

Leaders in Critical Pedagogy

LEADERS IN EDUCATIONAL STUDIES

Volume 8

Series Editor: Leonard J. Waks, *Temple University, Philadelphia, USA*

Scope:

The aim of the *Leaders in Educational Studies* Series is to document the rise of scholarship and university teaching in educational studies in the years after 1960. This half-century has been a period of astonishing growth and accomplishment. The volumes in the series document this development of educational studies as seen through the eyes of its leading practitioners.

A few words about the build up to this period are in order. Before the mid-twentieth century school teaching, especially at the primary level, was as much a trade as a profession. Schoolteachers were trained primarily in normal schools or teachers colleges, only rarely in universities. But in the 1940s American normal schools were converted into teachers colleges, and in the 1960s these were converted into state universities. At the same time school teaching was being transformed into an all-graduate profession in both the United Kingdom and Canada. For the first time, school teachers required a proper university education.

Something had to be done, then, about what was widely regarded as the deplorable state of educational scholarship. James Conant, in his final years as president at Harvard in the early 1950s, envisioned a new kind of university-based school of education, drawing scholars from mainstream academic disciplines such as history, sociology psychology and philosophy, to teach prospective teachers, conduct educational research, and train future educational scholars. One of the first two professors hired to fulfil this vision was Israel Scheffler, a young philosopher of science and language who had earned a Ph.D. in philosophy at the University of Pennsylvania. Scheffler joined Harvard's education faculty in 1952. The other was Bernard Bailyn, who joined the Harvard faculty in 1953 after earning his Ph.D. there, and who re-energized the study of American educational history with the publication of *Education in the Forming of American Society: Needs and Opportunities for Study* (University of North Carolina Press, 1960). The series has been exceptionally fortunate that Scheffler provided a foreword to the volume on philosophy of education, and that Bernard Bailyn provided one a foreword for the volume on the history of American education. It is equally fortunate that subsequent volumes have also contained forewords by similarly eminent scholars, including James Banks of the University of Washington, who has been a creative force in social education for decades and the prime mover in the field of multi-cultural education.

The *Leaders in Educational Studies* Series continues to document the growing and changing literature in educational studies. Studies conducted within the established academic disciplines of history, philosophy, and sociology comprised the dominant trend throughout the 1960s and 1970s. By the 1980s educational studies diversified considerably, in terms of both new sub-disciplines within these established disciplines and new interdisciplinary and trans-disciplinary fields.

Curriculum studies, both in general and in the particular school subject matter fields, drew extensively from work in philosophy, history and sociology of education. Work in these disciplines, and also in anthropology and cultural studies among others, also stimulated new perspectives on race, class and gender.

This volume, like previous volumes in the series, brings together personal essays by established leaders in a major field of educational studies. Subsequent volumes in the series will continue to document other established and emerging disciplines, sub-disciplines and inter-disciplines in educational scholarship.

Leaders in Critical Pedagogy

Narratives for Understanding and Solidarity

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Dedicated to the memory and legacy of Dennis Carlson

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SHIRLEY R. STEINBERG

PREFACE

Remembering Our Firsts, Naming Our Mentors

There are those *firsts* moments in life we remember...our first bike, first kiss, first time behind the wheel, first moment we identified our own sexualt(ies), first time we read *the* book or heard *the* song; and the first time we were introduced to Paulo Freire. We place our own positionality within critical pedagogy by how we first came to know Paulo Freire. To separate Paulo from critical pedagogy is not possible, he is our progenitor. I cannot begin to preface the life stories of critical pedagogues without disclosing a bit of my own story. And this story was written through the influences of many who remain my mentors...and some who are my anti-mentors.

I was an undergraduate education student in Lethbridge, Alberta...a misplaced Yankee Jew who found myself in Mormonlandia, amidst farmers, Hutterites, and many, many Native Reserves. Putting off my assignments to the end, I bolted awake one winter's eve, realizing I had a book review due the next day in my Multiculturalism course. Quietly scrambling to the living room, I sat down, ready to speed-read *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. I didn't quite understand the use of pedagogy, but I knew oppressed. I expected the fast read would take an hour, then planned to throw together the review. Enough time to get back to bed before the kids got up.

You all know the story, I turned the pages and "couldn't put it down." For the first time, words were put into my mind and organized the musings I stored...thoughts I had been unable to articulate or to act upon. Freire identified core elements of my own world. Born in Baltimore, Maryland, I lived close to a park children played in: seeking water in drinking fountains: White and Colored. We moved to Los Angeles and I wasn't allowed to play with Mexican children and where I was called a *Jew Bastard* in third grade. I grew up through the Viet Nam War, and only the poor Black or White kids from my high school were shipped out. And in Canada, I lived 2 hours from an enormous Reserve where every day, the *Indian bus* left early to come to our school, inevitably late, due to old creekly buses and potholed roads. I understood what oppression was in my world, in my context. And I understood Freire.

S. R. STEINBERG

The next year, my critical education began in earnest with Julia Ellis as my undergraduate mentor, teaching me critical ways in which to engage in problem solving. Kathleen Berry taught me context, and about poverty and the working class. Two years later, I returned to school for a master's degree, and David Smith was my guide. One of the first days of class, David showed a film from the 70s, *Starting From Nina*, and Paulo Freire came alive on the screen as he described the inequities and needs of teachers in working class Toronto. During those years I realized that all that *stuff*, all those hours in teacher education courses weren't relevant, but those precious hours with my first mentors shaped my need to become critical, pedagogical, and political.

Irony and destiny surrounded my birth into critical pedagogy. At a dinner, I listened to a speech from my then-partner condemning involvement of the political, the critical into public education. This (and other issues) led to the end of the unpleasant union. Weeks later, I was funded to attend a conference in Dayton, Ohio reputed to be "swarming" with critical types. Julia Ellis and I flew to Bergamo, and 24 hours later, I met Joe Kincheloe. Joe overheard me speaking about my work on the Stand Off Reserve in Alberta, and interrupted me to discuss our common interests. That discussion lasted over 20 years, and our friendship, marriage, and partnership was based on the radical love we found within our own critical pedagogies.

In 1992, Donaldo Macedo phoned Joe and told him if we could find the money to fly to Boston, he would take us to dinner with Paulo. I'm still not sure how we found the funds for two plane fares, but the memory of a Portuguese restaurant with big pots of chicken and vegetables, eating, talking, talking, and eating for four hours is embedded in my soul. This was the day that Paulo introduced the notion of radical love to us. He illustrated how the personal and the political intertwined to create the strength needed to subvert the current state of education and of disenfranchised groups. After this meeting, Joe and I were committed to spending our lives, our radical love in the pursuit of equity, activism, diversity, and criticality. We made many friends and even more enemies in those two decades. We learned that critical pedagogy wasn't a badge of popularity in an instrumentally rational world, and that challenging the lack of criticality within schools was a bit of a professional death sentence in many faculties.

For many years, our critical journeys were and are influenced by the words of those in this book along with so many others. We became acutely aware of pedagogical deconstruction and suspicious of curriculum. Along with our knowledges came the attached friendships, as we found years ago that our work was dangerous work, and safety was manifested in the relationships we made and nurtured, the critical friends we had. Everyone has their Paulo moments, and many of us are old enough to have memories of times spent with him. He laughed at the solemnness he was confronted with, joked about "Freirean methods," and eschewed the deification often thrust upon him. He understood that he had contributed and that he had important things to say, but was chagrined at those who wanted to promote a unilateral politic and

PREFACE

ended up creating a canon of no canons. While each of us have our stories, our ways, our attempts to criticalize pedagogy, we also must attempt to embrace the humility needed, the radical love expected, and embrace the vision of hope Paulo gave us, even in the worst of our times. For every life story in this book, we have multitudes to find and to nurture. It is an honour to be amongst the rebels in this book.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The material that comprises Peter Mayo's chapter originally appeared as responses to questions in two separate interviews one (by Juha Suoranta) which appeared in the *Review of Pedagogy, Education and Cultural Studies* and the other (by Hrvoje Simicevic) in *Truthout* and the Croatian journal *H-Alter*.

Peter McLaren's text contains sections from published material. It begins with some autobiographical material from *Life in Schools*, and some material published in various internet conversations and internet journals.

Sonia Nieto's text initially appeared in the *Journal of Language & Literacy Education*, 9(1).

Curry Malott's chapter initially appeared in the *Journal for Critical Education Policy Studies*, 12(1).

BRAD J. PORFILIO AND DEREK R. FORD

SCHOOLS AND/AS BARRICADES

An Introduction

When, on September 17, 2011, a handful of people set up tents in New York City's Wall Street financial district—the capital of capitalism—few would have predicted that it would inaugurate a movement that is likely to be a popular reference point for decades to come. The movement grew almost overnight in New York City and just as quickly spread to towns and cities across the country and the world. This somewhat nebulous movement—with a much higher level of internal organization that is usually attributed to it—introduced new terms and frameworks into popular discussions in nearly all facets of society. It also brought to the center of activist discussions and praxis the question of pedagogy that had been relatively absent, or at best implicit, in recent decades. To be sure, questions about organization and the relationship between protest movements and society, for example, have always been pedagogical at heart. But at the nightly (and, really, all-day) meetings in Occupy encampments the pressing question of teaching and learning relations was constantly being forefronted and explicitly addressed.

Thus, it is not just for critical pedagogues and critical educational scholars that the present volume has been compiled. While the book does indeed provide a historical exploration and documentation of the development of critical pedagogy as a contested and dynamic educational field—as well as analyses of that development and directions toward possible futures—it is also intended to provide an accessible and comprehensive entry point to a new generation of activists and organizers who place questions of pedagogy at the heart of their thinking and doing. In this sense, we see this book as embodying the *praxis* that is at the base of the orientation of critical pedagogy.

Critical pedagogy has variously inspired, ignited, troubled, and frustrated educational scholars for several decades now. Yet the fact that the term is still called upon among a variety of different orientations, we posit, is illustrative of its continued relevancy. The question, “What *is* critical pedagogy?” is one that will elicit various and probably irreconcilable answers. The late Ilan Gur-Ze'ev (2005) noted that it has become difficult to “speak of... the various conflicting pedagogies that propagate themselves under the banner of ‘Critical Pedagogy’” (p. 7). The debates that have taken place around and within the field over the last several decades testify to the great instability of the term as a signifier, a discursive formation, and a practice.

Jennifer Gore (1993) noted the ambivalence of the term ‘pedagogy’ itself over 20 years ago, preferring instead to write about ‘pedagogies’ in order “to signify the multiple approaches and practices that fall under the pedagogy umbrella” (xi). In addition, then, to “critical pedagogy,” what constitutes “critical” and what constitutes “pedagogy” is not set in stone, but open to contestation and debate.

As is the case with any attempt to label a work under any banner, then, this book itself performs and constitutes, in part, what scholars count as “leaders.” We have been cognizant of this performative aspect from the beginning of editing this collection and soliciting contributions from scholars. We have tended toward being expansive rather than restrictive in our construction of the field of critical pedagogy. We were pleasantly surprised at the prompt response of contributors and their willingness to undertake the project. While some were unable to contribute due to health reasons or work obligations we think that, in the end, this volume represents the various tendencies within critical pedagogy as it has unfolded over the last four decades.

MAPPING CRITICAL PEDAGOGY

While any origins story is necessarily elusive and at best partial—including, we note, the origins story of Occupy Wall Street—it is generally agreed that critical pedagogy has its origins in the critical theory of the Frankfurt school. In one sense, the theorists of the Frankfurt School were attempting to re-think Marxism in an effort to overcome what they saw as the limitations of Soviet-style socialism and the economic determinism that predominated much of Marxist thought during the mid-twentieth century, and contributed to the ascendancy of positivism. In attempting to combat the trend of economic determinism they emphasized the superstructural elements of society and the role that elements such as culture, knowledge, language, and desire play in the maintenance and reproduction of oppression, inequality, and injustice (i.e., capitalist social relations). Many of these elements, such as knowledge and language, are of course intimately connected with schooling and education, which leads Peter McLaren (1989), for example, when outlining the major concepts utilized in critical pedagogy, to write about such concepts as ideology, hegemony, cultural capital, and discourse.

Leaving aside the myriad debates about base and superstructure—and the way that many Frankfurt theorists ultimately posited superstructural determinism against economic determinism—critical pedagogy picks up on the idea that educational processes, practices, and modes of engagement play an active role in the production and reproduction of social relations and systems. Critical pedagogy seeks to understand and is concerned with the ways that schools and the educational process sustain and reproduce systems and relations of oppression. The idea is that, if education is a site for the reproduction of oppression, it can also potentially be a site for the disruption of oppression and even liberation. Theorists of critical pedagogy see themselves as concerned with how to alleviate oppression and human suffering

through pedagogy. Thus, its attention is focused on power relations both in the world, and in the university, school, and classroom. As such, the task of critical pedagogy is to guide scholars, schoolteachers, and citizens to understand what is responsible for oppression in schools and society and what steps are necessary for the dismantling of oppressive systems.

We might say that the “first wave” of critical pedagogy in the 1970s and into the early 1980s inherited most directly the theoretical inclinations of the Frankfurt school and its insistence upon the centrality of class. This “wave” is associated with the early work of scholars like Paulo Freire, Henry Giroux, and Ira Shor. A “second wave” continued to develop around the early 1990s that, as a whole, and in contradictory ways, built upon, problematized, and even outright rejected the initial work of critical pedagogues. There are two overlapping routes that comprise this generation of scholarship. The first route critiques critical pedagogy from the feminist (and feminine) standpoint. The second route travels along the inroads made by poststructural and postmodern philosophies. It is perhaps partly because of the time in which these criticisms arose, during the late 1980s and early 1990s, when poststructural and postmodern theories had already made sufficient advances into academia, that the two branches of critique are deeply interrelated. After all, the modern categories and frameworks are often tantamount to male categories and frameworks, and modernity is frequently seen as synonymous with masculinity.

One of the foundational critiques of critical pedagogy, and even today one of the most frequently referenced, is Elizabeth Ellsworth’s (1989) essay “Why Doesn’t this Feel Empowering? Working through the Repressive Myths of Critical Pedagogy.” In this essay, Ellsworth confronts critical pedagogy from a feminist and poststructural position. Ellsworth draws on her experiences facilitating (not “teaching”) a politically motivated and active college course. She argues overall “that key assumptions, goals, and pedagogical practices fundamental to the literature on critical pedagogy—namely, ‘empowerment,’ ‘student voice,’ ‘dialogue,’ and even the term ‘critical’—are repressive myths that perpetuate relations of domination” (p. 298). The reasons for the dominating effects of educational theories and practices motivated by liberation, she argues, stem from the decontextualized, abstract prescriptions in the critical pedagogy literature and a particular conception of power. A similar claim was made by Jennifer Gore (1993), who wrote that critical pedagogy operates on an understanding of “power as property.” Such an understanding is implied in the very word ‘empowerment,’ for “to em-power suggests to give power, to confer power, to enable the use of power” (p. 95). Gore (1993) acknowledges that some critical pedagogy theorists have recognized how power is “embodied in concrete practices” (p. 94). Still, however, power is seen as something that can *either* repress or liberate. Critical pedagogy is seen as the praxis that can liberate the oppressed. Here Gore takes up Foucault’s (1983) famous declaration that “everything is dangerous” (p. 231) because of the inseparability of power and knowledge. Because power exists only in circulation, it can’t be isolated from the knowledge (language, ideas, forms of communication, etc...) through which it circulates.

In general, this wave was defined by the belief that critical pedagogues influenced by the Frankfurt school are correct to examine the forces behind unjust power relationships inside of schools, but several scholars felt their insights lacked the sophistication to understand the myriad forces giving rise to the lived experiences of teachers and students and lacked the sensitivity to recognize the complexity behind how social domination operates on the structural axes of race, gender, sexuality, and (dis)ability (Steinberg & Kincheloe, 2010). Consequently, the field of critical pedagogy now represents a constellation of insights from other intellectual fields, including feminist studies, environmental studies, critical race theory, cultural studies, and Indigenous studies, for the purpose of becoming critically aware of how “the political and economic landscape” give rise to the “actual conditions of life in schools and how it is possible to remake schools on the ideals of justice, equity, and democracy” (Darder, Baltodano, & Torres, 2009, p. 3).

If the critiques and interventions of the second wave opened up and problematized underlying assumptions about the operations of power and oppression, ultimately leading to the inclusion of various forms of identity and difference, we have recently witnessed the emergence of a third wave of critical pedagogy that has returned to questions of class and capitalism. This does not represent a retreat, however, as this wave is—to varying degrees, of course—building upon and incorporating the critiques levelled during the second wave. Additionally, this form of “revolutionary critical pedagogy” emerged because of the domestication of critical pedagogy, its reduction to a *method*. The trajectory of this wave comes as a result of a resurgence of Marxist educational theorizing and is being developed in the recent work of theorists such as Peter McLaren and Curry Malott. One of the reasons for this return to class and the capital-labor relation may be the economic crisis of 2007–2008, which demonstrated once again the devastating ways that processes of capitalist value production (and the failure to *realize* those values) can make and remake our daily lives. The extent to which this wave of critical pedagogy remains entrenched in the structural/poststructural divide of the 1990s, however, remains to be seen. In navigating this wave, however, we might suggest that critical pedagogues look to activists to examine the ways in which various global social movements are negotiating different class and identity categories.

OVERVIEW

This volume can be seen as a first-hand account of the varying debates and struggles within and around the field of critical pedagogy. Again, we are excited to have diverse contributions from emerging and established critical pedagogues who truly convey the complexity and nuances of the field. There are, of course, common threads that run throughout each of the chapters of this book. A concern for issues of injustice, oppression, and exploitation animates each chapter. And this is no abstract concern. Instead, each contributor documents the intertwining of the personal and the

political, and how their life experiences came to shape their theoretical orientations and approaches to life and learning, and vice versa.

In the opening chapter, William Reynolds highlights how he started practicing critical pedagogy before encountering Freire or any other critical pedagogy literature. It was rather his experiences teaching in Upstate New York and his innate dissatisfaction with the banking method that prevailed at Romulus Central School. When he did come to read *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Reynolds says it “was like being in a completely dark room and someone turning on a bright light.” He talks about the consequences that he and his students faced as they read the word and the world, which leads him to emphasize that critical pedagogy necessarily entails risk. He also reads his student comments in order to grapple with student enthusiasm and resistance to critical pedagogy. Finally, Reynolds insists on centering hope—and “practical hope” in particular—in resisting “this historical moment of free-market fundamentalism, micro-fascism, and right-wing mega church religion.”

In the outset of his chapter, Wayne Au acknowledges the importance of his upbringing as a central foundation for becoming a critical pedagogue. His “dad’s communism” facilitated collectivist political work and made him conscious of the need to personally challenge oppression within his own lived world. Next, the author pinpoints how his connection to hip-hop culture positioned him to reject being part of White, middle-class suburban surroundings in Connecticut, while simultaneously allowing him to “cling to his urban-ness.” After discussing the role that his college experience played in his identity development as a critical scholar, Au links how the “tension between postmodern subjectivity and Marxist dialectical materialism” sparked his “activism and orientation towards the world.” The author concludes his chapter by highlighting his work as a schoolteacher in Berkeley, CA, by explaining why he decided to study with Michael Apple at the University of Wisconsin Madison, and by detailing how his intellectual and personal development was connected to being an “academic-activist and public intellectual.”

Sonia Nieto presents her life and work through the lens of language, and in particular her growing up bilingual and biliterate. As such, her chapter focuses on the intersections among language, literacy, and culture, and what these intersections have meant for her, and what they can mean for students who have been marginalized, neglected, or made invisible by traditional understandings of the role of education. Although not linked conceptually in the past, the more recent tendency to connect language, literacy, and culture gives us a richer picture of learning, especially for students whose identities related to language, race, ethnicity, and immigrant status have traditionally had a low status in many societies.

Noah De Lissovoy captures how his upbringing in Berkeley, CA during the 1970s and 1980s positioned him and many White middle-class families to rebel against “feel-good hippie impulses of the previous generation.” Members from this community and social strata directed their alienation with mainstream US politics

to a form a politics of indifference, rather than building collectivist movements to challenge the structures behind the politics that fuelled their alienation. Next, the author pinpoints how he developed a deeper understanding of how larger social forces are responsible for racialized injustices. This occurred when he moved to Los Angeles during the 1990s. Here he witnessed firsthand “a drawn-out race war” launched by the state against Black and Latino(a) residents. The injustice experienced by oppressed racial groups in Los Angeles provided a learning experience for De Lissovoy. He notes the learning was “not always pleasant” since it involved “interrogating his White and middle-class sensibilities.” However, this learning became the catalyst for becoming a critical pedagogue. De Lissovoy became connected with numerous critical scholars in the Los Angeles region and Peter McLaren became his doctoral adviser at UCLA. During his doctoral studies, he became versed in critically examining the impact of neoliberal globalization on schools, students, and the wider society. De Lissovoy concludes his chapter by detailing the central impulses of his work since he graduated from UCLA and how he engages in *communion* with his students in order to unpack the “limits of the imagination and in the boundaries of “reality” itself.”

Curry Malott traces his journey to critical pedagogy, focusing on a significant element of his family’s ethnic and class background and its connection to his own educational experiences from public schooling to university. Drawing on Marx’s historical discussions at the end of Volume 1 of *Capital*, Malott traces his own German background to the transition from feudalism to capitalism in Europe and how that process was connected to the American colonies and the emergence of capitalism in what would become the United States of America. Malott argues that this historical discussion helps us better understand both the current neoliberal era of perpetual budget cuts and austerity measures, and the true class position of most workers who wrongly self-identify as middle-class. In the end, Malott’s contribution works to advance a proletarian class-consciousness and the movement to transcend capital and its demands.

In her chapter, Jennifer M. Gore unveils “how aspects of childhood and experiences as both student and teacher guided my intellectual journey toward, through and since my initial engagement with critical pedagogy.” In the opening of the chapter, Gore reveals that she witnessed her sister being mistreated due to having cerebral palsy. The societal prejudices emanating “against difference” were major factors in the formation of her critical consciousness. After the author articulates how her family’s connection with the teaching profession made teaching an “honourable career option for her,” she sheds light on how her graduate studies at the University of British Columbia and at the University of Wisconsin Madison honed her thinking about teaching, education, society, and inequality. Next, Gore acknowledges the watershed moment of her intellectual development, which occurred when she read Elizabeth Ellsworth paper, “Why doesn’t this feel empowering?” The paper positioned her to become “passionate about what critical and feminist work might look like in

classrooms,” and how she “could operationalise (her) commitments to social justice and human dignity in (her) work in teacher education.” Gore concludes the chapter by detailing several strands of her intellectual work. Her work is imbued with “critical intent, aligning with the same principles for a more just world, more just lives for teachers and students.”

Peter Mayo writes about the development of his interest in adult education and alternative educational routes more generally, and how this interest intersects with the necessity of political education. While Mayo was drawn into the radical and socialist tradition while studying sociology at Athabasca University, his passion for social justice was furthered by the radical developments taking place in Latin America during the 1970s. In addition to detailing how he came into the critical pedagogy tradition, and how he was encouraged to read Freire together with Gramsci, Mayo generates important insights into understanding contemporary educational and social problems, focusing on the repression of migrants.

David Gabbard focuses his chapter on providing a concise summary “of the evolution of (his) thoughts on education and compulsory schooling.” In the introductory pages, the author notes why he believes education ought to be a continual “pursuing of answers that inevitably leads to more questions, leaving our answers always partial and tentative.” Unfortunately, Gabbard’s experience in higher education for almost 20 years illustrates that the vast majority of academics and students are not involved in this type of education. Rather, they are on a trek to earn a “piece of paper,” gain tenure, or obtain a job. Next, the critical pedagogue captures the role Žižek’s taxonomy of stupidity has played in shaping his development as a critical educational theorist. He concludes the chapter by “providing background information on the autobiographical experiences that gave rise to the questions” that he has “pursued over the past twenty-five years.”

Domenica Maviglia’s chapter is dedicated to capturing the intellectual and pedagogical legacy of one of the leading critical pedagogues in our generation, Joe L. Kincheloe. The author begins the chapter by providing cultural and biographical remarks surrounding Kincheloe’s upbringing, the scope of his research, and the trajectory of his administrative and cultural work. One of Joe’s numerous legacies that he left scholars and practitioners was his creation of the *Paulo and Nita Freire International Project for Critical Pedagogy*. Before Joe passed away in 2008, the *Project* was responsible for forging an “international critical community” devoted to improving the world of schooling and society through research, teaching, and activism. Next, Mavigila captures the depth and breadth of Kincheloe’s pedagogy. Along with impacting the world of critical pedagogy, Kincheloe impacted numerous debates in such intellectual fields, as “postformalism, critical constructivism, critical multiculturalism, critical cultural studies” and “critical social studies education.” The author concludes the chapter by documenting the numerous merits of Kincheloe’s critical pedagogy. His pedagogy is essential for challenging injustice in schools and society because it “recognises the crucial influence played by social relationships and

it denounces the paralysing burden posed by the power dynamics that characterise the educational experience.”

Peter McLaren details his transition from a non-political child growing up in a conservative home, to beatnik-hippie, to liberal and, finally, revolutionary. The formative role that individuals—friends, teachers, fighters, and academics alike—played in this transition is documented. McLaren writes about his days at the University of Toronto and his combination of “arrogance and innocence” that initially led him into the work of teaching. In addition to this historical information, McLaren documents his theoretical trajectory, talking about the importance of Marxism and the centrality of the capital-labor dialectic in understanding and resisting oppression and exploitation. He also traces several of his current projects, which are increasingly becoming international in scope. Finally, McLaren delineates several aspects of the revolutionary critical pedagogy that he has played a leading role in developing over the last decade.

In his chapter, E. Wayne Ross testifies to his conversion “from believer, to heretic, to apostate.” In his earlier life and career, Ross moved in between schools and the church, all the while struggling with authority and hierarchy. Ross’ orientation toward critical pedagogy was influenced by life experiences, professors, and his teaching background. His interest in critical theory was cemented at Ohio State, through his study of curriculum reconceptualism. After completing his doctorate, Ross writes that the theories of Marx, Foucault, and Debord became increasingly useful for understanding the contemporary educational and political scene. Ross concludes his chapter by detailing some of his work, much of it collaborative. Of particular note is his notion of “dangerous citizenship,” which “requires a praxis-inspired mindset of opposition and resistance, an acceptance of strategic and tactical stances.”

John Elmore begins his chapter by exploring the roots of his political orientation towards schools and society. He reveals how his grandfather’s production on his pig farm helped him “recognize that his toil was not only an act necessitated by basic sustenance, but also, and ultimately, an act in pursuit of freedom.” He explains how he held an oppositional identity towards the schooling process, which led him to opt for a GED and end his high school experience. The author details how his critical view of the schooling process is responsible for igniting his critical orientation towards the church’s “psychological and theological” domination over the public. Elmore ends the chapter by elucidating how his scholarship has been shaped by his critical orientation toward religion, schools, and society. He also makes a clarion call for other critical scholars to become intimately involved in administrative decision-making in the academy. He believes this step is necessary because “the enemies we face are powerful and well funded, but what is on the line for our students and, ultimately, the society we live in is more than worth the battle.”

Ana Cruz's chapter focuses on her journey with Paulo Freire's work. She connects how Paulo's work impacted her own development as a critical scholar as well as captures the significant influence of his work on the field of critical pedagogy. The author begins the chapter by connecting her geographical roots to Paulo's birthplace of Brazil. Before being arrested and exiled to Chile in 1964, the reader learns that Paulo was raised in a middle-class environment, was deeply connected to the Catholic Church, and was the director of national literacy campaigns. Cruz illuminates the myriad ways Freire's work has impacted the world of critical pedagogy. She also reminds us that one can only comprehend Freire's work if she or he is "being cognizant of the background and realizing the context within which the individual work was produced." The author concludes the chapter by outlining the "eclectic body of work that" Paulo "embraced to construct his thoughts on pedagogy" and by establishing several central concepts Freire generated to transform the world. She also articulates how her journey with Freire altered her understanding of education, activism, and relationships with the 'Other.'

Michael Apple's chapter begins by capturing how Teachers College was an excellent fit for him to begin his doctoral studies during the 1960s. It allowed him to combine his "interests in politics, education, and the gritty materialities of daily life in schools." While at Teachers College, Apple worked with several progressive scholars, including Dwayne Hue and Jonas Soltis, who provided the foundation for much of his "work on the relationship among education, knowledge, and power." Next, the author captures why the University of Wisconsin Madison became a "special place, an institution where" he has "spent more than four decades." Apple then details the rich intellectual trajectory of his work and illuminates how his scholarship is dedicated to capturing the "significance of cultural struggles and of the crucial place that schools, curricula, teachers, and communities play in these struggles." After documenting "the extensive international work" he has been engaged over the course of his illustrious career, Apple concludes the chapter by arguing that some radical scholar/activities have produced a "Freire industry." He argues that these scholars are connected to Freire's work for the purposes of creating "an illusion of political commitment while managing to make no sacrifices in one's goal of individual advancement and prestige."

Juha Souranta's chapter covers his journey from qualitative methodologist to critical pedagogue. Noting that critical pedagogy is still a marginal tradition in Finland, he writes that sufficient groundwork has been laid for the field in the country and, more significantly, that critical pedagogy today comprises an international community of radical educators and activists. A large portion of this narrative documents Souranta's underground life harboring a young Afghan who was due to be deported to Greece. As a tenured professor, Souranta's first immersion into activism—and a radical immersion at that—occurred because, he writes, "I was struck by a social problem, a previously unknown antagonism in my own neck of the woods, and I needed to do something, I needed to intervene."

Lisa Y. William-White uses poetry and autobiographic performance to frame the intersection of her personal and political life. This poetic telling begins before William-White, as she discloses the struggles of her foreparents and the Civil Rights movement in the U.S. This is a struggle that she would inherit and inhabit, one that would lead her to a permanent investigation into “the structural/and cultural forces that/shape me.”

Suzanne SooHoo offers us her “Asian ontology, critical incidents, and critical friends” that brought her into critical pedagogy. As education is so often a site of constant babbling, SooHoo writes about the productive and disruptive role of silence in her life, her thought, her teaching, and her political action. She relays a brilliant story about her time as a school principal and her efforts “to make a long-term commitment to that school to honor teachers as professionals and respect students for their rich inherent abilities and acquired talent.” While critical pedagogy has been critiqued as being too certain, SooHoo presents us with a chapter that cherishes the unfinished and the “humility of not knowing.”

In her afterword to the book, Sandy Grande makes a timely plea for understanding the current round of education “reforms” as a form of low-intensity warfare that is aimed at protecting and advancing racist, capitalist, and settler-colonialist power structures. Noting that, while the field is still largely white and male, the diversity of contributors to this volume evidences that this is changing. Grande then provides her own mapping of the field and reading of the book’s chapters, making explicit common threads and concerns. At the end of her afterword, Grande presents an understanding of the ways in which the colonial settler state “has relied on identity and cultural politics for its reconsolidation, requiring and soliciting certain ways of being, desiring, and knowing at the same time it destroys others.” As an example of this, Grande calls our attention to the (attempted) cooptation of #BlackLivesMatter by #AllLivesMatter. This is a form of erasure and that signals the dead-end nature of liberal politics. The task, then, is to move critical pedagogy “beyond the horizons of democracy,” which entails “nothing short of a remaking of the nation state through Indigenous repatriation and sovereignty.” We couldn’t think of a more pressing call for the international critical pedagogy movement to take up.

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