

Introduction: Exploring Connections to Build a Critical Multiculturalism

We are in search of the true America—an America of multiple cultures, multiple histories, multiple regions, multiple realities, multiple identities, multiple ways of living, surviving and being human. And no where is this struggle for the true America more profoundly being waged than in the classrooms of public schools in the United States.

Darder

It is a curiously discomfiting paradox that during the early 1990s, the term “diversity” came into vogue at a time when groups that had been historically polarized by antagonisms centering on race, class, gender, and sexual orientation were being pushed farther and farther apart following the conservative restoration of the Reagan-Bush administrations. Multicultural education was no longer a new term that elicited the question, ‘What’s that?’ when mentioned in conversation. The front pages of newspapers and popular magazines across the nation featured stories about the controversial *Children of the Rainbow* first grade curriculum in New York City, vociferous debates about history curricula, Afrocentric schools, bilingual education, and revisions of core curricula in universities such as Stanford. While some of the publicity surrounding multicultural education roundly condemned it, even that same publicity acknowledged its impact on schools.

Yet at the same time, evidence mounted that disparities among groups had widened markedly over the past two decades. Hacker (1992) amassed a wealth of data to argue that the U.S. was becoming two polarized nations: “Black and white, separate, hostile, unequal.” Barlett and Steele (1992) opened their discussion of what went wrong with America by observing that “The wage and salary structure of American business, encouraged by federal tax policies, is pushing the nation toward a two-class society. The top 4% make as much as the bottom half of U.S. workers” (p. ix).

Faludi (1991) described the 1980s as an “undeclared war against American women,” supporting this characterization with over 400 pages of data and examples. Kozol (1991) described the growing inequalities between the richest and the poorest schools in the U.S. as “savage.”

Multiculturalism did not cause these widening disparities, contrary to what some tried to argue (e.g., Schlesinger 1992). In fact, multiculturalism has acquired a deepened resolve among its advocates as well as among increasingly counterhegemonic forces precisely because of the decidedly Euro-American emphasis the antimulticulturalists place on sharing common values—an emphasis which is grounded in white supremacist, patriarchal discourses of difference and democracy. We juxtapose the growing attention to diversity with widening chasms among various socio-cultural groups to frame our discussion of the politics undergirding multicultural education and critical pedagogy. A proliferation of political and economic disparities among groups gave rise to multicultural education and critical pedagogy during the late 1960s. By the 1990s, oppressive relations had intensified, and the Radical Right’s capturing of the slogan “family values” turned it into a code word for segregation, intolerance, white privilege, and white Christian schools. However, this reality is often obscured in uncritical celebrations of difference and the push to increase the nation’s global competitiveness.

Mainstream schooling reinforces the dominant culture’s way of producing subjectivities by rationalizing and accommodating agency into existing regimes of truth. In other words, dominant forms of pedagogy accommodate existing modes or forms of intelligibility and their distributive effects which are part of the ritualized conversation of becoming a citizen. Most mainstream teaching practices, therefore, could be characterized as “membership-oriented” pedagogy which requires that teachers assist students in acquiring those necessary interpretive skills and forms of cultural capital that will enable them to negotiate contemporary zones of contest—the often complex, complicated, and conflictual public and institutional spaces within the larger society. The dominant culture of schooling mirrors that of the larger culture in so far as teachers and students willingly and unwittingly situate themselves within a highly politicized field of power relations that partake of unjust race, class, and gender affiliations. Within such a culture, individuals are differentially enabled to act by virtue of the social, cultural, and institutional possibilities afforded them on the basis of their race, class, gender, and sexual orientation. Such a “culture

of silence” teaches students to harmonize a world of incongruity and fractious antipathy and to domesticate the unruly and unpleasant and messy features of everyday life in which costs are imposed for being different and rewards given for ‘fitting in’ compliantly.

Multicultural education and critical pedagogy bring into the arena of schooling insurgent, resistant, and insurrectional modes of interpretation and classroom practices which set out to imperil the familiar, to contest the legitimating norms of mainstream cultural life, and to render problematic the common discursive frames and regimes upon which “proper” behavior, comportment, and social interaction are premised. Together, they analyze extant power configurations and unsettle them when such configurations serve to reproduce social relations of domination. Critical and multicultural pedagogy defamiliarize and make remarkable what is often passed off as the ordinary, the mundane, the routine, and the banal. They ambiguate the complacency of teaching under the sign of modernity, under which meaning too often is seen as ahistorical, neutral, and separated from value and power.

In their essence, neither multicultural education nor critical pedagogy consist of lists of items to add onto school practices, although one can find simplistic prescriptions for both. Multicultural education initially referred to demands for school reform articulated first by African Americans, then by other groups of color, followed by women, people with disabilities, and gay rights advocates (Banks 1989, p. 5). Critical pedagogy “challenges teachers and students to empower themselves for social change, to advance democracy and equality as they advance their literacy and knowledge” (Shor 1993, p. 25). Strictly speaking, any course in any discipline can be taught from a critical or a multicultural perspective and could justifiably be called critical pedagogy or multicultural education. This is perhaps why the terms “critical pedagogy” and “multicultural education” are now more frequently used in courses taught across the curriculum. However, we wish to be clear that we do not consider either critical pedagogy or multicultural education to consist simply of a set of methodological formulations. Rather, both refer to a particular ethico-political attitude or ideological stance that one constructs in order to confront and engage the world critically and challenge power relations. One could perhaps argue—although it is not within the scope of this introduction to do so—that these are both standpoint epistemologies as well as ethical imperatives, that they advocate a preferential option for certain types of actions and social interests. Critical educators adopt the stance of the *cultural worker*, an individual

who may work in schools but who may also work in other public spheres such as the arts, medicine, law, social work, or community work.

This book attempts to build a coalition that enables dialog, to identify terrains for mutual support, and to articulate common concerns and agendas. It attempts to enable such dialog around three themes: contexts for pedagogy, theories of pedagogy, and pedagogies in action.

CONTEXT

Of course, particular meanings, stereotypes and myths can change, but the presence of a *system* of racial meanings and stereotypes, of racial ideology, seems to be a permanent feature of US culture.

Omi and Winant

The American Indian has struggled with accessing an accurate past image, and is bombarded by the media's contrived and inaccurate images...These intrude and damage individual visions of past, which so significantly influence "today."

Pease-Windy Boy

This book would not have been conceivable at this present historical conjuncture were it not for the precipitous theoretical and political convergence of critical pedagogy and multicultural education over recent years. While we would not advocate that their distinctions become conceptually blurred out of existence in one transdisciplinary stroke, we do think it is productive to see these two formerly discrete fields as representing a common political project that may be distinguished less by their substantive interests than by their current emphases. Critical pedagogy and multicultural education are complementary approaches that enable a sustained criticism of the effects of global capitalism and its implication in the production of race and gender injustices in schools and other institutional settings.

We locate the current struggle in our schools in the larger efforts of white supremacist, patriarchal capitalism to condition the public's consciousness of everyday life, to create the borders of

what is considered the meaningful universe of its citizens, and to tacitly privilege the manner in which everyday life is framed and coded. Macedo's insightful discussion in this volume of how media framed the Gulf War, for example, challenges that conditioning and the teaching of "literacy for stupidification."

Global capitalist hegemony has become increasingly ambiguous, elliptical, ironic, and seductive. Domination is no longer only signalled by overt class exploitation, legalized racial and sex discrimination, or the fascist instrumentalization of everyday life. Structures of domination are, today, much less tangible and more difficult to decode, in part because of their hegemonic entrenchment. Spaces for commodification are endless and now include the very critics of capitalist commodification as, for instance, in the burgeoning book industry that deals with criticisms of contemporary incarnations of global capitalism and the demythologization of the advertising establishment. The motor force of capitalist domination rests on the tacit collusion of the oppressed in their own lived subordination; oppressed and oppressors alike are conditioned to accept the current economic and racial tensions as inevitable and to recode potentially oppositional anger into popular cultural forms (i.e., radio, film, and video), domesticating the modes of address that articulate the debates over public life and social justice and eclipsing the original referent system of revolutionary struggle. The transformation of Malcolm X from a revolutionary leader into an object of consumption is but one example. Hegemony no longer requires a uniform, monolithic reading of the social world but, in fact, successfully conscripts the self-reflexive and socially conscious citizen into its ranks, as witnessed in advertising's appeals to "liberated" women and men dedicated to environmental concerns and career advancement for all regardless of race, class, or gender. Hegemony has become 'sexier' but not less violent.

The new conservative agenda has been officializing a concept of democracy that conflates it with nationhood, making it inhospitable to the struggle of social justice. In effect, the right has attempted to emplace a white supremacist, capitalist, and patriarchal subjectivity that would channel resistance into a substratum of popular culture and make acculturation into the logic of consumption as penetrative as possible for the majority of citizens. Even the emphasis placed by liberals on the concept of pluralism demands an unhealthy allegiance to a set of discourses and social practices which serve to legitimize the imperatives of white patriarchal capitalism. Faced with the ominous threat of Gingrich and his minions, we need to brace ourselves for an all-out war against

difference. Here the term “democracy” becomes whatever it is necessary for it to mean given the interests of the groups that it serves—a type of *objet petit a* that can never be pinned down, a universal referent that can never be fully realized in the concreteness of everyday, situated existence, a signifier that is just free-floating enough to provide the ambiguity necessary to keep the symbolic order from imploding.

Critique of the political-economic context of schooling must be ongoing. Although schools are situated in increasingly embedded systems of domination, the particular ways in which forms of domination are encoded and played out shift over time and space, in order to appear benign, virtuous or simply normal. Even multiculturalism is being domesticated as diversity becomes fashionable, necessitating a continuous critical examination of multicultural practice. San Juan, Jr. (1992), for example, criticizes many contemporary literary texts that attempt to broaden the canon as resting on “a foundational scheme of inventing America as the model poly-ethnic nation with ‘a shared sense of destiny’ and ethnicization as a form of modernization” (p. 38)—peaceful coexistence within an historical trajectory of progress for all. One of the problems we need to face is that the academy encourages black academics to engage in the articulation of a theory of multiculturalism as long as it remains contextually tied to issues of racism and sexism, that is, issues dealing mainly with the private sphere. They are not encouraged to engage in criticisms of the wider public spheres dealing with the global implications of late capitalism or white supremacy (Gilroy, 1993).

Analyses of oppression in education must always be situated historically and on vigilant guard against cooptation. Thus, the first chapters in this book analyze the context of education in the early 1990s in terms of how differences are commodified and sold and relations of power are muted by appealing to exoticized images of difference.

PEDAGOGY AND THEORIES

Until recently, nobody had ever asked me if I was an Indian: it was obvious I was not; neither was I asked if I was a “minority” or a “Hispanic.” I never had to talk about myself in those terms. It was only after I came to the United States that I had to learn the many ways in which those terms were socially constructed by diverse groups in this country.

Montecinos

Differences between multicultural education and critical pedagogy
are more context than content, semantics than substance,
and oratorical than essential.

Gay

Education critics often identify themselves according to a particular theoretical or disciplinary allegiance to multicultural education, critical pedagogy, or feminist pedagogy, and these perspectives are often conflated within the critical educational tradition in both the practice of theory and in actual classroom praxis. As chapters in this volume by Gay, and by Rivera and Poplin argue, multicultural education, critical pedagogy, and feminist pedagogy are mutually informing frameworks or constructs that differ not so much in their overall political project of self and social transformation as in the emphases they place on theoretical approaches to class, gender, race, and sexual relations.

E. San Juan, Jr. (1992) argues that there is "no single master narrative" for liberation (p. 7). Rather, there must be multiple narratives as different groups of people define their own identities, analyze the circumstances of their own oppression, and chart strategies for empowerment. To complicate the situation further, groups are not discrete, freestanding entities, since all of us are racialized, genderized, and so forth; we all belong to multiple collectivities and define ourselves accordingly, although groups are constituted overwhelmingly within asymmetrical relations of power.

Multicultural education and critical pedagogy can each be traced historically to specific struggles; each has further been elaborated as its main precepts have proved useful in specific contexts. While there is no single narrative of liberation, a brief glance at the historic roots of multicultural education and critical pedagogy illustrates that both developed from complementary struggles and, further, that narratives of liberation can be pulled away from liberating projects and employed in the service of extant power relations.

Multicultural education is an offspring of the Civil Rights movement in the U.S. Gay (1983) notes that multicultural education

originated in a socio-political milieu and is to some extent a product of its times. Concerns about the treatment of ethnic groups in school curricula and instructional materials directly reflected concerns about their social, political, and economic plight in the society at large. (p. 560)

African American scholars and educators, working in conjunction with the Civil Rights movement as a whole, provided much of the leadership of multicultural education (Banks 1992).

The prefix "multi" was adopted as an umbrella to join diverse groups of color. Nakagawa (1989), for example, explains that it was a leap for her to move from identifying with the struggles of Asian-Americans to those of oppressed racial groups as a whole. The term "multiethnic education" was used to bridge racial and ethnic groups; "multicultural education" broadened the umbrella to include gender and other forms of diversity. The term "culture" rather than "racism" was adopted mainly so that audiences of white educators would listen. As a result, however, many white educators have pulled multicultural education away from social struggles and redefined it to mean the celebration of ethnic foods and festivals; the field is sometimes criticized as having turned away from its initial critique of racism in education (Mattai 1992). It is important to locate multicultural education in the Civil Rights struggle for freedom, political power, and economic integration since its roots were in racial struggle.

The late 1960s and early 1970s witnessed several other movements that have connected loosely with multicultural education. The women's movement gained strength and impacted schools with passage of Title IX in 1972. Although the women's movement has had a White middle-class orientation, there has been continued effort on the part of some workers to link struggles against racism with struggles against sexism. Bilingual education was advanced in the late 1950s by Cubans fleeing Castro's revolution. While this was a relatively privileged minority, since then Mexican-Americans, Puerto Ricans, and Asian-Americans have advanced bilingual education legislation, theory, and practice. The history and development of bilingual education is somewhat separate from that of multicultural education, although the two have grown in a mutually reinforcing symbiosis. Also, during this time ethnic studies and women's studies departments were established on some university campuses, providing a basis for contemporary debates about multiculturalism in higher education.

Multicultural education frames inequality in terms of institutionalized oppression and reconfigures the families and communities of oppressed groups as sources of strength. By the early 1980s, this formulation was turned on its head in the dominant discourse about education. Discussions about education were framed mainly in terms of how to enable the U.S. to maintain international supremacy in the Cold War and the "trade war" (Shor 1986). The

early 1980s saw a wave of educational reform reports, beginning with that by the National Commission on Excellence in Education, *A Nation at Risk* (1983). In this context, students of color, those from poverty areas, and those whose first language was not English were defined as “at risk” of failure, and their homes and communities were defined as culturally deprived and morally deprived.

Nevertheless, by 1985 demographic data reports were informing educators and the general public that people of color would become the majority during the twenty-first century, and multicultural education received renewed attention. At the K–12 level, workshops on multicultural education became “in” again, with many teachers interpreting it to mean teaching supplementary lessons about “other” cultures. Multicultural educators had made some substantive changes in curricula, however, which led to fierce battles in states such as California and New York (Cornbleth and Waugh 1993). In higher education, lively debates about the canon were met by conservative challenges against “political correctness.” The roots of Western civilization were reconnected with Africa and Asia (Bernal 1987), a connection that was fiercely rejected by those who feared that the loss of European supremacy would mean loss of civilization.

However, as White teachers in K–12 classrooms developed “tourist” conceptions of multicultural education (Derman-Sparks 1989) and as desegregated schools demanded children of color go far more than halfway to bring about integration, many educators of color grew disillusioned with the fading promises of the Civil Rights movement and multiculturalism. At the center of this disillusionment has been the failure of white people and institutions to grapple substantively with our own racism at personal as well as systemic levels, concomitant with the escalated transfer of economic resources and the mobility of capital away from poor communities. Native American, African American, Chicano/a, Puerto Rican, and other communities of color responded with resurgent self-determination. Tribal schools and Afrocentric schools and programs are vibrant examples of this response, and are discussed here in chapters by Pease-Windy Boy, Murtadha, and Phillips. These efforts argue compellingly for the need to center oneself spiritually and culturally before one can connect meaningfully across cultural borders and illustrate the failure of white controlled multicultural schools to advance the interests and needs of communities of color.

One also finds “multicultural education” in other institutional arenas, although exactly what this means varies widely. Many

corporations now offer multicultural (or "human relations") training as part of their in-service personnel agenda, primarily to maximize their own profits, although women and groups of color often define such training as part of a strategy for opening doors of opportunity. As a 1993 special issue of the *Labor Research Review* illustrates, organized labor is also beginning to use multicultural education as a way of bridging historical racial cleavages for the purpose of collective empowerment.

Multicultural education, initially born in liberation struggles, has become a free-floating signifier that is now used in widely differing contexts for conflicting purposes. Conservatives can be seen as wanting to exploit difference for its potential market value while liberals wish to celebrate difference under the sign of a unified, harmonious culture. In both cases difference is tolerated—even celebrated—as long as it does not contest white Anglo-European values that serve as the invisible referent against which difference is defined. In other words, difference becomes a marker for novelty while concealing the social, cultural, political, and economic conditions out of which difference becomes valued or demeaned. In this sense multicultural pluralism is understood as partly a detente between conservatism and liberalism in so far as its underlying unity is built upon commodity logic. We feel it is crucially important to fuse multicultural pedagogies with ongoing social critiques of oppression. Although critical pedagogy grew from different roots, linking critical pedagogy with multicultural education can strengthen this critical stance.

While critical pedagogy draws inspiration from liberation struggles in Latin America and elsewhere and invokes the example of individuals such as Farabundo Marti, Cesar Augusto Sandino, Rosa Luxemburg, and Che Guevara, it is most often associated with the literacy practices and brilliant exegetical work of Brazilian educator Paulo Freire. Freire's work is broad in theoretical sweep, but in most U.S. contexts educators have rather narrowly appropriated Freire's work as a methodology that will help them better understand the social physics of classroom life. Freire's work is best understood as problem-posing education rather than as a classroom tool kit for finding classroom solutions. Until recently, Freire's work dealt with mainly issues of education and social class discrimination although Freire has been directing his attention to questions dealing with race and gender in recent works. Freire's early emphasis on social class has to be seen in its historical context as far as radical work goes; in this respect it was, in fact, no different from the earliest exponents of North American criticalist work in education.

Influenced by the work of U.S. social reconstructionists, participatory research, ethnomethodology and hermeneutics, British advances in sociolinguistics and the sociology of knowledge, the Frankfurt School critique of the culture industry, and the work of radical Latin American educators such as Freire, criticalists in the U.S. gained a tremulous foothold in the early 1980s with the contributions of Henry Giroux, Michael Apple, Jean Anyon, Philip Wexler, Bill Pinar, Madeline Grumet, and others. These forerunners of critical pedagogy continue to break new theoretical ground, less isolated now in their endeavors perhaps but still relatively marginal actors when compared with those operating in mainstream educational arenas. What is promising in this present historical juncture is that a new generation of educators, working alongside the early pioneers of critical pedagogy or working independently at various sites across the country, are currently helping to steer the direction of scholarship in new directions. Today the critical enterprise has been subdivided into new categories: critical postmodernism, border pedagogy, neo and post-Marxism, feminist poststructuralism, ritology (study of ritual), border identity, postcolonial pedagogy, discourse analysis, historical genealogy, to name but a few. While theoretical differences certainly inflect the currently and often virulently contested field of critical pedagogy, there are also those who identify themselves as criticalists but who either eschew theory altogether or remain wary of criticalists who appropriate from the language of "high theory" to advance proposals for classroom reform. This book does not attempt to resolve such debates.

Since the conceptual beginnings of critical pedagogy in North America, there have been growing attempts among cultural workers to ground analysis in a more developed and sophisticated understanding of the role that race, gender, and class play in social formations and the production of historically and culturally specific modes of subjectivity. In addition, critical pedagogy has accomplished in more recent years a more detailed understanding of the production and disarticulation of women and people of color as the abjected other (*les autres*) through processes of ideological differentiation against invisible cultural markers consisting of Eurocentric, Anglocentric, and patriarchal assumptions and practices.

We acknowledge the need for critical pedagogy to study further the racializing of identity and social space, personal and institutional relations, and the public sphere, especially as these have shifted during the passage from what David Theo Goldberg (1993) calls "classical liberal modernity to postmodern bourgeois liberalism" (p. 206). We follow Goldberg in asking how we can turn the

category of race from one of oppression to become “the site of a counterassault, a ground or field for launching liberatory projects or from which to expand freedom(s) and open up emancipatory spaces” (Ibid., p. 211).

Critical pedagogy is situated as a critical/tactical practice designed to contest and transform what Lefebvre (1990) calls “terrorism and everyday life” and the “bureaucratic society of controlled consumption.” Everyday life, according to Lefebvre, is “maintained by terror” through the efficiency of classification techniques and the function of forms (and of institutions that develop out of these forms). Critical pedagogy seeks counterterrorist intervention. This does not refer to the transformation of existence only through the development of new theoretical vocabularies; to argue this position is to miss the point of critical pedagogy’s emphasis on the language of theory. The answer is not a new metalanguage but rather, in Lefebvre’s terms, the critical rediscovery, reorganization, and transformation of everyday life. Lefebvre (1990) writes:

The answer is everyday life, to rediscover everyday life—no longer to neglect and disown it, elude and evade it—but actively to rediscover it while contributing to its transfiguration; this undertaking involves the invention of a language or, to be precise, an invention of language—for everyday life translated into language becomes a different everyday life by becoming clear; and the transfiguration of everyday life is the creation of something new, something that requires new words. (p. 202)

Critical pedagogy is firmly set against what Kristin Ross (1993) calls “the integral ‘pedagogicizing’ of society” by which she refers to the “general infantilization” of individuals or groups through the discourses and social practices of “the nineteenth-century European myth of progress” (p. 669). Ross is able to move away from essentialist conceptions of cultural identity informed by a symbolic model of experience and representation in which one part timelessly and ahistorically reflects the whole. According to this model, the plight of, say, white women in New York is supposed to capture the struggle of black women in Alabama. This is decidedly insufficient if not politically ludicrous. Rather than viewing this relationship as unmediated—as a relationship in which the plight of white women constitutes an authentic or transparent reflection of the plight of black women—Ross prefers to see this and similar relationships as allegorical. According to Ross:

Allegory preserves the differences of each historically situated and embedded experience, all the while drawing a relationship

between those experiences. In other words, one experience is read in terms of another but not necessarily in terms of establishing identity, not obliterating the qualities particular to each. (p. 672)

E. San Juan, Jr. (1988) describes the power of allegory as follows:

Instead of inducing an easy reconciliation of antinomies, an existential leap of faith where all class antagonisms vanish and rebellious desire is pacified, allegory heightens the tension between signifier and signified, between object and subject, thereby foiling empathy and establishing the temporary distance required for generating critical judgment and, ultimately, cathartic action. (p. 46)

Since it is impossible to represent every cultural group in the curriculum, the task of critical pedagogy, in Ross's terms, is to construct identity allegorically in order that each group is able to see his or her cultural narrative in a broader and comparative relationship to others and within a larger narrative of social transformation.

It is especially urgent for students to recognize the historical and cultural specificity of their own lived experiences in allegorical relations to other narratives, given the persecutory and diabolic character of the New Right's assault on difference. As Ross (1993) puts it:

within a growing global homogenization the non-west is conceived in two, equally reductive ways: one whereby differences are reified and one whereby differences are lost. In the first, the non-West is assigned the role of the repository for some more genuine or organic lived experience; minority cultures and non-Western cultures in the West are increasingly made to provide something like an authenticity rush for blasé or jaded Westerners, and this is too heavy a burden for anyone to bear. In the second, non-Western experiences are recoded and judged according to how closely they converge on the same: a single public culture or global average, that is, how far each has progressed toward a putative goal of modernization. (p. 673).

We want to add here that allegories must be read historically and understood not simply in terms of the way they are produced but also in terms of the way they are read by specific reading publics—taking into account what Walter Benjamin (1969) referred to as “constellations.”

Chapters in the second part of this book explore theoretical ramifications of linking multicultural education with critical

pedagogy. How do the two fields connect? What light does one shed on the other? What problems must we guard against? In what way is it an act of power to name the experience of another? These are the central questions addressed by chapters in Part Two.

PEDAGOGIES IN ACTION

The responsibility of a community for teaching its youths in its indigenous ways rests with each ethnic group...Asymmetrical power relationships existing between the African American community and the school system make this issue critical to the success and achievement of African American students.

Phillips

How does one involve a class of male and female White students from mainly middle class backgrounds in a critique of various forms of oppression, and at the same time help them to construct for themselves insights grounded in emancipation of *other people*?

Sleeter

Critical pedagogy and multicultural education require action. Both pedagogies attempt to contest the established historical order through a series of counterhegemonic articulations, counternarratives, and countermyths that exist within a matrix of pedagogical discontinuities or ruptures. In other words, both address the configuration of sociopolitical interests that schooling serves. Criticalists do not believe that it is possible to provide value-free pedagogical knowledge—knowledge that is not the expression of the teacher's political or value commitments. All pedagogical efforts are infiltrated with value judgements and crosshatched by vectors of power serving particular interests in the name of certain regimes of truth. Human agency is not a transparent reflection of universal selfhood but rather is structurally located and socially and historically inscribed.

Critical pedagogy and multicultural education question how we name and construct ourselves as well as others. Naming brings to visibility and existence that which was formerly hidden or kept silent. For instance, naming as racist, sexist, or patriarchal certain relationships in the classroom helps to provide for students a

context in which those issues can also be discussed in the outside community and larger society. While every act of naming is in some sense an act of violence that makes something the object of knowledge, we advocate providing a critical vernacular so that subaltern groups can name and eventually own their own struggle for visibility and legitimacy. According to Rey Chow (1993), "The act of naming is not intrinsically essentialist or hierarchical. It is the social relationships in which names are inserted that may lead to essentialist, hierarchical, and thus detrimental consequences" (p. 105). This is to assert that naming is a discursive phenomenon, a particular network of signifiers that produce particular effects, given the concrete context of utterance. Critical subjectivity is not accomplished by the act of naming alone but in transforming those unjust social relationships in which the act of naming occurs.

Fundamental to critical pedagogy and multicultural education is the importance of reshaping, reformulating, and reenchanting the discursive and ideological formations in which subjectivities are produced and the social and political contexts out of which they are generated. Neither approach is simply the practice of inviting minority voices to trace their signatures against the firmament of social justice, for this is the paternalistic move of the bourgeois liberal educator. Nor do they place an emphasis on unforced subjectivity, a democratic conversation that may be transformed into an ideal form of discursive engagement. Criticalists recognize that unforced subjectivity or nondistorted communication can only take place in an uncontentious sphere of transcendental truth. Subjectivities are produced in public and private arenas that are riven with material inequalities and social injustices and that reflect race, class, and gender privileges. Subjectivities constituted by dominant discursive formations invite speakers or agents to misrecognize or mistake themselves as the authors of their own identity, occluding the material relations of capitalist production. Criticalists ask themselves: What is the type of human subject that our pedagogical practices summon into existence? As McCarthy illustrates convincingly in chapter 8 of this volume, the race, class, or gender identity of such a subject is never monolithic or essentialist in the sense of guaranteeing a particular politics. Similarly, we want to emphasize that identities are produced out of competing discourses, as multiplex, as multilayered palimpsests, as superimposed doublings. Identities are neither preconstituted by discourses nor hopelessly decentered; they are capable of becoming more self-reflexive if individuals are given the opportunity to acquire a critical praxis (what Freire terms "conscientization").

The experiences of students and teachers are important sites for constructing a pedagogy of transformation and social justice. Yet such experiences should not be uncritically patronized since experience never speaks for itself and needs always to be problematized for the ideological interests that it inevitably carries (McLaren 1993; Giroux and McLaren 1992; Scott 1992). Experience as situated meaning is largely understood and made sense of through language, and language is a social phenomenon that is always already embedded within a system of institutionalized sign systems, ideological constraints, and overdetermined or preferred readings. We do not completely own our own thoughts since we inherit structures of signification or vocabularies for making sense of the world (Ebert, 1991). The questions we ask and the statements we make are preceded by historical frames which delimit the range of our inquiry. Meanings are not panhistorically undecidable but are created (ideologically "sutured") through historical struggle over social relations, regimes of signification, and modes of intelligibility—conflicts which occur not simply in the arena of empty abstractions but at the level of material culture. In other words, truth is not something to be "discovered" in or as some timeless essence or to be taken from the metaphysical deep freeze and thawed out for consumption as a unitary, motionless, and apodictic meaning. Rather, truth is conjunctural, not essential, and is constructed through dialog among individuals in social contexts.

The analysis of experience needs to be turned into a mode of cultural critique. This does not mean that we should ignore experience but rather that we should understand that experience is always an 'experience effect' and thus must be understood in the context of its production and reception. Once it is interrogated for the interests it serves, it can be employed critically. This means more than simply recreating or resymbolizing experience or putting new labels onto what we already know. Making experience critical means reading experience performatively rather than constructing experiences mimetically. To create experiences mimetically means repeating what already is and what we already know. To understand experience performatively means taking experience beyond its uncontested service to empire and its chiasmatic remaking of what already is by transforming experience through the act of self-reflection (what Freire calls an "act of knowing") into an insurgent instrument for contesting domination and bringing into existence ideas and social practices that do not already exist. In order to do this we need a critical language of social analysis embedded not in the circular economy of empty

idealism but in a praxis of possibility and a language of hope (McLaren, 1995). Experience is not the 'limit text' of the real.

It is the attention given to the historical conflict over signs that distinguishes critical pedagogy's recent alliances with resistance postmodernism (Aronowitz and Giroux 1992; McLaren 1993). Resistance or critical postmodernism grounds its project in the fact that significations are struggled over in arenas of power and privilege. This position can be contrasted with "ludic" postmodernists who simply assert the infinite play of signifiers in a culture in which value referents have no anchors outside of their own rhetorical embeddedness (Ebert, 1991). We do not equate revolution with clever semiotic displays by careerist academics whose decentering strategies are as conceptually dazzling as they are politically reactionary. As editors we are less concerned with the mutability of meaning and the slippery side of human agency than we are with linking meaning to the social contexts in which it is generated. In making this assertion, we follow Raymond Williams's (1979) observation:

However dominant a social system may be, the very meaning of its domination involves a limitation or selection of the activities it covers, so that by definition it cannot exhaust all social experience, which therefore always potentially contains space for alternative acts and alternative intentions which are not yet articulated as a social institution or even project. (p. 252)

We do not wish here to suggest that immanent to the multireferentiality of language is the seedbed of revolution, for that assertion too easily lets us off the hook. However, we refuse to jettison the important connections between language and socioeconomic interests even though these connections are not fixed or invariable. We also want to make clear that the process of interrogating the ideological and discursive dimensions of experience necessitates that teachers be reflexive about the rhetorical construction of their own disciplinary authority. This means taking seriously the issue of speaking for and with students and questioning the conditions under which this is advisable and/or possible.

We also want to emphasize that every dominant discourse is in some sense ambiguous; that is, it is by definition incapable of squeezing out all spaces of counternarrative. However, we do not believe that recognizing or celebrating the "hybrid" nature of all social texts is enough to secure liberation for subaltern peoples. In other words, liberation can never be won, as Rey Chow (1993) notes, by simply deconstructing "the rich and ambivalent language of the imperialist" (p. 35). Rather, the act of speaking or enunciation "itself

belongs to an already well-defined structure and history of domination" (p. 36). This means that we, as editors, recognize that we cannot simply translate subaltern discourses into the language of academic social criticism. In other words, we need to identify with the "other" precisely at those points at which he or she is least like us.

Chapters in the third part of this book offer snapshots of contemporary practice in different sites: an African-centered school, a community center, a tribal college, and a teacher education program. This section is by no means exhaustive, but rather illustrative of the day-to-day work of critical multiculturalists.

WHITE SUPREMACY AND ELITISM

Both multicultural education and critical pedagogy challenge various forms of oppression but usually do not directly address the subjective identities and vested interests of activists and advocates who are white, male, and/or members of the intellectual elite. In chapter 3 of this book, Haymes critiques white peoples' construction of racism as a symbolic consumption of the "Other" and challenges whites to interrogate their own whiteness. As editors of this book, both of us, being white academicians, benefit from white supremacy and intellectual elitism. How, then, can we contribute to a discourse of social justice?

Both of us acknowledge that we have always benefited from our own locations in a racial and social class hierarchy, and, in Peter's case, in a patriarchal hierarchy. Had doors of privilege not been opened to us at points all the way through our lives, we might not be in the position today to write and teach. When confronting this fact, whites tend to bog down, wallowing in guilt. To go beyond white guilt, we believe it is critical to ask what to do with the privileged positions we currently occupy. We cannot escape participating in a racialized order, nor in a materialistic and highly individualistic society, nor in a patriarchal one. Like it or not, we are a part of this society.

As educated whites, we can speak to an educated white audience and attempt to contribute to dialog and praxis oriented around the deconstruction of white supremacy. It is likely that the majority of readers of this book will be educated whites: we urge such readers to examine our own collective positions of privilege, identify actions we can take to share power with non-white people, and work toward racial justice. In part, this involves learning to share, listen, step aside and take a backseat, admit that we know less than we usually take for granted, and take seriously the intelligence of people of color. It means learning to work in multiracial

coalitions and learning to link our own fates with humans whose coloring may be darker than ours. It means curbing our own appetites for material gain and power. In our chapters in this volume, each of us speaks to issues and actions that whites can take.

Collective action also means supporting the ideas, perspectives, and very careers of colleagues of color, both men and women, from various walks of life. Throughout the construction of this book, we asked: Who will benefit monetarily from the book? Whose ideas are rendered legitimacy? Whose careers are supported? Who gains audience? We acknowledge our own limitations, mistakes, and blinders in attempting to work through these questions. However, we put forth these questions as guides to white elite writers in an effort to direct attention to the effects of what we do, effects which go beyond what we say.

DIALOG AND COALITION BUILDING

This book is about dialog and coalition building for the purpose of strengthening collective work toward social justice. Marable (1992) describes the building of a "new majority for justice and peace" (p. 254). Building this majority requires bridges, debate and discussion, shared experiences, and distillation of common concerns. As he explains:

As long as we bicker over perceived grievances, maximizing our claims against each other, refusing to see the economic, political, cultural and social common ground which can unite us, we will be victimized by capitalism, sexism, racism, national oppression, homophobia, and other systems of domination....No single group has all the answers....But together, the collective path to human liberation, self-determination and sovereignty will become clear. (Ibid., p. 255)

Social justice movements tend to experience fragmentation, and the histories of multicultural education and critical pedagogy point to some persistent fissures. Constructing a dialog requires articulating some of the tensions that divide positions represented in this book. Historically, multicultural education has had the most to say about issues of race, culture, and ethnicity; its theorists and advocates have been uneven in their interest in gender issues, using largely a liberal perspective about sexism and, at the K-12 level, remaining virtually silent about social class and capitalism. Because of its African American origins and its silence about social class in most schools of education, the white left has tended not to identify with its issues. This has led many educators

of color to distance themselves from the racism embodied in disinterest or disdain by members of the white left.

This schism between the white left and groups of color is not new. Indeed, much of the history of the labor movement in the U.S. is a history of white racism. "[M]ore than enough of the habit of whiteness and of the conditions producing it survived [slavery] to ensure that white workers would be at best uncertain allies of Black freedom and would stop short of developing fully new concepts of liberation for themselves as well" (Roediger 1991, p. 177). Bridging a division between the white left and educators of color will require whites to address our own racism, and the benefits we derive from it. We cannot call for solidarity across racial lines, and at the same time continue to promote our own interests first. Bridging this division will also require middle-class people to question the ideology of individual mobility and material acquisition that allows us to move to the suburbs and into corporate offices, leaving the masses behind.

Ironically, because of multicultural education's appeal to white educators, many radicals of color view it with disdain. The staffs of public schools have been predominantly white since desegregation and are becoming progressively whiter. To address the needs of children of color, some educators work toward the establishment of schools that are staffed by educators of color and centered within the historical and cultural context of their own group, such as African American independent schools (Rattaray 1992). However, many multicultural educators appeal to white teachers who are already in the schools and are attempting to educate them to work more productively with their own children. This appeal is often taken up in a way that avoids confronting racism. How to address the huge problem of an institutionalized white, largely female, teaching staff is a very important issue.

Multicultural education is also often dismissed by white feminists who tacitly accept racism, view gender as the main axis of oppression, and distrust men of color. A fissure between white women and groups of color has a long history, as at various times white women have turned against Americans of color in order to advance their own interests (Blee 1991; Davis 1981). This fissure can be seen graphically on many university campuses that have predominantly white women's studies faculties and predominantly male ethnic studies faculties (Butler and Walter 1991). Bridging this gulf requires white women to confront racism, men of color to confront sexism, and both to acknowledge that our own marginalized positions fuel fears that bridge-building will cost us something.

In chapter 9, Allsup argues that scholarship by women of color provides the most insightful analyses of intersections of racial and gender oppression, scholarship that the rest of us should learn from.

Yet another gulf occurs between academicians, and practitioners and other cultural workers. For example, classroom teachers who work with critical pedagogy largely emphasize forms of pedagogical practice in which students are invited to problematize aspects of everyday life as it is lived out in the home, the classroom, the school, the community, and in larger institutional and social contexts. Here, the primacy of experience is emphasized both as a methodological tool to uncover the world of student meaning and as the ontological ground from which a politics of liberation must be waged. Theory, in this case, is often viewed as delusory and inherently elitist, an enterprise that is profoundly alienating to the rank-and-file educator. It is criticized for mainly assisting teachers in stepping outside of present pedagogical practices in order to control them, thereby helping to maintain the various interests of the dominant credentialing system that is housed in the schools and universities. Academicians, on the other hand, concentrate considerable energy working in transdisciplinary projects such as critical ethnography, action research, and the development of critical social theory, undertaken at the intersection of various fields such as women's studies, feminist pedagogy, ethnic studies, cultural studies, curriculum theory, literary and film criticism, and the philosophy and foundations of education. The result is a tremendous growth of new theoretical languages proliferating within the field of critical social theory. Who speaks for multicultural education and critical pedagogies and in what voice? This important issue is addressed in quite different ways in chapters by McLaren, Montecinos, and Ritchie.

We are concerned with developing a common ground of struggle that will not eliminate difference or merely exoticize it but will conscript difference into the construction of a new multicultural imaginary. We need to struggle towards a critical multiculturalism which can speak to the universal values of freedom and justice without such values becoming totalizing and which permit particular groups to articulate their own struggles. We are worried that struggles for universal values and struggles that support context-specific values are now being conceptualized and operationalized as mutually exclusive terrains.

As Ernesto Laclau (1992) has pointed out, Eurocentrism does not differentiate between universal, Western values and the partic-

ular individuals who incarnate them on a daily basis. On the other hand, particularist politics separates itself out from any appeal to universal values. We are currently confronted with a proliferation of particularisms—i.e., feminist, environmentalist, labor, gay and lesbian, and others—and Laclau argues that it is impossible to appeal to any one of these without at the same time appealing to a universal value. Yet, at the same time, we need to understand that no difference can be fully achieved just as no universal can be complete. Laclau argues that we should consider the universal to mean a “missing fullness” or an open horizon rather than a seamless truth. Concurrently, we should understand differential identities to be never closed (i.e., always open to further difference). If, then, we can “show that the concrete practices of our society restrict the universalism of our political ideals to limited sectors of the population, it becomes possible to retain the universal dimension while widening the spheres of its application—which, in turn, will redefine the concrete contexts of such a universality” (Ibid., p. 90). Paradoxically, because difference always fails to constitute itself as pure difference and because universal representation is inevitably contingent and partial, democracy is possible.

Rey Chow (1993) has posed a recent challenge to intellectuals which we feel has important implications for educators working in the fields of critical pedagogy and multicultural education. She asks, “How do intellectuals struggle against a hegemony which already includes them and which can no longer be divided into the state and civil society in Gramsci’s terms, nor be clearly demarcated into national and transnational spaces?” (p. 16). Chow remarks that most oppositional university intellectual work derives from *strategies* as opposed to *tactics*. Strategies occur as part of the political projects of those who wish to solidify a place or barricade a field of interest. Michael Shapiro (1992) (after Michel De Certeau) describes strategies as belonging “to those (e.g., the police) who occupy legitimate or what is recognized as proper space within the social order” (p. 103). He further describes them as “part of a centralized surveillance network for controlling the population” (Ibid.)

What we need instead of strategies, argues Chow, are tactics that deal with calculated actions outside of specific sites. Tactics are described as belonging “to those who do not occupy a legitimate space and depend instead on time, on whatever opportunities present themselves” (Shapiro, p. 103). Describing tactics as “weapons of the weak”, de Certeau is worth quoting at length:

[A] tactic is a calculated action determined by the absence of a proper locus....The space of a tactic is the space of the other. Thus it must play on and with a terrain imposed on it and organized by the law of a foreign power. It does not have the means to *keep to itself*, at a distance, in a position of withdrawal, foresight, and self-collection: it is a maneuver "within the enemy's field of vision,"...and within enemy territory. It does not, therefore, have the option of planning, general strategy....It operates in isolated actions, blow by blow. It takes advantage of opportunities and depends on them, being without any base where it could stockpile its winnings, build up its own position, and plan raids....This nowhere gives tactic mobility, to be sure, but a mobility that must accept the chance offerings of the moment, and seize on the wing the possibilities that offer themselves at any given moment. It must vigilantly make use of the cracks that particular conjunctions open in the surveillance of proprietary powers. It poaches them. It creates surprises in them....It is a guileful ruse. (Cited in Conquergood 1992, p. 82)

Unlike tactics, Chow (1993) warns that strategic solidarities only repeat "what they seek to overthrow" (p. 17).

We believe that Chow raises some important points with respect to oppositional movements such as multicultural education and critical pedagogy that begin as tactics but turn into strategies that unwittingly yet ultimately secure and protect precincts of the privileged. She writes:

We need to remember as intellectuals that the battles we fight are battles of words. Those who argue the oppositional standpoint are not *doing* anything different from their enemies and are most certainly not directly changing the downtrodden lives of those who seek their survival in metropolitan and nonmetropolitan spaces alike. What academic intellectuals must confront is *not* their "victimization" by society at large (or their victimization-in-solidarity-with-the-oppressed), but the power, wealth, and privilege that ironically accumulate from their "oppositional" viewpoint, and the widening gap between the professed contents of their words and the upward mobility they gain from such words. (When Foucault said intellectuals need to struggle against becoming the object and instrument of power, he spoke precisely to this kind of situation.) The predicament we face in the West, where intellectual freedom shares a history with economic enterprise, is that "if a professor wishes to denounce aspects of big business,...he will be wise to locate in a school whose trustees are big businessmen." Why should we believe in those who continue to speak a language of alterity-as-lack while their salaries and honoraria keep rising? How do we resist the

turning-into-propriety of oppositional discourses, when the intention of such discourses has been that of displacing and disowning the proper? How do we prevent what begin as tactics—that which is “without any base where it could stockpile its winnings” (de Certeau 1984, p. 37)—from turning into a solidly fenced-off field, in the military no less than in the academic senses? (p. 17)

In order to contest the opportunity for mainstream pedagogical and social practices to reset social boundaries in the interests of strategies for the privileged and the powerful (mainly white men), our proposed volume will develop a discourse of tactical insurgency and hope, linking multicultural theory and critical pedagogy in a manner that seeks to construct counterhegemonic pedagogies, oppositional identity formations, and social policies that refuse, resist, and transform existing structures of domination primarily in school sites but also in other cultural sites within the North American geopolitical arena. The task, as we see it, for critical multiculturalists is to create a collective praxis of liberation and social justice in a manner that will—in the particular concrete struggles of the oppressed—begin to challenge social, cultural and economic relations of exploitation and also shed new light on the construction of difference.

NOTE

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