

Critical Education:
the Need for Reform and a Place to Begin

by

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ABSTRACT

The need for a critical education in a democracy, its difficulties, and how to reform this field requires urgent attention. This project begins with the premise that education is necessary for a vibrant democracy. While examining differing voices that advocate for educational reform, mainly that of Critical Pedagogy, it is shown how conflicting forms are advocating similar ideals. Henry Giroux and David Horowitz, both reformers that are on opposite sides of the political spectrum appear to have similar goals. Yet, the question becomes how to solve these differences between these parties? By examining the philosophical origins of these projects and explicating differences rooted in human nature and the good, the basic differences can begin to be shown. In showing these differences it requires going back to the work of Kant. Kant shows the necessity of beginning with philosophy and examining basic assumptions in order to begin to critique and build an education that would guarantee equality.

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Chapter 1

EDUCATION AND THE NEED FOR REFORM

Introduction: Voices for Reform:

Numerous discordant voices in the history of US education have been crying out for reform. Despite the fact that education has been a high priority for the past few presidential administrations, arguably there has been little improvement in the US in K-12 education. This point is emphasized in the recent documentary *Waiting for Superman*.¹ A recent *Time* magazine article reviewing *Waiting for Superman* notes that 68% of eighth graders score below proficient in reading and 69% in math. And, despite the increase in per-pupil spending by 123% from 1971 to 2006² there has been no improvement in reading score. All that has been achieved through governmental cynosure of education can be equated to simply attempting to treat symptoms and not the root cause. Much of the backlash to the film has been against how the director Davis Guggenheim³ was not honest about his assessment of public education and charter schools. Despite backlash against this film which accuses it of negatively portraying public schools, vilifying unions, and lifting up charter schools it does leave a yearning for something more. Revealed here is the acute necessity for much more salient talk about education, not less, and not merely talk in which much more is said than done. Rather, more critical dialectical discussion about our

¹ *Waiting for Superman*, Directed by Davis Guggenheim (2010; New York: Paramount Vantage, 2011) Documentary.

² "Waiting for 'Superman': A Call to Action for U.S. Schools - what Makes a School Great - TIME "
http://www.time.com/time/specials/packages/article/0,28804,2019663_2020590,00.html (accessed 4/1/2011, 2011).

³ Guggenheim also did an acclaimed documentary about global warming, *An Inconvenient Truth*.

presuppositions and theoretical and practical implications that are in each philosophy of education is needed.

The movie follows five kids, and their parents, on their misadventures in attempting to avoid attending the vilified public school for the highly lauded charter school. The movie portrays the public schools as failing to educate kids while the charter schools are depicted to show them curbing the tide against the failing public education system. The major premise of the movie is that public schools are underperforming, filled with complacent tenured teachers, and their teachers unions do not serve the kids.⁴ The film stresses the need for kids to come first, not teachers. On Guggenheim's account, if teachers do not perform adequately at their job, they ought to be fired. Yet, for us, in this project it ought to be asked: how does one know what is adequate, exceptional, or poor? In other words: by what means, or whose means is the success of education being measured?

Many reviews have pointed to flaws in the film, either where something was under emphasized or over emphasized. For example education scholar Diane Ravitch says the film failed to inform its audience that in charter schools only "17 percent were superior to a matched traditional public school; 37 percent were worse than the public school; and the remaining 46 percent had academic gains no different from that of a similar public school."⁵ The weight placed upon "at fault" teachers was too heavy. Ravitch has claimed that according to most agreed-upon accounts,

⁴ "The Myth of Charter Schools by Diane Ravitch | the New York Review of Books" <http://www.nybooks.com/articles/archives/2010/nov/11/myth-charter-schools/> (accessed 4/1/2011, 2011). Rick Ayers and William Ayers, *Teaching the Taboo: Courage and Imagination in the Classroom (0)* Teachers College Press. 2010, Goldstein, Dana, "Grading 'Waiting for Superman,' Nation, Oct. 11, 2010.

⁵ Ibid.

10-20 percent of achievement is due to the work of teachers.⁶ Furthermore, Ravitch believes that Guggenheim essentially hijacked the word *reform* for the privatization of education throughout the film. It is argued that Guggenheim's portrayal of public teachers as listless simply misapprehends the reality that there are caring and thoughtful teachers who work hard in the public sector.⁷

Much more can be said about the misrepresentations appearing in the film and how these demarcate and alienate other reforming voices. Though, regardless of these criticisms, the film has been crucial in raising public awareness about the need for reform in primary and secondary educational systems. Though philosophies of education differ in terms of proposing a solution to the problem, none disagree about education's vitality in a vibrant democracy and the need for reform. The debate has always been about what the word "reform" means.

To understand where the popular belief for reform lays *Time* recently asked for the American people's thoughts about educational reform: 67% of the adults surveyed by *Time* believe our education system is in a crisis. Even Ravitch, who had severe reservations about the film, noted that, overwhelmingly, Americans are dissatisfied with public education.⁸ The method through which these people believe education will be reformed is predominantly (52%) by getting parents to be more involved, followed by (24%) the notion that what is needed are more effective teachers. A critical question is: what is this increased involvement and how will the

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Rick Ayers and Ayers, *Teaching the Taboo: Courage and Imagination in the Classroom*

⁸ *The Myth of Charter Schools* by Diane Ravitch | *the New York Review of Books*

teachers be more effective? Is it through increased training (30% believe so)? Or, is even more critical examination of assumptions necessary?⁹

In surveying education one prominent area needing attention is higher education with its rise and wide spread success in American society. If K-12 could mimic the higher education's accomplishments over the decades then it could be more successful. Better teacher training models or different curricular content could lead to better results in the areas America is becoming increasingly deficient in. Our universities are among the best in the world. So, how are teachers not getting the preparation they need? One voice, Jonathan Cole (former provost at Columbia University) explicates how the American University system came to preeminence, the current state of higher education, and the threats to it, in *The Great American University*.¹⁰ As it currently stands, according to a study done by Shanghai Jiao University in 2008, our university system is the best in the world; 17 out of the top 20, and 40 out of the top 50 universities are within the United States.¹¹ Cole sights a few reasons for this being the case: the resources put into the university system (as it stand Harvard's endowment is \$34.9 billions dollars,¹² our dual focus upon

⁹ Waiting for 'Superman': A Call to Action for U.S. Schools - what Makes a School Great - TIME

¹⁰ Jonathan R. Cole, *Great American University: Its Rise to Preeminence, its Indispensable National Role, Why it must be Protected* (New York, NY, USA: Public Affairs, 2010). <http://site.ebrary.com/lib/asulib/docDetail.action?docID=10359195>.

¹¹ www.arwu.org/ARWU2008.jsp ranks can often be a difficult thing and are only meant to point out that out of man major universities around the world the U.S. is consistently dominant. Ibid.

¹² This Cole says, is not an unusually number for having a successful top tier research university.

humanities and sciences, but cardinally our stances on academic freedom and competition.

Admonishingly though, Cole posits that threats from within and outside of the universities endanger the US's global positioning in education. One such threat that identified is academic dogmatism. Dogmatism is a threat to the fundamental reason for the American University's success: academic freedom.¹³ Dogmatism for Cole, and I agree with him, ought not be equated with such claims that are lacking in evidence or premature ideas. Rather,

through the expression of internal academic power, it is possible for faculty members to systematically exclude from the conversation those whose views offend the central dogma of the field; in other words, alternative views are sometimes perceived as intellectual threats because, if given the chance, their proponents may produce counter-evidence and arguments refuting conventional claims.¹⁴

There are premature ideas in that they have not been developed enough, do not properly address positions currently held, or misrepresent those positions that are all rejected. Rather, dogmatism ought to be understood as an unjust use of power to disparage dissenting positions, not for lack academic rigor or misapprehensions, but because of the challenge to popular positioning. This view of dogmatism is concomitant with views of power and hegemony that are used to oppress minority positions.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid., 379.

Cole and others¹⁵ all state that the use of coercion in hiring and appointing of tenure become issues. Ideas that are not held by the majority are removed from the academy.¹⁶ Cole finds this reminiscent of the McCarthy era Red Scare that ended in a number of faculty members being fired. He continues to point out that in recent years the Patriot Act has resulted in constraints upon various areas of academia for example, in biological research with harmful pathogen and suspicion of the researchers involvement in terrorist attacks.¹⁷ Cole also communicates cases such as associate professor of anthropology and activist Nicholas de Genova's release from Columbia University after he denounced the Iraq war in 2003. Though this should not be necessarily taken as fact, it assists in showing that the academy needs to protect itself against such dogmatic agendas from any source (inside and outside) in order to continue on the path of critical inquiry and academic freedom. The problem is that what is considered dogmatic and legitimate can, at times, be dictated by one's prior commitments such as in politics.¹⁸

For instance, historically the debate about educational reform has not agreed upon much more than the *need* for reform. Historian Richard Hofstadter notes that

¹⁵ One such person that will be talked about is David Horowitz and thinkers from Critical Pedagogy. This is not to ideologically place them together rather, this is to show a common rhetoric used against other positions.

¹⁶ David Horowitz, *Indoctrination U.: The Left's War Against Academic Freedom* (New York: Encounter Books, 2007), 159. Cole, *Great American University: Its Rise to Preeminence, its Indispensable National Role, Why it must be Protected*

¹⁸ I return to this idea of political dogmatism later by examining an ideological debate between David Horowitz and Henry Giroux. Though this is often a position that can be dismissed as quiet unfounded or on the level of conspiracy theories. This is still a position that must be addressed and not simply dismissed because of its immediate threat to academic freedom. However, I want to posit that there are in fact these real ideological differences, be they conscious or unconscious, that work themselves out in plays of power that are rooted in more basic differences.

the history of educational commentary has been “a literature of avid criticism and bitter complaint.”¹⁹ Of the many voices yearning for reform it will be helpful to know at least these four views that have differences in their goals and means to those goals such as progressive, conservative, liberal, and radical. Susan Semel’s distinction between these four groups is helpful. The Progressives are noted for seeing schools as “central to solving social problems, as vehicles for upward mobility, as essential to the development of individual potential, and as an integral part of a democratic society.”²⁰ The Conservatives “see the role of school as providing the necessary educational training to ensure that the most talented and hard-working individuals receive the tools necessary to maximize economic and social productivity.”²¹ The Liberal “stresses the school's role in providing the necessary education to ensure that all students have an equal opportunity to succeed in society.”²² Finally, the radicals believe schools ought to ‘eliminate inequalities.’ They argue that, “the school's role is to reproduce the unequal economic conditions of the capitalist economy and to socialize individuals to accept the legitimacy of the society.”²³ This list is not comprehensive; there are traditionalist, neo-liberal, neo-conservatives, etc. Some of these positions might overlap and have waxed and waned over time. For instance,

¹⁹ Richard Hofstadter, *Anti-Intellectualism in American Life* (New York: A.A. Knopf, 1964; 1963), 301.

²⁰ Susan F. Semel, “Introduction,” in *Foundations of Education: The Essential Texts*, ed. Susan F. Semel. (Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon; New York: Routledge, 2010), 6.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 7

²² *Ibid.*, 7

²³ *Ibid.*, 7

by 1995 much of the enthusiasm behind the progressive movement diminished.²⁴ What these views have in common is the ideal for a free democratic society. Yet, they vary in terms of what this actually means or what it looks like to create a free democratic society. Depending upon the political, ideological, worldview, or epistemic position with which one approaches education, the “ought” in education necessarily will be different.

Prima facie, education is necessary for a vibrant democracy. The state itself has a vested interest in the education of its citizens for its own future existence. The state of education is foretelling of the future condition of the state. All things remain the same if education is in desperate times now the state *will* be in desperate times soon. Therefore, it is an understatement to say that (only) education is experiencing an immense need for reform, but the totality of democracy is threatened. All of these views that have been covered so far are simply indicators, not solutions to the problem.

In seeing the ongoing debate it can be seen that competing understandings of what the ‘*ought*’ in education are being put forth and without coming to agreement children and democracy are being harmed. More thought in the areas of the theory and practice of education is that for which this situation calls. Such questions as: what is a good teacher? What ought to be taught? Who ought to teach? What training will they need? Otherwise, education is going to sink deeper into this quagmire where the whole system will decay and untimely result in a societal collapse. This project will start by addressing this problem at a more basic level.

²⁴ Lawrence A. Cremin, “The Progressive Movement in American Education: A Perspective,” in *Foundation of Education: The Essential Texts* ed. Susan F. Semel (Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon; New York: Routledge, 2010). 30.

However, no project is neutral in regard to its assumptions and meaning. In an attempt to get a broader perspective that is not already committed to a particular politics or ideology, one must begin by doing Philosophy. The method of Philosophy is that of critical inquiry. It is the only field that is able to ask questions that other fields merely presuppose, and the only field that is common amongst us all. For instance, the Social Sciences, Humanities, and Literature assume particular views of human nature and the real (though often conflicting within and between these fields). Only through critical inquiry that challenges more basic assumptions can the present dogmas be called into question and made to give an account. Recalling what has been said of dogmas earlier, this is not mere assumption, but assumptions that do not allow veracious challenges. Philosophy is the most basic mode of inquiry that is shared by all. Since all inquire as to the meaning of a thing, all rudimentarily do Philosophy. Therefore, the sense of the word Philosophy here is simply being the critical use of reason to test statements and assumptions for meaning. That is to say, to do as Socrates did, ask pressing questions that expose false assumptions.²⁵

To being with Philosophy one must consider its Socratic founder and his dictum that the unexamined life is not worth living. I begin though with Aristotle, because he gives guidance for this next section on differing philosophies of education by way of the concept of *telos*. Aristotle in his *Ethics* reminds his readers that every action is a means towards a definite end.²⁶ Furthermore, that there are

²⁵ Through invoking Socrates as the founder of Philosophy could bring a critique against this as being Western and ignoring the East. So I emphasize again that this is simply asking basic questions, that is what is meant by the critical use of Philosopher here.

²⁶ Aristotle, W. D. Ross and Lesley Brown, *The Nicomachean Ethics* [Nicomachean ethics.English] (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 3.

groups of actions like war making, engineering, and education that all have particular ends. The actions that broadly constitute education are: curriculum, methodologies, ideology, learning, teaching, administrating, and parenting. They share the common *telos* of engendering a human being.

The good for the state, according to Aristotle, is higher than the individual good of a particular person. The state is comprised of persons with the same good as the individual, but brings together people of various talents and abilities to reach that goal together. This work benefits all persons corporately and communally. Socratic thought of this communal work as the work of politics. Today, that work is more closely related to the work done in education, rather than our popular conception of politics. Perhaps today's politics is like Athenian political sophistry than the Socratic idealist concept of politics that is more closely related to an ideal education.

Problems arise when beginning to define what is "the good," the end in-itself, the *teleological* end. Aristotle's contemporaries claimed that it was clear and obvious. Such things as pleasure, wealth, or honor were seen as the good. Aristotle thought men were fickle in their claims of what was good. For instance when poor, one thinks the good to be wealth. When sick one thinks it to be health.²⁷ Aristotle contrastingly posits that whatever the good is it is inalienable for mankind. Wealth, health, pleasure and everything can be taken away from man, but the one thing that cannot is knowledge. This furthers the emphasis that the result of education (knowledge) is the one thing that cannot be taken from us. That which is learned and known cannot be stripped from persons.²⁸ Old age, sickness, death, oppression (in

²⁷ Ibid., 7

²⁸ Ibid., 10

any of its various forms), or any amount of suffering can separate a man/woman from all temporal goods, but they cannot separate or stop a person from obtaining or retaining knowledge. Therefore, it can be put forth that education's primary dealing is that of training, raising, or cultivating, the individual in knowledge of the good.

Philosophies of Education

To get to the current situation the web of ideas that constitute this modern debate must first be explicated. The modern context that this project will be engaging in is that of the 'radical' position Critical Pedagogy. I will begin by giving a brief overview of some philosophies of education and their view on what makes an educated person. Beginning with salient pieces from John Locke, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Immanuel Kant, and then leading us into post-modernity. I will show how these similar philosophies, while different in many less basic ways, are rooted in more basic assumptions. This will serve as a ground from which to define this modern problem in education. It should be noted that these three Philosophers form a sort of canon for different schools of philosophy. Therefore, Marx's conception, though applied by many to the educational crisis, will be left out because Rousseau is a precursor to Marx. Marx's ideas begin with Rousseau. In a way much of Marx's basic assumptions appear to derive from Rousseau and since this section is particularly concerned with the more basic assumptions Marx will, for now, be left out.²⁹

This thesis will focus on the discourse of Critical Pedagogy. I will argue that it gives us necessary insight into the current crisis and its possible solutions. Critical

²⁹ Though the application of Marx in education is covered here his own work and its application is not.

Pedagogy is a theory that has described itself as being a ‘critical’ education for a democratic society. This claim is examined to see if it is in accordance with its basic assumptions. Currently, there is a constant and passionate disagreement between Critical Pedagogy theorists, Henry Giroux, and Liberal Communist (now turned conservative) David Horowitz. This zealous disagreement, though at times can be reduced to fallacious refutations, should not detract from the gravity of the topic. Rather, it should cause one to think deeper about claims being made and those being presupposed. This is a debate to which I must later return. But, for now it suffices as a signpost to further note the ongoing debate about the nature of education.

To begin this brief survey of educational philosophies, I will outline the contributions of John Locke. Peter Gay, a history professor from Yale, says of Locke’s *Thoughts Concerning Education*, that it “stands at the beginning of the long cycle of modernity, but it stands, too, at the end, and as the climax, of a long evolution—the discovery of the child.”³⁰ It was at the dawn of the Enlightenment that the child began to gain a new place in society. In the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, the child was treated as a small adult, or a play thing for adults which often resulted in obscene placements of the child.

The radical Locke attempted to usher in a new rational understanding of how to approach the concept of childhood. Locke saw the child as a rational being, one that grew in their capacity to reason. Education to Locke became a means of instilling virtue in the child so that they would be well mannered, civic-minded

³⁰ Peter Gay, “Introduction,” in *John Locke on Education*, ed. Peter Gay. *Philosophy of Education: The Essential Texts*, ed. Steven M. Cahn, (New York: Routledge, 2009), 200.

Englishmen.³¹ He saw the use of discipline in the child's life as taking them away from vices such as their pleasures might lead them, but Locke wanted them to learn to be disciplined in their desires by making them subservient to reason. Too much punishment and the education would do very little good, too little and the child would be good for nothing. In this Locke advised parents to teach their children by example. He did not want adults to inundate children with rote memorization and burden them with learning. Rather, Locke felt, education stood as an acquaintanceship for the child to the world. This, perhaps, can be summarized as an education as a way of life. Locke concerned himself with every facet of the child's life: health, discipline, geometry, language, play, and prayer.

Writing in response to the broadly held societal acceptance of Locke's maxim "reason with children,"³² Jean-Jacques Rousseau in *Emile* explicates his own philosophy of education that is an antinomy with Locke's. Rousseau saw no duller children than those educated under Locke's maxim, "reason with children." Rather, Rousseau desired a return, as it were, to natural man. He saw the constraints of society as harmful things imposed upon men that deviated from man's good nature. His ideal educational practices consisted of negative examples to the child. He used the example of a child breaking a window and in response says, "let the wind blow on him night and day and do not worry about him catching cold."³³ It was through

³¹ Our modern ideals of a public education were not present in Locke's day and education in the formal sense began with the notion of making gentlemen. This of course minimized it to only a certain number of privileged persons in Locke's day.

³² Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Christopher Kelly and Allan David Bloom, *Emile Or on Education: Includes Emile and Sophie, Or the Solitaries* [Emile. English], Vol. 13 (Hanover, N.H.: Dartmouth College Press, 2010), 89.

³³ Ibid., 155

negative examples that the child would learn vice and virtue. Only when the child was older (eighteen) would he want to begin teaching the child to comprehend truth and meaning. In terms of religion, he would go no further than the light of reason in natural religion and then allow the child to choose.³⁴

The most prominent difference between Locke and Rousseau lay in their presupposition of man's nature. Locke, in accordance with his Calvinistic surrounding, held that men were fundamentally wicked in themselves and reason needed to guide their desires. In contrast, Rousseau held that society was the cause of corruption in man. Rousseau thought to raise Emile away from society and avoid the corruptions of society. Take, for instance, Rousseau's stance upon history: "Our historians all begin where they ought to finish. Only bad men achieve fame: the good are either forgotten or held up in ridicule. Like philosophy, history always slanders mankind."³⁵ Interestingly, Rousseau was actually breaking with the Calvinistic society in which he was brought up in that he aimed to debunk the notion of the depravity of mankind. These two thinkers laid the groundwork from which a multiplicity of debates would arise around the difference of the condition of man.

William Boyd explains that Rousseau's conception of a child's right to live, as an adolescent, was revolutionary and was a precursor for later psychology.³⁶ He asserted that only through the active interest in the current state of a child's

³⁴ Ibid., 221

³⁵ Jean-Jacques Rousseau. "The Emile of Jean Jacque Rousseau," translated by William Boyd, in Steven M. Cahn, ed., *Philosophy of Education: The Essential Texts* (New York: Routledge, 2009), 228.

³⁶ William Boyd, "Editors Epilogue," in *The Emile of Jean Jacque Rousseau*, translated and edited by William Boyd. *Philosophy of Education: The Essential Texts*, ed. Steven M. Cahn, (New York: Routledge, 2009), 248

upbringing would children be prepared for their later office as an adult. Furthermore, Boyd affirmed that it is this “democratic conception of humanity applied to childhood and youth, and is accepted in some fashion by all modern educators as an integral element in the educational ideal.”³⁷

Rousseau builds Emile’s education upon his theory developed in the *Social Contract*.³⁸ In it Rousseau posits that, from the state of nature, man is inherently good and the evil he suffers is from society. It is here that Rousseau’s precursory theory to Marx can be seen in that “no man has a natural authority over his equal, and since force produce no right to any, all legal authority amongst men must be established on the basis of convention.”³⁹ Rousseau found that power was socially constructed and only the infallible general will was capable to determine social relations of power.

After Rousseau and Lock one of the next major Philosophers to take seriously education was Kant. Kant’s writing has had far reaching impact upon all forms of philosophy and no doubt they do the same in the realm of educational philosophy. By education Kant meant care, discipline, and instruction of the pupil.⁴⁰ This brought to the fore a utopian teleology realizable through education where the entirety of man’s nature was realized as the successive generations inched closer and became more sophisticated in this utopian ideal. It is in this light that Robert Louden

³⁷ Boyd, “Editors Epilogue,” 250.

³⁸ Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *An Inquiry into the Nature of the Social Contract* [Du contrat social. English] (Dublin: printed by B. Smith, for William Jones, 1791), 321.

³⁹ Ibid., 12

⁴⁰ Immanuel Kant, “Lectures on Pedagogy,” translated by Robert B. Louden. *Philosophy of Education: The Essential Texts*, ed. Steven M. Cahn, (New York: Routledge, 2009), 253.

shows that Kant's philosophy of history influences his philosophy of education.⁴¹ By care it is meant that the pupil make no harmful use of their power. In other words, it was the aim of education to seek the good for them. Discipline for Kant is the taming of the savage man or restraining of our savage inclinations, desires, and instincts.⁴² Finally, instruction consisted of the culturing or socialization of man towards which they would be open to the possibilities of choosing the ends they sought.

Kant's own philosophy of education borrowed much from Rousseau. For instance they shared the notion of nature as being fundamentally good.

Good education is exactly that from which all the good in the world arises. The germs which lie in the human being must only be developed further and further. For one does not find grounds of evil in the natural predisposition of the human being. The only cause of evil is this, that nature is not brought under rules. In the human being lie only germs for the good.⁴³

Education, to Kant, stood as the demarcation between man's animal nature and human (rational) nature. Kant said that the undisciplined (through no education, or left to himself) man is a savage, which was different to Rousseau's notion of natural man. This differed from Rousseau in that Kant did not suppose, like Rousseau, that man left to nature would be much of a man at all. Where Kant differed is from whence morality arose: Kant claimed it could not be from nature whereas Rousseau felt it came from nature.

⁴¹ Kant, "Lectures on Pedagogy," 281.

⁴² Ibid., 258

⁴³ Ibid., 258

Modern Diagnosis

In order to bring this back to our modern era and see how similar conceptual frameworks are being once again used I will now go over a few thinkers who have, in their own way, called us to stop and think about education. As will be shown, each of the following thinkers builds upon the notion with which Kant worked, taking men from a savage state to one of being “more” human, using reason rather than merely listening to intuitions or instincts. For discourse about this subject and in order to reach different political realms I will only address the work of Theodore Adorno, Richard Hofstadter, and Alan Bloom. This will then provide a grounding that problematize education in such a way as to set the stage for Critical Pedagogy as the central theoretical feature of the current analysis.

In the work “Education After Auschwitz” Adorno attempts to give a diagnosis of man’s reified self in relation to the darkness that arises in the human condition. He begins with the assertion that “the premier demand upon all education is that Auschwitz not happen again.”⁴⁴ That Auschwitz was a relapse for humanity into barbarism and as long as the condition that has allowed for this to occur it will continue.

Adorno’s analysis points him towards the subjective as the possibility of change, namely that of psychology. Appealing to any objective values, by which he means societal and political; eternal values because people will not take them seriously; or enlightenment of a persecuted minority would not aid humanity in

⁴⁴ T. W. Adorno, “Education After Auschwitz,” *Education for Maturity.* [“*Erziehung Zur Mündigkeit.*”] *Frankfurt on Main*, 1970, 2.

reaching this goal Adorno has set education upon.⁴⁵ Adorno supposes that the universal can only exert itself upon the particular in such a way as to destroy them and along with it the ability to resist. Adorno, rather, sets his analysis upon the persecutors. His analysis is upon the unreflected vented hatred and aggression that only through critical self-reflection in early childhood education can possibly circumvent. Hope, Adorno believes, is found with autonomy. Autonomy is a Kantian sense of reflection, self-determination, and non-cooperation.⁴⁶

Adorno's keen focus upon that subject and their ability of reflection, self-determination, and non-cooperation is understood in contrast to the reified consciousness. In the world of Auschwitz, personality types are produced such that they are more likely to identify themselves with the collective, rather than questions and reflect, they accept and do. Adorno likens this to an observer of sports. The spectator is so caught up in the game that they lose the sense of self. Through 'customs' that are able to indicate membership in the collective and punish autonomy does the group then reify the consciousness of the subject rendering them incapable of autonomous action. This occurs, Adorno believes, through the use of hardening the self and others. This becomes a view of what ought a human to be, such that anyone else not like the hard collective is rendered non-human (object).

What Adorno argues though is that through this process of reification does one actually render themselves first, then others as objects. As one becomes hard, they no longer can cope with the anxieties that accompany this world and cause themselves to be incapable of having human experiences or emotions. Adorno

⁴⁵ Ibid., 2

⁴⁶ Ibid., 4

asserts that, “people of such a nature (reified consciousness) have, as it were, assimilated themselves to things. And then, when possible, they assimilate others to things.”⁴⁷ The reified man sees the other, not as human, but simply as means towards their own ends. To put it differently, they deny their own humanity first, and in turn deny others, then through demonizing them they destroy others. Thus, Adorno believed that men could not love, which resulted in such atrocities as Auschwitz, and in fact continue to occur today. He avowed that men are blinded to their historical past and rather expand what exists contingently to be that which is absolute.⁴⁸

Adorno brings to the fore the alleviation of human suffering brought upon by other humans as *the* goal of education. He asserts that it can only be through the alleviation of man’s psychology that this goal can be accomplished. The implications for education that Adorno and Marx highlight are exemplified well in the position of Critical Pedagogy. These works have heavily influenced many of the theorists that I will cover in the next section.

Delving still further into the roots of education in America there is yet another voice telling of the reified, lethargic, and savage state of man. Historian Richard Hofstadter in the mid 60’s released his work, *Anti-intellectualism in American Life*. This was his attempt to trace the genesis of America’s adverse attitude towards the intellect. The fall of Protestant intellectualism in the 1700’s with the rise of the Great Awakenings had begun and the awakening of evangelicalism engendered an

⁴⁷ Ibid., 6

⁴⁸ Ibid., 6

intellectual apprehension and a religious anti-rationalism.⁴⁹ This attitude permeated America and blighted the populace against any life of the mind. In fact the life of the mind was seen as antithetical to religion so much so that some feared, and still fear that those going to college will lose their faith due to challenges that arise therein.

Hofstadter saw this endemicity of anti-intellectualism in the nation as being founded upon sheer utility;⁵⁰ or rather what is thought to be of greatest utility. The quintessence of this is found in the traditional notion of the American dream, in which it is thought one need 'only' endure 30 years of labor to achieve a blissful state of rest from his labors.⁵¹ This attitude and belief towards this dream is antithetical to the incessant questioning of the intellect through critical inquiry. After all, why ask the meaning of things when what you are doing works? In summary of this position Hofstadter posits that anti-intellectualism is a resentment and suspicion of the life of the mind, and its opposite, intellectualism is questioning and playfulness towards discovery.⁵²

For Hofstadter the intellectual life is not anti-practical, but rather extra practical. This is what Cole would call the Louis Pasteur quadrant of inquiry.⁵³ This mode of analysis' emphasis is on solving problems and questions of fundamental

⁴⁹ Hofstadter, *Anti-Intellectualism in American Life*, 434, xiii; Daniel Rigney, "Three Kinds of Anti-Intellectualism: Rethinking Hofstadter," *Sociological Inquiry* 61, no. 4 (Fall91, 1991), 434-451.

⁵⁰ This goes back to what Schiller was also attempting to get at.

⁵¹ M. Eigenberger, "Is Anti-Intellectualism a Personality Trait? A Response to Howley," *Psychological Reports* 90, no. 2 (2002), 593-596.

⁵² Hofstadter, *Anti-Intellectualism in American Life*, 434, xiii.

⁵³ Cole, *Great American University: Its Rise to Preeminence, its Indispensable National Role, Why it must be Protected*; Cole mentions 3 modes of inquiry in which the academy is focused upon the Pasteur area is one that is practical as well as theoretical.

knowledge.⁵⁴ Reaching back to the Socratics, this is perhaps the embodiment of the Socratic “examined life.” In this manner, education functions first as an avenue of questioning ourselves, then comes to have impact upon the world through questioning others. First it is through the becoming aware and raising awareness about the challenges and shortcomings seen in various pedagogical practices.

In 1987, a more conservative social critique of America was published by Allan Bloom entitled, *The Closing of the American Mind*.⁵⁵ It was praised by many and become a best seller. However, it was criticized by many authors some of whom are within Critical Pedagogy. Like Hofstadter, Bloom was writing in response to the lack of intellectualism in America. Distinct from Hofstadter, Bloom traces the roots of this movement back to Germany and the post-Enlightenment thinkers that arose from within the Germanic state such as Rousseau, Nietzsche, Marx, and Heidegger.

Bloom’s thesis in this work is that American students are essentially complacent in regards to truth and its pursuit. Students come from a place where they hold that truth is relative. It is either purposed from psychology (Freud), historically (Nietzsche), or economically determined (Marx). To these views all of society is a product of events that determine meaning around us. There is no truth per se. Thus, they make no real distinction between good and evil and cease to seek after truth. Bloom posits that this is from the students having lost the sense of heroes, reading great literature, listening to great music, and having broken relationships that are rampant with divorce, cheap sex and love. This, according to Bloom, has been a result of Nietzsche’s observation that “God is dead.”

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ A. D. Bloom, *The Closing of the American Mind*, Simon & Schuster, 1988).

These theories have left man to his natural values thus Bloom thinks that truth and the good life become undiscoverable.⁵⁶ Science has resolved that reason is powerless to discover values, and therefore abandoned the search. All that remains is the bleak will to power. The response to this is in terms of culture, “the unity of man’s brutish nature and all the arts and sciences he acquired in his movement from the state of nature to civil society.”⁵⁷

Bloom says that Socrates, in his pursuit for the essence of justice and truth, went against the common culture of the people around him and that this is essentially the purpose of the university. However, once Heidegger came to the scene, Bloom tells us, he used philosophy to further German culture, not to challenge it.⁵⁸ With the university following in Heidegger’s footsteps Bloom sees its focus upon tolerance and openness as doing just that, not challenging and further the pursuit of truth. Instead Bloom thinks universities seem to conform to the cultural norms; because there is no truth, there is no distinction between good and evil. This leaves the university in an enigmatic situation.

The university must ask: how do we educate our students? Yet, according to Bloom, it cannot answer this question. “To attempt to answer the question is already to philosophize and to begin to educate.”⁵⁹ Bloom continues, “It is childishness to say, as some do, that everyone must be allowed to develop freely, that it is

⁵⁶ Ibid., 143

⁵⁷ Ibid., 185

⁵⁸ Ibid., 311

⁵⁹ Ibid., 336

authoritarian to impose a point of view on the student.”⁶⁰ Bloom, like many others leads us to ask: whose education, whose values? Bloom explicates that it is the post-modern position that has rendered the university inept because out of the chaos that is post-modern valuation and ethics comes the impossibility of making a reasonable choice.⁶¹ Thus, when a student asks the university to educate his whole person he finds a myriad of differing values and the university is wholly ill equipped to undertake the task.

While the university still is educating persons, it has become bifurcated into sects. Bloom attributes the bifurcation of the universities schools to the incoherence of truth. There is no wholeness in the university. The social sciences, humanities, and sciences all think themselves to be the whole and others the parts of the intellectual pursuit. It is this pursuit of wholeness that Bloom feels education ought to seek, to educate the whole person, not some segmented portion of him. This, accordingly, ought to be wrapped up in seeking the good, which he draws from the *Republic* by Plato as one of those who seeks truth.

In Book I of the *Republic*, Socrates reminds his audiences that “the argument concern no ordinary topic, but the way we ought to live.”⁶² The question bequeathed to this realm of thought is to resolve what the aim of education ought to be. The weight of this is in a two-fold sense: first, to think of human beings as such (in general) and secondly, how the subject ought to live (how I ought to live). The second sense ought not be confused with the first, more basic sense. Because the

⁶⁰ Ibid., 377

⁶¹ Ibid., 337

⁶² C. D. C. Reeve, trans., *Plato: Republic*. (Hackett Publishing Company, Inc. 2004), 32 352d.

subject is a human themselves, that is to say in the category 'human,' they must answer how a human ought to live first. Then, in their own: beliefs, background, social, and historical setting answer how they themselves ought to live. On this point Chris Higgins states that:

Modern values-talk would make it seem as if rival answers to Socrates' question could rest comfortably side by side. In fact, it matters very much to use whether family, friends, neighbours, and public figures hold different views of the good life. What appears to be moral relativism is often the scrupulous practice of a specific virtue, namely tolerance.⁶³

However, the problem again arises when two value claims come in contact with one another. The ubiquitous and abstruse nature of tolerance affirms all views as having equal value claims, but concomitantly denies all claims. This is to say; by affirming intellectual diversity one also affirms contradictory claims (those that are both true and false at the same time and same respect). By including all claims, one also excludes all one, and all, from the same rational community. It is to ignore the basic differences between worldviews as if they were trivial and thus devalues all communities (including one's own).

To answer Socrates' question of 'how one ought to live' it necessarily implies examining the differing worldviews and their claims upon what the good is. The three persons just covered have given us a fundamental, if not universal, condition that men find themselves within. From Adorno, Hofstadter, and Bloom one can conclude that pragmatism is a view that permeates throughout this epoch, but ought to be examined. In order to do so I will begin by way of giving an overview of a few differing views of a 'good' education.

⁶³ Chris Higgins, "Work and Flourishing: Williams' Critique of Morality and its Implications for Professional Ethics," *Journal of Philosophy of Education* 44, no. 2 (May, 2010), 214.

Education as Care

In order to begin answering the question –what is a good education?–one needs to understand to what education might be aiming and why it is that they need education. From an etymological understanding, “educate” refers to the ‘training of animals,’ that stems from the word *educare*, ‘to bring up, rear, educate.’⁶⁴ The training of animals and care, leads us back to Kant who spoke of education as doing both.

Kant’s care in education as bringing one from the animalistic nature to human nature through discipline helps us to perceive care:

An animal is already all that it can be because of its instinct; a foreign intelligence has already taken care of everything for it. But the human being needs his own intelligence. He has no instinct and must work out that plan of his conduct for himself. However, since the human being is not immediately in a position to do this, because he is in a raw state when he comes into the world, others must do it for him.⁶⁵

This portion of education, on Kant’s account, is a merely a negative thing. It is keeping him from his animal nature, whereby he might bring harm to his being. Therein opens the possibility for instructions that is the positive portion of education.

In the instructional phase the student goes through a process of moralization through which they carry titles like: mature, intelligent, intellectual, well read, erudite, etc. Though, what these terms mean is often obscure. Only through the process of becoming critically aware of the end education seeks and the views and questions that necessarily lead to such a position can one begin to discern how and if the students are being cared for. Recalling Aristotle one cannot avoid talking about the

⁶⁴ "Online Etymology Dictionary " <http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?term=educate> (accessed 7/11/2010, 2011).

⁶⁵ Kant, “Lectures on Pedagogy,” 254.

good when speaking of means and ends. Therefore, I propose this notion of care: care as seeking the good for the other.

First, education presupposes the notion of care that seeks the highest good for a being. Humans come into the world ignorant and have the aspiration not leave life the same. All education seeks to avoid the exemplary case of King Lear; we seek to become wise before becoming old. The only grounds from which are applicable to critique educational aims are in terms of the good. Responding to the debate, which Hofstadter said is marked by “criticism and bitter complaints,”⁶⁶ others make the audacious claim that opposing theories of education do not care for students only assumes one is justified in making that claim. For instance as explicated later, Giroux and Horowitz (Chapter 3 – The Modern Debate) believe this of one another, and historically the antithetical positions covered thus far. It is not that there is a lack of care within their theories, but rather a lack an awareness of their teleology as if there were none or as if theirs were axiomatically true.

Adam Phillips brings psychoanalysis and education together by saying that one should be careful in thinking they are caring for the pupil because if they think they are educating when in reality they are in fact not, then they are doing more harm than good.⁶⁷ This is a warning that should cause us to thoroughly examine our assumptions. Like a doctor that takes an oath to care for their patient, the teacher takes a solemn vow to do no harm to the child. Certain pedagogical practices will necessarily lead to a heightened awareness and incline educators toward a particular end. In Plato’s *Gorgias*, the point is made that man never stands to stand, rather there

⁶⁶ Hofstadter, *Anti-Intellectualism in American Life*, 310

⁶⁷ A. Phillips, *Equals* Basic Books, 2003.

is always a standing towards an end.⁶⁸ Education is able to reinforce or alter the direction toward which one is predisposed in both formal and informal ways.

Furthermore, Phillips invokes a salient point, “the child can only be taught what he wants to know.”⁶⁹ He can learn facts about life and recite them, “he can become a person that 'knows' such things - but it won't much matter to him. He will realize that to be a suitable member of society he has to be a person with the facts of life up his sleeve.”⁷⁰ Therefore, education also becomes care for the other in that it seeks to awaken, or make space for becoming aware of what one ought to care about; that is, the good. What the child comes to value and believe is the good is what they will desire to learn. Anything else, according to Phillips, they will memorize and become in a type of Machiavellian manner.

In education there is always a moment of liberation. Persons can be more or less ready and open to being liberated, based upon their view of the good and willingness to self-examine. Take Plato’s Cave for instance. When the liberated individual comes to free his friends, he attempts to do so through trying to make them aware of their state of being, on that is harmful to them. His fellow cave dwellers attempt to challenge his knowledge through shadow games. Of course, not being accustomed to them any longer, he loses. The same is true in every pedagogical moment there is an instance of attempting to free the other from perceived bondage. In educational vocalic, that is to educate or bring to maturity. However, taking into

⁶⁸ Plato and Donald J. Zeyl, *Gorgias* [Gorgias. English] (Indianapolis, Ind.: Hackett Pub. Co., 1987), 113.

⁶⁹ A. Phillips, *Side Effects* Harmondsworth: Penguin, 2006, 147.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 147

account Phillips' warning about 'thinking' one is doing education, or being educated leads to the question: is the educator really liberating people or keeping them bound?

Returning to the first notion of care, whether it be explicitly stated or implicitly stated there is always teleology in education. As Socrates explicates, "when we walk we walk for the sake of the good, and under the idea that it is better to walk, and when we stand we stand equally for the sake of the good."⁷¹ That is to say that the practice and theory of education both have a goal in mind, one that I will seek to elucidate in and through the lens of Critical Pedagogy.

Method

Despite the similarities that could be drawn between the philosophies outlined above, I want to ask the question: towards what end are they educating? One blatant difference is the difference in notions about the goodness of mankind between Rousseau and Locke that fundamentally changed their means, and therefore the goal of education. To do so one must first recall age-old wisdom. Confucius and Socrates, both attempted to get to the essence of a thing in order to understand it. For example Confucius spoke of the rectification of names when he mentioned:

If language is not correct, then what is said is not what is meant; if what is said is not what is meant, then what must be done remains undone; if this remains undone, morals and art will deteriorate; if justice goes astray, the people will stand about in helpless confusion. Hence there must be no arbitrariness in what is said. This matters above everything.⁷²

In the pedagogical context if one is to say they care for students, and speak as those who genuinely do care, yet by not understand their pedagogical aim can they with

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Confucius and Arthur Waley, *The Analects of Confucius* [English], 1 Vintage Books ed. (New York: Vintage Books, 1989; 1938), 257.

integrity say they do care? Hence, the need to understand what the aim of education is in order to speak of it in a proper sense.

Secondly, returning again to Socrates he reminds us to continually be self-reflective. Socrates began his unpopular career of philosophy by following a prophecy from the Oracle at Delphi who said he was the wisest man alive. Through his journey he questioned the artists, politicians, and craftsmen to see if they knew what the good was and discovered all thought they knew, yet did not. Socrates questioned their uncritically held assumptions, and was killed for doing so. It is through this same means of questioning the uncritically held assumptions of education that this project will begin to illuminate the positions from which educational theories originate and toward what they aim. In this current project examining the formation of the work becomes necessary to understanding the work itself and its beliefs. Though this work is primarily philosophical it is heavily influenced by Raymond Williams and Cultural Studies.

Cultural Studies began with one of its founders, Raymond Williams' work in adult education. Williams began gained a particular focus on the ordinary way or life from his days growing up in a rural Welsh-farming village at Pandy in Monmouthshire, which stood four miles outside of the border with England.⁷³ It was there that Williams' understanding of 'culture as a way of life' began to emerge. From this focus upon the ordinary Williams, after the WWII was over, focused upon the education of workers.

⁷³ W. John Morgan and Peter Preston, *Raymond Williams: Politics, Education, Letters* (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Macmillan, 1993), 4.

While working in the Worker's Educational Association Williams' formulated much of what would later become the project of Cultural Studies. Williams always wanted to bring literature and drama closer to the everyday life of the laymen.⁷⁴ Williams was particularly interested in the working class with its values, its collective democracy, its solidarity, and potential for making a better society.⁷⁵ His particular focus upon pedagogy is explained in the following realization:

it deepens the extent of the study of culture and power by addressing not only how culture is produced, circulated, and transformed but also how it is actually negotiated by human beings within specific setting and circumstances.⁷⁶

Pedagogy becomes the site for the re/production of power and ideology, and along with Williams' focus on "culture as ordinary" this was fertile ground for Williams' work.

'Culture as ordinary' was meant to convey that in the ordinary is where meaning is made. The work of culture, as the site where meaning and values were made was, for Williams, the primary force of society.⁷⁷ Moreover, it is in the ordinary that one's meanings and values are always challenged.

Culture is ordinary: that is the first fact. Every human society has its own shape, its own purposes, its own meanings. Every human society expresses these, in institutions, and in arts and learning. The making of a society is the finding of common meanings and directions, and its growth is an active

⁷⁴ John McIlroy, Sallie Westwood and National Institute of Adult Continuing Education, *Border Country: Raymond Williams in Adult Education* (Leicester: National Institute of Adult Continuing Education, 1993), 13.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 14

⁷⁶ Henry A. Giroux and Christopher G. Robbins, *The Giroux Reader* (Boulder: Paradigm Publishers, 2006), 94.

⁷⁷ W. John Morgan and Peter Preston, *Raymond Williams: Politics, Education, Letters* (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Macmillan, 1993), 77.

debate and amendment under the pressures of experience, contact, and discovery, writing themselves into the land.⁷⁸

For Williams, culture included two important aspects: “the known meanings and directions, which its members are trained to; the new observations and meanings, which are offered and tested.”⁷⁹ When it came to pedagogy Williams said that:

Education is ordinary: that it is, before everything else, the process of giving to the ordinary members of society its full common meanings, and the skills that will enable them to amend these meanings, in the light of their personal and common experience.⁸⁰

Williams saw that education ought to be used to give that sense of common, or shared meaning in society; not job training, or skills. For Williams education, for all, becomes the driving force behind a democracy that enables all citizens to take part in the making of meaning and values that their culture shares.

Democracy according to Williams was not the representative democracy that is found in today’s democracies. By democracy he means “*popular power*: a state in which the interests of the majority of the people were paramount and in which these interest were practically exercised and controlled by the majority.”⁸¹ This sense of socialist democracy is in contrast to the representative democracy that is now seen in the West. This concept of democracy seeks equality in of persons as against relations that produce qualitatively different inequalities.

⁷⁸ R. Williams, "Culture is Ordinary" in *Resources of Hope*, edited by Robin Gable (London: Verso, 1989), 4.

⁷⁹ Raymond, Williams. "Culture is Ordinary." In *Resources of Hope: Culture, Democracy, Socialism*, ed. Robin Gable (London: Verso 1989) 4.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 14

⁸¹ Raymond Williams, *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1976), 85.

Education, for Williams, was not then taken in a popular sense of a minority educating the majority but all having an equal voice in education. This comes out of Williams' understanding of the common good. Williams began with the idea that it was the duty of the government to make sure that its citizens could think.⁸² That education was to prepare students "to make sense of change, to adapt to change, and to shape change."⁸³ Williams felt that only through an education that grasped the meaning of the ordinary, common meanings, would the students be able to adapt and shape change for themselves. Furthermore, that this education could only do so by educating all persons so that they could partake in democracy.

Popular education, in any worthwhile sense, begins from a conception of human beings which, while recognizing difference of intelligence, of speed in learning, and of desire to learn which is clearly affected by difference of environment, nevertheless insists that no man judge for another man, that Everyman has a right to the facts and skills on which real judgment is based, and that, in this sense, all education depends on the acknowledgment of an ultimate human equality.⁸⁴

This was to say, that education must be rooted in a deep sense of solidarity for the other and not upon superfluous national or economic interests.⁸⁵

Drawing heavily from Williams' insight into education will be necessary not only to understand Critical Pedagogy but also to understand where to begin a critical education. Before this project lays a considerable challenge because analyzing the formation and basic beliefs of pedagogical practices is a difficult project due the

⁸² Alan Tuckett, "The Common Good: Raymond Williams, Adult Education and Social Change," *Journal of Access Policy and Practice* 4, no. 2 (2007): 178.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 178

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 123

⁸⁵ McIlroy, Westwood and National Institute of Adult Continuing Education, *Border Country: Raymond Williams in Adult Education*, 241.

tapestry or web of ideas that influences every aspect of that work.⁸⁶ It can be hard to trace the root of such projects due to factors of inconsistent and unconscious influences.⁸⁷ In addition to this, tracing the philosophical roots adds to this difficulty.

I will be pulling from Cultural Studies in the area of intervention within cultural practices.⁸⁸ These cultural practices are often seen in 'simple' ordinary instances of struggles of power and discourse within the everyday. Education particularly works within this project being that its essence is homologous. In other words, education is an intervention through discourse in relations of conceptual powers within the ordinary way of life and interpretations that seek to social transformation through the liberation of the self.⁸⁹ Cultural Studies in education therefore brings together the work of Williams and other thinkers like Gramsci and Freire. These thinkers interweave theories of power and ideology in education in a way that reveal the presuppositions underlying Critical Pedagogy.

⁸⁶ Paulo Freire, and Ana Araújo Maria Freire, *Pedagogy of Hope: Reliving Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (New York: Continuum, 1994), 240.; Richard Johnson, *The Practice of Cultural Studies* (London; Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage, 2004), 91.

⁸⁷ This is much the same as Freud helps us see that men are often not conscious nor consistent with our beliefs.

⁸⁹ Stephen Chan and Muriel Law, "Taking Education Seriously as Reform -- Curriculum Policy Research and its Implications for Cultural Studies," *Cultural Studies* 25, no. 1 (2010), 25.

Chapter 2

AN OVERVIEW OF CRITICAL PEDAGOGY

I will begin by examining the works of the founder of Critical Pedagogy, Paulo Freire and his main work *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*.⁹⁰ Additionally, Critical Pedagogy grew and changed with thinkers who will need to be touched upon such as Ira Shor, Peter McLaren, and Henry Giroux. To assist in framing this work I intend to draw upon the work Seehwa Cho in her summation of Critical Pedagogy.⁹¹ Cho summarized three projects of Critical Pedagogy as being, the project of experience, project of anti-system, and project of inclusions. Furthermore, she expounded upon three politics of Critical Pedagogy as culturalist, self/identity, and grassroots.

Thus far philosophical influences in the education landscape and a brief understanding of a teleological education have been explicated. In this section I now undertake the task of delving more into the particulars of Critical Pedagogy. In this part I set out to define Critical Pedagogy and understand its conceptions of the good. To do so an account will be given of the various rhetorical tropes that are used by Critical Pedagogy theorists redress. Then, this analysis will focus upon notable figures such as Paulo Freire in whom Critical Pedagogy finds its beginnings and Henry Grioux whose work is highly influential in the field today.

Defining Critical Pedagogy

Defining the term ‘Critical Pedagogy’ is a problematic task that even theorists within the field have difficulty doing. One of the difficulties is, “critical pedagogy is

⁹⁰ Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* [Pedagogia do oprimido.English], 30th anniversary ed. (New York: Continuum, 2000), 183.

⁹¹ Seehwa Cho, "Politics of Critical Pedagogy and New Social Movements," *Educational Philosophy & Theory* 42, no. 3 (04, 2010), 310-325.

an evolving field, and it is by no means unified.”⁹² Differing practices within the field make it difficult to solidify what Critical Pedagogy actually entails. Therefore, in the effort to be fair to this conceptualization of the field I will draw upon the words of those in the field to define it. As the reader might notice, I am using Critical Pedagogy as a proper noun, whereas the field uses it as a noun. What is to follow is a defense of that, because Critical Pedagogy holds commonly held assumptions that other educational theories do not such that it can be named as particular field.

Beginning with the work of theorist Seehwa Cho who, in her recent article “Politics of Critical Pedagogy and New Social Movements,” has done an excellent job in mapping the theory both in its goals and presuppositions. Of critical pedagogy Cho says:

At its core, critical pedagogy has the following two major agendas: transformation of knowledge (e.g. curriculum) and pedagogy (in a narrow sense, i.e. teaching). The most significant focus of critical pedagogy is the relationship between knowledge and power. By asserting that knowledge is intrinsically interwoven with power, critical pedagogy adamantly and steadfastly dismisses the mainstream assumption of knowledge as objective and neutral.⁹³

A unifying theme of Critical Pedagogy is that power is interwoven in practice and knowledge claims. Nothing is without this notion of power, especially knowledge.⁹⁴ Everything contains ideology that brings with it the notion of non-neutral propositional knowledge that; either extrinsically or intrinsically, dismisses certain groups while advancing others. Interwoven in Critical Pedagogy is the Marxian class

⁹² Seehwa Cho, "Politics of Critical Pedagogy and New Social Movements," *Educational Philosophy & Theory* 42, no. 3 (04, 2010), 320.

⁹³ Ibid., 311

⁹⁴ L. Weis, C. McCarthy and G. Dimitriadis, *Ideology, Curriculum, and the New Sociology of Education: Revisiting the Work of Michael Apple*, (CRC Press, 2006).

struggle in association with meaning making. Therefore, it stands as Critical Pedagogy's agenda to make these claims known. Thus, "Critical pedagogy refers to the means and method that test and hope to change the structures of schools that allow inequalities."⁹⁵ "That is, as a form of engaged practice, Critical Pedagogy calls into question forms of subordination that create inequities among different groups as they live out their lives."⁹⁶ Affirming the goal of equalizing power inequalities in educative practice/curriculum, Giroux adds:

Pedagogy represents both a mode of cultural production and a type of cultural criticism that is essential for questioning the conditions under which knowledge is produced, values affirmed, affective investments engaged, and subject positions are put into place, negotiated, taken up, or refused.⁹⁷

Critical Pedagogy is essentially a poststructural, postmodern, multicultural, pedagogical movement whereby relations of power and language are analyzed and changed by both teachers and students. This results from emphasis on the primacy of the will over the primacy of reason in Philosophy. Therefore, the form and content of pedagogical authority becomes the site of a struggle to understand whose epistemic framework is legitimated in practice.⁹⁸

Cho's summary defines Critical Pedagogy in terms of its project and politics. Cho differentiated three projects: the experience, anti-system, and inclusion. The three politics are: the culturalist, self/identity, and grassroots.⁹⁹ This framework can

⁹⁵ Barry Kanpol, *Critical Pedagogy: An Introduction* (Westport, Conn.: Bergin & Garvey, 1994), 27.

⁹⁶ Giroux and Robbins, *The Giroux Reader*, 50

⁹⁷ Ibid., 200

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ Cho, *Politics of Critical Pedagogy and New Social Movements*, 310-325

be used to conceptual understanding Critical Pedagogy. Though this is a difficult task, Cho's framework will allow for a sophisticated lens through which to address Critical Pedagogy's theories and practices.

Experience

The project of experience aims at "freeing students from oppressive cultural frames of knowing by providing them with new ways of claiming authority for their own experience."¹⁰⁰ This project is in reaction to the seemingly hegemonic discourse that presents itself as universal and necessary truths. This can be understood as a distinction between being and becoming. Critical pedagogy attempts to reconcile the social construction of history and culture with the hegemonic ideologies of this present epoch. Therefore, experience is often necessarily redressed in light of this postmodern understanding. Yet, what is meant by experience and how to claim one's own authority are what is debated within the field. However, the tacit focus of the field is upon the re-casting of students' experience. The following are a few accounts of the conceptualizations of experience from critical pedagogy scholars Barry Kanpol and Ira Shor.

Barry Kanpol reflects upon his experience in modern public education by highlighting the following themes within modern education: male dominance, sexism, fear, cheating, competition, stereotyping, authoritarianism, economics, the public, and teacher accountability.¹⁰¹ Kanpol believed that tests were created against certain sexes, teachers took their authority for granted and pushed it upon kids and

¹⁰⁰ Zavarzadeh, M. & Morton, D., *Theory as Resistance: Politics and Culture After (Post)Structuralism* (New York, Guilford Press 1994) 22.

¹⁰¹ Kanpol, *Critical Pedagogy: An Introduction*, 184

use of fear to control the classroom these practices resulted in prevalence of cheating amongst students and a lack of accountability amongst teachers. From these experiences in education Kanpol seeks to alter this state of affairs by allowing students to be co-creators in the educational process and challenge the norms of education. One way of doing that is by giving a greater significance to the student's own experiences as being valid over and against a teacher's prescription of validity.

Ira Shor, posits that education ought to be “orienting subject matter to student culture—their interests, needs, speech, and perceptions—while creating a negotiable openness in class where the students’ input jointly creates the learning process.”¹⁰² Students’ experience becomes the authority in the classroom and teachers’ acumen in their particular field is often subverted, or reoriented to also include the students. For Shor, current teacher-centered models of education are too competitive and encourage negative feelings due to the surveying of people’s differences and the lack of success for some over and against the privileged few.

In contrast to what is viewed as a typical education, marred by what Kanpol and Shor described, the critical education seeks not to deny competition, but have a democratic cooperative learning whereby the students garner optimistic feelings about their potential and future. Students become persons whose voices are worth listening to, whose minds are capable of serious intellectual contribution, and whose thought and feeling can garner the transformation of society.¹⁰³ This is set in contrast to what the critical educator sees as engendering boredom within the classroom that

¹⁰² Ira Shor, *Empowering Education: Critical Teaching for Social Change* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 16.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 26

discourages education through rote memorization of ‘facts,’ rather than this participatory model. These ‘fact’ based models build educative practice on the assumption that there is a given, objective reality, whereas the participatory model sees the world as open and manifest before the subject.

Perhaps the most salient piece to arise from this reconceptualization of experience is its effect on the perceived authoritative of the teacher. In other words, this delineation of experience has major effects on one’s concept of pedagogical authority within the teacher/student relationship. In this next section, these implications will be drawn out in much more detail through Paulo Freire’s explication of the educator/educatee relationship. It will become clear that Freire sees teachers and students as co-educators in a dialectic relationship that seeks to negotiate and renegotiate authority. This is a theme that will be a consistent thread, woven through the present critique of Critical Pedagogy.

As will be shown, Critical Pedagogy moves toward “equality” in opportunities and outcomes based upon their understanding of experience. Turning now to *Ideology and Curriculum* in order to show how, according to Critical Pedagogy scholars, there is always ideology embedded within practices that are thought to be neutral. Michael Apple argues that there is both explicit and implicit ideology behind any curriculum.¹⁰⁴ Jean Anyon builds upon Apple’s work in order to identify high-status symbolic capital like artistic, intellectual, linguistic and other skills that were developed in creative and more autonomous manner than traditional middle-class

¹⁰⁴ Michael W. Apple, *Ideology and Curriculum*, 2nd ed. (New York: Routledge, 1990), 203.

educative settings.¹⁰⁵ It is here that Apple posited: schools “ultimately help produce the type of knowledge (as a kind of commodity) that is needed to maintain the dominant, economic, political, and cultural arrangements that now exist. I call this ‘technical knowledge’ here.”¹⁰⁶ However, Apple saw that ideology stood behind curriculum. These ideologies, attempting to pass themselves off as skills were however inherently moral ideologies.¹⁰⁷ Apple linked this phenomenon to Antonio Gramsci’s concept of hegemony. Taking from Gramsci Apple conceives hegemony as the meaning and practices that prevail over and impose ideology that is given, lived, and not questioned.¹⁰⁸ This, according to Critical Pedagogy, works to reproduce inequalities in terms of opportunity as well as results. Therefore, subjective experience becomes the only meanings through which one can escape and make a place from which to begin counter-hegemonic dialogue about existing hegemonic norms.

This idea of experience as being authoritative, hegemony being linked with curriculum, and the desire for a more equal democratic state begs the question: what is meant by “equality?” Is there room for the talents and abilities inherently given to persons to flourish under this education, or will they be brought to have the same outcomes as others? Are the values, or ideologies informing an individual, groups of persons, cultures, and civilizations inherently rational? Is it also the case that in some

¹⁰⁵ Jean Anyon, “Social Class, School Knowledge, and the Hidden Curriculum,” in *Ideology, Curriculum, and the New Sociology of Education: Revisiting the Work of Michael Apple*, ed. by Lois Weis et al, *Ideology, Curriculum, and the New Sociology of Education: Revisiting the Work of Michael Apple*, (CRC Press, 2006). 41

¹⁰⁶ Apple, *Ideology and Curriculum*, x.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, viii

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 5

systems of belief, persons or groups are excluded on the basis of such frameworks belief? Can the poor have a better life than the rich? Can they be richer in meaning because of their struggles? Are there beliefs and values behind the actions of society and teachers in education that ought to be engaged with rather than dismissed as sexist or racist? Can one even engage, rationally, with them?

Project of anti-system

The project of the anti-system assists in understanding the removal of authoritative figures in pedagogical practices. Since reality is no longer given or objective it must be negotiated; hence subjective experience is seen as the only legitimate form of authority. In building upon the validity and newly found authority of one's own experiences, Critical Pedagogy reconceptualizes authority in the classroom. Critical Pedagogy stresses the ideal of an educational praxis whereby students and teachers are seen as equals. This kind of practice presupposes a postmodern, poststructural, Foucauldian concept of power, in which no knowledge is neutral, but power must to be located *and* resisted.

Therefore, Critical Pedagogy becomes problem-posing in its methods. Rather than a top-down model of a teacher that passes knowledge to the student, teaching becomes dialogical. Thus, as Ira Shor states, "the problem-posing approach views humans beings, knowledge, and society as unfinished products in history, where various forces are still contending."¹⁰⁹ There is always room for negotiating: this is not to say that such bodies of knowledge like science, math, etc are not formal bodies, nor does it take out the educational background of the instructor. Rather, critical education seeks to see that, "existing knowledge is not presented as facts and

¹⁰⁹ Shor, *Empowering Education: Critical Teaching for Social Change*, 35.

doctrines to be absorbed without questions.¹¹⁰ Therefore, it becomes of the utmost importance to account for social/economic, class, race, gender, religion, nationality, and other cultural backgrounds of the students and teachers. This is in the attempt to recognize that students already bring their own understanding of the world and lived experience with them, thus having a valid of claim upon knowledge as much as their teachers do.

In seeking to conceptualize the project of anti-system Kanpol's distinction between authority and authoritarianism is useful. Kanpol believes that authoritarianism, which schools currently employ, is based upon *arbitrary* structures of authority. As a result, teachers often abuse their power unethically and resort to coercive means of persuasion. Contrastingly, Kanpol's conception of authority is based upon a dialogical reciprocity between the knowledge of the teacher and student that challenges oppressive hegemony seen in race, gender, and class stereotypes.¹¹¹

This is furthered still by Shor's concept of participatory education. Based upon Piaget's epistemic position, as a derivative of action, "to know an object is to act upon it and transform it . . . to know is therefore to assimilate reality into structures of transformation and these are the structures that intelligence constructs as direct extension of our actions."¹¹² Concomitantly, this is drawn from a Dewidian conception of experience in education as that with which one does, a person suffers

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 35

¹¹¹ Kanpol, *Critical Pedagogy: An Introduction*, 184

¹¹² Jean, Piaget. 1979. *Science of education and the psychology of the child*. New York: Penguin. Originally published 1991. 28-29 as cited in Shor, *Empowering Education: Critical Teaching for Social Change*, 17

or undergo the consequences of their experience.¹¹³ Thus, Critical Pedagogy posits students ought to create their own meaning and not be told what to think or where to find meaning, but meaning is to be found within the dialogical process in which students and teachers engage. Meaning becomes negotiated and representation; based upon language and experience. Meaning ceases to be the discovery of some objective truth that sees the world as it is. Rather, meaning is actualized through language as the Derridian infinite play upon differences.¹¹⁴

As a counterexample, Shor finds various practices in modern pedagogical institutions that serve as instances of anti-dialogical practice. Lectures and summaries on subject matter, coaching advice to students during an exercise, taking attendance, doing analysis ahead of and without students all are examples of anti-dialogical practices. All of which seek to impart knowledge rather than dialogically coming to understanding through co-equal student/teacher participation. Contrastingly, the dialogical teachers: avoid jargon or obscure allusions that intimidate students into silence; pose thought provoking/open-ended problems to students so that they feel challenged in thinking them through, and seeks equal participation for minority students.¹¹⁵ These practices are based on the assumption that, “for general education, students should experience relevance, subjectivity, and provocative debates in an area, not orthodoxies of information.”¹¹⁶

¹¹³ Dewey, *Democracy and Education: an Introduction to the Philosophy of Education*, (New York: Free Press 1944) 139.

¹¹⁴ Dimitriadis and Carlson, *Promises to Keep: Cultural Studies, Democratic Education, and Public Life*, 9; Henry A. Giroux, *Border Crossings: Cultural Workers and the Politics of Education*, 2nd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2005), 52.

¹¹⁵ Shor, *Empowering Education: Critical Teaching for Social Change*, 286

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 143

Given these statements by Critical Pedagogy about the non-neutrality of education can it be said that any practice is neutral? Apple argued, rather effectively, that they could not be. How can decisions between one system over another be made? Can the choice between one be justified, or must they merely be picked at random? Recalling Aristotle again it can argued that no action is arbitrary but based upon beliefs and values and the conception of the good. Therefore, the question becomes what is the good, and what does Critical Pedagogy consider it to be?

Project of Inclusion

Formally stated the project of inclusion is, “the guarantee of equal opportunity and equal power for the underprivileged, oppressed, marginalized, or subjugated is the ultimate goal for this project.”¹¹⁷ The project of inclusion is an attempt to cross the ideological borders that garner competition and non-multicultural tendencies within students through the non-critical presentation of ‘facts.’

Ideologically this places Critical Pedagogy as antithetical to individual success at the expense of others persons. Kanpol makes a distinction between individuality and individualism to further this concept. Individualism sets up values of persons based upon what they do or how smart they are. Individuality rather takes into account the background and cultural origins of the individual.

Critical pedagogy is a cultural-political toll that takes seriously the notion of human differences, particularly as these differences relate to race, class, and gender. In its most radical sense, critical pedagogy seeks to unoppress the oppressed and unite people in a shared language of critique, struggle, and hope to end various forms of human suffering.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁷ Cho, *Politics of Critical Pedagogy and New Social Movements*, 315

¹¹⁸ Kanpol, *Critical Pedagogy: An Introduction*, 27

Kanpol builds upon Herbert Mead's work to say this is realized through the empathetic role taking of the other.¹¹⁹ Which is accomplished only by virtue of being in a shared world with shared communication, i.e., dialogical education.¹²⁰

Shor speaks of racial inequality in educational praxis resulting in economic disadvantages that are a result of a lack of educational opportunities.¹²¹ Shor sees equal access to college degrees as necessary in order for the gap between minority students and majority students to close. This is because knowledge and naming the world in the dialectical allows for oppressed persons to become unoppressed through understanding.

Since the project of inclusion seeks equality in opportunity and outcome do they have necessary presuppositions that will maintain and engender equality? If there is not fixed meaning, if meaning is only grounded in class distinctions and persons can be alienated from meaning as a result,¹²² then in what basic sense are men equal, what does it mean to be human? Finally, if educators continue to build upon Rousseau and Marx that posit: to change inequalities society must change, yet systems of meaning are behind these inequalities does blaming or changing the system do any good? Critical Pedagogy, as I will later show, even abandons this systematic attempt to change society.

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

¹²⁰ Perhaps this is much like and originating from a Heideggarian perspective on what it means to be in the world.

¹²¹ Shor, *Empowering Education: Critical Teaching for Social Change*, 286

¹²² Jean Anyon, "Social Class, School Knowledge, and the Hidden Curriculum."

Politics of the Culturalist

The culturalist project is set in contrast to the typical Marxist theorists' focus on economy. The focus is rather upon inequalities within and through representations of class, culture, subculture, hegemony, ideology, language, discourse, and representations of knowledge. This places the focus, as Shor indicates, upon situations such as unequal funding, inadequate staffing and facilities, and weak curricula—all decisions that were made from above.¹²³

This stance is vehemently against capitalism. According to Kanpol, capitalism is seen as a form of competition that devalues human life by allocating them to devalued positions due to quantifiable tests such as IQ.¹²⁴ Thus, Critical Pedagogy attempts to undercut this 'devaluing' of the human life to end alienation and subordination through the recasting of language and discourse as a means by which all persons have access. Furthermore, Kanpol believes that, under capitalism schools would remain unsuccessful in addressing problems of inequalities because inequality is built into the capitalist system.¹²⁵ This is due to understanding capitalism as being based upon the Darwinian survival of the fittest that presupposes inequality to subsist.¹²⁶ This is further recognized as a reaction against instrumental rationality as opposed to substantive rationality. Carlos Torres draws this distinction from

¹²³ Shor, *Empowering Education: Critical Teaching for Social Change*, 115

¹²⁴ Kanpol, *Critical Pedagogy: An Introduction*, 184

¹²⁵ Semel, *Foundations of Education: The Essential Texts*, 8

¹²⁶ Carlos, Alberto Torres, "Schooling, Power, and the Exile of the Soul," in *Ideology, Curriculum, and the New Sociology of Education: Revisiting the Work of Michael Apple*, ed, McCarthy and Dimitriadis, (CRC Press 2006), 50.

Raymond Morrow and David Brown *Critical Theory and Methodology*.¹²⁷ Instrumental rationality is efficiency of the means realizing given ends (values) where efficiency is based on calculation and expertise. Substantial rationality refers to ultimate value claims and cannot be based on formally rational procedures at all.¹²⁸

Once again it can be seen that the salient theme emerging of the non-neutrality of knowledge that leads to various forms of alienation and/or oppression being rooted in different conceptions of the good (the end). Under this guise—where instrumental/practical rationality is made to look like or be the only substantive rationality—in modern education the Critical Pedagogy theorist attempts to understand and intervene in knowledge representations by challenging students’ experiences and norms. For example, Shor, cites a study from Bigelow and Christensen about Columbus’s discovery of America to explicate this position of questioning ideology and representation.¹²⁹ Shor begins by asking students in the classroom: ‘if you take something and claim you discovered it does that make it is yours?’ They all respond, ‘of course not.’ Then they use that to elucidate how Columbus is portrayed to have discovered America when there were already people living there. Students then came up with new vernacular terms for what they think/felt Columbus actually did, “ripped off”, “invaded it,” and “conquered it.”¹³⁰ All in all they wanted students to question: why is it like this and how can I make it better? Perhaps, for Shor and others, the recasting of Columbus in history takes away the privileged position of the Spanish empire’s ‘discovery’ of the Americas.

¹²⁷ Raymond Allen Morrow and David D. Brown, *Critical Theory and Methodology*, Vol. 3 (Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage Publications, 1994), 381.

¹²⁸ Torres, “Schooling, Power, and the Exlie of the Soul, 100.

¹³⁰ Shor, *Empowering Education: Critical Teaching for Social Change*, 286

Thus, it can be seen how Critical Pedagogy attempts to question given norms that are portrayed as facts or common knowledge through the redressing of history or given facts. This practice attempts to alleviate suffering or alienation in certain individuals or people groups. In the Columbus example this was or can be used to alleviate the oppression of American Indians.

While it is important to question and redress false dogmas that are presented to us, it is of utmost importance *how* this is done; by what means the beliefs ought to be tested or examined. Once again, if nothing is neutral, from where does one begin to raise questions? Must another paradigmatically replace one worldview; are worldviews incommensurable? After all, how does one know for certain that they are not doing more harm than good in their redressing of history? Unbeknownst to the teacher, scholar, laymen or whoever is doing the redressing/questioning, history itself is now under suspicion, according to this theory, and it only gets continually re-casted depending on the particular worldview's narrative. Only through a theory that is available to all and able to make judgments between views could this problem of a relativity of worldviews be solved.

Politics of self/identity and grassroots

Cho saw that after the Soviet experiment had failed to garner results in the class struggle for equality that institutional change was abandoned. After the 1956 invasion of Hungary and Prague it became clear that economic class struggle was a failure. By the 60's the class struggle had become unrealistic and unpopular. Then, in the 70's and 80's the Third World saw they could not catch up with the modern world. It became, to the Left, a lost hope to attempt to improve the human condition or solve social problems systematically. Therefore, the focus shifted:

Critical pedagogy emerged against the structural determinism of the Neo-Marxist theories of education in the 1970s and 80s. It shifted its theoretical and political projects to re-discover the human agency, which has been all but denied or woefully ignored in structural determinism since Althusser¹³¹

Rediscovery human agency became necessary to redistribute power at all levels, beginning with the individual's emancipation. No longer was it merely a work of recasting society. Rather, Critical Pedagogy became focused upon the individual's recasting of their experiences and education.

Subsequently, Critical Pedagogy moved to a form of power that began to conceptualize authority as fundamentally dialogic consensus. They abandoned social change and began to look at change as localized and grassroots; bottom up not top down. This marked a shift of tactics away from the political to the educational and personal levels.

It should be added that this grassroots, individualistic movement of Postmodernism and Critical Pedagogy wanted to move away from the Enlightenment ideal of unity. Carlson and Dimitriadis say this of unity:

Postmodernism begins with a critique of all discourse of unity, and of an authoritative, unified, "objective" truth, associating unity with antidemocratic, authoritarian projects that attempt to erase difference. In place of the trope of unity, postmodernism valorizes the trope of chaos and disorder, of difference that cannot be brought together under a "whole," of truth that is always partial, contested, and positional.¹³²

Yet, there seems to be a paradox with this kind of Critical Pedagogical thinking. Is unity better or disunity? Apple indicates that unity, at least in share meaning and action through curriculum is not inherently bad but, an ideal societies strive to accomplish. Apple states that, "this commitment to maintaining a sense of

¹³¹ Cho, *Politics of Critical Pedagogy and New Social Movements*, 317.

¹³² Dimitriadis and Carlson, ed, *Promises to Keep: Cultural Studies, Democratic Education, and Public Life*

community, one based on cultural homogeneity and valuative consensus, that has been and remains one of the primary, though tacit, legacies of the curriculum field."¹³³ It is when hegemony through the use of scientific and technological language causes oppression, alienation, or bases itself off technocratic rationality that this idea of unity becomes suspect. This, according to Apple has been characteristic of attempts to solve a value/political problem through a systems approach influenced by science and technology.¹³⁴ Rather, Apple implores us to engage in ethical and political debate guided by “philosophical analysis dealing with modes of moral reasoning and valuative argumentation.”¹³⁵

If Apple is correct and curriculum is a form of garnering a common meaning in a person and amongst persons a conception of unity that also brings equality amongst persons and allows all persons to participate together is necessary. This theory necessarily needs to presuppose common ground between persons and building upon pervious points assist in choosing between and distinguishing different worldviews.

Paulo Freire

Many of these ideas, particularly that of oppression, that have been covered have been shared by various theorists that ascribe to Critical Pedagogy. Yet, in talking about this subject, it is necessary to provide a space for Paulo Freire. Freire is prominent figure in Critical Pedagogy and from whom many ideas arise. Therefore, it is imperative to further explicate his ideology in order to understand why Critical

¹³³ Apple, *Ideology and Curriculum*, 80

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, 199

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, 121

Pedagogy implements practices and ideological forms. In order to understand Freire I begin at the beginning of his career.

Freire began his journey in Brazil teaching and attending law school. He was a middle class man without a concern for being in poverty. Through a conversation with a young struggling dentist the course of his life was drastically altered. The dentist had taken out a loan too large to manage by himself and was in need of money to buy his instruments in order to practice. All the while, he was desperately trying to provide for his family. Feeling unequipped to assist this man in his endeavors and yearning to make an impact upon others like this struggling dentist, he quit law and decided to focus on education and began to write *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*.¹³⁶

Later, while presenting dialogical concepts, which would appear in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, about how more dialogical loving relationship between parents and children in place of violent punishment was necessary Freire have another such encounter.¹³⁷ After one lecture, a worker stood up and addressed Freire. This man's comment eventually helped Freire to focus his course of action:

'Dr. Paulo, sir—do you know where people live? Have you ever been in any of our houses, sir?' And he began to describe their pitiful house. He told me of the lack of facilities, of the extremely minimal space in which all their bodies were jammed. He spoke of the lack of resources for the most basic necessities. He spoke of physical exhaustion, and of the impossibility of dreams for a better tomorrow. He told me of the prohibition imposed on them from being happy—or even of having hope.¹³⁸

¹³⁶ Freire, Freire and Freire, *Pedagogy of Hope: Reliving Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, 240

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, 23

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, 17

This man then showed Freire that, though the doctor lived a nice life and read nice books, he did not understand the marginalized. On the topic of violence to their children the man went on to tell Freire that while the doctor might come home to bathed kids who are not hungry, are clean, and dressed—it was another thing to come home to children that are starving, bedraggled, and unkept. “If people hit their kids, and even ‘go beyond bounds,’ as you say, it’s not because people don’t love their kids. No, it’s because life is so hard they don’t have much choice.”¹³⁹ This lack of hope moved Freire so much that this encounter helped his taxonomy of class knowledge in understanding the oppressed.

This and other events in Freire’s life started him down a path of engaging with literacy in marginalized people groups, particularly the illiterate. “Freire did not promote literacy for its own sake, but saw it rather as bringing about the democratization of culture among the rural and urban illiterate in Brazil.”¹⁴⁰ This fight for literacy became Freire’s legacy and subsequent reason for exile from Brazil. In a system where one could only vote if one was able to read, Freire overturned the whole electoral system. In Pernambuco his movement moved the literacy rate from 800,000 to 1.3 million.¹⁴¹ With the subsequent socialist/communist awakening in Brazil that destabilized the country, Freire became guilty by association of the revolt and was exiled to Chile. It was there that his main work *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* was formed.

¹³⁹ Ibid.

¹⁴⁰ Paul V. Taylor, *The Texts of Paulo Freire* (Buckingham England; Philadelphia: Open University Press, 1993), 24.

¹⁴¹ Taylor 1993. Ibid.

To summarize the vastness and complexity of Freire's work I am going to propose the following points and explicate each of them in order. Each concept holds a salient theme in Freire's work: the oppressed, critical consciousness, dialogue, and freedom and authority.

The Oppressed

Freire begins with a conception of dehumanization as a historical and ontological problem facing humanity. For Freire, it was dehumanization brought upon others through ideological oppression that often, if not always, resulted in physical oppression.¹⁴² One of the basic elements of this dehumanization directed toward the oppressed was/is through prescription. In this reality, the oppressor sees himself and others as things, not persons. According to Freire, the prescriptions "represent the imposition of one individual's choice upon another, transforming the consciousness of the person prescribed to into one that conforms with the prescriber's consciousness."¹⁴³

Paul Taylor best explicates oppression in Freire's pedagogical framework. First, the individual deprived of dialogue is oppressed. Second, dialogue is the process and practice of liberation. Third, the individual engaged in dialogue is liberated. Fourth, dialogue by definition, requires more than one first. Fifth, more than a single person can be called a society.¹⁴⁴ It is by depriving the other of dialogue

¹⁴² To see how this links with Gramsci's notion of oppression see Peter Mayo's book *Gramsci, Freire & Adult Education* 1999. Peter Mayo, *Gramsci, Freire, and Adult Education: Possibilities for Transformative Action* (London; New York: Zed Books, 1999), 211.

¹⁴³ Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* [Pedagogia do oprimido.English], 30th anniversary ed. (New York: Continuum, 2000), 47.

¹⁴⁴ Taylor, *The Texts of Paulo Freire*, 59

that one becomes oppressed; persons are transformed from subjects to objects. Thus, it is through dialogue that one can be emancipated from oppression, which necessarily occurs within the politics of culture.

The struggle for Freire is for freedom from the prescription of the oppressors that can only come through the oppressed themselves. This is because, “the oppressor, who is himself dehumanized because he dehumanizes others, is unable to lead this struggle.”¹⁴⁵ Yet, those in the struggle for freedom from oppression battle against a duality within themselves. At one point wanting freedom yet afraid of it due having internalized the consciousness of the oppressor’s prescriptions within them have paralyzed the oppressed so as they are unable to actualize emancipation.

In this duality Freire sees the oppressed as having fatalistic attitudes. This attitude is almost always exemplified in what is seen as inevitable forces that work against freedom. The oppressed see, fatalistically, that “their suffering, the fruit of exploitation, as the will of God,” or in another way, that it is just how society is.¹⁴⁶ The oppressed further this attitude through self-depreciation. They see themselves as lacking knowledge and say “the ‘professor’ is the one who has knowledge and to whom they should listen.”¹⁴⁷ They fail to see that they know things and they are amidst a struggle to become more fully human. They must see the struggle is not simply a struggle that begins with hunger, but that the struggles is to become human beings, not merely objects.

¹⁴⁵ Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, 47

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., 47

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., 63

Freire believes this struggle against oppression can only come through teaching and developing a critical consciousness through revolutionary leadership.¹⁴⁸ The pedagogy that reveals this oppression therefore attempts to do so through bringing the person to understand or see their self-determined ability to recast their human agency, rather than define their humanity based upon an objective system of rationality.

Critical Consciousness

In order for one to escape the oppression, Freire posits what can be called critical literacy or critically consciousness. One can understand critical consciousness by understanding that to which it is opposed: the banking model of education. By understanding the banking model of education the critical consciousness can be defined.

Banking education takes the world as motionless, static, compartmentalized, and predictable.¹⁴⁹ The world is seen as being full of facts, such as four times four equals sixteen, or the capital of Arizona is Phoenix. This model then reaches into an ethical life and tells how students how life is or should be, rather than assisting them in understanding it themselves. Under the banking guise, education becomes “depositing” rather than learning. “The teacher issues communiqués and makes deposits which the students patiently receive, memorize, and repeat.”¹⁵⁰ According to Freire, this neglects the fact that students have knowledge about the world:

Implicit in the banking concept is the assumption of a dichotomy between human beings and the world: a person is merely *in* the world, not *with* the

¹⁴⁸ Ibid.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., 71

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., 72

world or with others: the individual is a spectator, not re-creator. In this view the person is not a conscious being; he is rather the possessor of *a* consciousness: an empty 'mind' passively open to the reception of deposits of reality from the world outside.¹⁵¹

Thus, the banking methodology of educational praxis is anti-dialogical in that it places ideology upon students rather than examines it alongside them. Yet, due to the presupposition of an objective, unchanging world where "facts are facts," there is no need for dialogue juxtaposed with mere memorization.

"Contrastingly, authentic thinking, thinking that is concerned about *reality*, does not take place in ivory tower isolation, but only in communication."¹⁵² That is, conceptions of reality are communicated in dialogue. "Changing language is part of changing the world. The relationship, language-thought-world, is a dialectical, processual, contradictory relationship."¹⁵³ This understanding of dialogue leads to, according to Freire, a restoration of the subjective understanding of humans and sets in relief conceptions of power.

Therefore, the essential goal of a critical consciousness becomes transforming reality through dialogue.¹⁵⁴ This transformation occurs through non-acceptance. Nothing is given, nothing is unquestionable; there is no sacred. Critical consciousness becomes a paradigmatic shift in the way the individual sees the world around him. Necessarily, this leads to a rejection of the idea of the banking model's

¹⁵¹ Ibid., 75

¹⁵² Ibid., 77

¹⁵³ Freire, Freire and Freire, *Pedagogy of Hope: Reliving Pedagogy of the Oppressed*

¹⁵⁴ Paul V. Taylor, *The Texts of Paulo Freire* (Buckingham England; Philadelphia: Open University Press, 1993), 52.

form of knowledge as facts to be memorized and discovered. Rather, knowledge is to be grasped through dialogue with others.

Yet, almost paradoxically, Freire is following in the footsteps of the Philosopher René Descartes. Freire is attempting to understand the reality that cannot be doubted. In Freire's literacy campaigns he believes in naming the world as a form of critical consciousness. Freire is "asking the learner to confront the complexities of the whole word, the whole world of reality, through 'naming their world'."¹⁵⁵

Though the claim can be made that this once again leads to the banking model of education Freire cuts that claim off. In his problem-posing form of education, leading to a critical consciousness, the teacher and student are working together to discover the world. Together with the student the teacher creates the conditions where conceptions of knowledge are superseded by knowledge at the level of *logos*.¹⁵⁶ This problem-posing model of education seeks to create an emergence of consciousness and critical intervention in reality rather than a submergence through the presentation of facts to be regurgitated.

It is through this dialogical form of education alongside the student that critical consciousness is realized. The world becomes open to them and hegemony can be deconstructed. Upon Freire's account, critical consciousness that occurs through dialogue is presupposed by: hope, integrity, faith, humility, and love.¹⁵⁷ In order to understand how dialogical education can unoppress persons it will be

¹⁵⁵ Taylor, *The Texts of Paulo Freire*, 80

¹⁵⁶ Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, 81

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 92

necessary to understand what Freire, and by extension Critical Pedagogy theorists mean by dialogue.

Dialogue: Hope, integrity, faith, humility, and love:

Dialogue cannot exist without love. “Love is at the same time the foundation of dialogue and dialogue itself.”¹⁵⁸ The act of love is being committed to the cause of the other, to their liberation and emancipation. Without love one cannot, according to Freire, enter into dialogue. Love is an act of intervention and courage for the other and for oneself against oppression.

Alongside love, Freire sees humility as a necessary part of dialogue. Humility, in this sense, can be understood as seeing that one’s self does not contain the whole of truth. It sees others are partners in this world and as equals. “Self-sufficiency is incompatible with dialogue.”¹⁵⁹ Humility is seeing one’s self as a part of the greater whole of humanity and as always being with others in the world. It is not opposing others or marginalizing others. Therefore, it is willing to listen to others’ thoughts, which results in genuine dialogue.

“Faith in people is an *a priori* requirement for dialogue; the ‘dialogical man’ believes in other even before he meets them face to face.”¹⁶⁰ Faith to Freire is, understanding the possibility of both alienating the other and liberating them. The dialogical person takes up the challenges of liberation in the face of alienation because of the possibility and hope that lies with the other.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., 89

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., 90

¹⁶⁰ Ibid., 90

Dialogue with love, humility, and faith produces an environment of trust. In the environment of trust, according to Freire, a closer partnership of naming the world can occur. This environment of trust is contingent upon integrity and honesty between two persons and “it cannot exist if that party’s words do not coincide with their action.”¹⁶¹ For Freire, attempting to promote democracy while silencing or marginalizing people is to not have integrity.

Furthermore, dialogue cannot exist without hope. “Hope is an ontological need.”¹⁶² For one to struggle without hope is frivolous and ends in fatalism and pessimism about reality. Freire finds hope in the unknown struggle for the future, “when the future is a given, then there is no hope. There is no room for struggle or a utopia.”¹⁶³ Without hope in the midst of the struggle against oppression, hope is pointless. It is denying the struggle one of its necessary conditions. The hope Freire finds amidst the struggle is in tolerance and an egalitarian future where all persons are treated equally. It is important to note that his hope is rooted in a form of critical consciousness that *creates* hope.

Freedom and Authority

Freire works out the role of the educator in a critical education as one who instills hope in the student. Yet, this occurs under the Freireian dialogue between the educator and the educatee where the goal is the emancipation of the individual. So, as a result, there remains an interesting dichotomy. To teach a student is to impose or deposit, given knowledge into the educatee, thus a form of oppression; yet, the

¹⁶¹ Ibid., 91

¹⁶² Freire, Freire and Freire, *Pedagogy of Hope: Reliving Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, 8

¹⁶³ Ibid., 91

role of the educator always already stands above the educatee. What then becomes of the role of an educator when all knowledge is related to power and oppression, what can be taught?

To attempt to escape this quagmire Freire bases pedagogical authority in dialogue, and given his prior aversion toward the banking model (hegemony) of education this is the only way for him:

We also run the risk of either of denying freedom the right to assert itself, thus exacerbating the role of authority; or else of atrophying the latter and thus hypertrophying the former. In other word, we run the risk of succumbing to the seduction of tyranny of liberty, or to the tyranny of authority, thus acting at cross-purposes, in either hypothesis, with our incipient democracy¹⁶⁴

Therefore, authority based upon a mutual respect between the teacher (educator) and the student (educatee) as partners within the dialogue is the way by which the binds of oppression can be broken. As Carlson and Dimitriadis indicate, Freire's builds upon Marxist discourse in a way that helps the marginalized and oppressed people overcome the ideology that besets them and tells them they cannot think for themselves, are undeserving, and therefore dependent upon the "master."¹⁶⁵ By recasting knowledge, authority, and freedom in dialogue, Freire recasts the desired dynamic between teacher and student.

Going further, Freire proclaims, "it is impossible to democratize the choice of content without democratizing the teaching of content."¹⁶⁶ Thus, is born the dialogical approach of educational praxis whereby the student-teacher relationship is

¹⁶⁴ Ibid., 21

¹⁶⁵ Dimitriadis and Carlson, *Promises to Keep: Cultural Studies, Democratic Education, and Public Life*, 13

¹⁶⁶ Freire, Freire and Freire, *Pedagogy of Hope: Reliving Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, 110

based upon equal footing. “Through dialogue, the teacher-of-the-students and the students-of-the-teacher cease to exist and a new term emerges: teacher-student with student-teachers.”¹⁶⁷ In this dialogical problem-posing education teachers become learners along with the students *as much as* the students become instructors along with the teachers. “In this process, arguments based on ‘authority’ are no longer valid; in order to function, authority must be *on the side of* freedom, not *against* it.”¹⁶⁸

Instead of pedagogical practices in which the teacher prepares a lecture a head of time the dialogic teacher would do examination of texts along with the student. It would then appear that the only way for a teacher in a problem-posing form of education to have any ‘authority’ over the students would be as a result of the acumen they have gained from years of study in their field. Yet, even acumen can still not be held over the students because students are seen as likely to have just as much insight into the subject of study. That is to say, the dialogical teachers in understanding the interconnectivity of dialogical practices will not be able, or ‘ought not’ hold any forms of authority over the student in a way that becomes hegemonic. Thus, to Freire the teachers who do not continue to study and better themselves are no longer qualified to be teachers; they have deprived themselves from the wherewithal to be a teacher.¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁷ Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, 80

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 80

¹⁶⁹ Freire, Freire and Freire, *Pedagogy of Hope: Reliving Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, 82

Henry Giroux

Henry Giroux is a prominent thinker in modern Critical Pedagogy and Cultural Studies. In the 70's and 80's Giroux brought together the work of Freire, the cultural capital of Pierre Bourdieu, the radical democratic work of Aronowitz, and the Frankfurt School's critical theory.¹⁷⁰ From this amalgamation of ideas he returned to the roots of Cultural Studies found in Raymond William's notions of adult education. There he attempted to expose the use of education to reeducate America away from the liberation movements during the Regan era.

In the 30s and 40s Richard Hoggart and Raymond Williams founded Cultural Studies. Williams' work was mainly focused around that of adult education and the idea of culture as an ordinary way of life.¹⁷¹ This inherently made a move away from modernity that Giroux would later expand upon in his work in Critical Pedagogy and border crossing.¹⁷² In the following section I will attempt to contextualize Giroux's work in his move away from modernity to border pedagogy constituted within Postmodernity which itself rejects universality, reason, and a grand narrative of history.¹⁷³

¹⁷⁰ Joe L. Kincheloe, *Critical Pedagogy Primer* (New York: P. Lang, 2004), 156.; Dimitriadis and Carlson, *Promises to Keep: Cultural Studies, Democratic Education, and Public Life*, 13

¹⁷¹ R. Williams, "Culture is Ordinary" 1989.

¹⁷² Giroux, *Border Crossings: Cultural Workers and the Politics of Education*, 263

¹⁷³ Henry A. Giroux, *Pedagogy and the Politics of Hope: Theory, Culture, and Schooling: A Critical Reader* (Boulder, Colo.: WestviewPress, 1997), 290.; Henry A. Giroux and Christopher G. Robbins, *The Giroux Reader* (Boulder: Paradigm Publishers, 2006), 48.; Dimitriadis and Carlson, *Promises to Keep: Cultural Studies, Democratic Education, and Public Life*, 13

Postmodernism, according to Giroux, ‘rejects the universal, any claim to transcendental, rejects reason as the universal claim on human affairs.’¹⁷⁴ Within Modernity, reason was held in high regard and became associated with scientific rationality, which is inherently positivistic. This signals Morrow and Brown’s distinction, covered earlier, between instrumental and substantive rationality.¹⁷⁵ Due to the resulting atrocities seen in Auschwitz, the modernist conception of reason and science has been rejected as the result of the rise of oppression and subjugation. Postmodernism rejects positivism in its attempts to be predictive and mechanistic in its orientation toward the future. This rejection of universality and reason for the Postmodern becomes a rejection of reason as having a transcendental or ontological status within human affairs.

Another characteristic of social modernism is the epistemological project of elevating reason to an ontological status. Modernism in this view becomes synonymous with civilization itself, and reason is universalized in cognitive and instrumental terms as the basis for a model of industrial, cultural, and social progress.¹⁷⁶

For postmodernists if reason stands as it was in modernity it denies the reality of difference and struggle for a better future. Instead of the Postmodern notion of open and manifest, Modernity holds that history is determined. Thus, as Freire states, for some this denies hope for a better future.

This is furthered in a rejection the idea of a historical narrative, continuity, or goal set forth in history. By rejecting the primacy of reason as the foundation from

¹⁷⁴ Giroux and Robbins, *The Giroux Reader*, 8

¹⁷⁵ Torres, “Schooling, Power, and the Exile of the Soul,” 50.

¹⁷⁶ Giroux, *Border Crossings: Cultural Workers and the Politics of Education*, 36

which humans might relate and/or come to know the world the narrative of Hegel, Marx, or Kant are subsequently rejected as well. Contrastingly:

Post modernism not only views the subject as contradictory and multilayered: it rejects the notion that individual consciousness and reason are the most important determinants in shaping human history. It posits instead a faith in forms of social transformation that understand the historical, structural, and ideological limits that shape the possibility for self-reflection and action . . . points to solidarity, community, and compassion as essential aspects of how we develop and understand the capacities we have for how we experience the world and ourselves in a meaningful way.¹⁷⁷

Furthermore, that the "grand narratives do not problematize their own legitimacy rather, they deny the historical and social construction of their own first principles and in doing so wage war on difference, contingency, and particularity."¹⁷⁸ This furthers the point that nothing is given, all is historically and socially constructed and therefore open for critique and change.

It is important to note that Postmodernity is responding to a *certain conception* of reason as governed by positive science. Positivism is historically arising from a conception of reality that is *a priori* knowable through the senses. In this framework, it is believed that what cannot be verified through the senses cannot be known. This is particularly the form of reason that many scholars (such as Adorno) are responding to, which is thought to have constituted modernity and resulted in the Holocaust. Therefore, the harmony of postmodernism as, "if there is any underlying harmony to various discourses of postmodernism, it is in their rejection of absolute essences" ought to be understood in light of this context of sense experience.¹⁷⁹

Furthermore, these modern pedagogical practices became – "an irrational rationality

¹⁷⁷ Giroux and Robbins, *The Giroux Reader*, 49

¹⁷⁸ Giroux, *Border Crossings: Cultural Workers and the Politics of Education*.

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 44

marked by an emphasis on prediction and technical control” that is constituted by Freire’s conception of Banking Education.¹⁸⁰

In light of the response to positivist discourses, Postmodernity reconceptualized language.

Postmodern discourse has retheorized the nature of language as a system of signs structured in the infinite play of difference, and in doing so has undermined the dominant, positivist notion of language as either a genetic code structured in permanence or simply a linguistic, transparent medium for transmitting ideas and meaning.¹⁸¹

This is to say, that language is both given and knowable, or that language is a system of signs and symbols whereby meaning is socially constructed. In this socially constructed sense the critical educator must uncover this meaning of differences in social reality. Education becomes the site where subjectivities are produced and maintained, cultural hegemony and construction of dominant and subordinate ideologies through the use of language. Therefore, Giroux proposes a radical pedagogy that allows us to understand how these understandings or ideologies are formed in the complex web of social constructions.

From this Giroux enumerates the notion of border pedagogy, which allows students and teachers to understand their experiences in relation to culture, history, and politics.¹⁸²

Border pedagogy is attentive to developing a democratic public philosophy that respects the notion of difference as part of a common struggle to extend the quality of public life. It presupposes not merely an acknowledgment of

¹⁸⁰ Kincheloe, *Critical Pedagogy Primer*, 79

¹⁸¹ Giroux, *Border Crossings: Cultural Workers and the Politics of Education*, 52

¹⁸² *Ibid.*, 73

the shifting borders that both undermine and reterritorialize different configurations of culture, power, and knowledge.¹⁸³

Border pedagogy calls for recognition of epistemic, political, cultural, and social margins that structure the language of history, power, and difference. It wants to create a space for otherness to be understood and new identities to be created in existing power relations. It makes known the historical and social construction inherited that frame discourse and language. Furthermore:

border pedagogy necessitates combining the modernists emphasis on the capacity of individual to use critical reason to address the issue of public life with a postmodernist concern with how we might experience agency in a world constituted in difference unsupported by transcendent phenomena or metaphysical guarantees.¹⁸⁴

Border pedagogy follows the way of Postmodernity, by seeing the world as open to human creation, will, and power. In so doing, border pedagogy puts its hope in creating new horizons of knowledge.

In Giroux's rejection of the modernist presuppositions the question of meaning arises. What are these new horizon's of knowledge? Like postmodernism the salient question of nihilism arises once foundations of universality, a given metaphysics, or future states such as those explicated by Kant, Hegel, or Marx are abandoned. In response Giroux turns to Laclau, which is worth restating here:

It leads, rather, to a proliferation of discursive interventions and arguments that are necessary, because there is no extradiscursive reality that discourse might simply reflect. Inasmuch as argument and discourse constitute the social, their open-ended character becomes the source of a great activism and a more radical libertarianism. Humankind, having always bowed to external forces—God, Nature, the necessary laws of History—can now, at the

¹⁸³ Ibid., 20

¹⁸⁴ Ibid., 21

threshold of postmodernity, consider itself for the first time the creator and constructor of its own history.¹⁸⁵

Thus the primacy of experience and the will arise to place man, not in any given sense, but seeing an opening up of one's vistas to new possibilities. Through the rejection of deterministic forces such as God, Nature, or History Giroux has instead placed argument and discourse. The question then becomes has he truly escaped metatheory or simply posited a new one?

With this in mind, it is possible to situate Giroux's move towards institutional and social critique rather than philosophical epistemic critiques. In a Rousseauian way, (presupposing the goodness of man, the primacy of the will, and social activism) border pedagogy attempts to create new objects of knowledge and address how inequality, power, and human suffering are rooted in institutional structures.¹⁸⁶ Furthermore, in its pedagogical practices, border pedagogy goes against the grain of transmission teaching that do memorization and surveying of texts without critical analysis.

Therefore, "it is imperative that such a pedagogy acknowledge and critically interrogate how the colonizing of differences by dominant groups is expressed and sustained through representations in which the humanity of the other is either ideologically disparaged or ruthlessly denied."¹⁸⁷ These differences can often be made through the uncritical acceptance of texts as privileged without critically examining the power structure behind them. Thus, border pedagogy has three goals: (1) to understand how the production of meaning is related to affective investment and

¹⁸⁵ E. Laclau, "Politics and the Limits of Modernity," *Social Text*, no. 21 (1989), 79-80.

¹⁸⁶ Giroux, *Border Crossings: Cultural Workers and the Politics of Education*, 21

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 25

production of pleasure, (2) how students placed in and take up different economic needs and rethinking them, and (3) that popular culture be seen as a legitimate phenomenon to be analyzed as a primary force in shaping students' stand point.

Chapter 3

A PLACE TO BEGIN

To better understand Critical Pedagogy I will show what their goals are and how and if those goals match up with their presupposition. In order to set up and differentiate this analysis I will begin with the modern setting. Recalling part of the first section's focus on the *telos* of education I will examine David Horowitz and Henry Giroux's differences on education and how these differences in light of their not dissimilar goals bring this debate to a stalemate. Ultimately, I will draw critical education back to Immanuel Kant's and Jurgen Habermas' understand of the transcendental to realize what a critical education 'ought to be.' In what follows I want to conclude:

1. Divisions about politics assumes divisions at a more basic level
2. A critical education should get to more basic level divisions (and establish common ground)
3. Critical Pedagogy does not get to the more basic level due to its assumptions (nor establish common ground)
4. Therefore Critical Pedagogy's assumptions cannot stand as a substantive form of critical education.
5. Furthermore, Worldviews are way of making sense and giving mean to the world around us
6. A critical education tests various worldviews for meaning
7. Critical Pedagogy makes sense of the world around us through the Postmodern worldview
8. The Postmodern worldview must be tested for meaning and cannot, because of its presuppositions, be the grounds from which meaning is tested.
9. The only means from which to test other views for meaning in through what is transcendental.

The Modern Debate

Horowitz and Giroux, though never exchanging words, do exchange ideological blows with one another. Giroux is not explicitly mentioned in Horowitz's writings, however the Critical Pedagogy/Critical Theory position from which Giroux

comes is; cultural studies, critical studies, etc. Giroux, on the other hand does explicitly mention Horowitz's and his conservative position in his own writings by vehemently denouncing him. Therefore, I will examine some of this conflict so as to reveal more basic differences between the two parties that influence their view of education.

I first begin with Horowitz. Horowitz began as a member of the communist party and is now a passionate speaker against left leaning political movements. During his time on the left, his writings received favorable reviews and were never highly criticized by his colleagues.¹⁸⁸ However, it would appear now that Horowitz is an out spoken conservative in the academy that sees education as needing to rid itself of what he claims is indoctrination by the Left, that he is high criticized. Particularly, Horowitz believes many study areas (e.g. cultural studies, whiteness studies, post colonial studies, global studies, justice studies) have been shaped by a-political view points and represented as canon to students.¹⁸⁹ Rather, he would prefer that professors, under the auspices of academic freedom and personal acumen, instruct students to be critical thinkers as opposed to indoctrinating them.¹⁹⁰ On this he says:

Professors have every right to interpret the subjects they teach according to their individual points of view. This is the essence of academic freedom. But they also have professional obligations as teachers, whose purpose is the instruction and education of students, not to impose their biases on students as though they were scientific facts. The professorial task is to teach students how to think, not to tell them what to think. In short, it is the responsibility of professors to be professional – and therefore "academic"— in their

¹⁸⁸ Horowitz, *Indoctrination U.: The Left's War Against Academic Freedom*, 159

¹⁸⁹ David Horowitz, *The Professors: The 101 most Dangerous Academics in America* (Washington, DC: Regnery Pub., 2006), x.

¹⁹⁰ Horowitz, *Indoctrination U.: The Left's War Against Academic Freedom*, 159

classrooms, and therefore not to require students to agree with them on matter which are controversial.¹⁹¹

Horowitz maintains that the only type of pedagogical practice that ought to occur in the classroom is that of academic vigor, not an impositions of their particular points of view.

This has resulted in Horowitz writing books such as *101 Most Dangerous Professors*, and other such titles to warn unaware students of the dangers of indoctrination. This kind of audacity resulted in him getting booed off stage and lambasted by leftist academics for attempting to push his conservative ideology upon academia.¹⁹² All the while, according to Horowitz, he wants to simply engender professionalism in the classroom rather than indoctrination or politics, be it from the left or right. He finds the attacks upon him are unfortunately focus on his character rather than his ideas. He has claimed that he does not wish to get left-wing professors fired nor make them give equal time to “crackpot views, like those of Holocaust deniers.” He simply desires the removal of controversial political views that have little to do with their fields of study from the classroom curriculum and talk.¹⁹³

One of the most controversial moves Horowitz has made is the publishing of his *Academic Bill of Right (ABOR)* and the subsequent adoption of it by various universities.¹⁹⁴ In the controversial ABOR Horowitz seeks to have a space that is free

¹⁹¹ Horowitz, *The Professors: The 101 most Dangerous Academics in America*, xxvi

¹⁹² Horowitz, *Indoctrination U.: The Left's War Against Academic Freedom*, 159

¹⁹³ *Ibid.*, 101

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

for inquiry.¹⁹⁵ That is free from political ideologies or biases. For students he wants to protect them from ready-made opinions on issues that have not yet been adequately challenged or debated. For professors, that they be protected from politics with hiring and appointment.¹⁹⁶ Furthermore, that the classroom ought to be conducted in a professional manner and opinions political, religious, or otherwise ought to be left outside or opposing viewpoints made known whereby the student's naïveté and intellectual immaturity might not be taken advantage of.

This position seems proper given the posture of academia with the focus upon academic freedom that was mentioned in the beginning by Cole. Cole mentioned similar threats from within and without against academic freedom such as dogmatism and politics that pervade academia.¹⁹⁷ However, once Horowitz began to implement this bill of rights extreme controversy ensued. In Colorado the bill was adopted with partisan compromise. Subsequently, however he was denounced by the print media in Colorado by such tag lines as “witch-hunter,” or being likened to Mao Zedong who persecuted professors for not touting the party line.¹⁹⁸

These views though do not appear *prima facie* in contrast to what has been covered in the examination of Critical Pedagogy. Horowitz wants to protect the academic freedoms of professors and students from ideas that are given to them as if

¹⁹⁵ “Academic Bill of Rights - Basic Texts - Documents - Students For Academic Freedom” last modified 2007,
<http://www.studentsforacademicfreedom.org/documents/1925/abor.html>

¹⁹⁶ Horowitz, *The Professors: The 101 most Dangerous Academics in America*, 448; Horowitz, *Indoctrination U.: The Left's War Against Academic Freedom*, 159

¹⁹⁷ Cole, *Great American University: Its Rise to Preeminence, its Indispensable National Role, Why it must be Protected*

¹⁹⁸ Horowitz, *Indoctrination U.: The Left's War Against Academic Freedom*, 11

they were 'truth.' Recalling the positions of Critical Pedagogy as dialogical and Freire's decri of banking education, it can be seen that these 'goal' are not entirely dissimilar. However, it ought to give us pause because Henry Giroux denounces this position.

Henry Giroux for example, believes public schools are under attack from neo-conservatives, religious fundamentalists, and hard-core right-wing ideologies because they (schools) have the potential to teach skills, knowledge, and values that necessarily make a more democratic public by making power and knowledge an object of dialogue and engagement.¹⁹⁹ This for Giroux will undermine the Right's power and ideology. Horowitz stands as the exemplar for those ideological positions. Giroux claims that, despite Horowitz's claim that the ABOR is politically neutral, he is backed by and often supports Right-wing ideology, thus he is not neutral; he has an agenda.²⁰⁰

Notable here is that both Giroux and Horowitz place political ideologies as the crux of the future of academia. Giroux cites Horowitz as actively pushing for state and federal regulations that impose political quotas on higher education by making conservative ideology a basis for hiring.²⁰¹ Horowitz does agree with allowing more conservative appointments in the academy because he believes by advocating for ideological diversity that shares in the national political landscape these diverse

¹⁹⁹ Henry A. Giroux, "Education After Abu Ghraib," *Cultural Studies* 18, no. 6 (11, 2004), 797.

²⁰⁰ Henry A. Giroux, "Academic Freedom Under Fire: The Case for Critical Pedagogy," Vol. 33.4 *College Literature*, 2006), 1-42.

²⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 797

idea can be worked out.²⁰² Horowitz claims that the leftist ideologies “are sectarian attempts to subvert both (heritage and culture) – by deconstructing the nation’s identity and by dividing its communities into warring classes, genders and races—into victims and oppressors.”²⁰³ As shown Giroux, and Critical Pedagogy in general, make a stand against this position by virtue of its purportedly neutral top-down stance. Therefore, Horowitz’s critique of this position does, at the least, not apply to Critical Pedagogy.

Each side desires academic freedom and critical inquiry, yet their political stances are antinomies. Giroux responds to Horowitz’s position by citing various occasions of one-sided critique and bias on Horowitz’s side against any left-oriented political positions.²⁰⁴ Yet, almost paradoxically Giroux himself says, “balance in the current attack on higher education is used as a rhetorical tool by right-wing conservatives and Christian evangelicals whose worldviews are dominated by fixed dualisms and an ideological rigidity that resents questioning.”²⁰⁵ For both sides, represented by Horowitz and Giroux, the debate remains at a political level of: right vs left; Christian vs non-Christian; communism vs capitalism. These apparent antinomies do not help to come to understand which should be chosen, if in fact these are the only choices.

What has been brought to the forefront is that practical reason is useless. Both sides see that mere job training is less than ideal. Horowitz and Giroux both

²⁰² Giroux, *Academic Freedom Under Fire: The Case for Critical Pedagogy*, 1-42

²⁰³ Horowitz, *Indoctrination U.: The Left’s War Against Academic Freedom*, xiv

²⁰⁴ Giroux, *Academic Freedom Under Fire: The Case for Critical Pedagogy*, 1-42

²⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 26

have stances that knowledge is not neutral or given. It must be tested. Both sides stand against rote memorization and dogmatism and, instead, wish to engender free and critical inquiry in schools. If anything can be thought of as common ground between these two, that can. Despite this 'agreement' there remain bitter divisions amongst these groups and persons. Giroux and Horowitz leave the debate at an impasse. These divisions, if they are to ever overcome in order to work together, must addressed at a more basic level.

In order to understand how education stands as a type of care for one's being and what a critical education is by understanding presuppositions, I want to explicate various philosophers' works. This will shed light on the debate between Giroux and Horowitz by bringing to the foreground if there are more basic points that ought to be addressed first and foremost. Can the academic future be fixed solely upon political ideology such as conservative or liberal, or is the debate and conflict at a level of understanding presupposed by each? Giroux believes that the academy is to challenge our worldviews, to unsettle our position, to think critically, but not to merely acquire skills for a job.²⁰⁶ Horowitz also believes in the process of understanding all positions, as there is a multiplicity of views.²⁰⁷ Both of these men, who stand in for their particular positions are quintessential examples of advocates for academic freedom, but from different political/ideological positions.

²⁰⁶ Ibid., 26

²⁰⁷ Horowitz, *Indoctrination U.: The Left's War Against Academic Freedom*, 159

Return to Philosophy

Much of this current debate stems from one that took place between Locke and Rousseau. Is the state and society, or the human condition to blame for suffering and moral evils (Rousseau) or does man have responsibilities for his/her circumstances (Locke)? To bring this further into the debate in education, this comes back to the fundamental question: what is it to be a human? Does man have an inclination towards selfish pursuits or virtuous ones? Is there a state apparatus needed to help us be good (Locke), or would it be better for us to be free from societal constructions and constraints (Rousseau)? If Rousseau is correct then changing societal circumstances is imperative to obtaining the good. But, the social construction of reality implies this idea too was socially constructed. However, if Locke is correct and men do not do what is good and need civil order to govern them, then changing the circumstances will only put different corrupt persons into power. What could possibly free man from this inner corruption about which Locke speaks? This brings back to the assignment of discerning the most basic aspect of human beings. Is it the will and power (such as Critical Pedagogy posits)? Is our most basic feature connected with a certain conception of rationality? Or, is there nothing transcendent in our being; is nothing assumed that makes all else possible? The answer to this question is paramount in determining the 'ought' in education.

As it currently stands, Critical Pedagogy looks at the cultural/social background factors of our human personality as the basis for equality/human rights.²⁰⁸ If men are equal then simply referencing subjective experiences as the basis

²⁰⁸ Back in section 2 this was the project of inclusion where Cho explicitly advocates for equality.

for democratic equality breaks down. If one, like in Auschwitz or Aبا Ghraib, decides some persons are not equal, how can subjectivity point out the error? Only through coming to understand how it is all persons experience is always already interpreted and engaging at that level this goal be reached. This further necessitates understanding our understanding as the ontological basis that is qualitatively true and applies to all persons. In order to do so, I go back to Kant where he attempted to explicate the transcendental in reason as that which is common amongst all and then working in Jürgen Habermas to further understanding the transcendental.

Turning to the topic of the transcendental it is necessary to turn to Kant. Kant stands as one of the most prominent philosophers of modernity that championed reason. “Kant was a virtual titan of philosophy, with absolutely enormous influence upon subsequent philosophy and theology.”²⁰⁹ His motto, ‘dare to reason’ stood as the slogan of the Enlightenment. If Critical Pedagogy is going to abandon Enlightenment rationality and appeal to subjective experience as the basis for understanding then, Kant’s arguments must be thoroughly examined.²¹⁰ This is not to say one should take the whole of Kant as correct; his work is still in need of critique. However, Kant tacitly applies because of his work in moral philosophy (that with which education is chiefly concerned). Kant, furthermore, provides an alternative to the presented spectrum of rationality with which Postmodernity has left us (i.e. technological or meditative, objective or subjective). From Kant, I will

²⁰⁹ Alvin Plantinga, *Warranted Christian Belief* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 9.

²¹⁰ As shown in chapter two Critical Pedagogy has rejected reason, not wholly, but reason such that the Enlightenment posited. I want to asked the question then, is that even possible to reject reason, or by saying one is they are tacitly affirming reason.

explicate two important concepts: that ethics for humanity must be universal and there must be some transcendental.²¹¹ This is not to ignore the critiques of Kant's ethics that have followed or ignore his distinction between practical reason and pure reason. Rather, this is to build presuppositionally from what is most basic (i.e., by asking is there something transcendental?). Upon this ground Kant's work becomes salient and examining his argument as a dichotomy to what Critical Pedagogy has posited as nothing is transcendental.

Kant explicates the necessity of the universality of morality in his piece *Metaphysics of Morals*. The universality of morality is salient to our present topic because of the highly lauded equality that is sought in pedagogical practices.²¹² Furthermore, democracy assumes that this equality must be rooted in common ground. Therefore, to obtain equality in democracy, common ground must necessarily be established. Rational/logical common ground must be found amongst rational beings. People do not offer a horse, a chair, or water the right to vote; only rational beings are able to vote. If reason cannot be called upon to establish common ground then equal rights cannot be guarantee in either the public or private realm.

Kant posits that, if the law is to have moral force, it must be rooted in the nature of

²¹¹ A bold task, but his argument is what will be under scrutiny so I will be drawing it out.

²¹² Recalling the project of inclusion as the goal of Critical Pedagogy as “the guarantee of equal opportunity and equal power for the underprivileged, oppressed, marginalized, or subjugated is the ultimate goal of this project.” Furthermore, as I argue for later equality and any moral/ethical theory must follow the principal of Universalization (U) as explicated by Habermas. Therefore, if Critical Pedagogy were to back away from equality that is universal, but rather local it would be impossible because via participating in practical discourse they presuppose the (U). This point will become clearer as this argument unfolds.

Cho, *Politics of Critical Pedagogy and New Social Movements*, 315 Jürgen Habermas, *Moral Consciousness and Communicative Action* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1990), 225.

man. Furthermore that human nature must be qualitatively known, not quantitatively/empirical known.²¹³

Human nature cannot be merely empirically grounded. Human nature requires the conceptual understanding of the word human nature, i.e., one that is grasped and applies to all within that category. Empiricism, by virtue of dealing solely with the external sense experience, when consistently held, leads to nominalism. Nominalism denies natures and sees words with no corresponding reality. When, and if, applied to human nature, would undermine any sense of universal (all within that class) equality of humans. Taking a practically example of how this is problematic can be seen through the work that has already been mentioned from Adorno.

At first glance the skeptic might reply that pragmatism does not need to appeal to any principal of universality. Yet, recalling Adorno's that the chief-end of education is that the mass murder of others never occurs again leaves the skeptic in a problematic position. Either it is the case that the action of the Nazi's is rational and thus propositional or that it defies propositional truths and cannot be argued for or against. That is to say, without communicative rationality such ethical problems that must be solved become impossible because no party in the debate is able to validate their moral claims.

Without philosophy based upon the reason, or the *Logos*, the moral law becomes unknowable.²¹⁴ This *Logos* that governs the world is what Freire was attempting to ascertain in his own way; through a critical consciousness. Both Kant and Freire can be seen to say that, morality properly conceived governs all

²¹³ Paul Guyer and Inc NetLibrary, *Kant's Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals* (Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield, 1998), 5.

²¹⁴ Ibid.

(universally) moral/rational beings. If morality, according to Kant, is not applicable to all moral beings then it is in no way a moral law, therefore to claim an ethical maxim (the 'ought') is utterly meaningless because it only applies to a select few. ²¹⁵

To state 'thou shall not steal' as a moral law assumes equality amongst those under the law. If one is not equal to the other the law does not apply. An animal is not held in the same regard as the human that steals, but only is a human stealing guilty of breaking the civil law. American democracy, begin with the claim that all men are equal.²¹⁶ Though this is rooted in a metaphysical position that was taken as self-evident and has been challenged since, the flow from metaphysics to ethics should not be abandoned too. It is important to not confuse positive law, that which is arbitrary like driving on the right side of the road, with moral philosophy and education. Education already assumes those being educated are equally rational (able to form concepts, judgment and arguments), and that rationality constitutes our common ground. If someone undermines this common ground, and is thus inconsistent with democracy, it ought to be rejected as an undemocratic form of education. Furthermore, it is no less dogmatic to assert a form of education without justification that guarantees equality by basing this upon the grounds empirical sense data, i.e., subjective experience. Critical Pedagogy has attempted to accomplish this by rooting equality in the subject's personal experience. The problem arises though in how to get outside of one's own experience and what occurs when contradicting interpretation of the same experience arises. To recall Adorno again, this becomes

²¹⁵ Ibid., 19

²¹⁶ "NARA | the Declaration of Independence: A Transcription "
[http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/charters/print_friendly.html?page=declaration_transcript_content.html&title=NARA | The Declaration of Independence: A Transcription](http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/charters/print_friendly.html?page=declaration_transcript_content.html&title=NARA%20|%20The%20Declaration%20of%20Independence%20: A%20Transcription) (accessed 4/3/2011, 2011).

the case when the West attempts to stop Nazi Germany. One side (Allies) see the Jews as humans the other (Nazis) see the Jews as non-humans. Human suffering requires all persons to participate in discourse whereby validity of morality is tested with others. Human suffers as radical as Auschwitz requires that humanity, not local bodies alone (in a mono-tradition) participate in discourse.

In so far as one participates in the communicative community, or the life world, there must be dialog with others about ethical maxims. In this modern era our world has expanded such that communication with other countries and ideologies is necessary. If Kant is correct and morality must be applied to all persons then the processes of validating maxims must benefit all persons and be justified. From this Habermas derives his understanding of the principal of universalization (U):

*All affected can accept the consequences and the side effects its general observance can be anticipated to have for the satisfaction of everyone's interests (and these consequences are preferred to those known alternative possibilities for regulation).*²¹⁷

And his principal of the ethics of discourse (D):

Only those norms can claim to be valid that meet (or could meet) with the approval of all affected in their capacity as *participants in practical discourse*.²¹⁸

From here Habermas presupposes that validation of norms is possible otherwise moral discourse becomes superfluous. Furthermore, ethical arguments cannot take place in a monological fashion but must take place dialogically. In this dialog all interlocutors can, after much discussion, reach a *common will* that is expressed in their agreement with one another. This must be the case because, as Habermas indicates,

²¹⁷ Ibid., 65

²¹⁸ Ibid., 66

persons must be open to criticism by others' needs and wants.²¹⁹ Since ethical claims, according to Kant and Habermas, all presuppose (U) all must be able to participate in the discourse. Every moral statement forces one into a yes or no position. Thus, justification in dialog is necessary in so far as one participates in the practical discourse.

Where Kant limits himself is that he posits the necessary *a priori* of reason that is apart from human nature as the foundation for morality, not human nature as reason. Kant states:

By this terminology one is directly reminded that moral principles are not grounded on the peculiarities of human nature, but must be subsistent *a priori* for themselves; but from them human practical rules must be derivable, as for every rational nature.²²⁰

Although Kant does say, “moral laws are to be valid for every rational being in general, to derive them from the universal concept of a rational in general.”²²¹ It is not surprising that Postmodernity responds to the Enlightenment rationality as being disjunct from humanity and goes the way of skepticism. Only by rooting morality within what is common amongst mankind can morality, in any universal and necessary sense, survive. What Freire seems to capture is this notion of the *Logos* in man that leaves the world open for him to know, or name/understand.

Though Kant's categorical imperative can remain valid only when thought of in relation to the good, as that which all persons can will. The duty-for-duty's-sake approach breaks down in determining which duties one ought to do and universalizing them. The categorical imperative “would be that which represented an

²¹⁹ Ibid., 67

²²⁰ Guyer and NetLibrary, *Kant's Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, 27

²²¹ Ibid., 28

action as necessary of itself without reference to another end, i.e., as objectively necessary.”²²² If, instead of duty, this is posited as the good, then once again morality could be established as universal and necessary. But, only if the good is knowable. All of ethics then stands as a hypothetical imperative to the one categorical imperative, i.e., discerning the end of happiness. That is, discerning that which brings lasting happiness: the *summum bonum*, the good.

By understanding understanding in relation to the good critical education be better understood. By looking at what Critical Pedagogy sees as understanding and comparing that to Kant it can be seen which is sounder (in terms of rational justification). In comparison to Kant, Critical Pedagogy’s view of language and understanding attempts to claim that there is no transcendental and no universal. There is no meaning behind a word; any word refers to various other words.²²³ The conventionality of the words is applied to concepts that too have become conventional. Concepts themselves are universal; they apply to all in that class that share those attributes and only those attributes. A concept is grasped. If there are no universals, then there are no concepts. This position is consistent with empiricism which itself if consistently held leads to nominalism.²²⁴ If all knowledge is from sense experience then there can never be a universal because one can never experience all instances. If there are no concepts then it can be rephrased, as nothing is knowable in itself, or that nothing has any essence. This it not to say that a particular cannot be

²²² Ibid., 31

²²³ Giroux, *Pedagogy and the Politics of Hope: Theory, Culture, and Schooling: A Critical Reader*, 290

²²⁴ Soon I will show how Habermas furthers this point by arguing against the skeptical positions that in that without the (U) of ethics the skeptic, in as far as they are consistent, must remain in silence or affirm (U) by participating in discourse.

known rather, extrapolating from the particular to the universal becomes problematic. This would necessarily include humans and undermine any form of rational justification for ethics. In what follows I will defend this position via Kant and Habermas.

Necessity of a Transcendental

Kant begins with experience and shows how it is that there must be something transcendental, the quality of the transcendental. Kant posits that transcendental aesthetics is that which is concerned with space and time. Of space he says:

Space is not a conception which has been derived from outward experiences. For, in order that certain sensations may relate to something without me (that is, to something which occupies a different part of space from that in which I am); in like manner, in order that I may represent them not merely as without, of, and near to each other, but also in separate places, the representation of space must already exist as a foundation.²²⁵

Without space being *a priori* experience could not occur. There would be no object outside being with which to interact and have the phenomenon called experience. If it were the case people could not understand our being in the world because the conception of its bounds and limits would be impossible.

Furthermore time stands as an *a priori* necessity for the possibility of experiencing the world. This notion is not something that can be sought empirically. Rather, it is known through reflection.

1. Time is not an empirical conception. For neither coexistence nor succession would be perceived by us, if the representation of time did not exist as a foundation *a priori*. Without this presupposition we could not represent to ourselves that things exist together at one and the same time, or at different times, that is, contemporaneously, or in succession.

²²⁵ Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. Miller John and Meiklejohn DowMobileReference, 2008), 23.

2. Time is a necessary representation, lying at the foundation of all our intuitions. With regard to phenomena in general, we cannot think away time from them, and represent them to ourselves as out of and unconnected with time, but we can quite well represent to ourselves time void of phenomena. Time is therefore given a priori.²²⁶

Kant here is arguing for a transcendental aspect of time. Without time given *a priori* experience and intelligibility as a finite temporal being would cease to exist.

Attempting to argue against time would end in a contradiction in that the skeptic would, by virtue of their argument, assume they are in time (here and now). It can therefore be seen that, in our experience, there must be conditions necessary for it. Having shown how Kant's conceptions of the necessity of the transcendental in experience a similar argument can be posited for a transcendental in understanding itself. Which is to say, that the transcendental is that with which a refuting is impossible because it is always already assumed in all that is said or done and stands in need of no prior justification.

Kant continues to press this idea of the transcendental in the area of logic. He establishes that it cannot be founded in experience. Rather, it is also prior to experience and necessary to understand experience.

With the pure conceptions of understanding, on the contrary, commences the absolute necessity of seeking a transcendental deduction, not only of these conceptions themselves, but likewise of space, because, inasmuch as they make affirmations concerning objects not by means of the predicates of intuition and sensibility, but of pure thought a priori, they apply to objects without any of the conditions of sensibility.²²⁷

This is to say, cognition applies to experience in order for sensibility to be possible. Without an *a priori* way of understanding experience then experience, which must be interpreted, will be rendered meaningless. Furthermore, according to Kant if one is

²²⁶ Ibid., 27

²²⁷ Ibid., 70

to deny the necessity of a transcendental then they wander about blindly and return to utter ignorance.²²⁸ Just as an infinite regress in experience is absurd so too is a regress in understanding. Understand based upon understanding based upon understanding ad infinitum has no meaning. I would be based upon my understanding of my teacher, which is based upon his teacher, ad infinitum; but no one actually having understanding. For example, if John owes Sally five dollars and write an I.O.U, but tells Sally that Joe will pay her from his I.O.U. that he has, and this goes on ad infinitum then Sally never gets paid. For another example take a theory, if theory A's weight (truth) is based upon theory B's weight, which itself is based upon theory C, ad infinitum there is no weight to theory A. The thing must be able to be examined in terms of something that allows for the examination, i.e., a transcendental. That which must be assumed for intelligibility to be possible otherwise as Kant states:

He ought, moreover, clearly to recognize beforehand the unavoidable difficulties in his undertaking, so that he may not afterwards complain of the obscurity in which the subject itself is deeply involved, or become too soon impatient of the obstacles in his path; because we have a choice of only two things- either at once to give up all pretensions to knowledge beyond the limits of possible experience, or to bring this critical investigation to completion.²²⁹

Kant leaves us with these options give up any understanding of concepts, essences, equality, rights, morality, and education or continue in the pursuit of understanding the nature of that which is transcendental.

Following in this same line of thinking as Kant, Habermas argues for the transcendental through the pragmatic presuppositions of practical discourse. To do

²²⁸ Ibid., 70

²²⁹ Ibid., 70

so Habermas uses Karl-Otto Apel's argument against the Munchhausen trilemma. Habermas recalls that according to Hans Albert if one attempts to justify moral principals with universal validity they fall into this trilemma. It becomes the case that the person must put up with an infinite regress, arbitrarily break off their point of deduction, or make a circular argument.²³⁰ In response Habermas states that: "it arises only if we presupposes a *semantic concept of justification* that is oriented to a deductive relationship between statements and based solely on the concept of logical inference."²³¹ Habermas then uses Apel's argument against this position to defend the cognitivist. The main line of arguments for this falls under the *performative contradiction*. "A performative contradiction occurs when a constative speech act $k(p)$ rests on noncontingent presuppositions whose propositional content contradicts the asserted proposition p ."²³² Habermas uses the example of Descartes "Cogito ergo sum" argument as an example. If a speaker were to take upon the opposite position, "I do not exist" then, it is the case that the speaker has performed this contradiction. At time of saying "I do not exist" the speaker also affirms "I exist (here and now)." At this point Habermas makes one aware of the futile attempts at the deductive argumentation for validity of (U) and instead validates moral arguments via the pragmatic presuppositions of practical discourse, i.e., transcendental justification. That amounts to that which must be presupposed from the condition of the possibility of discourse. To question it become futile because it makes questioning possible.

²³⁰ Ibid., 79

²³¹ Ibid., 79

²³² Ibid., 80

From practical discourse Habermas derives rules that transcendently remain true in pragmatic discourse. From Aristotle he derives three levels of these presuppositions: the logical (products), the dialectic (procedures), and the rhetorical (processes). These rules for discourse are as follows:

- 1.1 No speaker may contradict himself.
- 1.2 Every speaker who applies predicate F to object A must be prepared to apply F to all other objects resembling A in all relevant aspects.
- 1.3 Different speakers may not use the same expression with different meanings.
- 2.1 Every speaker may assert only what he really believes.
- 2.2 A person who disputes a proposition or norm not under discussion must provide a reason for wanting to do so.
- 3.1 Every subject with the competence to speak and act is allowed to take part in a discourse.
- 3.2 a. Everyone is allowed to question any assertion whatever.
- b. Everyone is allowed to introduce any assertion into the discourse
- c. Everyone is allowed to express his attitude, desires, and needs.
- 3.3 No speaker may be prevented, by internal or external coercion, from exercising his right as laid down in (3.1) and (3.2).²³³

Using these rules Habermas shows that within practical discourse these rules hold true and the denial of such leads to a contradiction. If one were to convince another via lies then they would not be breaking the 2.1 and by implication 1.1. Habermas likens the rules of discourse to that of a chess game. Whereas the rules of a chess

²³³ Ibid., 87-89

game are *constitutive* of the act, otherwise one is not playing chess. Rather, the rules of discourse give the *form* of discourse. Thus, Habermas states: “These rules must be followed in *actual fact* if error-free argumentation is to take place in real life.”²³⁴ In other words, if moral disagreements are to garner any type of common will then these rules are necessary presuppositions in any discourse.

Finally, Habermas concludes by responding to the still skeptic that might deny that there is a transcendental in discourse. The skeptic that is able to see from the outset that he will be caught in a performative contradiction will not participate in argumentation. “The *consistent* skeptic will deprive the transcendental pragmatist of a basis for his argument.”²³⁵ By appealing to his own cultural norms/rationality as if this is a foreign culture. In so far as the skeptic wishes to remain consistent they now take themselves out of the argument by positing that their *rationality* is substantively different than the one being used. Then, according to Habermas, it becomes impossible to talk *with* the skeptic, but only *about* them at this point. In response the cognitivist will say that less the whole moral theory becomes pointless arguments must continue, however one cannot force another to participate and be consistent. However, Habermas points out a further problem for this skeptic:

By refusing to argue, for instance, he cannot, even indirectly, deny that he moves in a shared sociocultural form of life, that he grew up in a web of communicative action, and that he reproduces his life in that web. In a word the skeptic may reject morality, but he cannot reject the ethical substance (*Sittlichkeit*) of the life circumstances in which he spends his waking hours, not unless he is willing to take refuge in suicide or serious mental illness.²³⁶

²³⁴ Ibid., 91

²³⁵ Ibid., 99

²³⁶ Ibid., 100

Thus, the skeptic by virtue of being a rational being remains bound to the everyday presuppositions of practical discourse.

The consequence then in denying a transcendental paradoxically places the skeptic in the trilemma. All understanding would rest on subjective understanding that would attempt to garner objective or at least collective understanding. Making distinctions would not be possible. Just as in experience where there is the necessity of distinctions of differences so too in understanding. Otherwise 'the chair is black' would be its opposite and itself at the same time. The chair would be both black and non-black at the same time and in the same respect; chair and not-chair as well; is and not-is. If no distinction is possible, nothing is knowable, because nothing could be recognizable. If nothing is knowable then meaning is not possible. On this reading of Habermas' argument I find him saying that, if meaning is not possible then all that remains is nihilism.²³⁷ Since nihilism is existentially impossible (one cannot live without meaning) then it must be the case that rational justification through discourse is possible. Then it appears the infinite regress, the arbitrary justification, or the circular arguments all lead to this place because of the inherent contradictions.

From the arguments shortened and reproduced here I can now state what I find ought to be taken as transcendental. The first rule that Habermas lays out is that a speaker may not contradict him/herself. Be it formally or informally the words the speaker uses must be used in a consistent manner. This, and the rest of the first law (logical aspect of discourse) can be rephrased as the law of non-contradiction. In that

²³⁷ I think this point can be made in connection with nominalism and Habermas' response to the skeptic in that he states they would either have to commit suicide or have a mental illness.

it is presupposed by all other laws and acts the law of non-contradiction is most basic in understanding. This law of thought is presupposed by and makes the other laws possible, but cannot be deductively justified; rather it makes deductive justification (and any justification) possible. The other laws of thought in combination with this one (law of identity and excluded middle) make up what is transcendental in understanding. Any of these laws can easily derive the other two and they come as a set. One law cannot be denied while affirming any of the other two. If one were to affirm the law of identity but not the law of non-contradiction then the law of identity would be undermined as well and invalid. A would have to be A, without the law of non-contradiction A could be non-A which in turn denies that A is A (because it could be non-A).

Conclusion

Let us take an example by going back to Adorno's "Never again Auschwitz." In order to say that one ought not kill another requires showing that the other is a human and indeed does deserve the same, universal rights as the other humans. It would be hard to imagine that they truly believed they were killing humans, but rather they thought they were killing non-humans. One could not will the ethical maxim that human life is not valuable because that would forfeit the value of our life as well. Without being able to show that human nature is knowable and the argument authoritative (that is based upon the transcendental) one would not be able to justifiably stop the killing of others.

Kant and Habermas show that there must be a transcendental.²³⁸ It seems that, for Critical Pedagogy theorists, that which would be in this place is the will or experience. However, as Kant has already shown, experience cannot be transcendental or primary. Experience necessarily needs interpretation to come to understanding. One comes to understand their experiences in light of their beliefs about the world. These beliefs come from their understanding. The will needs to be guided by beliefs and values that are also held through our understanding about the world prior to deciding upon what to do. For example, if one believes in the existence of God, it will necessarily follow that they will come to interpret their experiences in light of this revelation, i.e., God made it possible for me to get this job or write this paper. Conversely if one holds to the non-existence of God they might appeal to the forces of causality for landing the job i.e., it necessarily followed due to such and such a situation (background or casually) that I would get this job or write this paper. Since neither the will nor experience are transcendental (i.e. they presuppose prior necessary conditions) and since there must be something transcendental it cannot be experience itself.

Democracy presupposes equality. Experience and the will cannot reach equality. Critical Pedagogy cannot furnish democracy or work as a critical education. The epistemic grounding of experience and the will fail to settle divisions such as those between Freire's belief in God and suffering, Locke and Rousseau, Horowitz and Giroux's political debate, divisions between theism and atheism, and between the United States and the Middle East. Since Critical Pedagogy only gets down to the

²³⁸ As for the rest of their philosophical works I cannot comment on the amount I agree or disagree with them. At this time I am only using these arguments for a transcendental.

level of power and ideology and is unable to critique the more basic assumptions behind ideologies and power relations it cannot settle these disputes.

In terms of hope for change Freire is correct. Hope is an ontological need. One cannot continue to exist in light of the trials and suffering of life without hope in a better future. However, hope in general consensus to change society is essentially an idea inherited from Rousseau that is found wanting. It assumes man will, or already is, seeking the good. That, inherently, men are good, and everywhere he is in chains.²³⁹ Rousseau himself assumes a state of nature of mankind as being by himself and having a natural inclination toward the good. This brings about a revolutionary utopianism through the consensus of the masses whereby change occurs through force (the will) and not through understanding. In order to make lasting change people need to be informed through education. If one is thought to be free yet does not know what to do, as Kant claimed, they will go about in blind ignorance.

Critical pedagogy implicitly abandons the primacy of reason for the primacy of experience and the will. Once reason is abandoned, all hope is lost. This will invariably end in the exercise of power over others. This will always result in oppression of differences without distinction. In order to combat oppression, instill, and maintain a democratic society whereby all people regardless of race, religion, creed, sex, etc are given equal voice, a philosophical basis for equality must be found. In order to establish a basis for this equality, the transcendental (*Logos*) must be discovered and built upon in order to have lasting change.

²³⁹ Rousseau, *An Inquiry into the Nature of the Social Contract*, 3

Understanding the goal of education and moral philosophy is impossible without common ground. The subjective will and experience cannot maintain common ground amongst persons. Once understanding is abandoned the strongest will rule. Education becomes only an outworking of the influence of various dogmatic worldviews without justification. Critical pedagogy, at least how it is presented by Freire, Giroux, and others at a basic level becomes dogmatic by assuming the conceptual frameworks of postmodern ideologies that need to be further tested for meaning.

Without common ground there is no basis from which to decide what action or what education ought to look like. Without common ground, there is no point in critical education or education at all. When common ground is abandoned meaning is lost. Man cannot existentially maintain a life void of meaning. The will and experience therefore are no basis for common ground amongst humans. Therefore education ought to be built only upon what is common.

This does not abandon nor stray from critical education. Not all the work done in this field has become meaningless. Culture remains ordinary.²⁴⁰ To understand the philosophic presuppositions that people built their systems of meaning upon “the ordinary” needs to be explored. Actions still show what is valued and believed to be valuable therefore it is still necessary to deconstruct systems of belief; cultures.

Critical Pedagogy’s performative contradiction should not detract from the method by which they educate. The method of dialog and equal participation of all voices in the Socratic fashion is only furthered by Habermas and Kant’s arguments

²⁴⁰ Williams, *‘Culture is Ordinary’ in Resources of Hope*

given here. Habermas' rules of discourse in fact guarantee that all are able to participate in dialog that wish to and in so far as one lives in a sociocultural world they must participate in dialog. Therefore, I find that without abandoning the goals of Critical Pedagogy the transcendental presupposition of discourse establishes: the project of experience, anti-system, and inclusion.

In the rules of discourse the project of experience is given relief in that all are able to participate and given equal voice. No experience is discounted due to ideological differences. Rather, different interpretations of experiences are given room to be discussed and debated with others that share those experiences but not the particular interpretation. The anti-system project is established in that in so far as a teacher and student has the acumen and ability to identify basic differences and discuss them. The project of inclusion is also established in that no voice is abandoned, equality is guaranteed in so far as (U) of moral theories is actual. Any moral theory that can be consistent with (U) by implication necessarily could not oppress others. These goals can only be successful via the transcendental presupposition of dialogue and communicative action. Otherwise, the goals of Critical Pedagogy fall into the performative contradiction if they continue to base themselves upon the subjective. For individuals that might not be a problem, but is so far as the individual participates in the public sphere that necessarily presupposes corporate communicative action (by implication the rules of practical discourse) the individual cannot consistently hold to this position.

Future work

This leaves open a large amount of future work. This moment of inquiry is in no way shut. Though Critical Pedagogy is not actually a critical education there remains more work on defining what critical education ought to look like. Critical Pedagogy exists as a form of world disclosure, or as a worldview, that has not been critical of its own assumptions. Though many other areas inside this system can still be explored and used. For example, this does not abandon the dialogical/Socratic methods used by much of Critical Pedagogy, nor the critique against modernity. In fact those are building blocks for a future critical education.

I will to continue work in communication and education as an aspect of moral philosophy by exploring this notion of the transcendental in understanding. By understanding understanding common ground can be established. If common ground can be established then education can then be a place of building an egalitarian society, in Kant's words a Kingdom of Ends. This future endeavor I wish to partake of will necessarily lead me down the epistemic road of examining what has been held at various points in history as a transcendental and systematically examining them.

In future works various theories of language and reason will need to be examined. Jacques Derrida's *différance* that suggests that meaning is the product of a language constructed out of and subject to the endless play of difference among signifiers; "what constitutes the meaning of a signifier is defined by the shifting, changing relation of difference that characterize the referential play of

language."²⁴¹ Ferdinand de Saussure system of difference where meaning is a historical/cultural production between the sign and the signifier, Noam Chomsky's linguistic theories as innate ideas, Ludwig Wittgenstein, Bertrand Russel, Rudolf Carnap, Hans-Georg Gadamer, Martin Heidegger and others will all be necessary in understanding understanding. If any of them attempt to force subjective experience upon others as an objective form or they become self-referentially absurd. The task ahead is daunting, however education as a form of endowing persons with understanding is ultimately worth it.

²⁴¹ Giroux, *Pedagogy and the Politics of Hope: Theory, Culture, and Schooling: A Critical Reader*, 202

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