” is generally represented as leading an “essentially truncated life on account of her gender (read: sexually constrained) and her being ‘third world’ (read: ignorant, poor, uneducated, tradition-bound, domestic,

family oriented, victimized, etc.)” (Mohanty, 1997, p. 80). Constituted as the very embodiment of lack, such representations of third world women mirror ableist representations of disabled women (Fine & Asch, 1988; Morris, 1991; Garland-Thomson, 1997; Thomas, 1999; Ghai, 2003). And yet, notwithstanding this obvious connection, third world feminists have consistently ignored issues of disability.

This occlusion of disability issues in third world feminism is costly. For example, significant in third world feminist analyses are theorizations of the experiences of women under the postcolonial nation-state (Mohanty, 1991; Rai, 1996; Kaplan, Alarcon & Moallem, 1999). Rai (1996) points out that in Third World contexts, the state “looms large in women’s lives only when women transgress the boundaries set by the state in various areas of public and private life over which it has jurisdiction” (p. 36). Thus, an ableist state would also closely patrol the boundaries of female bodily difference as is evident in state practices that seek to control (disabled) women’s reproduction - sterilization (Ghai, 2004; Molina 2006); (disabled) women’s immigration and citizenship rights (Molina, 2006); and (disabled) women’s economic (in)dependence (Chang, 2000; Livingston, 2006; Erevelles, 2006).

Additionally, notwithstanding “different histories with respect to the particular inheritance of post-fifteenth-century Euro-American hegemony: the inheritance of slavery, enforced migration, plantation and indentured labor, colonialism, imperial conquest, and genocide” (Mohanty, 1991, p. 10), third world feminists should have common cause around at least one issue – that of disability – an inevitable repercussion of the violence of such oppressive practices/structures. So then, in which spaces do disabled third world women claim sisterhood? How do they relate to their disabled sisters who derive certain privileges from residing in the very imperialist states that facilitated their becoming disabled in the first place? More urgently, how do they challenge their invisibility among their third world sisters who, while critiquing the imperialist state refuse to foreground its ableist assumptions that ultimately work against all third world women?

#### THE INVISIBLE TERROR OF GENDER, RACE AND DISABILITY IN WAR TIME

I now turn to the very real and immediate context of war. Almost daily, on the news, there are reports of roadside bombs detonating, the launching of military offensives, the consistent regularity of power failures and shortages of food, drinking water, and fuel in the “post-war” contexts of a devastated Afghanistan and an occupied Iraq. In the United States, we keep a diligent count of the number of U.S. soldiers killed in the wars in both Iraq and Afghanistan. Even more infrequently, and almost always as a passing note, we hear a rare report of US disabled war veterans returning from combat (iCasualties.org, 2009). In Afghanistan, the first country targeted in the “War on Terror”, the number of civilian deaths reported in 2002 was around 3,800 (Herold, 2002). The escalation of combat in 2009 has now brought that total to 6534 (The Guardian, 2009). On the Iraqi side, the numbers of civilian and military deaths reported is contested, with reports varying from 40,000 (iCasualties.org, 2006) to around 103,000 (iraqbodycount.org, 2009). I was unable to find any statistics on

Afghan and Iraqi civilians and members of the military (and now the insurgency) who have become disabled as a result of the war and the post-war conflict.

I find these omissions extremely troubling. In moving from a national to a transnational context, why has there been little outrage and protest not just by Anderson Cooper but also by his U.S. audience, when for the last 5 years similar devastating accounts of death, destruction, and disability from Afghanistan and Iraq have briefly appeared on television before disappearing forever with little debate and or discussion? This is extremely problematic in light of the fact that this devastation was on a much larger scale and was a direct result of US imperialist policies. Even more troubling has been the unemotional response from both people of color and disabled communities in the US. After all, this war has created more disability in people of color communities with very little or no social and economic support.

Third world feminists Jacqui Alexander and Chandra Talapade Mohanty (1997) argue that “militarized [hyper]masculinity” (p. xxv) has a strategic function in the reproduction of (neo)colonialism and the (re)organization of gendered hierarchies in the nation state. As a result, in war time, the nationalist popular media creates a seemingly facile relationship between violent male behavior and hyper-masculinity by glorifying tough, aggressive, and robustly masculine soldiers (Myrntinen, 2004), while ignoring women unless they appear in “recognizable and traditional roles such as the mourning widow or the all-feeling mother” (Lindinski, 2005, p. 142). Moreover, in an effort to maintain its robustly masculine image, the military exists in persistent terror of being emasculated (Pin-Fat & Stern, 2005). Thus, even though both women and gay men serve in the U.S. military, gay men, in particular, who represent a “feminized masculinity” in the popular imagination are required to maintain a “silent” presence, in order to sustain the mythical image of the hyper-masculine imperialist army.

However, even tough and aggressive U.S. soldiers are humbled while living through the actual materiality of war. War injuries produce disability - another threat to the hyper-masculine imagery. Many of the soldiers who are diagnosed with depression, post-traumatic stress, and mental illness are afraid to admit their vulnerability and dependence on others – traits that appear so contradictory to their fictional ideal of masculinity because of their association with disability (Glaser, 2005). In Operation Iraqi Freedom, soldiers are reported to have access to the best emergency medical attention and advances in medical technology during the time period immediately after acquiring their injuries<sup>1</sup>, especially in relation to prosthetics. Proud of its technology in this area, the military has announced new efforts to keep certain disabled personnel on active duty if they can regain their fitness after being fitted with a prosthetic (Hull, 2004). One such example is David Rozelle, who having being fitted with a prosthetic leg was slated to be deployed to Iraq as commander of the Third Armored Cavalry Regiment. One of the few disabled soldiers celebrated in the mass media, Rozelle is seen as the very embodiment of the saying – “once a soldier, always a soldier” – because he is also seen as the very embodiment of the fabled toughness and manliness of the U.S. military.

In fact, disabled soldiers like Rozelle could be seen to represent a new identity in contemporary military discourses – “the cyborg soldier ... the juncture of ideals,

metals, chemicals, and people who make weapons of computers and computers of weapons and soldiers” (Masters, 2005, p. 113). The cyborg soldier is the new posthuman subject who is intimately interconnected with modern technologies of war (e.g. the Patriot missile; smart bombs, etc.) that are infused with the ability to reason and think without being interrupted by emotions, guilt, or bodily limitations. In fact, the cyborg soldier, in almost every way, is in constant battle against the normal human male body using “technological prostheses that replicate biological senses while circumventing human biological limitations: poor eyesight, hearing and discernment” (Masters, 2005, p. 122). Masters describes this cyborg soldier as “a much more resilient subject, a hegemonic technological subject animated by masculine subjectivity, effectively mitigating against the imperfections of the human body while simultaneously [forging] a close identification with white, heterosexual, masculine subjectivity” (p. 121).

From a feminist disability studies perspective, the cyborg soldier is a cause for celebration. The cyborg soldier as posthuman<sup>2</sup> subject troubles the boundaries of normal/abnormal humanity – creating a transgressive image of disabled subjectivity that modernist discourses have historically denied. Whereas disabled subjectivity has historically been categorized as effeminate, disability as embodied via the hyper-masculine cyborg soldier challenges oppressive images of weak, pitiable, broken, and wounded human flesh and offers more empowering and transgressive imagery of possibility and potential. Additionally, one of the benefits of militarism is that advanced technologies developed in the battlefield often trickle down to domestic markets (cell phones, video games, and now high-tech prostheses) to enhance the quality of (disabled) civilian life. Thus, some feminist disability studies theorists could argue that the cyborg soldier can offer transgressive possibilities for the category of disability.

But what if, we actually looked at the “other” face of disability – one that resists codification as cyborg because of actual social, political, and economic deprivation? As mentioned earlier, war produces disabilities that include loss of limbs, paralysis, emotional trauma - disabilities that challenge families, communities, and government agencies (Safran, 2005). For example, in Afghanistan, vast numbers of people have physical disabilities arising from polio; blast injuries, visual disabilities from untreated eye diseases and blasts; mental disabilities associated with malnutrition, iodine deficiency disorders, and trauma; and epilepsy associated with trauma or with untreated malaria (Miles, 2002). Moreover, Afghan refugees wounded and/or disabled as a result of “friendly fire” have had to depend on the meager resources of their families for survival. Miles (2002) has reported that access to disability services for women is very limited and during Taliban rule these services ceased functioning. In addition, access to even, community rehabilitation is restricted for women and children. In an interesting observation, the restriction of mobility of Afghan women has actually resulted in fewer women being killed or disabled by fighting, landmines, and unexploded bombs. Women, also participate disproportionately in the informal home care and assistance – a major source of disability services in the country. Given these material realities, neither feminist disability studies nor third world feminism can dismiss disability in third world contexts as either a troublesome trope or an irritating detail.

In Iraq, the situation is even more sobering. Like Afghanistan, Iraq has also suffered 15 years of war, economic sanctions, and now the US invasion and ongoing occupation of Iraq. A new study by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) contains the following indices of what they term the “social misery” in Iraq:

- Nearly a quarter of Iraq’s children suffer from chronic malnutrition
- The probability of dying before 40 of Iraqi children born between 2000 and 2004 is approximately three times the level in neighboring countries
- 40 percent of families in urban areas live in neighborhoods with sewage on the streets
- More than 200,000 Iraqis have “chronic” disabilities caused by war (Walsh, 2005)

In addition, lessons learned from other war-torn countries like Bosnia, Sierra Leone, and Kosovo demonstrate that there is also a proliferation of other invisible disabilities among civilian populations living through a war. For example, McKay (2004) reports that in Sierra Leone, children participating in war return to rural communities with memories of terror and day to day suffering. Additionally, children exposed to war experience post-traumatic stress, anxiety and depressive symptoms, psycho-physiological disturbances, behavioral problems and personality changes, in addition to physical traumas resulting from injury, physical deformities and diseases such as tuberculosis, malaria, and parasites (Kuterovac-Jagodic, 2003; McKay, 2004; Al-Ali, 2005).

Ghoborah, Huth, & Russett (2004) describe some major influences wars have on public health infrastructures. First, wars increase the exposure of the civilian population to conditions that increase the risk of disease, injury, and death as a result of displacement. Bad food, water, sanitation, and housing turn refugee camps into vectors for infectious disease. With the destruction of the health care infrastructure, prevention and treatment programs are weakened and often in these circumstances new strains that are drug resistant (e.g. tuberculosis, HIV/AIDS) evolve. Secondly, wars reduce the pool of available resources for expenditures on health care for the general population as well as constrain the level of resources allocated to the public health care system in their aftermath. Thirdly, war time destruction of the transportation infrastructure weakens the distribution of clean water, food, medicine and relief supplies to both refugees and those who remain behind in these war torn areas.

In citing these statistics, I am attempting to show how the proliferation of disability in war, actively affects positive and negative meanings that are attributed to the category of disability. In third world contexts, international organizations like the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund are often instrumental in defining and administering disability with devastating consequences for disabled people themselves as exemplified by the use of the concept of the DALY – disability adjusted life years. Using the DALY, the World Bank prioritizes health interventions by calculating their relative cost effectiveness. (SLIDE 31) Hence, children and the elderly have lower value than young adults, and presumably disabled persons who are unable to work are awarded zero value and therefore have little or no entitlement to health services at public expense (Erevelles, in press). Thus, the DALY, constitutes disabled people as a liability to the state rather than as a valued investment.

Additionally, state-initiated policies that have been celebrated for their cost-effectiveness are actually geared to “[mobilize] ... people’s resources for government programs” (Kalyanpur, 1996, p. 125), where the additional costs of these services continue to be absorbed by both the lowly paid and unpaid labor of poor third world women. In a context where war is responsible for the proliferation of disability, it is critical that third world feminists examine the impact of disability on (both non-disabled and disabled) third world women’s lives as they struggle against the oppressive policies and practices of the imperialist, neocolonial state.

#### IMPERIALISM/NEOCOLONIALISM AS THE NEW EUGENICS

In this final section of my chapter, I make the case for a *transnational feminist disability studies perspective* – a perspective that engages gender and disability and their intersection with race, class, and sexuality within the material context of the post/neocolonial state. Such a perspective is neither ahistorical, nor limited by national/ethnic boundaries. It is neither burdened by narrow class interests nor restricted by normative modes of being. Rather, this perspective maps both the continuities and discontinuities across different historical periods that have both separated and connected women along the axes of race, class, disability, sexuality, ethnicity, and nationality by foregrounding not just discursive representations but also the material (read actual) conditions of their lives.

As an example, I will very briefly map out the historical continuities and discontinuities between racism, sexism, and ableism embodied in the eugenics practices of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century and the contemporary context of neo-colonialist wars and their impact on disability, race, and gender in the third world. The term “eugenics” was coined in 1883 in Britain by Francis Galton to describe a program of selective breeding. Within the imperialistic context of colonialism, eugenics thrived on the fear of racialized Others fueled by racist associations of genetic degeneration and disease. By hinting at the imminent possibility of social decay if certain degenerate “bodies” were not brought under control, the segregation and/or *the destruction of the colonized races was regarded as necessary for the public good* because maintaining biological distance was critical to preventing degeneracy. Fearing that such characteristics could be passed down from generation to generation and further pose a threat to the dominant white race, “protective” practices such as forced sterilizations, rigid miscegenation laws, residential segregation in ghettos, barrios, reservations and other state institutions and even genocide were brought to bear on non-white populations by bringing into play the oppressive practices of eugenics. In this way, according to feminist scholar Leslie Roman (2003) the project of colonialism and nation-building was intimately intertwined with eugenics policies that contributed to the social and material construction of people of color and people with disabilities as ‘unfit bodies’ or ‘unworthy citizens.’

Similarly, by foregrounding disability as an imperialist ideology that equates certain racialized, gendered, sexual, and class differences as “defect,” it is possible to also foreground the eugenic impulses articulated via the “War on Terror” and that have oppressive implications for both poor non-disabled and disabled women of color

living in both the first and third worlds. The sheer scope of this violence should be difficult to ignore and yet it is ignored; its invisibility justified by the imperialist/neocolonial state through its claims of regulating and controlling differences that are seen as disruptive to the “natural” order of global civil society. This is where the echoes of eugenics policies of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries resonate in contemporary times. For example, Iraqis and Afghans who are killed or disabled in their “Occupied” countries are not thought of as “civilians” resisting an imperialist force but as “terrorists/insurgents” – a term that negates any rights to enfranchised citizenship. If civilian deaths and/or disabilities caused by the war are acknowledged, they are dismissed as collateral damage. When an odd discussion comes up regarding the meager pensions and lack of disability benefits made available to widows/mothers/caregivers whose family members have been affected by the War on Terror, it is explained away as a luxury they did not even enjoy prior to the Occupation. And in spaces where concepts like the DALY are deployed to determine who has access to health services at public expense, there will be oppressive outcomes for the thousands of civilians disabled on account of war and their care-givers, most of whom will be poor women of color.

Persistent invisibility and occasional hypervisibility exact a heavy price from its victims. On February 1<sup>st</sup>, 2008, for a brief moment race, disability, and gender claimed center stage in the news regarding the war in Iraq. The FOX News Headline read, “Mentally Disabled Female Homicide Bombers Blow Up Pet Markets in Baghdad, Killing Dozens.” The AOL news headline put it even more tersely and coarsely, “Mentally Retarded Pair Used in Bombing.” Moral outrage is the only appropriate response to these headlines. But what exactly has caused our outrage? Was it the fact that the two women who literally exploded in the market place were “mentally retarded”? Were we outraged because we presumed they were unwilling pawns used by unscrupulous individuals for whom barbarism has no boundaries? Does our outrage reinforce our belief in the righteousness of our stance against the “terrorists”? Or do we give pause amidst this moral outrage to reflect on several issues I have raised in this presentation that demonstrate that we have always used poor disabled third world women as pawns in our mythical struggles over good and evil – allowing them a “deadly” recognition – only when it suits our purposes.

A transnational feminist disability studies perspective will force us to see that the embattled bodies of (disabled) (third world) women wear scars that speak of centuries of violence – representational, physiological, and material – and still live to tell their stories in the breathless whisper of exploding bodies and shattered bones. As witnesses to this violence, our only recourse is to forge a transnational theory and praxis that would work across the boundaries of race, class, gender, disability, and sexuality to end this violence now.

#### AND SO ... WHAT IS TO BE DONE?

So what does all this mean pedagogically? Should not discussions like this cause us all to be outraged? Where is there place in our curriculum for us to address issues like this? Why is it that even progressive pedagogues in Feminist Studies,

Disability Studies, Anti-Racist, and Social Education have done little to reflect on the implications of contemporary history on issues of race, gender, and disability? Is it because we perceive these populations as “backward, irrational, undeveloped”– whose claims to personhood are questionable? Are we conscious of both racist and ableist metaphors that we deploy to justify and therefore silence the critical dialogue as well as action that may be required of all us to stop the violence? How do we go about business as usual...making blithe assertions of our respect for our common humanity in a context rife with the real material violence of social and economic inequality?

To educate for social justice it is imperative that we ask the hard questions. To be an ethical educator would require that we have the moral courage to seek the answers to those questions. And to claim our own humanity necessitates that we care about the Other as much as we would our own.

#### NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> Here I am referring only to the emergency care soldiers receive at the military bases and at hospitals like Walter Reed in Bethesda, Maryland. Follow up medical care and access to medical benefits that occurs in VA hospitals in the months following emergency care are reported by several news media sources to be far from satisfactory.
- <sup>2</sup> Judith Halberstam and Ira Livingston (1995) define posthuman bodies as “the causes and effects of postmodern relations of power and pleasure, virtuality and reality, sex and its consequences. The posthuman body is a technology, a screen, a projected image; it is a body under the sign of AIDS, a contaminated body, a techno-body, ... .. a queer body.” (p. 3)

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