

Critical Pedagogy and Class Struggle in the Age of Neoliberal Globalization: Notes from History's Underside^[1]

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Abstract: Within the North American progressive education tradition, critical pedagogy has been a widely discussed project of educational reform that challenges students to become politically literate so that they might better understand and transform how power and privilege works on a daily basis in contemporary social contexts. As a project of social transformation, critical pedagogy is touted as an important protagonist in the struggle for social and economic justice, yet it has rarely ever challenged the fundamental basis of capitalist social relations. Among the many and varied proponents of critical pedagogy in the United States, Marxist analysis has been virtually absent; in fact, over the last decade, its conceptual orientation has been more closely aligned with postmodernism and poststructuralism. This paper argues that unless class analysis and class struggle play a central role in critical pedagogy, it is fated to go the way of most liberal reform movements of the past, melding into calls for fairer resource distribution and allocation, and support for racial diversity, without fundamentally challenging the social universe of capital in which such calls are made.

1. The Crisis of the Educational Left in the United States

Part of the problem faced by the educational left today is that even among the most progressive educators there appears to exist an ominous resignation produced by the seeming inevitability of capital. This problem continues to obtain even as financial institutions expand capacity in inverse proportion to a decline in living standards and job security. It has become an article of faith in the critical educational tradition that there is no viable alternative to capitalism. When class relations are discussed, they are rarely ever talked about in the Marxist sense of foregrounding the labor/capital dialectic, surplus value extraction, or the structure of property ownership; instead, the conversation is directed towards consumption, lifestyle politics, theories of social stratification in terms of access to consumption, or job, income, and cultural prestige. The swan song for Marxist analysis apparently occurred during the intellectual collapse of Marxism in the 1980s after the Berlin Wall came crashing down and along with it a bipolar imperialist world. Capitalism was loudly proclaimed to be the victor over socialism. The globalisation of capital was advertised as the designated savior of the world's poor and powerless. But as we have begun to observe, its function, far from supplicatory or transitive, has been deadly alienating. Gobbling up the global lifeworld in the quest for an endless accumulation of surplus value,

capital has produced a new Gilded Age for the ruling classes in the developed nations of the North, and world-historical excretory excesses for developing countries in the South, as pollution is exported from the United States to Latin America, creating a hemispheric toilet of toxic waste while egregiously adding legions to Marx's reserve army of labour. The cutbacks in government expenditure on health, education and housing investment, the creation of shantytowns in urban industrial areas, the concentration of women in low-wage subcontracted work, the depletion of natural resources, the rampant de-unionisation, the growth of labour discipline, the expansion of temporary and part-time labour, the progressive diversion of capital into financial and speculative channels (what some have called "casino capitalism" on a world scale) the pushing down of wages, and the steady decline of decent working conditions—all of these have proceeded apace but the rule of capital is rarely challenged, only its current 'condition'. The site where the concrete determinations of industrialization, corporations, markets, greed, patriarchy, and technology all come together—i.e., the center where exploitation and domination is fundamentally articulated—is steadfastly occupied by capital. The insinuation of the coherence and logic of capital into everyday life—and the elevation of the market to sacerdotal status, as the paragon of all social relationships—is a largely uncontested observation in the contemporary literature on globalizatón.

In Russia today, the *prikhvatizatsiya* (grabitization) that has been bequeathed to the masses by a kleptocratic capitalism that has recently dragged itself out of the carrion house of economic shock therapy has led to 'blitzkrieg liquidations', the destruction of industry, the disappearance of health benefits and housing, the slashing of salaries, and the transfer of wealth to a dozen or so private owners who now commandeer one public property. As poverty shifts from 2 percent to 50 percent, Western freemarket fundamentalists keep reminding the Russians how awful it must have been to live under the iron fist of communism. Western countries that had established their own economic fiefdoms by protecting key industries and subsidising some domestic producers continue to preach the gospel of free trade and deregulation to other countries. Even when the messianic monopoly fantasies of CEOs from Enron, WorldCom and Global Crossings culminate in bankruptcy disasters that shake the very pillars of the hallowed marketplace, the belief in the sanctity of the market remains undisturbed. Capital stealthily hides behind Nietzsche's unsullied veil, maintaining its secret of reversibility—that its economic assistance to the Third World reproduces underdevelopment and ensures the continuity of dependency.

The belief in the single-model neoliberal alternative had pullulated across the global political landscape before the fall of the Soviet Union and the Eastern Bloc, attaching itself like a fungus to regional and national dreams alike. The winds of the Cold War had spread its spores to the farthest reaches of the globe. After lying dormant for a decade, these spores have been reactivated and have seemingly destroyed our capacity to dream otherwise. Today most nations celebrate capital as the key to the survival of democracy. Watered by the tears of the poor and cultivated by working-class labour, the dreams that sprout from the unmolested soil of capital are those engineered by the ruling class. Plowed and harrowed by international cartels of transnational corporations, freemarketeers, and global carpetbaggers poised to take advantage of Third World nations in serious financial debt to the West, the seeds of capitalism have yielded a record-breaking harvest. The capitalist dream factories are not only corporate board rooms and production studios of media networks that together work to keep the capitalist dream alive, but a spirit of mass resignation that disables the majority of the population from realizing that capitalism and exploitation are functional equivalents, that the globalisation of capital is just another name

for what Lenin termed imperialism.^[2] United States imperialism —what Tariq Ali calls “the mother of all fundamentalisms”^[3]— has decamped from its Keynesian position of pseudo-liberalism to fully embrace a fanatical neo-liberalism. The grand mullah of neo-liberalism, Von Hayek, an avatar to both Thatcher and Reagan, favored military actions to defend US interests abroad. On the domestic front he favoured the invisible magic of a manipulated market. No state intervention against the interests of capital was to be tolerated. But the state was vital to undertake military operations in the sphere of international relations^[4].

Further, Von Hayek's neo-liberal followers were staunch defenders of the Vietnam war. They supported the US-backed military *coup* in Chile. In 1979, Hayek favoured bombing Tehran. In 1982, during the Malvinas conflict, he wanted raids on the Argentinean capital. This was the creed of neo-liberal hegemony most favoured by its founder^[5].

The fact that neoliberalism —the midwife to the return of a fanatical belief in non-state intervention into capital movements that was spawned by 19th century liberalism— has resoundingly defeated the bureaucratic state capitalism of the former Soviet ‘evil empire’, and has created a seismic shift in the geopolitical landscape. Michael Parenti grimly comments that the overthrow of the Soviet Union has abetted a reactionary “rollback” of democratic gains, public services, and common living standards around the world as the US continues to oppose economic nationalism and autonomous development in Asia, Africa, and Latin America, primarily though enforcing debt payments and structural adjustment programs imposed by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. Particularly hard hit have been the so-called Third World countries^[6]. The Soviet Union's collapse has opened the political floodgates of U.S. imperialism, permitting the US to pursue virtually uncontested an agenda of “arrogance and brutality”. The U.S. is no longer faced with a competing superpower that imposed constraints on the dream of US global dominance. Parenti offers this disillusioned comment:

The record of US international violence just in the last decade is greater than anything that any socialist nation has ever perpetrated in its entire history. US forces or proxy mercenary forces wreaked massive destruction upon Iraq, Mozambique, Angola, Nicaragua, El Salvador, Guatemala, East Timor, Libya, and other countries. In the span of a few months, President Clinton bombed four countries: Sudan, Afghanistan, Iraq repeatedly, and Yugoslavia massively. At the same time, the US national security state was involved in proxy wars in Angola, Mexico (Chiapas), Colombia, East Timor, and various other places. And US forces occupied Macedonia, Bosnia, Kosovo, and Afghanistan, and were deployed across the globe at some 300 major overseas bases —all in the name of peace, democracy, national security, counter-terrorism, and humanitarianism^[7]

It is no longer just the capitalists who believe that they are the salvation for the world's poor, but the workers themselves have become conditioned to believe that without their exploiters, they would no longer exist. The entrails of the eviscerated poor now serve as divining mechanisms for the soothsayers of the investment corporations. Even many trade unions have served as little more than adjuncts of the state, reimposing the discipline of capital's law of value. Those who wish to avoid both Communist-type centralized planning and the disequilibrium and instability of laissez-faire capitalism have turned to a type of market socialism through labour-managed firms, but have done little to challenge the deep

grammar of capital itself.

Everywhere we look, social relations of oppression and contempt for human dignity abound. It is not that workers are being press-ganged to serve in the social factory; it is more like they are being made to feel grateful that they have some source of income, as meagre as that may be. As the demagogues of capitalist neo-liberal globalization spin their web of lies about the benefits of "global trade" behind erected "security" walls, protesters are gassed, beaten and killed. As the media boast about the net worth of corporate moguls and celebrate the excesses of the rich and famous, approximately 2.8 billion people — almost half of the world's people— struggle in desperation to live on less than two dollars (U.S.) a day^[8].

As schools become increasingly financed by corporations that function as service industries for transnational capitalism, and as bourgeois think-tank profiteerism and educational professionalism continues to guide educational policy and practice, the United States population faces a challenging educational reality. Liberals are calling for the need for capital controls, controls in foreign exchange, the stimulation of growth and wages, labour rights enforcement for nations borrowing from the United States, and the removal of financial aid from banking and capital until they concede to the centrality of the wage problem and insist on labour rights. However, very few are calling for the abolition of capital itself.

The commercialization of higher education, the bureaucratic cultivation of intellectual capital —what Marx referred to in the *Grundrisse* as the 'general intellect' or 'social brain'^[9]— and its tethering to the machinery of capital, the rise of industrial business partnerships, the movement of research into the commercial arena of profit and in the service of trade organizations and academic-corporate consortia, have all garnered institutions of higher learning profound suspicion by those who view education as a vehicle for emancipation. In the hands of the technozealots, teachers are being re-proletarianized and labor is being disciplined, displaced, and deskilled. Teacher autonomy, independence, and control over work is being severely reduced, while workplace knowledge and control is given over more and more to the hands of the administration.

The educational left is finding itself without a revolutionary agenda for challenging in the classrooms of the nation the effects and consequences of the new capitalism. As a result, we are witnessing the progressive and unchecked merging of pedagogy to the productive processes within advanced capitalism. Education has been reduced to a sub-sector of the economy, designed to create cybercitizens within a teledemocracy of fast-moving images, representations, and lifestyle choices brought powered by the seemingly frictionlessness of finance capital. Capitalism has been naturalized as commonsense reality - even as a part of nature itself - while the term "social class" has been replaced by the less antagonistic term, "socioeconomic status."

2. The Transnational Capitalist Class

William Robinson has made a convincing argument for the appearance of a transnationalist capitalist class^[10]. Arguing for a conception of globalization that transcends the nation-state system, he has effectively reconceptualized the dominant Weberian conception of the state through a Marxist problematic as the institutionalization of class relations around a

particular configuration of social production in which the economic and the political are conceived as distinct moments of the same totality. Formulating the concept of social class in this way, the relation between the economy and states can be seen as an internal one. There is nothing in this view that necessarily ties the state to territory or to nation-states. Whilst it is true that, seen in aggregate nation-state terms, there are still very poor countries and very rich ones, it is also true that poverty and marginalisation are increasing in so-called First World countries, while the Third World has an expanding new strata of consumers. The labour aristocracy is expanding to other countries such that core and periphery no longer denote geography as much as social location. The material circumstances that gave rise to the nation-state are, Robinson argues, being superseded by globalization such that the state —conceived in Marxist terms as a congealment of a particular and historically determined constellation of class forces and relations (i.e., a historically specific social relation inserted into larger social structures)— can no longer simply be conceived solely in nation-state-centric terms. Robinson's argument —that a transnational state apparatus is emerging under globalization from within the system of nation states— rests on the notion that the production process itself has become increasingly transnationalized as national circuits of accumulation become functionally integrated into global circuits. Neoliberal globalization is unifying the world into a single mode of production and bringing about the organic integration of different countries and regions into a single global economy through the logic of capital accumulation on a world scale. Non-market structures are disappearing, as they are fast becoming penetrated and commodified by capitalist relations. Global class formation has involved the accelerated division of the world into a global bourgeoisie and a global proletariat. The transnationalized fractions of dominant groups have become the hegemonic fraction globally^[11].

3. Neoliberalism and Education

Neoliberalism (“capitalism with the gloves off”, or “socialism for the rich”) refers to a corporate domination of society that supports state enforcement of the unregulated market, engages in the oppression of nonmarket forces and antimarket policies, guts free public services, eliminates social subsidies, offers limitless concessions to transnational corporations, enthrones a neomercantilist public policy agenda, establishes the market as the patron of educational reform, and permits private interests to control most of social life in the pursuit of profits for the few (i.e., through lowering taxes on the wealthy, scrapping environmental regulations, and dismantling public education and social welfare programs) . It is undeniably one of the most dangerous politics that we face today.

Dave Hill and Mike Cole have noted that neoliberalism advocates a number of pro-capitalist positions: that the state privatize ownership of the means of production, including private sector involvement in welfare, social, educational and other state services (such as the prison industry); sell labor-power for the purposes of creating a ‘flexible’ and poorly regulated labor market; advance a corporate managerialist model for state services; allow the needs of the economy to dictate the principal aims of school education; suppress the teaching of oppositional and critical thought that would challenge the rule of capital; support a curriculum and pedagogy that produces compliant, pro-capitalist workers; and make sure that schooling and education ensure the ideological and economic reproduction that benefits the ruling class^[12]. Of course, the business agenda for schools can be seen in growing public-private partnerships, the burgeoning business sponsorships for schools,

business 'mentoring' and corporatization of the curriculum^[13] and calls for national standards, regular national tests, voucher systems, accountability schemes, financial incentives for high performance schools, and 'quality control' of teaching. Schools are encouraged to provide better 'value for money' and must seek to learn from the entrepreneurial world of business or risk going into receivership. In short, neoliberal educational policy operates from the premise that education is primarily a sub-sector of the economy.

It is growing more common to hear the refrain: 'education is increasingly too important to be left to the educators', as governments make strong efforts at intervention to ensure schools play their part in rectifying economic stagnation and ensuring global competitiveness. And standardized tests are touted as the means to ensure the educational system is aligned well with the global economy. There is also a movement to develop international standardized tests, creating pressures towards educational convergence and standardization among nations. Such an effort, note Davies and Guppy, provides a form of surveillance that allows nation-states to justify their extended influence and also serves to homogenize education across regions and nations^[14]. School choice initiatives such as voucher programs have dramatically expanded their scope, sapping the strength of the public school system and helping to spearhead further educational privatization.

Since capital has itself invaded almost every sphere of life in the United States, the focus of the educational left has been distracted for the most part from the great class struggles that have punctuated this century. The leftist agenda now rests almost entirely on an understanding of asymmetrical gender and ethnic relations. While this focus surely is important, class struggle is now perilously viewed as an outdated issue. When social class is discussed, it is usually viewed as relational, not as oppositional. Privatization initiatives have secured a privileged position that is functionally advantageous to the socially reproductive logic of entrepreneurial capitalism, private ownership, and the personal appropriation of social production by the transnational ruling elite. This neoliberal dictatorship of the comprador elite has re-secured a monopoly on resources held by the transnational ruling class and their allies in the culture industry. The very meaning of freedom has come to refer to the freedom to structure the distribution of wealth and to exploit workers more easily across national boundaries by driving down wages to their lowest common denominator and by eviscerating social programs designed to assist labouring humanity.

4. Critical Pedagogy and the Primacy of Political Struggle

It is impossible to disclose all the operative principles of critical pedagogy. To penetrate the glimmering veil of rhetoric surrounding it would require an essay of its own. Suffice it here to underscore several of its salient features. First and foremost, it is an approach to curriculum production, educational policymaking, and teaching practices that challenges the received 'hard sciences' conception of knowledge as 'neutral' or 'objective' and that is directed towards understanding the political nature of education in all of its manifestations in everyday life as these are played out in the agonistic terrain of conflicting and competing discourses, oppositional and hegemonic cultural formations, and social relations linked to the larger capitalist social totality. Critical pedagogy locates its central importance in the

formidable task of understanding the mechanisms of oppression imposed by the established order. But such an understanding is approached from below, that is, from the perspective of the dispossessed and oppressed themselves. It is an encounter with the process of knowledge production from within the dynamics of a concrete historical movement that transcends individuality, dogmatism, and certainty. Only within the framework of a challenge to the prevailing social order *en toto* is it possible to transform the conditions that make and remake human history. Specifically in the context of school life, capital produces new human productive and intellectual capacities in alienated form. Critical pedagogy's basic project over the last several decades has been to adumbrate the problems and opportunities of political struggle through educational means as a way of challenging the alienation of intellectual capacity and human labour. In is incoherent to conceptualize critical pedagogy, as do many of its current exponents, without an enmeshment with political and anti-capitalist struggle.

In its North American variants, the genesis of critical pedagogy can be traced to the work of Paulo Freire in Brazil, and to John Dewey and the social reconstructionists writing in the post-depression years in the United States. Once expressing a kind of end-station of theoretical maturity, critical pedagogy has become, over the years, much more eclectic and less focussed on a critique of political economy. Its leading exponents have cross-fertilised critical pedagogy with just about every transdisciplinary tradition imaginable, including theoretical forays into the Frankfurt School of critical theory, and the work of Richard Rorty, Jacques Lacan, Jacques Derrida and Michel Foucault. Here the focus mainly has been on a critique of instrumental reason and the nature of governmentality in educational sites. An emphasis has been placed on the non-conceptual in which thinking is constructed as a performance of ethics, or as a post-truth pragmatics, or as an open-ended, non-determinate process that resists totalizing tropological systems (hence the frequent condemnation of Marxism as an oppressive totalizing master narrative). Critical pedagogy's reach now extends to multicultural education, bi-lingual education, and fields associated with language-learning and literacy (including media literacy). Clearly, critical pedagogy is checkered with tensions and conflicts and mired in contradictions and should in no way be seen as a unified discipline.

I do not wish to rehearse this decidedly potted history here since it will serve little purpose other than adding cumbersomely to its growing historical weight or rehashing what I assume most progressive educators already know or about which they at least have some working idea. In the mid-seventies to mid-eighties the role of critical pedagogy was much more politically aggressive than in recent years with respect to dominant social and economic arrangements. Critical pedagogy has always had an underground rapport with the working-class, a rapport which virtually disappeared post-1989. In contrast to its current incarnation, the veins of critical pedagogy were not in need of so much defrosting in the early 1980s but were pumped up with quasi-Marxist-inspired work that had been bench-pressed into publications by radical scholars at the Birmingham School of Contemporary Cultural Studies, as well as American social scientists, Samuel Bowles and Herbert Gintis. The 1980s also witnessed as a reengagement with the work of John Dewey, Paulo Freire, Antonio Gramsci and the Frankfurt School. During that time, critique flowed generally unimpeded and was directed not simply at isolated relations of domination but at the capitalist system as a whole. Regrettably, however, many of the radical discourses appropriated and in circulation at the time were the result of a desire to affirm all that was then theoretically 'in vogue'. Terry Eagleton opined that

the Center for Contemporary Cultural Studies at Birmingham University moved in the Seventies from left-Leavisism to ethnomethodology, flired half-heartedly with phenomenological sociology, emerged from a brief affair with Levi Straussian structuralism into the glacial grip of Louis Althusser, moved straight though Gramsci to post-Marxism, dived into discourse theory and teetered on the brink of Post-Modernism^[15].

Critical pedagogy, it seems, has evacuated its eclectic brand of artificial steroids, and has given itself over to the thrall of a heady theoretical post-modernism.

5. Postmodern Theory and the Domestication of Critical Pedagogy

Authoritative as the term may sound, 'critical pedagogy' has been extraordinarily misunderstood and misrepresented. Once considered by the faint-hearted guardians of the American dream as a term of opprobrium for its powerful challenge to the bedrock assumptions characterizing the so-called US 'meritocracy', critical pedagogy has become so completely psychologized, so liberally humanized, so technologized, and so conceptually postmodernized, that its current relationship to broader liberation struggles seems severely attenuated if not fatally terminated. While its urgency was once unignorable, and its hard-bitten message had the pressure of absolute *fiat* behind it, critical pedagogy seemingly has collapsed into an ethical licentiousness and a complacent relativism that has displaced the struggle against capitalist exploitation with a postmodern emphasis on the multiplicity of interpersonal forms of oppression. The conceptual net known as critical pedagogy has been cast so wide and at times so cavalierly that it has come to be associated with anything dragged up out of the troubled and infested swampland of educational practice, from, for instance, classroom furniture organized in a "dialogue friendly" circle to "feel-good" curricula designed to increase students' self-image. It's multicultural education equivalent can be linked to a politics of diversity that includes 'respecting difference' through the celebration of 'ethnic' holidays and themes such as 'black history month' and 'Cinco de Mayo'. I am scarcely the first to observe that critical pedagogy has been badly undercut by practitioners who would mischaracterize its fundamental project. In fact, if the term 'critical pedagogy' is refracted onto the stage of current educational debates, we have to judge it as having been largely domesticated in a manner that many of its early exponents, such as Brazil's Paulo Freire, so strongly feared.

In the United States, critical pedagogy has collapsed into left liberal attempts by progressive educators to remediate the educational enterprise. This has resulted in a long list of reform initiatives that include creating 'communities of learners' in classrooms; bridging the gap between student culture and the culture of the school; engaging in cross-cultural understandings; integrating multicultural content and teaching across the curriculum; developing techniques for reducing racial prejudice and conflict resolution strategies; challenging Eurocentric teaching and learning as well as the 'ideological formations' of European immigration history by which many white teachers judge African-American, Latino/a, and Asian students; challenging the meritocratic foundation of public policy that purportedly is politically neutral and racially colour-blind; creating teacher-generated narratives as a way of analysing teaching from a 'transformative' perspective; improving academic achievement in culturally diverse schools; affirming and utilising

multiple perspectives and ways of teaching and learning; and de-reifying the curriculum and exposing 'metanarratives of exclusion'. Most of these pedagogical initiatives are acting upon the recommendations of the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future – a commission bent upon challenging social class and ethnicity as primary determinants of student success. And for all their sincere attempts to create a social justice agenda by attacking asymmetries of power and privilege and dominant power arrangements in U.S. society, progressive teachers have, unwittingly, operated under the assumption that these changes can be accomplished within the existing social universe of capital. Critical pedagogy has been taken out of the business of class analysis and has focussed instead on a postmodernist concern with a politics of difference and inclusion—a position that effectively substitutes truth for singular, subjective judgement and silences historical materialism as the unfolding of class struggle^[16].

In capturing the 'commanding heights' of left educational criticism, postmodernist educators have focussed their analysis on the subject as consumer in contrast to the Marxian emphasis of the subject as producer and in doing so have emphasized the importance of a textual subversion of fixed identity, and a decentering of subjectivity. Too often this work collapses politics into poetics. Marxist educationalists maintain that neoliberal ideology as it applies to schooling is often given ballast by poststructuralist-postmodernist/deconstructive approaches to educational reform because many of these approaches refuse to challenge the rule of capital and the social relations of production at the basis of the capitalist state.

Insofar as liberal postmodern educationalists do not address the labour/capital dialectic or the social relations of production, postmodern educational criticism and educational neoliberalism can be considered to be two species of the same genus: capitalist schooling. They can, in other words, be considered as two forms of one and the same social type. Hence, both liberal postmodern critique and neoliberalism serve as a justification for the value form of labour within capitalist society. Here postmodernists and neoliberals adopt the role of the sorcerer's apprentice who has been summoned to serve his master: capital. Greg Philo and David Miller baldly identify the political deceit that often accompanies postmodern academic work:

It is perhaps easier to focus on consumption, pleasure and cultural fashion, discussed in impenetrable private debates. But for academics to look away from the forces which limit and damage the lives of so many, gives at best an inadequate social science and at worst is an intellectual treason—just fiddling while the world burns.^[17]

My point here is that the debates over educational reform are far richer today when seen through the palimpsest of Marxist critique. Marxist critique serves as a counterpoint to the subversive acts of the proto-Foucauldians-and- Derrideans, who, garbed in theoretical attire of Ninja academics, relish in foot-sweeping the metaphysics propping up the 'totalitarian certainties' of the Marxist problematic, dismembering 'totalities' by stealthily inworming them and opening them up to multiple destinies other than those circumscribed by Marx. The point is not that the gallery-hoping titans and fierce deconstructors from the postmodern salons have not made some important contributions to a *fin-de-siecle* politics, or that they have not exerted some influence (albeit proleptically) in the arena of radical politics, but that, in the main, their efforts have helped to protect the

bulwark of ruling class power by limiting the options of educational policy in order to perpetuate the hegemony of ruling class academics. Their herniated ideas have made for good theatre, but their words have often turned to ashes before leaving their mouths. They have not left educators much with which to advance a political line of march, that is, within a theoretical framework capable of developing an international strategy to oppose imperialism.

The above is unavoidably a sweeping synthesis of the limitations of a postmodernized critical pedagogy in the North American context. The main bone of contention that I have with the direction of increasingly postmodernised critical pedagogy over the last several decades is its studied attempt to leave the issue of sexism and racism —i.e., the politics of difference— unconnected to class struggle. Of course, this conveniently draws attention away from the crucially important ways in which women and people of colour provide capitalism with its superexploited labour pools—a phenomenon that is on the upswing all over the world. E. San Juan sees the continuing racialization of the American national identity occurring in novel ways as long as identity is based on citizenship and individual rights are needed to legitimate private property and to further capital accumulation.^[18] Capitalism is an overarching totality that is, unfortunately, becoming increasingly invisible in postmodernist narratives that eschew and reject such categories *tout court*. Postmodernist educators tend to ignore that capitalism is a ruthless ‘totalizing process which shapes our lives in every conceivable aspect’ and that ‘even leaving aside the direct power wielded by capitalist wealth in the economy and in the political state’ capitalism also subjects all ‘social life to the abstract requirements of the market, through the commodification of life in all its aspects’. This makes a ‘mockery’ out of all aspirations to ‘autonomy, freedom of choice, and democratic self-government.’^[19]

The voguish academic brigandism of educational postmodernists that gives primacy to incommensurability as the touchstone of analysis and explanation has diverted critical analysis from the global sweep of advanced capitalism and the imperialist exploitation of the world's labouring class. While few academic disciplines have managed to escape these trendbucking trendsetters, wrapped in the academic counterculture of artschool novelty, not every scholar who identifies with postmodern theory can be deemed a charlatan. As within any discipline there is serious and not-so-serious scholarship. There are many important debates occurring under the umbrella of postmodern theory.^[20] What is most troubling for critical pedagogy is not the theoretical iconoclasm of the liberal postmodern educationalists but rather their distilled animosity towards Marxism. The Marxist analysis that we believe is most indispensable for the project of critical pedagogy is one that eschews both the scientism of iron laws and utopia in order to capture the ontological co-ordinates of the capitalist system. Here, Marxist approaches to critical pedagogy can be partnered with developments in democratic pedagogy based on a project for a genuine (inclusive) democracy that aims at the elimination of all forms of subordination, whether they are based on economic power, or any other form of social power.^[21] The key focus, however, remains on understanding the contradictions within the capitalist system. As Kanth notes

Marxism captures the real ontology of capitalism in all its various potentially transformative moments like no other system. In this regard, any realist appreciation of capitalism must bend toward Marxian insights, almost involuntarily. Marxism at its best, therefore, is Realism, and the good Marxist is one who keeps reality in focus as the determining factor of theory, rather than

the texts of Marx, which can easily be turned into the pseudo-ontology of the Word.^[22]

Marxism is not used here as a codicil of revolutionary amendments to the radical literature on education, as a collection of unchallengeable postulates enjoined upon the faithful, or as an ideology used to target constituencies of the masses. We are using Marxism close to its notional starting point in dialectical analysis, not as a radical critique of society but more importantly as a negative theory against society. As John Holloway^[23] opines, Marxists are not bent on understanding social oppression as much as they determined to unmask the fragility and vulnerability —i.e., the internal contradictions— of capitalism. He is emphatic that the contradictions of capitalism do not exist independently of class struggle. This is because capitalism relies on human labour while human labour does not rely on capitalism. Using negative categories to understand capitalism from the standpoint of non-capitalism, Marxists such as Holloway view the objective conditions of class struggle as alienated expressions of the power of labour. As long as capital is dependent upon the power of labour, the powerless can potentially realize their power through class struggle. In this view, Holloway notes, there can be no room for the concept of historical necessity. This is because, when we view the world as continuous struggle, we must evacuate the notion of certainty and historical determination.

Marxism, in the sense being employing here, is grounded in the contextual specificity of the global universe of capital in which we find ourselves today. I am also using Marx here in the spirit of Žižek's recent call to 'repeat Lenin'. Arguing that any acceptance of the liberal-parliamentary consensus 'precludes any serious questioning of how this liberal-democratic order is complicitous in the phenomena it officially condemns'^[24] Žižek invokes Lenin not in a nostalgic sense of returning to the old Lenin, of reenacting former revolutionary moments or in a desire for dogmatic certainty. To call for repeating Lenin is to retrieve 'the Lenin-in-becoming, the Lenin whose fundamental experience was that of being thrown into a catastrophic new constellation in which old coordinates proved useless, and who was thus compelled to *reinvent* Marxism'.^[25] Lenin is not being invoked for the purpose of an 'opportunistic-pragmatic adjustment of the old program to "new conditions"'^[26] but rather in the sense 'of repeating, in the present, worldwide conditions, the Leninist gesture of reinventing the revolutionary project in the conditions of imperialism and colonialism'.^[27] This is certainly a call that is compatible with individual and social autonomy.^[28] But is also a warning that if we appropriate Marx, we must appropriate a Marx that still has the power challenge the democratic consensus. Plumping for a fairer distribution of social resources within the social universe of capital is not enough. Žižek asserts that 'actual freedom of thought means the freedom to question the predominant, liberal-democratic, 'postideological' consensus—or it means nothing'.^[29] The point I wish to make here that despite the radical stance some postmodern educators may take towards the ills of capitalism, it is still a stance that does not directly contest capitalism's political form. As Žižek argues

(...) anticapitalism without problematizing capitalism's political form (liberal parliamentary democracy) is not sufficient, no matter how "radical" it is. Perhaps **the** lure today is the belief that can undermine capitalism without effectively problematizing the liberal democratic legacy which (as some leftists claim), although engendered by capitalism, acquired autonomy and can serve to

criticize capitalism.^[30]

This is not the time to evaluate the jousts between Marxists and postmodernists for the spoils of the critical tradition, a task that I have undertaken elsewhere.^[31]

6. A Renewal of the Marxist Problematic

My concern over the last five years has been to introduce Marxist scholarship into the field of critical pedagogy, since, as I have argued above, it has been taken over by postmodernists who have been attempting to suture together in recent decades the ontological tear in the universe of ideas that was first created when history was split in two by the dialectical wave of Marx's pen in the *Communist Manifesto* and the subsequent development of the communist movement in the mid-1800's. My own Marxism is informed by the philosophy of Marxist-Humanism which posits, after Hegel, that forward movement emerges from the negation of obstacles. It is the negation of 'what is' and a critique of the given that spurs development and creates the path to liberation. Absolute negativity occurs when negativity becomes self-directed and self-related to become the seedbed of the positive. According to *News and Letters*, a Marxist-Humanist publication,

The key is the difference between the first and second negation—the two moments of the dialectic. The first negation is the negation of the given; it takes what appears positive, the immediate, and imbues it with negativity. The second negation, 'the negation of the negation,' turns the power of negativity upon the act of negation; it takes what appears negative and shows that it is the source of the truly positive.^[32]

Marxist humanists believe that the best way to transcend the brutal and barbaric limits to human liberation set by capital are through practical movements centred around class struggle. But today the clarion cry of class struggle is spurned by the bourgeois left as politically fanciful and reads to many as an advertisement for a B-movie. The liberal left is less interested in class struggle than in making capitalism more 'compassionate' to the needs of the poor. This only leads to the renaturalization of scarcity. What this approach exquisitely obfuscates is the way in which new capitalist efforts to divide and conquer the working-class and to recompose class relations have employed xenophobic nationalism, racism, sexism, ableism, and homophobia. The key here is not for critical pedagogues to privilege class oppression over other forms of oppression but to understand how capitalist relations of exploitation provide the ground from which other forms of oppression are produced and how postmodern educational theory often serves as a means of distracting attention from capital's global project of accumulation.

It is not my purpose here to develop an exegesis of Marxist-Humanism (one among dozens of identifiable schools of Marxist thought but the one most pertinent to my own work) but simply to draw attention to the ways in which the Marxist tradition has been woefully absent from critical pedagogy as it is engaged in the U.S. academy (i.e., in Colleges of Education or University Departments of Education)—an absence that has brought with it irreparable damage to the tradition of critical education. Unscrolling the present state of critical pedagogy and examining its depotentiated contents, processes, and formations puts progressive educators on notice in that few contemporary critical educators are either willing or able to ground their pedagogical imperatives in the concept of labour in general,

and in Marx's labour theory of value in particular. This is certainly more the case in North American educational settings than it is in the United Kingdom, the latter context having had a much more serious and salutary engagement with the Marxist tradition in the social sciences and in adult education, one of its professional offshoots.

7. Farewell to All That

These days it is far from fashionable to be a radical educator. The political gambit of progressive educators these days appears to silence in the face of chaos, with the hope that the worst will soon pass. There are not many direct heirs to the Marxist tradition among left educational scholars. To identify your politics as Marxist —especially in the slipstream of the recent terrorist attacks on September 11 and the bombastic odes to the military machine and the United States' unilateral quest to create a New World Order that are now suffusing U.S. politics— is to invite derision and ridicule from many quarters, including many on the left. It is to open one's work to all species of dyspeptic criticism, from crude hectoring to sophisticated Philippics. Charges range from being a naive leftist, to being stuck in a time warp, to being hooked on an antediluvian patriarch, to giving in to cheap sentimentality or romantic utopianism. Marxists are accused with assuming an untenable political position that enables them to wear the mantle of the revolutionary without having to get their hands dirty in the day-to-day struggles of rank-and-file teachers who occupy the front lines in the schools of our major urban centers. Marxist analysis is also frequently derided as elitist in its supposed impenetrable esotericism, and if you happen to teach at a university your work can easily be dismissed as dysphoric ivory tower activism —even by other education scholars who also work in universities. Critics often make assumptions that you are guilty of being terminally removed from the lives of teachers and students until proven otherwise. Some of the criticism is productive and warranted but much of it is a desperate attempt to dismiss serious challenges to capitalism —to displace work that attempts to puncture the aura of inevitability surrounding global capitalism. While some of the criticism is substantive —including a welcomed critique of the enciphered language of some academics and a challenge to radical educators to come up with concrete pedagogical possibilities— much of it is small-minded and petty. The beneficiaries of the current disunity among the educational left are the business-education partnerships and the privatization of schooling initiatives that are currently following in the wake of larger neo-liberal strategies.

In this interregnum, in particular, where the entire social universe of capital is locked up in the commodity form, where capital's internal contradictions have created a global division of labour that appears astonishingly insurmountable, and where the ecological stakes for human survival have shifted in such seismic proportions, creating a vortex in which reactionary terrorism has unleashed its unholy cry, we lament the paucity of critical/pedagogical approaches to interrogating the vagaries of everyday life within capital's social universe.

Understandably enough, progressive educators are often wont to ask: Were the 1960s the last opportunity for popular revolutionary insurgency on a grand scale to be successful? Did the political disarray of prodigious dimensions that followed in the wake of the rebuff of the post-1968 leftist intelligentsia by the European proletariat condemn the revolutionary project and the 'productionist' meta-narrative of Marx to the dustbin of history? Have the postmodernist emendations of Marxist categories and the rejection —for

the most part— of the Marxist project by the European and North American intelligentsia signaled the abandonment of hope in revolutionary social change? Can the schools of today build a new social order?

A nagging question has sprung to the surface of the debate over schooling and the new capitalist order: Can a renewed and revived critical pedagogy distinctly wrought by an historical materialist approach to educational reform serve as a point of departure for a politics of resistance and counter-hegemonic struggle in the twenty-first century? And if we attempt to uncoil this question and take seriously its full implications, what can we learn from the legacy and struggle of revolutionary social movements? The fact that Marxist analysis has been discredited within the educational precincts of capitalism America does not defray the substance of these questions. On the surface, there are certain reasons to be optimistic. Critical pedagogy has, after all, joined anti-racist and feminist struggles in order to articulate a democratic social order built around the imperatives of diversity, tolerance, and equal access to material resources. But surely such a role, while commendable as far as it goes, has seen critical pedagogy severely compromise an earlier, more radical commitment to anti-imperialist struggle that we often associate with the anti-war movement of the 1960s and earlier revolutionary movements in Latin America.

What does the historical materialist approach often associated with an earlier generation of social critics offer educators who work in critical education? We raise this question at a time in which it is painfully evident that critical pedagogy and its political partner and congener, multicultural education, no longer serve as an adequate social or pedagogical platform from which to mount a vigorous challenge to the current social division of labour and its effects on the socially reproductive function of schooling in late capitalist society. In fact, critical pedagogy no longer enjoys its status as a herald for democracy, as a clarion call for revolutionary praxis, as a language of critique and possibility in the service of a radical democratic imaginary, which was its promise in the late 1970s and early 1980s. As I will attempt to argue throughout the remainder of this essay, part of this has to do with the lack of class analysis evinced in its work, but it also is related to the general retreat of the educational left in the United States over the last several decades.

8. Critical Pedagogy: Contemporary Challenges for the Educational Left

Critical pedagogy has had a tumultuous relationship with the dominant education community both in North America^[33] and the United Kingdom^[34] for the past twenty-five years. Clearly, on both sides of the Atlantic, the educational community has been aprioristically antagonistic to Marxist critique (clearly more so in the United States), effectively undercutting the development of Marxist criticism in education. Many of the current attempts to muster a progressive educational agenda among education scholars in suffused with an anti-communist bias. Only occasionally is the excessive rejectionism of Marxism by postmodern educationalists accompanied by analysis; rarely is it ever accomplished beyond the level of fiat. To borrow a commentary that Barbara Foley directs at the post-Marxism of Laclau and Mouffe, “it conflates politics with epistemology in an irrevocably linked chain of signifiers: the authoritarian party equals class reductionism equals logocentricity; totality equals totalitarianism”.^[35]

Our own practices —what Paula Allman has christened “revolutionary critical pedagogy”^[36]— ups the radical ante for progressive education which, for the most part over the last decade, has been left rudderless amidst an undertow of domesticating currents. It ups this ante by pivoting around the work of Karl Marx, Paulo Freire, and Antonio Gramsci and in doing so brings some desperately needed theoretical ballast to the teetering critical educational tradition. Such theoretical infrastructure is necessary, we argue, for the construction of concrete pedagogical spaces – in schools, university seminar rooms, cultural centres, unions, social movements, popular forums for political activism, etc. – for the fostering and fomenting of revolutionary praxis.

While it certainly remains the case that too many teachers take refuge in a sanctuary of assertions devoid of critical reflection, it would be wrong to admonish the educational activism of today as a form of pedagogical potvaliancy. Courageous attempts are being made in the struggle for educational reform in both North America and the United Kingdom. In this case, we need to be reminded that the lack of success of the educational Left is not so much the result of the conflicted sensibilities of critical educators, as it is a testament to the preening success of Western Cold War efforts in indigenising the cultural logic of capitalism, the fall of the Eastern Bloc non-profit police states, and the degradation and disappearance of Marxist meta-narratives in the national-popular agendas of decolonising countries. It can also be traced to the effects of the labour movement tradition which keeps labour-left educators struggling inside the labor/capital antagonism by supporting labour over capital, rather than attempting to transcend this divide entirely through efforts to implode the social universe of capital out of which the labour/capital antagonism is constituted.

The critical pedagogy we are envisioning here operates from the premise that capital in its current organisational structure provides the context for working-class struggle. Our approach to understanding the relationship between capitalism and schooling and the struggle for socialism is premised upon Marx's value theory of labour as developed by British Marxist educationalist, Glenn Rikowski, and others.^[37] In developing further the concept of revolutionary critical pedagogy and its specific relationship to class struggle, it is necessary to focus on labour's value form. We follow the premise that value is the substance of capital. Value is not a thing. It is the dominant form that capitalism as a determinate social relation takes. Following Dinerstein and Neary^[38], capital can be conceived as ‘value-in-motion’. Marx linked the production of value to the dual aspect of labour. Workers do not consume what they produce but work in order to consume what others have produced. Labour is thus riveted in both use-value and exchange-value.^[39] Domination in this view is not so much by other people as by essentially abstract social structures that people constitute in their everyday social intercourse and socio-political relations. In the *Grundrisse*, Marx emphasised that society does not consist solely of individuals; it expresses the entire web of connections and relationships in which individuals are located. The slave or the citizen are both socio-historical determinations.^[40] Labour, therefore, has a historically specific function as a socially mediating activity.

Following Marx, Rikowski notes that labour-power —our capacity to labour— takes the form of ‘human capital’ in capitalist society. It has reality only within the individual agent. Thus, labour-power is a distinctly human force. The worker is the active subject of production. He or she is necessary for the creation of surplus-value. He or she provides through living labour the skills, innovation and cooperation upon which capital relies to

enhance surplus value and to ensure its reproduction. Thus, by its very nature, labour-power cannot exist apart from the laborer.

Education and training are what Rikowski refers to as processes of labour-power production.^[41] They are, in Rikowski's view, a sub-species of relative surplus value production (the raising of worker productivity so that necessary labour is reduced) that leads to a relative increase in surplus labour time and hence surplus value. Human capital development is necessary for capitalist societies to reproduce themselves and to create more surplus value. The core of capitalism can thus be undressed by exploring the contradictory nature of the use value and exchange value of labour-power.

Within the expansive scope of revolutionary critical pedagogy, the concept of labour is axiomatic for theorising the school/society relationship and thus for developing radical pedagogical imperatives, strategies, and practices for overcoming the constitutive contradictions that such a coupling generates. The larger goal that revolutionary critical pedagogy stipulates for radical educationalists involves direct participation with the masses in the discovery and charting of a socialist reconstruction and alternative to capitalism. However, without a critical lexicon and interpretative framework that can unpack the labour/capital relationship in all of its capillary detail, critical pedagogy is doomed to remain trapped in domesticated currents and vulgarised formations. The process whereby labour -power is transformed into human capital and concrete living labour is subsumed by abstract labour is one that eludes the interpretative capacity of rational communicative action and requires a dialectical understanding that only historical materialist critique can best provide. Historical materialism provides critical pedagogy with a theory of the material basis of social life rooted in historical social relations and assumes paramount importance in uncovering the structure of class conflict as well as unravelling the effects produced by the social division of labour. Today, labour-power is capitalised and commodified and education plays a tragic role in these processes. According to Rikowski, education and training are

production processes for human capital, and it is the reduction of our humanity to *capital* that is at issue. 'Human capital' is not just some arcane bourgeois concept with an origin in the 1960s to be ignored or derided. It is an expression of our predicament, of what we are becoming. It highlights the fact that we live in a society that incorporates a social drive to recast the 'human' as human capital which also deforms and reforms education and training as elements of this process.^[42]

Schools therefore act as vital supports for, and developers of, the class relation, the highly unstable capital-labour relation that is at the core of capitalist society and development.

In so far as schooling is premised upon generating the living commodity of labour-power, upon which the entire social universe of capital depends, it can become a foundation for human resistance. In other words, labour-power can be incorporated only so far. Workers, as the sources of labor-power, can engage in acts of refusing alienating work and delinking labor from capital's value form. As Dyer-Witheford argues: 'Capital, a relation of general commodification predicated on the wage relation, needs labour. But labour does not need capital. Labour can dispense with the wage, and with capitalism, and find different ways to organize its own creative energies: it is potentially autonomous'.^[43]

Inasmuch as education and training socially produce labour-power, this process can be resisted. As Dyer-Witheford notes: 'In academia, as elsewhere, labour power is never completely controllable. To the degree that capital uses the university to harness general intellect, insisting its work force engage in lifelong learning as the price of employability, it runs the risk that people will teach and learn something other than what it intends'.^[44] Critical educators push this 'something other' to the extreme in their pedagogical praxis centered around a social justice, anti-capitalist agenda. The key to resistance, in our view, is to develop a critical pedagogy that will enable the working class to discover how the use-value of their labor-power is being exploited by capital but also how working class initiative and power can destroy this type of determination and force a recomposition of class relations by directly confronting capital in all of its hydra-headed dimensions. Efforts can be made to break down capital's control of the creation of new labour-power and to resist the endless subordination of life to work in the social factory of everyday life.^[45] Students and education workers can ask themselves: What is the maximum damage they can do to the rule of capital, to the dominance of capital's value form? Ultimately, the question we have to ask is: Do we, as radical educators, help capital find its way out of crisis, or do we help students find their way out of capital? The success of the former challenge will only buy further time for the capitalists to adapt both its victims and its critics, the success of the later will determine the future of civilization, or whether or not we will have one.

The struggle among what Marx called our 'vital powers', our dispositions, our inner selves and our objective outside, our human capacities and competencies and the social formations within which they are produced, *ensures* the production of a form of human agency that reflects the contradictions within capitalist social life. Yet these contradictions also provide openness regarding social being. They point towards the possibility of collectively resolving contradictions of 'everyday life' through revolutionary/transformational praxis.^[46] Critical subjectivity operates out of practical, sensuous engagement within social formations that enable rather than constrain human capacities. Here critical pedagogy reflects the multiplicity and creativity of human engagement itself: the identification of shared experiences and common interests; the unravelling of the threads that connect social process to individual experience; rendering transparent the concealed obviousness of daily life; the recognition of a shared social positionality; unhinging the door that separates practical engagement from theoretical reflection; the changing of the world by changing one's nature.

Our work in critical pedagogy constitutes in one sense the performative register for class struggle. Whilst it sets as its goal the decolonization of subjectivity, it also emphasizes the development of critical social agency; at the same time it targets the material basis of capitalist social relations. Critical educators seek to realize in their classrooms democratic social values and to believe in their possibilities—consequently we argue that they need to go outside of the protected precincts of their classrooms and analyze and explore the workings of capital there as well. Critical revolutionary pedagogy sets as its goal the reclamation of public life under the relentless assault of the corporatisation, privatization and businessification of the lifeworld (which includes the corporate-academic-complex). It seeks to make the division of labor coincident with the free vocation of each individual and the association of free producers. At first blush this may seem a paradisiac notion in that it posits a radically eschatological and incomparably "other" endpoint for society as we know it. Yet this is not a blueprint but a contingent utopian vision that offers direction not only in unpicking the apparatus of bourgeois illusion but also in diversifying the theoretical

itinerary of the critical educator so that new questions can be generated along with new perspectives in which to raise them. Here the emphasis not only is on denouncing the manifest injustices of neoliberal capitalism and serving as a counterforce to neoliberal ideological hegemony, but also on establishing the conditions for new social arrangements that transcend the false opposition between the market and the state.

In contrast to postmodern education, revolutionary pedagogy emphasizes the material dimensions of its own constitutive possibility and recognizes knowledge as implicated within the social relations of production (i.e., the relations between labor and capital). I am using the term materialism here not in its postmodernist sense as a resistance to conceptuality, a refusal of the closure of meaning, or whatever 'excess' cannot be subsumed within the symbol or cannot be absorbed by tropes; rather, materialism is being used in the context of material social relations, a structure of class conflict, and an effect of the social division of labor.^[47] Historical changes in the forces of production have reached the point where the fundamental needs of people can be met —but the existing social relations of production prevent this because the logic of access to “need” is “profit” based on the value of people’s labor for capital. Consequently, critical revolutionary pedagogy argues that without a class analysis, critical pedagogy is impeded from effecting praxiological changes (changes in social relations). Critical revolutionary pedagogy begins with a three-pronged approach: First, students engage in a pedagogy of demystification centering around a semiotics of recognition, where dominant sign systems are recognized and denaturalized, where common sense is historicized, and where signification is understood as a political practice that refracts rather than reflects reality, where cultural formations are understood in relation to the larger social factory of the school and the global universe of capital. This is followed by a pedagogy of opposition, where students engage in analyzing various political systems, ideologies, and histories, and eventually students begin to develop their own political positions. Inspired by a sense of ever-imminent hope, students take up a pedagogy of revolution, where deliberative practices for transforming the social universe of capital are developed and put into practice. Revolutionary critical pedagogy supports a totalising reflection upon the historical-practical constitution of the world, our ideological formation within it, and the reproduction of everyday life practices. It is a pedagogy with an emancipatory intent.

Practising revolutionary critical pedagogy is not the same as preaching it. Revolutionary critical educators are not an apocalyptic group; they do not belong to a predicant order bent on premonising the capitalist crisis to come. Revolutionary critical pedagogy is not in the business of presaging as much as it is preparatory; it is in the business of pre-revolutionising: preparing students to consider life outside the social universe of capital — to ‘glimpse humanity’s possible future beyond the horizon of capitalism’.^[48] What would such a world be like? What type of labour would be — should be — carried out? Thus, critical revolutionary pedagogy is committed to a certain form of futurity, one that will see wage labour disappear along with class society itself.

But revolutionary critical pedagogy is not born in the crucible of the imagination as much as it is given birth in its own practice. That is, revolutionary critical education is decidedly more praxiological than prescored. The path is made by walking, as it were. Revolutionary educators need to challenge the notion implicit in mainstream education, that ideas related to citizenship have to travel through predestined contours of the mind, falling into step with the cadences of common sense. There is nothing common about common sense.

Educational educators need to be more than the voice of autobiography, they need to create the context for dialogue with the Other so that the other may assume the right to be heard.

The principles that help to shape and guide the development of our 'vital powers' in the struggle for social justice via critical/revolutionary praxis have been discussed at length by Allman.^[49] These include: principles of mutual respect, humility, openness, trust and cooperation; a commitment to learn to 'read the world' critically and expending the effort necessary to bring about social transformation; vigilance with regard to one's own process of self-transformation and adherence to the principles and aims of the group; adopting an 'ethics of authenticity' as a guiding principle; internalising social justice as passion; acquiring critical, creative, and hopeful thinking; transforming the self through transforming the social relations of learning and teaching; establishing democracy as a fundamental way of life; developing a critical curiosity; and deepening one's solidarity and commitment to self and social transformation and the project of humanisation.

For those of us fashioning a distinctive socialist philosophy of praxis within North American context, it is clear that a transition to socialism will not be an easy struggle, given the global entrenchment of these aforementioned challenges. The overall task ahead is what Petras and Veltmeyer refer to, after Marx and Engels, as the creation of a dictatorship *of* the proletariat, not a dictatorship *over* the proletariat.^[50] It consists of managing the inherent contradiction between the internal socialist relations and the external participation in the capitalist marketplace. Meeting this challenge will require, among other things, a long list of initiatives, such as moving from a globalized imperial export strategy to an integrated domestic economy which entails reorienting the economy away from the reproduction of financial elites and replacing privatization with a socialization of the means of production.^[51] Joel Kovel makes the point that the transition to socialism will require the creation of a 'usufructuary of the earth'.^[52] Essentially this means restoring ecosystemic integrity across all of human participation—the family, the community, the nation, the international community. Kovel argues that use value must no longer be subordinated to exchange value but both must be harmonized with 'intrinsic value'. The means of production (and it must be an ecocentric mode of production) must be made accessible to all as assets are transferred to the direct producers (i.e., worker ownership and control). Clearly, eliminating the accumulation of surplus value as the motor of 'civilization' and challenging the rule of capital by directing money towards the free enhancement of use values goes against the grain of the transnational ruling class.

If every new society carries its own negation within itself, then it makes sense for critical educators to develop a language of analysis that can help to identify the habits, ideas, and notions that help to shape and condition —either in a forward-or backward-looking way— the material and discursive forces of production. These habits, ideas, and notions —which stir as contradictions in the womb of subjectivity— are never static but always are in motion as possibilities given birth by history, that is, by class struggle. We need to develop a critical pedagogy, therefore, that can help students reconstruct the objective and subjective contexts of class struggle by examining the capitalist mode of production as a totality in relation to the aggregate of social relations that make the human —an examination that is centred upon Marx's labour theory of value. This mandates teaching students to think dialectically, to think in terms of "internal relations", such as creating an internal relation between diversity and unity, and between our individuality and our collectivity.^[53] The idea here is not simply to play mediatively with ideas but to

interrogate the social grammar of capitalist society inhibiting its refractory relations while struggling for a political recomposition of social subjects that want a different world; indeed, who seek a socialist alternative.

Clearly, present day left educationalists need to rethink the state as a terrain of contestation while at the same time reinventing class struggle as we have been doing in the streets of Seattle, Porto Alegre, Prague, and Genoa. We have to keep our belief that another world is possible. We need to do more than to break with capital or abscond from it; it is glaringly evident that we need to challenge its rule of value. The key to resistance, in our view, is to develop a revolutionary critical pedagogy that will enable working-class groups to discover how the use-value of their labour-power is being exploited by capital but also how working class initiative and power can destroy this type of determination and force a recomposition of class relations by directly confronting capital in all of its multi-faceted dimensions. This will require critical pedagogy not only to plot the oscillations of the labor/capital dialectic, but also to reconstruct the object context of class struggle to include school sites. Efforts also must be made to break down capital's creation of a new species of labour-power through current attempts to corporatise and businessify the process of schooling and to resist the endless subordination of life in the social factory so many students call home. ^[54]

The myriad obstacles facing the progressive educational tradition in the United States — such as whether or not critical pedagogy can be revived in this current historical juncture of neoliberal globalization— can, I believe, be overcome —albeit haltingly rather than resoundingly. However, the recent advance of contemporary Marxist educational scholarship, ^[55] critical theory, ^[56] and a rematerialized critical pedagogy ^[57] —although the offerings are still only modest glimmerings— are as yet insufficient in posing a necessary counterweight to neoliberal free market imperatives and to post-Marxist solutions that most often advocate the creation of social movements grounded in identity politics or, as evident in recent anti-Marxist pedagogical polemics, a pedagogy grounded in uncertainty.

In the face of such a contemporary intensification of global capitalist relations and permanent structural crisis (rather than a shift in the nature of capital itself), we need to develop a critical pedagogy capable of engaging everyday life as lived in the midst of global capitalist social relations. We need, in other words, to face capital down. This means acknowledging global capital's structurally determined inability to share power with the oppressed, its implication in racist, sexist, and homophobic relations, its functional relationship to xenophobic nationalism, and its tendency towards empire. It means acknowledging the educational left's dependency on the very object of its negation: capital. It stipulates a concerted effort at developing a lateral, polycentric concept of anti-capitalist alliances-in-diversity to slow down capitalism's metabolic movement —with the eventual aim of shutting it down completely. It means looking for an educational philosophy that is designed to resist the 'capitalization' of subjectivity, a pedagogy that we have called revolutionary critical pedagogy.

Keening the death of Marxism will do little more than momentarily stir the ghost of the old bearded devil. It will do little to resurrect the best of the Marxist tradition so that it can be rethought within the contextual specificity of neoliberal globalisation. Novel ingressions towards rebuilding the educational left must be made concrete. It will not be easy, but neither will living under an increasingly militarised capitalist state where labour-power is constantly put to the rack to carry out the will of capital. Whilst critical pedagogy may

seem driven by lofty, high-rise aspirations that spike an otherwise desolate landscape of despair, where pock-marked dreams bob through the sewers of contemporary cosmopolitan life, they anchor our hope in the dreams of the immediate present. Here the social revolution is not reborn on the foam of avant-garde anti-foundationalism, which only stokes the forces of despair, but emerges from the everyday struggle to release us from the burdens of political détente and democratic disengagement. It is anchored, in other words, in class struggle.

[1] Some sections of this paper have been based on Peter McLaren, "Marxist Revolutionary Praxis", *Journal of Critical Inquiry Into Curriculum and Instruction*, vol 3, no. 3, pp. 36-41.

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[3] Tariq Ali, *The Clash of Fundamentalisms: Crusades, Jihads and Modernity*. (Verso, 2002), p. 281

[4] Ali, *The Clash of Fundamentalisms: Crusades, Jihads and Modernity*, p. 286.

[5] Ali, *The Clash of Fundamentalisms: Crusades, Jihads and Modernity*, p. 286.

[6] Micheal Parenti, 'Rollback: Aftermath of the overthrow of communism', in G. Katsiaficas (Ed), *After the fall: 1989 and the future if freedom* (Routledge, 2001), pp. 153-158.

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[8] Linda McQuaig, *All You Can Eat: Greed, Lust and the New Capitalism*. (Penguin Books, 2001) p. 27.

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[12] Dave Hill & Michael Cole, 'Social Class', in D. Hill & M. Cole (Eds.) *Schooling and Equality: Fact, Concept and Policy* (Kogan Page, 2001).

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[14] Scott Davies and Neil Guppy, 'Globalization and Educational Reforms in Anglo-American Democracies', *Comparative Education Review*, vol.41,no.4, (November 1997) 435-459.

[15] Terry Eagleton. 'The Hippest', *London Review of Books*, 7 March, 1996, p.3.

[16] Teresa Ebert, *University, Class, and Citizenship* (Unpublished manuscript, 2002).

[17] Greg Philo and David Miller, 'Media/Cultural Studies and Social Science', in Greg Philo and David Miller (Eds) *Market Killing: What the Free Market Does and What Social Scientists Can Do About It* (Pearson Education Limited, 2001), p. 79.

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- [19] Ellen Meiksins Wood, *Democracy Against Capitalism: Renewing Historical Materialism* (Cambridge University Press, 1995) pp. 262-263.
- [20] For important developments in postmodern theory, see the work of Steve Best and Doug Kellner, especially *The Postmodern Adventure: Science Technology, and Cultural Studies at the Third Millennium* (Routledge and Guilford Press, 2001). See also, Henry A. Giroux, *Border Crossings* (Routledge, 1992). See also Joe Kincheloe, *Toward a Critical Politics of Teacher Thinking* (Bergin and Garvey, 1993).
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- [22] Rajani Kanth, *Capitalism and Social Theory* (M.E. Sharpe, Kanth, 1992.).
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