



Torres, Carlos A. (2009) *Globalizations and Education: Collected Essays on Class, Gender, and the State*. NY: Teachers College Press.

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**Reviewed by Daniel Kirk
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Carlos Alberto Torres holds an influential and prominent place in the arenas of critical educational theory and comparative education. His work with, and interpretation of the work of Paulo Freire, highlight Torres as one of contemporary education's most vocal critics, as well as a champion of educational issues, particularly as they relate to social justice and equality. In this current text, we are treated to a collection of some of Torres' most influential and important essays, spanning three decades, in a career that has been as varied as it has been significant. The book proves to be a useful and informative synthesis of Torres' body of work, which is of particular benefit to those encountering his writing for the first time, almost serving as a reader of the seminal work of his career.

Torres, a sociologist originally from Argentina, set out his academic stall in the United States, drawing upon his South

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Carlos Alberto Torres is a professor of Social Science and Comparative Education at the UCLA Graduate School of Education and Information Studies. He serves as director of the Paulo Freire Institute and the UCLA Latin American Center.



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American roots to forge a successful, and productive, career in the frenetic and competitive world of academe. Never turning his back on his native cultural, linguistic and national identity, he remained a close and ardent supporter of social justice in education in Latin America, as highlighted in his work with Paulo Freire. Drawing upon, and employing, critical theory in his examination and critique of issues of race, class, gender and power in educational structures, Torres guides the engaged reader through many of the underlying issues related to educational equity and access that exist.

As we would expect, in the current volume of collected essays, Torres draws heavily on the work of Freire, expanding on the philosophical and theoretical work of the renowned Brazilian educator. Of course, aside from the works produced by Freire himself, there are tomes dedicated to an exploration of his work, career and writings. What sets Torres' interpretation and exploration of Freire aside, is that he worked closely with Freire, acting as advisor during the latter's tenure as Secretary of Education of the City of Sao Paulo, (1989 – 1991). This personal insight into the workings of Freire, alongside the educational theories held by Torres himself, mesh to form a comprehensive set of works presented in this volume, that should be required reading for all those involved in public education, regardless of where in the world they are.

After an informative and very readable foreword by Michael Apple, the text takes the reader through a series of chapters concerned with the relationship between the state and education, with particular attention paid to issues of race, gender, class, social status, and power in socio-cultural spheres. The structure of the text makes it particularly attractive to students and early career educators, as the main tenets of critical theory and social justice in education are explored through cases that make real the often abstract notions of educational theory and the sociology of education. As would be expected due to Torres' background, much of what is explored is grounded in Latin America, and the political and cultural shifts that have occurred in that region, impacting directly educational structures and practice. This works on two levels; firstly by offering those



unfamiliar with the educational landscape of Latin America and insight into the issues and practices of the systems of education that exist, and secondly, by allowing us to understand how globalizing forces highlight that regionally grounded experience is transferrable and relevant to other contextual settings. Again, making the text useful to those with an interest in educational policy, globalization of education, comparative education, and public education systems.

Overall, this text is a valuable read for educators interested in the relationship, often uncomfortable and ill-fitting at times, between the state and public education systems. Even those who have a deep understanding of the issues, and of the work of Torres and Freire, the text provides a useful synthesis of some of Torres's seminal work.

About the Reviewer

Daniel Kirk, PhD, Assistant Professor, American University of Sharjah, United Arab Emirates. Daniel received his PhD in Language and Literacy Education from the University of Georgia. Daniel gained a BA (Honors) degree in English, a postgraduate teacher certification and a Master of Arts (Education) degree from the University of Sunderland, UK. He has taught secondary English and Literature in the UK, Qatar, Bermuda and Dubai. His research interests focus on the preparation of new teachers from an international comparative stance. Email: dkirk@aus.edu.

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