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A Revolutionary Critical Pedagogy Manifesto for the Twenty-First Century

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Abstract

Transnational capitalist corporations have put humankind and the natural environment on the brink of disaster. The world population is increasingly polarized into a global proletariat and a transnational bourgeoisie. This process is what Samir Amin (2004) refers to as the "pauperization" of the world. The authors of this article draw from the work of Henry A. Giroux, David Harvey, and William I. Robinson, among others, to discuss the rise of neoliberal capitalism. The corporatization and privatization of public education is explored. Various consequences of neoliberalism such as environmental catastrophes, language loss and English as a colonizing language, and the end of certain indigenous populations are considered. The authors then explicate the necessity of revolutionary critical pedagogy by outlining its central tenets. The authors close with a call for unity among Marxists, Critical Pedagogues, and Critical Race Theorists, that the distinct disciplines can inform one another and advance social justice commitments through solidarity.

Keywords: revolutionary critical pedagogy; neoliberalism; transnational corporations, social stratification, exploitation

Critical Pedagogy

A spectre is haunting the logic of capitalism – the spectre of critical pedagogy. All the powers of the neoliberal world have entered into a holy alliance to exorcise this spectre: the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, the transnational knowledge economy, and its various and sundry educational compacts. Where is the party in opposition that has not been decried as communistic or socialist by its opponents in power? Where is the party in opposition that has not been laughed aside as a piteous anachronism? Where is the party that has not been labelled extremist by the military-industrial complex?

The transnational capitalist corporations have placed worldwide public spheres in their crosshairs. Their pockets cannot be full enough, no bonus is too large, and nothing is beyond commodification. In fierce competition with one another (but always in concert against the poor and working class) transnational corporations seek to privatize any remnants of the public sphere, commodify whatever can be seized and sold, and (through control over mainstream media) perpetuate the psychological imposition of false needs upon permanently tuned-in viewers/ listeners/ consumers. Today's bread and circus is served in the form of iPods, Twitter messages (affectionately called "tweets"), and other forms of propaganda that foster individualized activities, disconnect people from one another, and distract them from critical reflection. Yet, behind all this is what David Harvey refers to as 'accumulation by dispossession' (see Buzby, 2010).

To say that public education in the United States is under assault in this climate of gangster capitalism is a gross understatement; education has been hijacked by oppressive regimes and is now one among a list of corporatized, privatized enterprises that once had been a public service. Public education is now more like a thresher bent on not so much harvesting bright minds but for grinding down into pulp the hopes and aspirations of a whole generation. Such oppression comes in multiple forms: the linguistic seizure of speakers of languages other than English, the ideological normalization of an increasingly militarized society, and indoctrination into the values of neoliberal capitalism (competition, alienation, individualism). Any chance for the development of creative and critical agency among youth in public schools today must take place either in schools (but under the radar, as conscientious educators attempt to subvert the system from the inside out), or in external sites where public pedagogy actively seeks to undue the dominant ideology. By public pedagogy, we are referring to Henry A. Giroux's crucial work that centered 'on public pedagogy as a means of producing critical analyses of and interventions within mass culture and media' (Sandlin, Schultz, Burdick, 2009: 2-3). Henry A. Giroux (2004) writes:

the ascendancy of neoliberal corporate culture into every aspect of American life both consolidates economic power in the hands of the few and aggressively attempts to break the power of unions, decouple income from productivity, subordinate the needs of society to the market, and deem public services and goods an unconscionable luxury (Giroux, 2004: 105).

The astronomical debts suffocating already over-exploited countries, (debts owned by the United States via the IMF, World Bank, and other nefarious institutions), act as a stand-in slave master whipping

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over-exploited countries into a form of servitude, essentially converting the globe into a neo-plantocracy. As a result, entire populations, their ways of knowing, languages, cultures, are as jeopardized as polar ice caps on our increasingly cooked planet. Environmental catastrophes linked to pollution, plunder and depletion of natural resources, over-consumption and its attendant accumulation of waste give us pause to question the possibility of sustaining life on Earth. McLaren (2010:13) writes, 'The role of the nation state has changed to meet globally uniform laws that produce capital against the interests of the international working class'. Concern for the collective best interests thus becomes marginalized and consumption comes to validate individuals' desires, leading to rabid spending frenzies and hyper-consumption.

Global Proletariat and Transnational Bourgeoisie

Society today continues to be defined by a history of class struggle. As Marx and Engels (1848) once stated, 'freeman and slave, patrician and plebian, lord and serf, guildmaster and journeyman, in a word, oppressor and oppressed, stood in constant opposition to one another, carried on an uninterrupted, now hidden, now open fight, a fight that each time ended, either in a revolutionary reconstitution of society at large, or in the common ruin of the struggling classes.' While Marx and Engels referenced these antagonistic groups within the Roman Empire and European feudalism, over 160 years later we see the same exploitative relationship on an unprecedented, now global scale.

The dynamics of neoliberalism and the globalization of capitalism are what continue to produce and expand these dehumanizing relationships between oppressor and oppressed. The working class has been transformed into a global proletariat while the ruling class is now a transnational bourgeoisie. As William I. Robinson (2010) astutely points out (it is worth quoting at length), developing countries have experienced:

the rise of new dominant groups and capitalist fractions tied to the global economy; the downward mobility – or proletarianization – of older middle classes and professional strata and the rise of new middle and professional strata; proletarianization of peasants and artisans and the rise of new urban and rural working classes linked to transnational production processes; the working class itself become flexibalized and informalized; the appearance of an expanding mass of supernumeraries or marginalized. A global working class has emerged that runs the factories, offices, and farms of the global economy, a stratified and heterogeneous class, to be sure, with numerous hierarchies and cleavages internal to it – gender, ethnicity, nationality, and so on (Robinson, 2010: 7).

Corporations seeking to increase profits by defraying production costs have outsourced labor to overseas workers as national borders have been forced open to a handful of “free marketeers” who exploit the world’s resources while taking control of global markets without restriction. (See McLaren, 2005). These global workers – separated from each other by oceans and mountains – have limited ability to unionize against their faceless, transnational corporate employers. Meanwhile, these transnational corporate employers have the means with which to meet where they want to, when they want to, and with the security and firearms to keep protestors from interfering.¹

Indeed, current manifestations of the globalization of capital are mere mutations of what Lenin (1951) called ‘imperialism’. Such imperialism has been made possible through the vehicle of neoliberalism that Harvey (2005) explains can be interpreted ‘either as a *utopian* project to realize a theoretical design for the reorganization of international capitalism or as a *political* project to re-establish the conditions for capital accumulation and to restore the power of economic elites (Harvey, 2005: 19). As the global economy continues to grow sicker while the world’s poor population increases at alarming rates, it appears that neoliberalism falls more into the latter interpretation suggested by Harvey, as the world’s elites are getting wealthier and greedier. Consider, for example, how Bank of America Corporation’s CEO Brian Moynihan’s base annual salary has been increased to \$950,000 from \$800,000 and Bank of America’s home loans and insurance president, Barbara Desoer’s salary has increased from \$500,000 to \$800,000 even as millions of Americans continue to lose their homes to foreclosure (Associated Press, 2010).

This comes as little surprise when examining the history of neoliberalism itself. The concept of neoliberalism – the belief that free market exchange, the privatization of all society’s function, and the decrease of state intervention are, in and of themselves, an ethic that should define all human action – was made popular through the Austrian political philosopher, Friedrich von Hayek by first stressing the threat to “freedom” imposed by state intervention as well as by defining corporations as “individuals” before the law (Harvey, 2005: 21). Soon after Sweden’s banking elite – who would benefit from free marketization and decreased state intervention—ensured that Hayek would receive the Nobel Prize in economics in 1974, neoliberal theories gained momentum in academia and, soon after, in practice with the political rise of conservatives like Margaret Thatcher in Britain and Ronald Reagan in the US. Their attacks upon trade unions and welfare recipients, as well as Reagan’s seething racism assisted in

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Yet how, in practice, could neoliberalism gain momentum? A post-structuralist analysis certainly will not do. We reject such post-structuralist analyses of capital as that of Jacques Derrida for they ultimately miss the point of overcoming the (now neoliberal) capitalist modes of production that sustain dehumanization. David McNally (2001) critiques Derrida for locating money apart from its exploitative origins; that is, money that is fetishized and that materialized (supposedly?) out of thin air. McLaren and Jaramillo (2010) point out that in such an analysis, 'capital in this view is nothing more than a self-engendering dance on a solipsistic path of self-fecundation' (2010: 5). Derrida's post-structuralist critique of capital thus contributes to capital's momentum in failing to acknowledge that this system has been (and still is) devastating the natural environment and ending the lives of millions. Anna Stetsenko (2010) furthers a critical understanding of dialectical research that defeats the conundrum of post-structuralist critiques. Stetsenko (2010b) posits:

true hallmark and condition *sin qua non* for the dialectical method is the notion that practice serves as the ultimate ground for advancing and verifying theories as well as for providing warrants for knowledge claims. Unlike the skepticism of social construction and other postmodernist approaches that acknowledge no grounds for falsifying theories or adjudicating among various theoretical standpoints and claims, the Marxist method provides warrants for such adjudication. These warrants have to do not with applying some abstract, fixed principles that lie outside knowledge claims but instead, are derived by discerning the (often implicit but always ineluctably present) ideological and ethical underpinnings and potentialities of a given theory as a form of practice (Stetsenko, 2010b: 73-74).

David Harvey offers a sternly accurate analysis of neoliberal capitalism. According to Harvey (2005: 39), in countries like Argentina or Chile in the 1970s, consent was forced through military coups backed by the traditional upper classes and the US government, while in Britain and the US, consent needed to be constructed through "democratic" means. Advocates of neoliberalism and those who would prosper from a decreased state intervention and increased free marketization influenced peoples' understandings of the purpose of a free market through cultural and traditional values (religious and societal beliefs), as well as peoples' fears (of immigrants, communists, etc.) through so that political questions became 'disguised as cultural ones' (Gramsci, 1971: 149). Corporations were able to influence traditional and cultural values through media, churches, professional associations and organizations, and most importantly, *schools*. Students of all

ages were being prepared to join the work force under the belief that the economy could never exist without neoliberalism, competition, and global capitalism.

The influence of neoliberalism and global capitalism on education is easy to see. Consider, for example, the corporatization and privatization of schools that is now highly coveted by US Secretary of Education Arne Duncan and US President Barack Obama as evidenced through their "Race to the Top" national public school competition for federal funding. Arne Duncan – who has no teaching experience – clearly noted that states unwilling to consider privatizing public schools through charters with corporations and local businesses would *not* be given federal funding through this competition. Due to the lack of support from state and federal governments hit hard by the economic downturn in the US, many schools also turn to corporations like Coca-Cola Corporation for extra funding which, of course, comes with the requirement to advertise such corporations to students and families in the schools.

The Corporatization and Privatization of Public Education

Similarly, the emphasis on standardized assessments in the US simply reproduces the status quo of hegemonic social and superstructures through its reification of dominant ideologies based in global capitalism and neoliberalism. In fact, standardized assessments may be the best modern illustration of ruling class hegemony (Gramsci, 1971) through economic, legal, and political superstructures (Marx, 1968) that reproduce social inequity. Standardized assessments maximize the social control educational institutions exert over youth. The political and intellectual world of our public education system – one that employs high-stakes standardized testing to define student learning and teacher ability – is based upon our capitalist structure in which few have extreme wealth and the majority live in poverty. Social hegemony through governmental control within this economic system functions in two ways:

Through the "spontaneous" consent given by the great masses of the population to the general direction imposed on social life by the dominant fundamental group...

Through the apparatus of state coercive power which "legally" enforces discipline on those groups who do not "consent" either actively or passively (Gramsci, 1971: 12).

In education, this becomes manifest as the government disciplines schools, without requiring physical force, by denying them federal funding (that schools need to function) unless they maintain "profi-

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cient” standardized test scores toward the No Child Left Behind Act “adequate yearly progress” measures. Federally engineered standardized assessments are designed according to white, middle-class ideologies that diverse students are expected to internalize in order to achieve higher test scores (Anyon, 1995; Meier, 1994). Furthermore, the government is allowed to take over schools – that do not score high enough on standardized tests (Au, 2009) – and instate “scripted” curricula based on banking education methods in which everything that teachers say and that students are expected to write are controlled by textbooks. The government’s power to control the way teachers teach has important implications for the way poor schools, which have a majority of coloured students – that do not have the same resources as wealthy schools – become labeled as “failing” schools while their students are tracked according to oppressive standardized testing practices (Oakes, 1985). Such federal manipulation of schools reveals how power relations

. . . create boundaries, legitimize boundaries, reproduce boundaries, between different categories of groups, gender, class, race, different categories of discourse, different categories of agents. Thus, power always operates to produce dislocations, to produce punctuations in social space (Bernstein, 1996: 19).

This power dynamic affects the way teachers understand their own identities that become a ‘reflection of external contingencies . . . [the] maintenance of this identity depends upon the facility of *projecting* discursive organization/practices themselves driven by external contingencies’ (Bernstein, 1999: 251). Under the standardized test and scripted curricula pressures of “external contingencies,” educators feel obligated to focus on preparing students for specific kinds of questions and ways of thinking that perpetually oppress the perspectives of students who are outside white, middle-class groups, therefore encouraging often culturally- and community-irrelevant pedagogy (Bernstein, 1975).

Standardized testing, force-feeding students unrelated/uncritical knowledge, and the rise in discipline for youth (mostly poor youth of color) constitute various mechanisms in the on-going socialization of youth. Noam Chomsky (2003) states, ‘. . . given the external power structure of the society in which [schools] function now, the institutional role of the schools for the most part is just to train people for obedience and conformity, and to make them controllable and indoctrinated’ (Chomsky, 2002: 29). The post-9/11 rise in the militarization of schools, particularly J.R.O.T.C. programs in middle and high schools, clearly reveals the pipeline into which the ruling class pushes youth. Local school and district administrators are routinely punishing creative and independent thought from teachers and students

alike. Mental conformity in youth is thus manufactured through the inundation of base, repetitive, and disconnected curricula and the disciplining of "failing" schools. Kenneth J. Saltman (2004) is exactly right in arguing, 'a movement against education as enforcement must include the practice of critical pedagogy and also ideally links to multiple movements against oppression such as antiglobalization, feminist, labor, environmental, and antiracism movements' (2004: 21).

Some Effects of Neoliberalism: Pauperization, Genocide, Language Death

The gap between the globally wealthy and the locally poor is continually widening. Henry A. Giroux (2004) writes:

Construing the public good as a private good and the needs of the corporate and private sector as the only source of investment, neoliberal ideology produces, legitimates, and exacerbates the existence of persistent poverty, inadequate health care, racial apartheid in the inner cities, and growing inequalities between the rich and the poor (Giroux, 2004: 46).

Samir Amin (2004) characterizes such oppression as 'pauperization'. Amin states that the only possible consequence of 'globalized liberalism' is 'an intensification of the inequalities between peoples (an intensified global polarization) and within populations (of the global South and North)', (Amin, 2004: 29). Neoliberalism thus undermines national institutions and traditional forms of governance while also co-opting any marketable service or good. The natural environment, areas of indigenous inhabitants, anything not already corporately owned thus become seized and remolded to fulfill the needs of the new colonizers.

Additionally, there must be active resistance against the linguistic genocide that elevates the cultural capital of the English language. Such an attack both permanently alters the shared linguistic realities among communities and accelerates the sprint of transnational capitalist corporations usurping of public services worldwide. The spread of English inflicts devastating consequences for non-English speaking countries that have imported TESOL teachers and scripted instructional materials from Western powers. In 2008, the United Nations News Centre released a report stating that 'more than half of the world's 6,700 spoken languages are threatened with extinction and every two weeks on average one language disappears.' (¶ 1)

According to Samir Amin, this is one of the constituent dimensions of capitalism: the 'destruction of sections of older societies and sometimes entire peoples, such as North American Indians' (Amin, 2004: 34). Tragically, the United Nations' report is accurate. On February 4, 2010, the BBC reported the death of Boa Senior. Boa Sr. was the last

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speaker of Bo, an ancient language in India that is considered to have been one of the world's oldest. For the past 30 years Boa Sr. was the last speaker of the Bo language. She had outlived everyone with whom she could communicate in Bo, and was forced to learn new languages in order to communicate linguistically with other people.

Indeed, an increase in the use of English as a colonizing language can be directly linked to exponential blanket growth of Transnational Capital. We agree with Robert Phillipson (2008: 20) in his assertion that 'we can see global English as *the capitalist neoimperial language* that serves the interests of the corporate world and the governments that it influences, so as to consolidate state and empire worldwide', italics in the original). Phillipson accurately positions the use of the English language as a central tool that the United States employs in its quest for global domination. Yet it is not only that English becomes a colonizing language but that it also serves as a form of cultural capital that once attained, further oppresses non-speakers. Phillipson (2008: 24) later posits, 'linguistic neoimperialism entails the maintenance of inequalities between speakers of English and other languages, within a framework of exploitative dominance'. Such oppressive inequalities divide populations abroad as well as in the United States.

Legislation outlawing bilingual education (such as California's racist Proposition 227) and the segregation of non-English speakers are well documented by leading scholars in Critical Race Theory, particularly George A. Martínez. In R. Delgado and J. Stefancic (2000, eds.) *Critical Race Theory: The Cutting Edge* (2nd Ed.) Martínez cites *Salvatierra v. Independent School District*, in which Mexican American parents filed a lawsuit against the school district, charging the district with depriving Spanish-speaking students of the same benefits that white students received. The court ruling declared that Mexican Americans could not be segregated from white students (since they were both white) but could be segregated on the grounds of 'linguistic difficulties and migrancy' (1999: 380). Such rulings attempt to mask the vicious and raw racism that thrives in linguistic oppression.

The globalization of English is merely one of the many attacks upon indigenous communities worldwide. As noted above, the United Nations has predicted a rapid loss of indigenous languages. In the case of Boa Sr., the mark left on humanity is indelible. Yet throughout Latin America indigenous coalitions and organic movements are organizing and engaging in truly revolutionary critical pedagogy. In Oaxaca, Mexico, indigenous teachers have banded together to resist the Mexican government's continued privatization of public education. The pre-written curriculum schools are providing is part of a con-

certed attempt by the ruling class to spread dominant ideology and subordinate indigenous epistemologies and ways of knowing. Increasingly, the Mexican government is also seeking to further colonize areas inhabited by indigenous peoples. Following repressive military action against striking teachers in May of 2006, several popular organizations came together in solidarity to form the APPO, or *Asamblea Popular de los Pueblos de Oaxaca* (Popular Assembly of the Peoples of Oaxaca). Armed with a counter-hegemonic ideology and collective solidarity, the APPO continues to protest neoliberal assaults on indigenous communities. The APPO strives to enact gender equality, ensure the perpetuation of indigenous cultures and languages, insist on accountability for repressive government actions, and uphold international legislation such as the United Nations' Universal Declaration of Human Rights. In short, the APPO serves as an example of popular collective struggle that embraces a vision for a world more just and humane than this one.

In Argentina, 134 factories have been seized by workers and members of the National Movement of Occupied Factories. The occupiers in this case are not colonizers but conscientious resisters to the misuse of sites where public pedagogy thrives. Students engage in counter-hegemonic activities. What does this mean, counter-hegemonic? In these factories, schools are built in which youth participate in dramatic, artistic, and literary activities. In these factories, health clinics have been established for local residents. Youth unlearn neoliberal capitalist values and learn instead to care for their communities, each other, and a social future less devastated by the reign of capital (Scatamburlo-D'Annibale & McLaren, 2009).

It is imperative that we look beyond Western, Euro/U.S.-centric ways of knowing the world – that are based in a free-market imperialism and neoliberal, global capitalism – in order to consider new forms of counter-hegemony. Following leaders in women's studies, critical race theory, indigenous studies, ethnic studies, and other fields that have been labeled as "other" or nondominant, we must be self-reflective enough to examine the ways in which our actions and ways of thinking may unconsciously uphold mainstream ideologies at the expense of nondominant conceptualizations of the world, so that we may seek solidarity with nondominant groups in the bringing together of the creative imaginaries of all people toward a new social order.

This new social order should not be limited to Western/European responses to liberalism and capitalism alone, but rather – as noted in Walter Mignolo's (2010) analysis of Aymara sociologist Félix Patzi Paco's work regarding Indian/indigenous conceptualizations of the

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'communal' – should include the views of those who continue to suffer under the expansion of Western civilization while recognizing that their perspectives in response to colonization may not fully overlap with communist/Marxist responses to capitalism. Mignolo (2010) writes:

The communal system in Tawantinsuyu and Anahuac, as I imagine social organizations in China before the Opium War and the arrival of Mao Zedong, were not created as responses to liberalism and capitalism. They had to adapt and still are adapting to capitalist and (neo) liberal intrusion (Mignolo, 2010: 147).

An inclusion of indigenous perspectives should recognize that 'the left of European genealogy of thought (and the same genealogy in modern/colonial states) doesn't have the monopoly to imagine and dictate how a non-capitalist future shall be' (Mignolo, 2010: 148). Instead, following Patzi Paco's application of Niklas Luhmann's Social System's central pillars of the political and economic management, we should recognize that indigenous systems do not have the same political pillar or economic management pillar as those of Western, capitalist systems or colonial systems and, therefore, take on a different perception of justice, collective rights, and change. In the case of indigenous views in Bolivia, South America, the communal system does not propose a more equitable distribution of wealth, but an horizon of life where wealth is not the goal. The goal, as it is being repeated today and inscribed in the Ecuadorian constitution is "el bien vivir," and "el bien vivir" cannot be attained through an economic system that promotes accumulation at the expenses of human lives and of all living systems simplified under the name of "nature." (Mignolo, 2010: 154)

Recognizing that diverse groups might understand "el bien vivir" in varying ways, we must actively engage the entire spectrum of perspectives to truly create a future world that embraces all rather than a select few.

Of course, challenging epistemologies of empire by engaging indigenous perspectives also requires that we be cautious about *how* we engage with indigenous perspectives. In particular, Linda Tuhiwai Smith (2005) reminds us how researchers, academics, and project workers have always found 'ways of 'taking indigenous knowledge . . . [in a] systematic gathering of scientific data that have proven dangerous to indigenous peoples' (Smith, 2005: 2). Taking up indigenous perspectives has usually been as exploitative as the act of imperialism and colonialism itself; just as 'Imperialism was the system of control which secured the markets and capital investments' of European and U.S. powers, research on indigenous knowledge and perspectives has

been the accumulation of 'othered' information as a form of subjugation that defined indigenous as 'backwards' and Western as 'modern' (Smith, 2005: 21). Of course, central to the definition of "modernity" was colonization's reach into the Americas and the development of the U.S. as Quijano and Wallerstein (1992) explain:

The modern world-system was born in the long sixteenth century. The Americas as a geosocial construct were born in the long sixteenth century. The creation of this geosocial entity, the Americas, was the constitutive act of the modern world-system. The Americas were not incorporated into an already existing capitalist world-economy. There could not have been a capitalist world-economy without the Americas. (Quijano & Wallerstein, 1992: 549).

In fact, creating "modernity" and "newness" – central to Westernization – involved also engaging four key concepts: 'coloniality, ethnicity, racism, and the concept of newness itself' (Quijano & Wallerstein, 1992: 550). With this understanding in mind, it becomes crucial that, when engaging indigenous perspectives, we do not continue in the same exploitative manner as those who are responsible for the genocide of billions of indigenous people. We must challenge our concepts of "modernity" and recognize our European-based epistemologies in order to allow for complete reverence for all other local and global views.

Revolutionary Critical Pedagogy

Recognizing that U.S. education is defined by a capitalist system which places monetary profit over human well-being, it becomes of the utmost importance that we seek guidance in a different logic that challenges capitalist ideologies, values the voice of *all* people as originally promised in U.S. democracy, and critically examines both how and for whom public schooling is organized. What we need is a revolutionary critical pedagogy (Allman, 2001; Hill, McLaren, Cole, & Rikowski, 2002; McLaren & Farahmandpur, 2005; McLaren & Jaramillo, 2007).

We seek a revolutionary critical pedagogy because, in recent years, some have appropriated critical pedagogy for anti-critical uses, weakening and "domesticating" critical pedagogy's original purpose to challenge the status quo and capitalist forces that oppress and exploit students, teachers, parents, and communities. Revolutionary critical pedagogy seeks to challenge these models of the world that continue to use capital as a social relation.

The central tenets to a revolutionary critical pedagogy for education worldwide are the following:

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First of all, revolutionary critical pedagogy recognizes that schools are *non-neutral* spaces that often reproduce global class differences and racialized inequalities among students who are the most politically and economically vulnerable in society. Second, revolutionary critical pedagogy is committed to creating an emancipatory culture of schooling that empowers nondominant students by recognizing the global capitalist structures determining who can have power and must work for those in power. Third, revolutionary critical pedagogy uses ideology as a pedagogical tool for questioning the contradictions inherent in dominant culture, while also incorporating the idea of hegemony to understand ideology – since hegemony reflects the social control exercised by dominant culture – through a dialectical perspective that recognizes how all analysis must engage individual and society with theory and practice as coexistent, not polarized, dichotomies. Thus, fourth, revolutionary critical pedagogy embraces praxis that involves exercising critique in a self-reflexive manner that engages the larger historical contexts and deeper meanings of pedagogical encounters while trying to envision new contexts for learning and social change. As such, the praxis of critique in revolutionary critical pedagogy reflects on systems of thinking as well as the power structures defining social relations in learning spaces, while simultaneously seeking a realm beyond where all individuals can find protagonistic agency toward a better world through acts of learning and teaching. Fifth, such praxis leads to what Freire (1970) best defined as *conscientização*, which is a critical social consciousness born of the process in which students become aware of the social realities shaping their lives while finding empowerment in redefining the self within such a context. Yet, central to such *conscientização* is the understanding that politics and pedagogy are not an exclusive function of having the right knowledge via some kind of “ah-ha” awakening of the revolutionary soul – critical consciousness is not the root of commitment to revolutionary struggle but rather the product of such a commitment. Indeed, critical consciousness is not a precondition of struggle, but rather, it is in the act of struggling that individuals become critically conscious and aware. This is the bedrock of revolutionary critical pedagogy’s politics of solidarity and commitment. While radical scholarship and theoretical ideas are important – extremely important – people do not become politically aware and then take part in radical activity. Rather, participating in contentious acts of revolutionary struggle creates new, protagonistic, political identities. Critically informed political identities do not motivate revolutionary action but rather develop as a logical consequence of such action that, in revolutionary critical pedagogy, is always heterogeneous, multifaceted, protagonistic, democratic and participatory – yet always focal-

ized – anti-capitalist struggle. And, finally, revolutionary critical pedagogy incorporates counter-hegemonic practices that redefine power relations and bring forward the voices of nondominant peoples by seeking to abolish capital as a social relation and by challenging global capitalism and neoliberal practices.

Emerging scholarship in ecosocialism (Foster, 2000; Kahn, 2010; Kovel, 2007) is central to revolutionary critical pedagogy. Kovel's groundbreaking work on capitalism's unsustainability, as well as its centrality in continued environmental destruction provides further support for the relevance of revolutionary critical pedagogy, as well as widens the circle of counter-hegemonic struggle. In *"What every environmentalist needs to know about capitalism"* Fred Magdoff and John Bellamy Foster (2010) burn through the fog and present the environmental situation in all its urgency. They echo Samir Amin in asserting:

The system of world capitalism is clearly unsustainable in: (1) its quest for never ending accumulation of capital leading to production that must continually expand to provide profits; (2) its agriculture and food system that pollutes the environment and still does not allow universal access to a sufficient quantity and quality of food; (3) its rampant destruction of the environment; (4) its continually recreating and enhancing of the stratification of wealth within and between countries; and (5) its search for technological magic bullets as a way of avoiding the growing social and ecological problems arising from its own operations (Magdoff & Foster, 2010: 72).

Magdoff and Foster de-mystify the repeated right-wing claims that capitalism is essential for our survival, claims that sound strikingly similar to Thatcher's "There Is No Alternative" sloganeering. Alternatives to neoliberal capitalism and environmental destruction certainly exist yet many were systematically attacked and demonized by the right-wing for decades, even predating the attacks upon Rachel Carson's (1962) *Silent Spring*.

Shoulder to Shoulder, Not Head to Head

We call for a unified, united movement in which a worldwide class struggle can inform and be informed through solidarity with the oppression of other marginalized peoples. Marxists, Critical Pedagogues, and Critical Race Theorists can benefit more from cooperation and mutual commitment than from intellectual arson. How can the three work together to further common hopes and dreams for a better world? What unites them, and dissolves the antagonistic and exclusionary arguments that pit the oppressed against the oppressed? We agree with Gregory Meyerson (2001) in his call for an historical materialist lens that can bring together struggles based on class exploitation with those of race and identity politics. He writes:

The primary international goal of an anti-racism is rooted in a natural detente multiple a

Meyerson's arguments require that a class and sexism. Anna Stetsky and racism both sides meaningful, goals (2010a: 14 share a cor

We reject under neoliberal and accelerate the weight on it because it which labor is worked into, into f serve the racism makes their s

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The primacy of class means that building a multiracial, multi-gendered international working-class organization or organizations should be the goal of any revolutionary movement: the primacy of class puts the fight against racism and sexism at the center. The intelligibility of this position is rooted in the *explanatory* primacy of class for understanding the structural determinants of race, gender, and class oppression. Oppression is multiple and intersecting but its causes are not (§4).

Meyerson later posits, '... it does not follow that multiple oppressions require multiple structural causes' (2001: 89). What is key here is that a class struggle worthy of the name inherently places racism and sexism at the forefront of the movement. We further agree with Anna Stetsenko that the 'rift [between class-based politics and identity and race politics], with harmful consequences for perspectives on both sides can be overcome if identity is grounded in the notion of meaningful life agenda and seen as inevitably revolving around values, goals, commitments, and other ethical/ideological matters' (2010a: 14-15). Class-based politics and identity and race politics share a common genesis of exploitation and dehumanization.

We reject the claim that racism benefits white working class people; under neoliberal capitalism racism actually serves to further divide and accelerate the conquering of the global proletariat. While historically the white working class has been very racist, Alex Callinicos is right on in his assertion 'white workers accept racist ideas not because it is in their interests to do so, but because of the way in which labour market competition among different groups of workers is worked up, by the conscious and unconscious efforts of the capitalists, into full scale racial divisions' (1993: 44). Thus, racism does not serve the best interests of the white working class; on the contrary, racism maintains the division of all working class people and continues their subordination to the capitalist class.

Conclusion

Collectively, Marxists, Critical Pedagogues, and Critical Race Theorists must incorporate elements of each into their own individual research. Collaboration across disciplinary divides must be fostered in an attempt to repair and progress a frequently disunited and antagonistic Left. The political progress of critical scholars must advance the fights against racism, sexism, class exploitation, and other forms of dehumanization.

Notes

1. Consider, for example, how following the 1999 World Trade Organization (WTO) meeting in Seattle, Washington – where protestors seeking entry and audience with WTO conveners were brutally attacked and arrested – all WTO

meetings are now held in inaccessible locations that are heavily guarded.

2. While the term "indigenous" is problematic because it assumes that all the diverse, indigenous populations of the world have experienced imperialism in the same exact way, we do not believe that all indigenous people have the same experiences, perspectives, or lifeways. However, we hope that the term "indigenous" – as used in this article – can be applied as the 'umbrella enabling communities and peoples to come together, transcending their own colonized contexts and experiences, in order to learn, share, plan, organize and struggle collectively for self-determination on the global and local stages' (Smith, 2005: 7).

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Abstract

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