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Reviewed by Rebecca Rogers & Eric D. Turley
University of Missouri-St. Louis

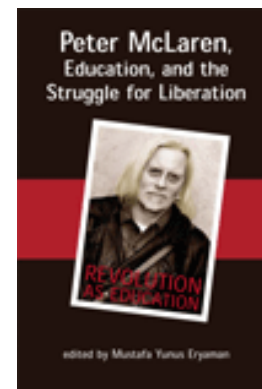
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We write this review of *Peter McLaren, Education and the Struggle for Liberation* at a time when a group of teachers in Los Angeles, California are on a hunger strike to protest a school budget that includes over two thousand staff layoffs and increases in class sizes; at a time when the US has revitalized its commitment to send 20,000 troops to Afghanistan this year and at a time when taxpayer dollars have been used to bail out Wall Street. “Where is the outrage?” asks Valerie Scatamburlo-D’Annibale in chapter 2. She continues, “Could it be that many self-proclaimed ‘left’ academics serve as diversionists rather than political interventionists? Are they so enamored with their discourse radicalism so preoccupied with deconstructing texts that they have failed to confront the broader context of globalized capitalism?” (p. 26)

About the Author

Mustafa Yunus Eryaman is Associate Dean, College of Education, Canakkale Onsekiz Mart University, Turkey.

This volume includes essays that explore the boundaries of what the authors refer to as critical revolutionary pedagogy, calling for a more materialist and grounded approach—one that is riskier and more radical than previously seen in the U.S. All of the contributors situate their chapters within the scope of Peter McLaren’s work, specifically his theoretical turn during the 1990’s toward a Marxist-humanist approach to social reform focused on historical materialism. A theme resonating throughout the collection is the importance of centering class analysis as a way to make critical pedagogy a material force for social change. Thus, using McLaren’s work as a backdrop for their own projects—projects that range from analyzing the contributions of a Filipino artist to teacher education on the US-Canada border, to study circles in a university classroom, to a discourse analysis of McLaren’s work—the contributors of this collection remind educators to focus on the political, economic, historical, and material struggles of peoples living in oppression brought on by the perpetuation of capitalism.



Standing up to Neoliberalism through Critical Pedagogy

“Neoliberalism is the immediate and foremost enemy of genuine participatory democracy, not just in the US, but across the planet, and will be for the foreseeable future” (Scatamburlo-D’Annibale, p. 44). The basic storyline for understanding the relationship between neoliberalism and education goes something like this: More and more, democracy is being used as a way to administer capitalism and as a vehicle through which the social relations of consumerism, necessary in the neoliberal world order, are acquired. As people learn to value commodities over participation, they acquire the ideology of neoliberalism. Thus, education becomes the terrain through which the necessary ideology for neoliberalism is developed. The second stage, though, is that the terrain of education itself becomes the target of the market. Because new markets are constantly needed in fast capitalism, education becomes fertile ground for profit seeking. State interventions, provided for under NCLB, become the strategic site of privatizing public education. Public monies become the fuel for capitalist expansion; paradoxically providing less and lower quality services to students and families than previously.

Critical pedagogy holds the potential to disrupt and erode this ideology. While neoliberalism demands relations of consumption, detachment and non-participation, critical teaching requires relationships of love and solidarity. However, Gabbard (chapter 6) realistically writes, “Education in the United States is as far away from revolutionary critical pedagogy as the American political system is from democracy” (p. 132). When revolution is not imminent as is the case in the US, “what remains are attempts to interfere with the spell of commodity relations, to build something in capitalism’s shadow” (p. 10). Critical pedagogy is the architecture of the shadow that is building, always against the threat and tyranny of neoliberalism. The chapters collectively take on the question: How do we break the spell of capitalism in a society where revolution is not possible? Or, as McLaren asks “what is the maximum damage we can do to the rule of capital, to the dominance of capital’s value form?” (cited on p. 11). Or, how can we make people choose an alternative system? How might we destroy of the ideology of consumerism or use consumerism on itself? Martin (chapter 4), with a note of hope adds, “the conditions leading up to revolutionary crisis in advanced capitalist countries are also being prepared for by the thousands of minor skirmishes and struggles engaged in today” (p. 94).

Tools of Radical Critical Pedagogy

Drawing on the backdrop of Friirian notions of liberatory pedagogy, the contributors of this book offer the possibilities and limitations of tools aimed toward replacing the exchange economy of capitalism with a system of democratic socialism.

Central to radical critical pedagogy is recognizing that “the embodied self is a practical knowledgeable actor in the word” (Scatamburlo-D’Annibale, p. 34) and “the actions of human beings shape history” (citing McLaren, p. 34). Combined, the authors ask us to imagine the critical entry points where educators and activists can work to resist capitalist forces working to dehumanize and segregate humans from their work as producers.

In chapter 3, Juha Suoranta and Olli-Pekka Moisio ground their instructional methods at the university level to critical pedagogy through meaning making as a collective enterprise. Suoranta and Moisio discuss their use of study circles as a means to shift the production of knowledge from faculty to students, allowing students to experience and know the conditions necessary for making knowledge (capital). The study circle builds toward a "collective social expertise" where the 3-5 students work as a community to produce knowledge that they all create and share. This chapter challenges the growing space of the University as a degree mill and questions the real purpose of higher education.

Michael Viola in his essay on Filipino artist Danilo "Papo" de Asis explores the way art and creativity can be taken up to humanize and illuminate the struggles of peoples resisting imperial forces of power. Possibly the strongest essay in the collection, Viola weaves the artistic work of Papo against the backdrop of U.S. imperialism, specifically within the twentieth century as the United States sought out new markets and hoped to use the Philippines as an entry point to China. When Papo expatriated to the United States in 1990, he turned his creative energies toward working-class communities of color in Los Angeles. In both the Philippines and in Los Angeles, Papo worked among and created communities of artists who also sponsored youth artists. Together their art "support[ed] the praxis of creating new social agency that is multiracial, gender-balanced, anti-imperialist, anti-capitalist, and internationalist in scope" (p. 180).

Several contributors to the collection considered using radical critical pedagogy as a tool to reframe teacher education. In chapter 5, Brad Portfilio uses critical framing as the major tool in his two-year qualitative study on future female educators and their perceptions and experiences of working within a "male-centered computing culture" (p. 101). Mustafa Yunus Eryaman and Marina Riedler contrast progressive and radical progressivism focusing on the need for teacher-educators to engage in reflective practice centered on human agency and teaching practices situated within "political, ideological, gendered, sexual, racial, transformative, social, discursive, engages, indigenous, lived, or performed praxis" (p. 214). While

both of these articles offer the discourse of an alternative world order through an articulation of McLaren's scholarly work, neither, at least in these essays, illuminate the potential of radical critical pedagogy beyond the research context. That is, how does their critical framing impact the material realities of the classrooms, schools, and educational settings where these future teachers will engage their students? These chapters point to the need for future work in the impact revolutionary critical pedagogy has on pre-service teachers when they enter schools.

Another tool woven through the book is the role that language plays in the reproduction and contestation of neoliberalism. Samuel Day Fassbinder (chapter 1), for example, analyzes McLaren's discourse strategies and argues that his use of naming culprits, suggesting icons and theorizing to unite the disaffected (p. 11) works to build a world where socialism is possible. However, he states, "it is still an open question regarding how far the above discursive strategies can interfere with the spell of commodity relations" (p. 17). This hopefulness and skepticism about the role of discourse in revolutionary pedagogy is a focus of the book. Later, Arshad Ali (chapter 9) convincingly argues for the development of "a critique of language and a language of critique" which will allow "critical educators to help foster an educative process directed toward attacking social and economic injustices" (pp. 188). At the end of the day, we are left wondering to what extent critique of discourse practices can not only interrupt but form the new relations of solidarity needed for socialism. Ali is optimistic about the relationship between discourse and material social change. He writes, (chapter 9) "naturalizing ideology through public discourse represents a form of material power and symbolic capital that is a constitutive part of political economy, convertible to economic and social capital" (p. 189). He continues, "linguistic ideological production thus provides the tools to access and consider issues of hegemony, power and alienation and allows for the exploration of how dominant groups are able to normalize knowledge" (pp. 189). The authors shun a "textual revolution" where the act of deconstructing texts has become a substitute for deconstructing unjust social relations—what D'Annibale refers to as "excessive discursivism" (p. 39).

Closing Thoughts

The book is a tribute to Peter McLaren's life and work. Each of the chapters speaks to how their work has been influenced by McLaren's brand of critical pedagogy. We were surprised that the chapters in this collection did not attempt to extend or critique McLaren's work. We were also surprised to see only two female contributors included in this collection. Furthermore, given the multiple calls of the authors to ground our work in the material or to engage in dialect with historical and economic forces which shape the present, we found this collection falling short in this area. Finally, several of the authors mentioned McLaren's work in South America and the foundations which bear his name; it would have been nice, in a collection on the legacy of Peter McLaren, to address the ways these foundations work toward the socialist ends McLaren asks us to imagine.

We infer that the link between critical revolutionary pedagogy and a new social order is in changing the relation between self and the market, conditions that can be formed through educational spaces. Indeed, Peter McLaren's argument is that destroying capitalism is more a "matter of reconstituting our internal and social relations than it is a matter of propagating a certain set of ideas" (p. 95). This is the concept of endogenous development so widely practiced as part of the Bolivarian revolution in Venezuela. This idea seems core to the work of revolutionary critical pedagogy and we think more could have been done with this idea throughout the volume.

Despite these shortcomings, we are still compelled by the underpinnings of a critical pedagogy working toward hope, human agency, and renewed social relationships. Arshad Ali (chapter 9) writes, "the constant within McLaren's writings and teaching is his fundamental commitment to the elimination of oppression domestically and worldwide through his uncompromising commitment to humanity" (p. 188). As Peter McLaren himself stated, "I am trying to exhort my American readers to look, to stare, and then to refocus through a new conceptual imaginary, to rethink the marriage of democracy to capital. Is there another bride, another bridegroom more

compatible for and less inimical to democracy? I think there is. It's called socialism" (p. 228). But, we wonder, what kind of socialism?

A truly revolutionary critical pedagogy, in our opinion, would necessarily link educational struggles with social struggles. We would challenge each of the authors to think about the ways in which they can connect their piece of the revolutionary puzzle to other sectors of the movement. Indeed, one shortcoming of critical pedagogy is the insular nature of our work. What is needed is more transfer between critical educators and others in the movement for liberation to build new social relations necessary for an expanded and more human form of life.

About the Reviewers

Rebecca Rogers is an Associate Professor in the College of Education at the University of Missouri St. Louis. Her research focuses on the socio-political contexts of literacy education. Her research has appeared in journals such as: *Reading Research Quarterly*, *Journal of Literacy Research*, *Review of Educational Research*, *Anthropology & Education Quarterly*, *Discourse and Linguistics & Education*. Her book "A Critical Discourse Analysis of Family Literacy Practices" (2003, Routledge) was awarded the Ed Fry Book Award for Outstanding Contributions to Literacy Research. Her newest book (with M. Mosley, M.A. Kramer & LSJTRG) is called "Designing Socially Just Learning Communities: Critical Literacy Education across the Lifespan" (Routledge, 2009).

Eric D. Turley is an assistant professor at the University of Missouri St. Louis, where he holds a joint-appointment in the English Department and the Division of Teaching and Learning. His research explores the intersections of composition theory, writing assessment, and literacy politics. Eric's work has appeared in *Phi Delta Kappan* and *English Journal*; he is currently working on a book manuscript based on an archival and ethnographic study of standardized writing assessment in secondary schools.

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Editors

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