

## **YouTube, Critical Pedagogy, and Media Activism: An Articulation**

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A main goal of critical pedagogy is to facilitate simultaneously individual development and social transformation for a more egalitarian and just society. As opposed to the reproductive role of education, critical pedagogy strives for the “action of dialogical Subjects upon reality in order to transform it... [by] posing reality as a problem” (Freire, 1970, p. 168). In other words, critical pedagogy believes education to be a form of cultural politics that is fundamental to social transformation aiming to cultivate human agency and transformative activity. With the firm belief in the “potentiality of the people,” critical pedagogy equips individuals with opportunities to expose, develop and realize their human capacities through “participating in the pursuit of liberation” of themselves and society at the same time (Freire, 1970, p. 169). Therefore, due to individual differences in development and abilities, genuine education is never just a matter of a homogenized schooling during a certain time period. Essentially, education is a life-long process and search for self-fulfillment. As Dewey and Freire note, with critical perspectives on education’s role in societal as well as individual developments, it can also be a democratizing force and promote cultural revolution and social transformation.

However, education today tends to be confined to schooling, that is, getting instruction as job-training, or indoctrination into established value-systems and practices. Education in a capitalist society is a kind of voucher for politico-economic success or, at least, subsistence. Furthermore, the hidden curriculum of mass media’s popular pedagogy, such as advertising, media socialization, and political propaganda, means that education in the United States, as a life-time process, tends to be controlled by dominant economic and political institutions. In other

words, education is no longer primarily a matter of self-development, critical thought, and social progress, but is a mere matter of financial investment or ideological inculcation. Tragically, school is often no longer a live forum for liberating dialogue, but tends to be a warehouse for knowledge and skills as a matter of transmission in which “teaching for testing” becomes the norm under the banner of *No Child Left Behind*.<sup>1</sup> In terms of the Enlightenment project of Western civilization which promised individual freedom, social prosperity, and universal progress, an enlightened modernity has not been achieved because of education’s failure to cultivate critical human agency with rationality and autonomy. Rather, schooling has promoted social conformity and striving for success in the competitive rat race.

As a chief reason for the failure of the Enlightenment project, the monopoly of knowledge and the institutionalization of education have played a major role in strengthening conservative hegemony by eradicating critical consciousness, as well as by making school a crucial field for social, political, and ideological reproduction. With regard to the interconnection of power and knowledge (Foucault, 1980), schooling has become a quasi-monopoly control and dissemination of knowledge by established powers as a form of cultural and ideological domination, which controls knowledge to strengthen the interests of the dominant class. Consequently, Althusser (1971) correctly identifies education as a part of the Ideological State Apparatus to produce/reproduce ruling ideologies in capitalist societies.

However, the innovation of information and communication technologies (ICTs) has provided ordinary people with unprecedented opportunities to take on the ruling educational power structure and pedagogy. The uncontested monopoly of knowledge and the institutionalization of education can now be challenged by new media technologies, which make possible decentralized and interactive communication and a participatory model of culture and

democracy, with multiple voices and an expanded flow of information, thus creating a new field for the conjuncture of education and democracy. In particular, dialogical two-way communication and collective “many-to-many” communication have been widely implemented with the emergence of the Internet and social networking sites. This technological development has amplified individual, voluntary participation in mutual education through proliferating new voices and visions, making possible the democratization of knowledge. In other words, conventional relationships between the producers and the consumers of knowledge have been productively challenged. Thus, the Internet has opened a space for individuals to realize Benjamin’s (1934) belief that a “reader is at all times ready to become a writer,” suggesting a new space to realize the civic engagement of modern citizens (p. 225). Consequently, individuals can become more deeply involved in the democratization of knowledge and mutual pedagogy as autonomous rational beings, thus helping to realize the dreams of the Enlightenment.

With regard to the potential of ICTs for reviving a more pedagogically participatory democracy, Habermas’s (1989) notion of the “public sphere” is an important resource to examine the significance of voluntary individuals’ active engagement with the dominant reproductive model of education. Grounded in an ideal of “communicative rationality” which is based on mutual understanding and persuasion,<sup>2</sup> Habermas (1989) believes that individuals should strive for personal autonomy and to exchange their ideas openly and reach consensus in the “universal speech situation” of the public sphere, in which there is minimum domination or manipulation and the force of the better argument prevails. Individuals can exercise mutual pedagogical practices when the ideal notion of the public sphere is embodied in their autonomous participation in discussions of their own interests, as well as by undistorted communication among themselves. In this ideal space of pedagogical interaction, any attempt to dominate or

regulate a free flow of knowledge and information is difficult, if not impossible, thus helping to realize Enlightenment goals.<sup>3</sup> From this idealized and normative perspective, interactive and decentralized communication on the Internet can invigorate the potential of pedagogic democratization in the “public sphere.” However, leaving aside problems of the “digital divide” among class, gender and race, Habermas (1989)’s notion of the public sphere is strictly confined to the bourgeois model of liberal capitalism which does not explain social problems caused by class conflicts, the fragmented public by competing interests, and the massive intervention of governments and corporations into social formation of public opinion (Fraser, 1992; Kellner 2000). Nevertheless, Habermas’s ideal of the public sphere is still a powerful concept to examine the Internet’s potential for democratization. For, in contrast to rigid notions of schooling, the Internet can provide individuals with the occasion to reclaim education as a space for self-fulfillment and personal autonomy without any restrictions of institutional control and standardized curricula.

Yet, we must conceptualize the Internet and new media in terms of the “embeddedness in the political economy, social relations, and political environment within which they are produced, circulated, and received” for a more correct understanding about its socio/political potential as well as its limitations (Kellner, 1995, p. 2). While emergent technologies provide the potential that individuals can “empower themselves in relation to dominant media and culture” (Kellner, 1995, p. 2) and can provide the oppressed with ever more liberating forum for the counter-hegemonic politics of culture, there are also limitations that must be confronted concerning the political economy of the media and technology, their imbrications in the dominant social and political system, and the ways that media and technology generate social reproduction and can be part of an apparatus of social domination. In this article, we argue that

new media like YouTube (hereafter, UT), combined with a transformative critical pedagogy, can help realize the Internet's potential for democratization and transformative pedagogy.

To be sure, while new media technologies allow individuals to secure unprecedented space for an alternative/counter-hegemonic politics, they also face the risks of ensnaring established social constituencies in the tentacles of the dominant culture and ideology. Emancipatory, politically progressive, and socially transformative uses of the media and technology should thus be informed by a critical pedagogy to produce a viable counter-hegemonic cultural politics and pedagogy of the Internet. This requires insight into the important role of narrative in pedagogy. Critical pedagogy offers a “discourse of plurality, difference, and multinarratives ....in order to explain either the mechanics of domination or the dynamic of emancipation” (Giroux, 1992, p. 51). Giroux calls critical pedagogy to help traditionally oppressed people to acquire their voices in culture and politics as the prerequisite of developing critical human agency and a more democratic society. Therefore, by acknowledging a cultural politics of critical media pedagogy, individuals can critically confront the hegemonic power of domination and pursue counter-hegemonic politics of alternative pedagogy and culture. By taking over opportunities offered by novel Internet media such as UT, individuals can organize and deploy novel strategies of self-education and social transformation.

More importantly, with pervasive distribution of Internet communication infrastructures throughout the globe providing universal access, new media can help the oppressed to exercise “praxis [with] reflection and action which [can] truly transform reality” in their everyday lives (Freire, 1970, p. 100). When they have an occasion and competence to raise their authentic voices based on their own lived experiences of social oppression, marginalized people are likely to augment their counter-hegemonic struggle by consolidating solidarity with other critical social

constituencies.<sup>4</sup> Equipped with crucial sociopolitical consciousness and competency to make uses of the Internet, individuals can realize what Giroux (2001, p. 13) calls the “reconstruction of democratic public life.” In other words, a critical media pedagogy can provide the oppressed with the revolutionary power of “praxis” by providing virtually universal points of intervention into the cultural politics of the new media. In this regard, believing that “public pedagogy represents a moral and political practice rather than merely a technical procedure” (p. 9), Giroux (2001) affirms the progressive, transformative potential of critical new media pedagogy by stressing:

[T]he performative as a transitive act, a work in progress informed by a cultural politics that translates knowledge back into practice, places theory in the political space of the performative, and invigorates the pedagogical as a practice through which collective struggles can be waged to revive and maintain the fabric of democratic institutions. (p. 14)

From this point of view, to examine the pedagogic implications and power of UT is important because successful implementation of critical media pedagogy for social transformation requires that individuals make use of the potentially democratizing and transformative opportunities made available by emergent technologies like UT. Stated differently, it is important to examine how individual UTers make use of opportunities to implement a “performative pedagogy” (Giroux, 2001, p. 7) of the new media by infusing theory and practice. On the other hand, so far, there is little academic research to investigate the transformative roles of UT in terms of its pedagogical as well as political potentials. Even though there is some research, it is essentially confined in the functionalist/instrumental paradigm to review UT’s usability.<sup>5</sup> Consequently, this study will contribute to developing a critical and

transformative pedagogy of new media technologies, as it examines the dialectical relationship between UT and individuals' employment of it as potential forms of critical pedagogy and democratic social transformation that highlights both its potential contributions and limitations.

### **YouTube as a Cutting Edge of ICTs**

UT has been immensely popular and influential since its inception in February 2005. *Time* magazine awarded UT the Best Invention of 2006, and Grossman (2006) describes UT's enormous impact on contemporary society:

One year ago, this would not have been possible, but the world has changed. In the past 12 months, thousands of ordinary people have become famous. Famous people have been embarrassed... The rules are different now, and one website changed them: YouTube.

Nielson/Net Ratings reported that users of UT grew from 7.3 million to 12.8 million by the end of July 2006. Since January, 2006, traffic to UT almost tripled, 297% (O'Malley, 2006). According to *USA Today*, UT comprises 60% of online-served videos and 29% of market share in multimedia entertainment in the United States. As of March 2008, there are more than 78.3 million video uploaded, constituting over 200,000 videos uploads and 100 million videos watched daily on UT.<sup>6</sup>

UT has already had significant cultural, social, and political impact, beginning with producing a new form of Internet celebrity. Ordinary people can get significant attention from others in the world of the Internet and UT. For example, Geriatric1927, in his eighties, has been enjoying late-life fame as no. 6 in the "Most Subscribed Directors of All Time" list on UT. Enjoying UT fandom, Brookers ultimately signed with a conventional mainstream medium, Carson Daly Productions, that "calls for her to help create and act in programs for television, the Internet, and portable devices" (Hardy, 2006). UT has further circulated the media contents from

such conventional broadcasting companies as NBC, CBS and Fox to increase their viewership and recently, the BBC announced a deal to post its video clips on UT. Even an elite orchestra utilizes UT as an auditioning means.<sup>7</sup> Based on a four-minute piece by the composer of YouTube Symphony Orchestra summit, Tan Dum, UT users record their performances and upload them on UT, and then, judges will decide finalists, who will play at Carnegie Hall in April, 2009.

In terms of UT's social influences, several police departments have taken advantage of UT as a kind of press-release while investigating crimes. In Massachusetts, Patrolman Brian Johnson was able to pinpoint criminal suspects through circulating a surveillance video clip on UT (Tucker, 2007). Other police departments have used UT in criminal investigations in Florida, Rhode Island and California. For more efficient religious information sharing, Jewish Rabbi Shalom Adler started to post video clips on UT. There are 7,280 Jewish-related videos, 53,000 Christian videos and 15,700 Muslim-related videos on UT (Schulte, 2007). Universities have provided virtually any audiences at any time with their lectures by posting online version of lectures on UT.<sup>8</sup> Students increasingly depend on UT as a reference tool for their assignment research as well. People made 2.8 billion searches on UT, that is, about 200 million more than on Yahoo, which is the second popular search engine (Helft, 2009).

UT's impressive popularity has created a new space for laymen to participate in traditionally restricted areas of politics. For example, Senator George Allen (R-Va) was heavily favored to win re-election to the Senate and was being touted as a 2008 Republican presidential candidate when he fell afoul of the ubiquity of digital media on the campaign trail. Baiting a young man of color doing oppositional video who Allen called "macaca," the event was captured on video, put on UT, and then sent through the Internet, eventually emerging on network



television. The UT footage became part of a spectacle that coded Allen as a racist and he eventually lost his re-election bid.

Furthermore, politicians have started to employ UT as a strategy to approach undecided and disinterested U.S. voters. Since the 2004 election, there have been studies to explore the practical viability of the Internet as a novel method of political campaigning.<sup>9</sup> Several studies show that more than half of UTers are between thirty-five and sixty-four years old and consist of a more active voting population than other voting groups (Gueorguieva, 2007). Since Obama got 66% of votes from the 18-to-29 age group and 52% from the 30-to-44 in the 2008 election (Pew Research Center for the People & the Press, 2008b) and younger adults are more active on these websites, grassroots campaign materials' impact on the 2008 election is obvious.

A significant increase of Internet uses indicates the accelerating role of UT videos as a venue of campaign advertisements for the campaigns. While 10% of Americans consulted the Internet for political news during the entire 2004 campaign season, 33% of them depended on the Internet for campaign-related information for the 2008 election as of October, 2008 (Pew Research Center for the People & the Press, 2008a). What is more, 35% of adult Web users have watched some form of political online videos as of June 15, 2008 (Pew Internet & American Life Project, 2008). Specifically, "more than 146 million people watched an average of 86 videos" during September 2008 (Eisenberg, 2008, n.p.). With this pervasive Internet presence and an uprising of UT's share of political/ campaign communication, 7 of out 16 potential presidential candidates announced their races for parties' nomination on UT. Most of them created their accounts on the site [You Choose '08](#) on UT. What is more, as a means of grassroots participation by producing UT videos, ordinary UT users had the opportunity to address their political concerns to parties' nomination candidates. Eight Democratic nomination candidates and eight

Republican candidates answered voters' questions in UT video clips hosted by CNN/UT on July 23, 2007 and November 28, 2007 respectively.<sup>10</sup>

There was also an impressive Internet spectacle in support of Obama's presidency. Obama raised an unprecedented amount of money on the Internet; he signed up over one million friends on MySpace, and mobilized youth and others through text-messaging and emails. The YouTube music video "Obama Girl," which features a young woman singing about why she supports Obama with images of his speeches interspersed, has gotten over thirteen million hits and is one of the most seen and discussed videos in history.

Hence, the Obama phenomenon is a major indicator of the complex interconnections between UT, mutual pedagogy, and grassroots political participation. Arguably, a key dynamic for Obama's election as the Democratic Party's candidate and the 44<sup>th</sup> president of the United States came from varieties of online multi-media materials produced by ordinary people, which boosted the number of small donations and the amount of grassroots participation.<sup>11</sup>

In addition, grassroots campaigns for Obama illustrate the vast potential impact of UT. On behalf of Senator Obama, traditionally underrepresented youth and people of color have vigorously utilized UT and UT-style self-made videos as an innovative platform for grassroots political mobilization which contain their personal narratives and reasons they support Obama for President in order to inspire and consolidate potential Obama supporters on and offline. Among the enormous numbers of alternative media artifacts for the Obama campaign, will.i.am's *Yes, We Can* music video manifests how grassroots-initiated alternative media artifacts can mobilize individuals to support Obama as the next president.<sup>12</sup> This MTV style UT music video breaks with conventional ways of producing music video, as will.i.am assembled a variety of artists' grassroots participation in its production. In his words:

I wasn't afraid to stand for "change"... it was pure inspiration... so I called my friends... and they called their friends... We made the song and video... Usually this process would take months... but we did it together in 48 hours... and instead of putting it in the hands of profit we put it in the hands of inspiration....<sup>13</sup>

More than this avant-garde alternative media artifact made by professional musicians, there are truly grassroots-based videos made by ordinary people who have produced their own videos and narratives to support Obama, collected on the UT website.<sup>14</sup> Several themes emerge among twenty-nine self-made videos on the UT site in which young people manifest their resolution to support Senator Obama for President. As a grassroots political activity, the main purpose of their production and posting is to consolidate broader popular support for Obama, and to recruit undecided voters. The videos for Obama exhibit hopes and dreams for a better future as the most favored reason to support Obama by eight people (27.5%). Six of the videos (20.6%) affirm that Obama is the right candidate for this time of socio-political turmoil; five (17.2%) trust Obama as the candidate who can unite people in the United States to realize the American dream. Because Senator Obama voted against the United States invasion of Iraq and helped many socially and economically marginalized people by serving community organizations, supporters express their own desire for Obama to carry on these agendas when he assumes office.

Obama is believed by his UT supporters to provide ordinary people with critical vision through which they can reflect upon their own politico-economic situation in society and realize the importance of civic/political participation. Others were moved by Obama for his ability to inspire, his possibility for being a transformative president, and his promise for carrying through significant change. The campaign validates the importance of examining how traditionally

marginalized people deploy new media technologies to construct and publish their political agendas, and can thus involve themselves in grassroots, participatory democracy by political agenda-setting, mobilization of supporters, and fighting for transformation of social conditions in their everyday lives. In this regard, grassroots videos and campaign organizations for Obama provide highly important political as well as pedagogical implications for the future.

However, although there are compelling examples of UT videos in the 2008 election, one cannot claim UT's remarkable performances as a true "story of the business of the future [because] it's too strange a place and too uncertain a profit model to inspire copycats" (Heffernan, 2008, n.p.). Yet there are important issues concerning what sort of critical pedagogy should be employed for future interventions to maximize UT's contribution to the democratization of media spectacles through grassroots political participation.

### **YouTube as Dialogical Learning Community**

As well as practical political interventions, there have also been pedagogical discussions about UT itself via the means of self-produced videos. During a relatively early stage of UT's development, Zakgeorge21, posted his video clip to initiate a thought-provoking discussion about the future of UT.<sup>15</sup> His discursive question, "Why do you tube? Why do you make a video for UT?" makes fellow UTers reconsider their motives and purposes in UTing. Further, he asked about the UT's possible effect: "What is the future of UT and how is it going to impact the world globally?" Basically, Zakgeorge21 believes that UT provides us with unique opportunities for a better future. Believing that "UT is a really cool place for serious changes to happen throughout the world," he asked UTers to discuss the desirable uses of UT for the future: "What do you think the implications of UT and what can be beneficial about it?"

It is important to examine the pedagogical values of Zakgeorge21's discursive question. First of all, the initial question substantiates the key values of critical pedagogy, that is, education as the process of problem-posing and problem-solving (Dewey, 1916; Freire, 1970; Giroux, 1992, 2001; Marcuse, 1968, 1975; Rousseau, 1764; Wollstonecraft, 1792). For Freire (1970), problem-posing pedagogy is a liberating alternative to the dehumanizing banking education in socially affirmative conventional schooling that only engages in social reproduction. Freire (1970) maintains that banking education is a hidden curriculum of dominant ideology, "for the more the oppressed can be led to adapt to that situation, the more easily they can be dominated" (p. 60).

As noted, Zakgeorge21 initiated the process of UT learning by posing questions and inviting others to engage in the mutual learning process. By posting video clips, Zakgeorge21 not only initiated dialogical learning himself by posing a discursive question about the technology which he uses, but he also induced other UTers to participate in the discursive learning process by posting their videos. Therefore, dialogues and discussion among UTers are vivid moments of learning-by-doing, learning-as-process, and learning-as-communication within the public sphere of Internet media.

Furthermore, while considering learning-by-doing presupposes an individual's own narrative as a learning process, producing video clips as a moment of realizing human agency by constructing narrative furthers the transformative potential of the new media pedagogy. Further, the narrative of an individual video posting on UT elaborates the viability of the cultural politics of critical media pedagogy of learning-by-doing and establishing dialogical and pedagogical relations with others. Because it is based on the "discourse of plurality, difference, and multinarratives ... in order to explain either the mechanics of domination or the dynamic of

emancipation” (Giroux, 1992, p. 51), the traditionally unrepresented people can acquire their own voices in the politics of representations as the prerequisite of critical human agency for further social emancipation. While individuals are producing and posting video clips on UT, as a kind of “public pedagogy,” they participate in mutually transformative pedagogy through dialogue and can exercise the power of “performative pedagogy” for social transformation (Giroux, 2001, p. 7).

By March 5, 2007, there were 700,183 UT users who had watched [Zakgeorge21](#)'s video posting and there were 4,062 text comments and 80 video responses after his initial videos post on January 9, 2007. In this study, we analyze a total of the 80 video responses, although only 20 of the videos are engaged because not all video responses are discursively deliberate and on the topic.<sup>16</sup> Because video-posting and video-response are unique features of UT unlike other Internet discussion forums, conducting textual analysis of these UT videos is particularly meaningful as a way of investigating media artifacts which enable a unique examination of media production and pedagogy on the Internet. Thus, doing textual analysis of UT videos enables researchers to investigate media artifacts which constitute a mode of social communication within specific cultural and political contexts (McKee, 2001). In this way, we also take advantage of what Thomas (1994) calls an “indirect” examination of human behavior on the Internet which “may be *interpreted as reflecting* [meaning-making-and-subsequent-application] processes” (p. 685, emphasis original).

Pedagogically, it is significant to analyze video responses of UTers because it is a dialectical learning process achieved through their active participatory communication. In other words, their own discussion of UT has provided UTers with critical moments to make sense of their participation and to reflect on their participation in UT, providing moments of learning as

self-reflection (Rousseau, 1764). By posting opinions on the future of UT, UTers actively involve themselves in pedagogic democratization through a problem-posing and problem-solving process, becoming learners-as-doers. Hence, this discursive practice of discussing their own UT productions, which was created by ordinary users to discuss the future of UT, hints at the potential of reviving Habermas's public sphere where ordinary people realize autonomous human agency by participating in free, autonomous discussions.

Therefore, this article focuses on what are the UT's potential modes of transformative pedagogy and how these are practically employed by UTers. Based on the arguments of classical philosophers of education,<sup>17</sup> this article critically evaluates both the pedagogical possibilities and limitations of UT as a form of cultural politics and its pedagogic potential for grassroots democracy and social transformation.

### **YouTube for Learning-by-Doing and Life-Long Learning**

In terms of everyday life education, by both reviewing Zakgeorge21's video posting and responding to it, a UTer could experience the pedagogy of learning-by-doing motored by voluntary human agency (Dewey, 1916; Freire, 1970; Rousseau, 1764). Compared to the total number of 700, 183 hits to the video, UTers who responded to it either through text comments (4,062) or video responses (80) showed higher motivation in the discussion. More specifically, compared to 4,062 text commentators, eighty video responders have taken time to think over the question, review other UTers' comments, and organize their opinions on their video postings, to produce video clips to articulate their own ideas. Through this process of video postings as self-education, UTers thus practice the pedagogy of learning-by-doing as "performative pedagogy" that they effectively engage in their everyday lives as a fundamental process of meaning-making.

Traditionally, “those under instruction are too customarily looked upon as acquiring knowledge as theoretical spectators” in socially reproductive schools, although Dewey (1916) encourages individuals to actively engage subject matters in which they are interested in everyday life for their own interests (p. 140). However, the Internet provides individuals today with a whole new pedagogical setting: decentralized and interactive communication, a participatory model of pedagogy, and an expanded flow of information, thus comprising a new field for the conjuncture of education and democracy. This technological development has amplified individuals’ voluntary participation in mutual education through proliferating new voices and visions, making possible the democratization of knowledge and learning in their daily lives. From this point of view, as opposed to rigid subject boundaries in formal education, Superangrymonkey evaluates UT’s everyday life curriculum that “people can do whatever they want in UT. It is freedom; it is the closest thing to the freedom that we’ve got.”<sup>18</sup> Whether they are good or bad, positive or negative, for Rousseau (1764), experiences are crucial for one to generate his or her own human potentials and life knowledge because “the Well-being of freedom makes up for many wounds” (p. 78). Therefore, LeonWestbrook appreciates UT’s pedagogy of hands-on-experience and freedom for providing him with the opportunities “to express myself or trash [something that] I could not do before” for the more learner-centered pedagogy of UT.<sup>19</sup>

Concerning the topic of discussion, UTers are well aware that the future of UT is totally dependent upon their concrete uses of it. Stipulating individuals’ active engagements, the learner-centered pedagogic value of UT, that is, learning-by-doing pedagogy, conditions the genuine potential of UT’s future. A “progressive society counts individual variations as precious since it finds in them the means of its own growth” (Dewey, 1916, p. 305). Hence, as a



pedagogic tool, UTers' varied opinions and modes of expression contribute to reviving the democratic public sphere on the Internet. Owing to their active involvement in posting and responding to videos, PublicAutopsy believes that UTers are "creating a boundless community where everyone can share what they feel with video and not just text."<sup>20</sup> Since, as Badkid3 puts it, "we are the ones who make UT's future,"<sup>21</sup> it seems that the pedagogical value of learning-by-doing is producing a democratic public sphere in which UTers are posting and responding to videos discussing the future of UT, and are thus creating its future as they debate and learn what is desirable or not.

The notion of learning as a lifetime process is interconnected with the pedagogic value of learning-by-doing. The real value of education as self-realization can never be confined to a classroom (Dewey, 1916; Rousseau, 1764). As long as individuals have access to the Internet and are willing to do so, the opportunities to post and watch videos are virtually unlimited. Furthermore, age does not restrict participation in pedagogical practices on UT. As noted, [Geriatric1927](#), in his eighties, has been enjoying his late-life fame with no. 6 in the "Most Subscribed Directors of All Time" on UT. With learning-by-doing, [Geriatric1927](#) engages in the life-long process of self-cultivation and social engagement. Dewey (1916) emphasizes the pedagogic value of learning as lifetime-process, arguing:

*Life is a self-renewing process through action upon the environment ... With the renewal of physical existence goes, in the case of human beings, the re-creation of beliefs ideals, hopes, happiness, misery and practices. The continuity of any experience, through renewing of the social group, is a literal fact. Education, in its broadest sense, is the means of this social continuity of life* (p. 2, emphasis added).

## **YouTube and Learning Through Communication**

Insofar as it is part of a life-time process of self-renewal and realization, education is a continuous communication among members of society through participatory dialogue, as well as through self-reflection. This is why education, as communication, can simultaneously promote individual development and a democratic society. (Dewey, 1916; Freire, 1970). For the essentially communicative nature of education, Dewey (1916) believes that “society not only continues to exist by transmission, by communication, but it may fairly to be said to exist in transmission, in communication” (p. 4). Likewise, learning as communication is a quintessential component of problem-posing pedagogy that requires dialogical communications between students and teachers where both are learning and teaching each other. In this regard, Freire (1970) further emphasizes the importance of dialogic communication among mutual-learning constituencies: “one must seek to live with others in solidarity. One cannot impose oneself, nor even merely co-exist with one’s students. Solidarity [for self-learning and self-emancipation] requires true communication” (p. 63). While UT communication is virtual, it allows a form of dialogical communicative interaction.

Through dialogical communication with others, by discussing their everyday lives and uses of technologies, individuals can become active subjects of learning and their own future. Realizing the “issues of liberation and empowerment ... in a mobile field of ideological and material relations” deeply embedded in our everyday environments (Giroux, 1992, p. 99), individuals are able to exercise critical human agency through communicating with others on UT by posing social reality as a problem and seeking solutions through their discursive interaction. In this regard, Xanthius asserts that UTers have many opportunities to learn about different cultures by communicating with people around the world: “UT has created a milestone for so

many possibilities for the Internet; in particular, context and visual abilities through [communicating with] other people throughout the world.”<sup>22</sup> More substantially, UT’s technological innovation and convergence of multimodal communications further promote UTers’ involvement and interaction with other people for a collective process of self-learning (Ramirez & Burgoon, 2004). NenoBrasil highlights UT’s pedagogical contribution to real life learning through interacting with other people on the Internet, writing: “I think the relationship will not ever be the same after UT; it is a tool that allows us to meet people all around the world to share our thought, problems, happiness, beliefs and everything.”<sup>23</sup>

In terms of learning-as-communication, Habermas’ notion of the public sphere envisions the potential of UT’s connection between learning and democracy. Just as Dewey (1916) believes in democracy as a “mode of associated living, of conjoint communicated experience” (p. 87), Habermas (1989) stresses the importance of communicative action to reach consensus among discussion participants as a means of unbound, free association in the public sphere. In other words, individuals can achieve personal autonomy and reach consensus, exchanging their ideas openly based on a “universal speech situation” that is a condition of combining mutual pedagogy and participatory democracy in their daily lives. From this point of view, through posting video clips and exchanging their opinions, UTers practice the essential components of unrestricted communication, personal autonomy and participatory democracy. Thus, UT can implement the interconnection among learning, communication and democracy. However, a simply increased quantity of free, unrestricted communication and information does not automatically guarantee any revolution of participatory democracy (Bimber, 1999; 2000; 2001; 2003). Hence, we would argue that a transformative use of UT for the goals of a strong

participatory democracy, education, and social justice requires informing UT practice with the values and practices of a critical pedagogy.

### **YouTube for Learning through Reflection on the Environment**

As long as human beings live in a society, they are products of its influences. Marx (1845) critically assesses the dialectical relationships between human beings and their environments. As much as one's environment confines the individual, Marx states "circumstances are changed by men and that it is essential to educate the educator himself" (p. 121). Marx further demands individuals' radical intervention for learning-as-transformation: "the coincidence of the changing of circumstances and of human activity or self-change can be conceived and rationally understood only as *revolutionary practice*" (p. 121, emphasis added). Therefore, as much as one should recognize the defining influence of everyday environments, he/she has to acknowledge that human agency is the fundamental force which constructs environmental circumstances and can transform them, just as critical pedagogy calls for simultaneous transformation of self and the environment.

Among classical philosophers of education drawn on in the study, Toni Morrison (1970) and Mary Wollstonecraft (1792) clearly explicate the immense influences of environments on individuals' learning and lives. Just as Althusser (1971) dissects the ubiquity of the dominant ideology's pedagogical apparatuses which interpellate individuals as ideological subjects in their everyday lives, Morrison (1970) explores how the oppressed in society are perpetually indoctrinated by structures of everyday life such as the media:

Adults, older girls, shops, magazines, newspapers, window sign—all the world had agreed that a blue-eyed, yellow-haired, pink-skinned doll was what every girl child

treasured. “Here,” they said, “this is beautiful, and if you are on this day ‘worthy’ you may have it.” (p. 20–21)

Morrison (1970) further asserts that the oppressed are perpetually dehumanized and exploited by a mere biological marker of their body “in equating physical beauty with virtue, she stripped her mind, bound it, and collected self-contempt by the heap” (p. 122). Given the fact that pervasive messages of mass media, especially in commercial advertisements, are highly sensational and exert cognitive influences on the sub-consciousness level, everyday lives which are saturated with the media and commercial goods are another pedagogical field molded by the established society. Claiming that circumstances play a prescriptive power to form human development in a given society, Dewey (1916) maintains the importance of the environment which “consists of those conditions that promote or hinder, stimulate or inhibit the characteristic activities of a living being” (p. 11). Thus, the hidden curriculum of both the media and banking education reproduces the dominant ideology and dehumanizes individuals to become docile objects, controlled by the established power structure.

For Wollstonecraft (1792), education for the oppressed is the prerequisite for the re-humanization of both oppressors and the oppressed alike: “to free them from all restraint by allowing them to participate in the inherent rights of mankind...the improvement and emancipation of the whole sex” (p. 307). Emphasizing rationality as a condition for human agency, Wollstonecraft (1792) maintains that “it is the right use of reason alone which makes us independent of everything—excepting the unclouded Reason—‘Whose service is perfect freedom’” (p. 235). In this regard, she advocates that “*public education*, of every denomination, should be directed to form citizens” (p. 289, emphasis added). Only through public education can all citizens participate in reciprocal dialogue as a basic component of constructing voluntary

human agency in order to realize the true value of education as the transformation of individuals and social environment at the same time – a possibility also offered by UT.

Since reason is a precondition for human agency (Rousseau, 1764; Wollstonecraft, 1792) and a good environment is an essential condition for better education, the emancipatory project of critical pedagogy lies in its dialogical transformation of both at the same time. As Marx (1845) states, although the environment exerts huge influences on individuals, it is individuals who made and can transform it (Freire, 1970; Marcuse, 1968, 1975). Further Feenberg (2002) argues that deploying technology for social transformation unleashes the collective power of individuals in a decentralized and interactive mode of communication, which, if informed by a participatory model of pedagogy, can expand the flow of information and transform the social environment in terms of Freire's concept of re-humanization.

Along this vein of argument, Zakgeorge21 focuses much attention on a new learning and agency-building environment of the Internet: "Technology is the closest thing to magic so that's why we as human beings are so fascinated by it. The Internet and UT in general are going to make a Renaissance." Some of UTers highly appreciate the potential of the Internet for its emancipatory characteristics. Stating that "this is the place to be and a birthplace for something new," Superangrymonkey agrees with Zakgeorge21 concerning the transformative potential of UT's technological innovation. However, what matters most is the way individuals use technology within specific contexts because different uses of it render totally different effects of the technology (Salter, 2004). Thus, there needs to be concrete pedagogical interventions to provide ordinary people with tools to deploy the vast potential of Internet media for their cultural/social/political empowerment.

In terms of the forms of UT use, UTers utilize communication technology to make use of its pedagogical potential for discussion and debate. UTers can raise generative questions about the values and potential of UT as a problem-posing pedagogy and facilitate interactive communications to share their ideas as learning-as-communication.<sup>24</sup> From this point of view, PublicAutopsy clearly explicates the pedagogic value of UT as a learning community: UT has “already revolutionized the Internet by breaking down any border of race or religion we would have between each other. UT is creating a borderless community where everyone can share what they feel with video, not just text.”<sup>25</sup>

### **YouTube for Learning as Self-fulfillment and Empowerment**

As long as the aim of education is to bring forth individuals’ many-sided potential, self-directed human agency can become a key goal for education. Further, human agency is a requirement for realizing education as a self-renewing and self-realizing process over time through continual communication with others and democratic transformation of one’s environment. For Dewey, Freire, and progressive educators, education aims to achieve self-fulfillment and empowerment, as well as democratic social transformation. In this respect, for Dewey (1916), the main goal of public education is to achieve human agency for individuals to pursue their own interests and to create a better society:

The desired transformation is not difficult to define in a formal way. It signifies a society in which every person shall be occupied in something which makes the lives of others better worth living, and which accordingly makes the ties which bind persons together more perceptible—which breaks down the barriers of distance between them (p. 316).

Therefore, truly critical human agency can be obtained when individuals revolutionize their socio-political conditions by breaking through the relations of oppression (Freire, 1970). The critical process of becoming-a-subject within public education requires that individuals recognize and transform oppressive conditions dialectically. Freire (1970) believes, as the oppressed become fully human subjects, they begin to realize their human and social potential:

as he [sic!] breaks his “adhesion” and objectifies the reality from which he starts to emerge, he begins to integrate himself as a Subject (an *I*) confronting an object (reality). At this moment, sundering the false unity of his divided self, he becomes a true individual. (p. 174)

If a society hinders individuals from obtaining voluntary and critical human agency, it dehumanizes individuals by perpetuating a dehumanizing environment. Thus, becoming a true subject requires and coincides with the radical transformation of society to break through the vicious circle of dehumanization and social oppression.

Considering the relationships between individuals and their learning environments, UT provides individuals with vast opportunities to form a transformative and creative learning community. In terms of Giroux (2001)’s emphasis on “performative pedagogy” (p. 7), as with Dewey’s pragmatic approach to combine theory and practice, UTers can become not only theoreticians but also practitioners of transformative pedagogy. Superangrymonkey confirms the performative/pragmatic pedagogy of UT to realize human agency: “I YouTube because I want to see some proactive change and I want to be a part of it.” UTers are able to achieve agency in forming UT as their learning community by questioning and answering each other. Sabrnig confirms this point: “I want to be around people who think and share ideas while we talk. I want to be a part of using technology to make a better world.”<sup>26</sup>



As for its accessibility and impact, the Internet/UT can become beneficial for the oppressed in society. Compared to the established restrictions on public self-expression in society, the oppressed can gain access to unprecedented opportunities of media access with the Internet and new forms like UT. With the universal access to the Internet as an emerging form of cultural politics, the oppressed can employ UT as a tool for proactive social changes. Therefore, focusing on “the question of social change and how people on the margins take up and use the Internet,” Mehra, Merkel and Bishop (2004) substantiate how the Internet empowers the oppressed in society (p. 782). For example, gays and lesbians can use the Internet for constructing “positive development in their ‘queer’ identities” and “political empowerment via the establishment of a political agenda” (p. 789).

Consequently, the Internet has opened a space for individuals to realize Benjamin’s (1934) belief that readers can be writers and active producers of their culture. Individuals can obtain the agency to become involved in the democratization of knowledge and to pursue a transformative pedagogy of everyday lives on the Internet. Ultimately, through implementing the emancipatory potential of critical human agency, individuals become more able to secure reliable resources to revolutionize the oppressive power structure of society. Nevertheless, there is ambivalence of UT’s concrete impact on society depending on each user’s specific motivations and objectives of using it as seen in many cases of destructive, anti-social deployment of the Internet throughout the globe.<sup>27</sup> Therefore, it is a crucial issue for critical pedagogy practitioners to implement Feenberg’s (2002) “radical philosophy of technology” which demands ordinary people’s active intervention in shaping technologies’ social applications, as well as its redesign for a more egalitarian purposes.

## **YouTube for Learning for Agency and Social Change**

With the decentralized technological structure of the Internet, individuals have obtained a much broader space to participate in the public sphere. UTers have exhibited the pedagogical power of learning-by-doing, learning-as-communication, learning for self-fulfillment, and learning through reflection. Hence, UTers can cultivate agency and actively participate in a “space of interaction” for “actual issues in actual places” and “alternative views of the lived environment” (Ridell, 2005, p. 162). Superangrymonkey confirms UT’s potential to realize critical human agency: “I YouTube because I want to see some proactive change and I want to be a part of it.”

In view of the huge influences of education on individuals and its role of reinforcing the dominant ideology in society (Althusser, 1971), in order to achieve a real condition for emancipatory and democratic education means to transform everyday life and struggle against oppression (Freire, 1970; Marcuse, 1968; 1975). For Dewey (1916), the essence of education is positive transformation:

*Knowledge is humanistic in quality not because it is about human products in the past, but because of what it does in liberating human intelligence and human sympathy. Any subject matter which accomplishes this result is humane, and any subject matter which does not accomplish it is not even educational. (1916, p. 230, emphasis added)*

Criticizing the reproductive role of education in an inegalitarian capitalist society, Marcuse (1968) stresses the importance of education for human emancipation from exploitative social relations.<sup>28</sup> Such transformative education means that educational practice is not value-neutral or merely technical, but rather is a highly ethical engagement for political justice and

transformation. In the Marcusean vision, individuals have to implement the “application of knowledge to the improvement of the human condition” and the “liberation of the mind, and of the body, from aggressive and repressive needs.”

Therefore, individuals’ concrete forms of UT use are important because the actual effects of it depend on their specific practices and goals. Thus, UT’s practical application with specific socio-political intents helps to realize the pedagogical potential of UT. Calling for emancipatory uses of media technology, Freire (1970) also problematizes the effects of its concrete uses: “It is not the media themselves which I criticize, but the way they are used” (p. 136). Therefore, it is highly significant to argue for more emancipatory uses of the new Internet media for the sake of social transformation. In this regard, as a classical model, the Zapatista National Liberation Army (EZLN) shows how the emancipatory uses of the Internet technology are critically important for the success of revolutionary movements (Knudson, 1998; Best & Kellner 2001).

The global demonstration in February 2003 against the U.S. invasion of Iraq clearly exemplifies the revolutionary power of individuals’ transformative uses of the Internet (Hands, 2006; Kahn & Kellner, 2005a). Strategic employments of the Internet to organize the global-scale anti-war protests catalyze David Held’s (1995) “double democratization,” that is, “the democratization and restructuring of both civil society and the state in order to ensure active citizens and a containment of the power of global capital” (Hand, 2006, p. 236). In other words, individuals’ emancipatory uses of technology can result in achieving critical agency and the transformation of a society as a learning environment. Kahn and Kellner (2005a) summarize the vast potential of the liberating uses of the Internet: “the new ICTs are revolutionary and constitute a dramatic transformation of everyday life in the direction of more participatory and democratic potentials” (p. 94).

However, unfortunately, the majority of discussion participants in UT forums are not aware of UT's liberating potential for social change. Though Zakgeorge21 and Superangrymonkey anticipate "serious changes" and "some proactive change" through uses of UT respectively, many other UTers seem to be satisfied to use UT as a pedagogical form of learning-by-doing, learning-as-communication or personal entertainment. As Jessebearwear articulates:

UT is going to change, but it is not going to change the world. UT is an excellent and great place to watch videos, but it is not a place to try to change the world. UT is not going to change the political aspect or social aspect of the world.<sup>29</sup>

Even though UT could make some proactive changes, Retardedfolks does not believe that "it is going to change really anything, anytime soon, anything drastically."<sup>30</sup>

In general, UT seems to serve the liberal individualist's perspective on self-expression and education as pursuing personal needs. Based on the notion of an individual as "rational, autonomous subject who knows and can express their own best interests," Dahlberg (2001) describes the pedagogic characteristics of the prevalent uses of the Internet as "maximum information is available for private individuals to make their best possible strategic choices between competing positions" (p. 160). In other words, the pedagogic value of the Internet "means that consumers are at liberty to freely move around cyberspace and make the choices they desire without restriction found in 'real' space" (p. 163). It seems that the pedagogic uses of UT are confined within the paradigm of individual functionalist/instrumental rationality as the dominant ideology of a liberal/individualist society. For instance, NenoBrasil notes that being in UT means enjoying freedom: "in here we are free to watch whatever we want because there are millions of videos to watch." Sometimes, UTers enjoy other free benefits: "It is a good fun to

promote my web-site for free advertising” (Nickypoo31).<sup>31</sup> Indeed, a causal perusal of UT reveals that much of its content expresses narcissism, rampant materialism and consumerism, and other values of the dominant capitalist society. Specifically, together with commonly used tags such as “sexy, sex, music, rock, rap, funny, news, pop, [and] dance,” the majority of UT videos are based on the dominant categories of corporate media productions; music (19.8%), entertainment (19.0%), comedy (13.4%), and sports (6.9%) comprise the majority of UT contents (Digital Ethnography, 2008, n.p.).

As an indicator of the annual UT video trends, *Time* magazine’s “Top 10 Viral Videos” also reveal that the most of videos in the list involve comedy, parody, spoof, music video, celebrity, or sensational materials which mostly recirculate the dominant corporate media spectacles. For example, Chris Crocker’s UT video, *Leave Britney Alone!* was ranked the #1 in the 2007 list, in which he hysterically defends pop-star Britney Spear, and he eventually “nabbed a reality show off the buzz from the video” (Keegan, 2007, n.p.). In other words, many people use UT as a form of self-promotion which aims to grasp attention from the public or the established entertainment industry. Eight videos in the list are similar kinds to Crocker’s hyper self-expression video. Likewise, as the #1 in the 2008 list, Matt Harding’s video, *Where the Hell is Matt?* was selected. In the clip, Harding recorded footages of his comic dance with local people in the fun during his 14 month trip to 42 different countries funded partially by Stride Gum Company. Hamilton (2008) evaluates the video as “The sheer silliness and joy of Harding’s adventures will keep you smiling long after you’ve watched them” (n.p.). Seven videos in the list are this sort. In other words, the main trend of UT uses is not oriented to public issues of sociopolitical matters, but a different version of corporate media spectacles which eventually (re) produce the cultural hegemony of the status quo.

Yet, as we have argued, there have been many positive pedagogical instances of the use of UT, as well as concrete political effects. A telling example of how new digital technologies of everyday life are transforming contemporary U.S. politics comes from the role of UT in the debates on the U.S. invasion of Iraq. On September 1, 2007, CBS News had a report on vigorous debate over Iraq with postings getting as many as 350,000 hits. Focusing on a sixteen-year-old anti-Bush and anti-Iraq protester from a small town in New Jersey and a pro-war soldier,<sup>32</sup> the segment demonstrated how ordinary people could participate in contemporary political dialogue via UT and its potential for democratization, as did the role of UT in the 2008 election of Barack Obama, as we stressed earlier.

The future of UT is open to a variety of uses and is a contested terrain like other forms of media and culture in the established society. It is up to educators and individuals to establish pedagogically and politically responsible and progressive uses of UT. In this study, we have revealed the ways that certain practices of UT overlap with critical pedagogy, but we fear, without specific pedagogical or political goals, UT could end up a mere part of the fun-house of consumer capitalism. Therefore, it is an important practical question how critical pedagogy practitioners should take advantage of UT in order to construct an alternative Internet culture and, in turn, to promote values of human agency, grassroots democracy and sociopolitical reconstruction. In conclusion, we will sum up the potential and limitations of UT, suggesting positive pedagogical and political uses, but also dangers.

### **YouTube's Pedagogical Perspectives: Potential and Limitations**

Ultimately, UT requires individuals' critical consciousness and active engagement to use it pedagogically and politically. As much as the technological innovation of UT provides potentially progressive pedagogical opportunities, individual UTers' actual uses of the

technology will eventually determine its practical possibilities for transformative pedagogy and social transformation. We have argued that UTers' progressive uses of the Internet technology substantiate the essential values of critical pedagogy, including learning-as-doing, learning-as-communication, learning-for-agency and learning-for-social transformation. Yet, without a clear critical pedagogical vision, UT could easily become a mere toy of the privileged and instrument of individual pleasure and expression.

As a communicative medium, UT is a potential exemplar of the Deweyan pedagogy of learning as communication. For Freire, the revolutionary potential of liberating communications of the oppressed can be facilitated by the ubiquitous presence of the Internet. UT could be a cradle to a critical communicative pedagogy in a multi-mediated society. For Rousseau and Wollstonecraft, education is to raise individuals' rationality to realize autonomous human agency. Posting and responding to videos in UT are fundamentally self-realizing activities of UTers because they invest their time and energy in thinking over topics, organizing ideas and producing videos. Through the video production process, UTers practice a crucial pedagogy of critical human agency, becoming a subject in Freire's sense. The oppressed traditionally are deprived of the means of expressing themselves, and self-expression on UT is consistent with the emphasis in Wollstonecraft, Toni Morrison, and Freire for self-empowerment of the oppressed.

Hence, in the society of multi-mediated and media culture, UT can provide individuals with significant opportunities to intervene in media cultural politics. However, some of the defining problems and limitations of the Internet extend to UT. While the presence of the Internet is getting more ubiquitous and its utilization also becomes pervasive in society,<sup>33</sup> the problem of the digital divide is still a lingering obstacle to realizing a truly transformative pedagogy of the new media.<sup>34</sup> Of the UT eighty-one video postings examined in the study above

that analyzed how UTers present and understand their work, seventy-seven were created and posted by whites, with only four were by non-whites. Sixty-five postings were produced by men while sixteen were by women. All the postings were in English. In short, the UT discussion forum is dominated by white-male-English speaking users. Of course, concerning the matter of access to the Internet, it is disproportionately occupied by the dominant class in society. From this point of view, Cammaerts and Audenhove (2005) stress that “online engagement in forums is cyclical, tends to be dominated by those already politically active in the offline world and functions within a homogeneous ideological framework” (p. 193). Therefore, “the Internet reflects rather than circumvents offline power structures and relations” (Russell, 2005, p. 515).

Considering that a democratic and pedagogical public sphere can only exist without any forms of outside control, a UT takeover by major corporations is one of the most serious challenges to the potential of UT for democracy. Robins and Webster (1999) stress that a corporation’s takeover of Internet sites entails “the intrusion of market and commodity relations into the public sphere, and this results in the transformation of reasoning into consumption” (p. 104). In other words, the corporate takeover of UT by Google might undermine the potential to use it as an example of Giroux’s “performative pedagogy” for social transformation if its’ “political debate has come to be regulated by large corporate bodies” (Robins & Webster, 1999, p. 104). In this regard, Retardedfolks\_ warns against encroachments such as censorship by Google.com as the owner of UT. Since a majority of videos on UT are “replications of video footage commonly available elsewhere” in the traditional commercial media (Rajan, 2007), Google’s control over UT videos will further accelerate based on Copyright infringement restrictions and court battles over fair use. Unfortunately, following the copyright dispute



between Warner Music and UT, thousands of self-made videos by ordinary UTers have already been taken away.<sup>35</sup>

Moreover, there may still be explicit censorship when UT videos have caused cultural and ideological clashes with many forms of sovereign state and corporate power. For example, Thailand blocked access to UT via Thai I.P. addresses since it found insulting materials on the Thai monarchy in 2006.<sup>36</sup> Recently, the Chinese government blocked UT because there were videos which documented Chinese police officers brutally beating Tibetans in Lhasa, Tibet.<sup>37</sup> Likewise, when there is clash between Google's corporate interests and UT videos' contents, it is obvious that the company is threatening "the ideal speech situation" and unrestricted communication as the core asset of the public sphere.

Advertising has been appearing on UT,<sup>38</sup> and there are dangers of increasing commercialization and the expansion of a consumer and business culture, as well as possibilities of censorship and control. Google made an announcement that it would sell UT spaces to advertisers as a means of its financial revenue makeover on top of showing advertisements within UT videos in November 2008 (Clifford, 2008). With the announcement, there are direct or indirect skews toward commercial materials with sensational content. In this respect, to keep the Internet as a public sphere, Blumler and Gurevitch (2001) propose "creating an authority with responsibilities for arranging, publicizing, moderating and reporting on the outcomes of a wide range of [corporate advertisers'] exercises" which distort individuals' content production and consumption (p. 9). To protect individuals' open access to the Internet and potential for transformative pedagogy, Blumler and Gurevitch (2001) also assert that "firm anti-discriminatory access policies are needed, perhaps requiring the segregation of the provision of content from the distribution channel" (p. 8). Furthermore, Blumler and Gurevitch (2001)

propose “creating an authority with responsibilities for arranging, publicizing, moderating and reporting on the outcomes of a wide range of exercises in electronic democracy” (p. 9).

It is also up to individuals and groups committed to the use of emergent technologies for critical pedagogy and social transformation to develop new strategies of education and communication. Much UT production does not meet Habermas’s strict criteria for rational communicative action in the public sphere due to deficits in rationality, reasoned debate, and unforced consensus. Many UT products, by contrast, exhibit silliness, self-indulgence, or worse. Critical pedagogical and socially transformative uses of UT and other new technologies thus require clear educational and progressive vision of social transformation.

Consequently, it is highly important and timely to examine both the potentials and the limitations of the new forms of Internet pedagogical practices. There should be extensive pedagogical endeavors to examine critically as well as incorporate the new media technologies in general education settings.<sup>39</sup> The new media have opened unprecedented space for individuals to exercise a performative/critical media pedagogy for self-realization and social-transformation. In terms of education as a bringing forth of individuals’ many-sided potential, UT gives individuals moments of self-expression, personal empowerment, and transformative agency. In terms of education as an enlightenment project, UT provides an opportunity to exhibit the values of personal autonomy, virtuous citizenship, political participation and social justice in our everyday lives. Depending upon the form of its use and how a performative/critical pedagogy of the new media is implemented, UT can be either a reservoir of true enlightenment, or another play-pen in the capitalist fun house. Ultimately, for public educators it is highly important to develop new critical media pedagogies that will help enable students to become active subjects of emerging

media technology, and for students and citizens to use new media for progressive pedagogical and political goals, as well as self-expression and entertainment.

## Notes

1. For critical analyses of the *No Child Left Behind* program, see Meier, D. and G. Wood (2004, eds). *Many Children Left Behind: How the No Child Left Behind Act is Damaging our Children and our Schools*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press.
2. See Habermas, J. (1981/ 1984). *The Theory of Communicative Action, Vol. 1: Reason and the Rationalization of Society*. Translated by T. McCarthy. Boston: Beacon Press.
3. See Blake, N. (1995). Ideal Speech Conditions, Modern Discourse and Education. *Journal of Philosophy of Education*, 29/ 3, 355 – 367.
4. For the Internet's potential as a social movement mobilizer, see Bennett, W. L. (2003). Communicating Global Activism: Strengths and Vulnerabilities of Networked Politics, *Information, Communication & Society* 6, 143-68; and Carroll, W. and R. Ratner (1999). Media strategies and political projects: A comparative study of social movements. *Canadian Journal of Sociology*, 24/ 1, 1-34.
5. For political uses of UT in 2006 election, see Gueorguieva, V. (2007). Voters, MySpace, and YouTube: The Impact of Alternative Communication Channels on the 2006 Election Cycle and Beyond. *Social Science Computer Review*, 1-13. For its pedagogical implications, see Trier, J. (2007). "Cool" engagements with YouTube: Part 2. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 50/7, 598-603.
6. <http://ksudigg.wetpaint.com/page/YouTube+Statistics?t=anon>
7. [www.youtube.com/symphony](http://www.youtube.com/symphony)
8. <http://www.youtube.com/user/ucberkeley>

9. See Trippi, J. (2004). *The Revolution Will Not Be Televised: Democracy, the Internet, and the Overthrow of Everything*. New York: Regan Books, and Gillmor, D. (2006). *We the Media: Grassroots Journalism by the People, for the People*. Sebastopol, CA: O'Reilly Media.
10. For more detailed transcript of the CNN/UT democratic presidential debate, see <http://www.cnn.com/2007/POLITICS/07/23/debate.transcript/index.html>, and <http://www.cnn.com/2007/POLITICS/11/28/debate.transcript/>
11. See Kim, G. (forthcoming). Online Videos for the Obama Campaign in the 2008 U.S. Presidential Election: Some Reflections on Internet's Attributes for Grassroots Political Participation. In M. Eastin & T. Daugherty (eds). *The Handbook of Research on Digital Media and Advertising*.
12. <http://www.dipdive.com/archives/212>
13. <http://www.hopeactchange.com/creators/song>
14. <http://www.dipdive.com/dip-politics/ywc/> (video #2 to 30). The following analysis was done by Gooyong Kim in summer 2008.
15. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z7JgtjeIsuY>
16. This research was undertaken by Gooyong Kim in 2007.
17. The classical philosophers of education drawn on in this study were the topic of Douglas Kellner's Philosophy of Education seminar at UCLA; see the web-site at <http://www.gseis.ucla.edu/courses/ed206a/edphil.htm>.
18. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jrH5VqOYsM8&mode=related&search>
19. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CtRVbcf4CDI>
20. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EC2A1HqPjZU>
21. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3fIFRNGqY28>

22. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=15053Q1L4dQ&mode=related&search>

23. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z1YHCDnuiG8>

24. For Freire, education should pose what he calls “generative questions” which “is to investigate people’s thinking about reality and people’s action upon reality, which is their praxis.... The more active an attitude men and women take in regard to the exploration of their thematics, the more they deepen their critical awareness of reality and, in spelling out these thematics, take possession of that reality” (p. 106). Furthermore, Freire believes that “generative questions” and liberating education are the different sides of the same coin because “every thematic investigation which deepens historical awareness is thus really educational, while all authentic educational investigates thinking.... Education and thematic investigation, in the problem-posing concept of education, are simply different moments of the same process” (p. 109).

25. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CtRVbcf4CDI>

26. [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_fljRPrCYf0](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_fljRPrCYf0)

27. See Rayner, G. (2008, September 23). Finnish school shooting: Police “investigate YouTube link.” *Telegraph*. URL:

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/finland/3066526/Finnish-school-shooting-Police-investigate-YouTube-link.html>

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29. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ddmieEpwDqU>
30. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2zWtSVQct9k&mode=related&search>
31. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KV2e9u-an2o>
32. See Doane, S. (2007, September 1). Iraq War Debated On YouTube. *CBS News*. URL: <http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2007/09/01/eveningnews/main3227641.shtml> (9/3/07).
33. See Jones, S. & Fox, S. (2009, January 28). *Generations Online in 2009*. Washington, D.C.: The Pew Internet & American Life Project. URL: [http://www.pewinternet.org/~media/Files/Reports/2009/PIP\\_Generations\\_2009.pdf](http://www.pewinternet.org/~media/Files/Reports/2009/PIP_Generations_2009.pdf).
34. See Lenhart, A., Horrigan, J., Rainie, L., Allen, K., Boyce, A., Madden, M. & O'Grady, E. (2003, April 16). *The Ever-Shifting Internet Population: A New Look at Access and the Digital Divide*. Washington, D.C.: The Pew Internet & American Life Project. URL: [http://www.pewinternet.org/~media/Files/Reports/2003/PIP\\_Shifting\\_Net\\_Pop\\_Report.pdf.pdf](http://www.pewinternet.org/~media/Files/Reports/2003/PIP_Shifting_Net_Pop_Report.pdf.pdf).
35. See Arango, T. (2009, March 23). As Rights Clash on YouTube, Some Music Vanishes. *The New York Times*. URL: <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/03/23/business/media/23warner.html?pagewanted=2&th&emc=th> (3/23/09).
36. For a more detail account, see Rosen, J. (2008, November 30). Google's Gatekeepers. *The New York Times*. URL: <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/11/30/magazine/30google-t.html?emc=tnt&tntemail=y> (12/01/08).
37. [http://www.nytimes.com/2009/03/25/technology/internet/25youtube.html?\\_r=1&th&emc=th](http://www.nytimes.com/2009/03/25/technology/internet/25youtube.html?_r=1&th&emc=th)
38. See Chmielewski, D. C. and J. Guynn (2007, Aug. 24). Google tests ads in YouTube videos. *Los Angeles Times*, C1 and C8.

39. On the importance of critical technoliteracies, see Kahn & Kellner (2005b). On the need to incorporate critical media literacy curricular in K-12 school, see Kellner, D. and J. Share (2007). Critical Media Literacy: Crucial policy choices for a twenty-first-century democracy. *Policy Futures in Education*, 5/1, 59-69.



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