PEDAGOGY AND PRAXIS IN THE AGE OF EMPIRE

INTERVIEW BY SAMANTHA COHEN

PETER McLAREN & NATHALIA JARAMILLO

Peter L. McLaren, UCLA Professor of education, and Nathalia Jaramillo, Assistant Professor of Cultural Foundations at Purdue University, recently co-authored *Pedagogy and Praxis in the Age of Empire: Towards a New Humanism* (Sense Publishers, 2007), a collection of essays that investigates corporate global capitalism and its relation to educational and social movements in the United States and abroad.

McLaren is one of the leading critical pedagogists in North America, and has written and edited approximately forty books and monographs on critical pedagogy and multicultural education. His book *Life in Schools: An Introduction to Critical Pedagogy in the Foundations of Education* (1998) was named one of the twelve most significant writings by foreign authors in the field of educational theory, policy and practice by the Moscow School of Social and Economic Sciences. Jaramillo has co-authored numerous publications with McLaren, including "Alternative Globalizations: Toward a Critical Globalization Studies" and "A Moveable Fascism: Fear and Loathing in the Empire of Sand." She received a Ph.D. in education at the UCLA Graduate School of Education & Information Studies.

SC What prompted you to begin work on this project?* You mentioned that you've made the book available free of charge in fifteen developing, "overexploited" countries. What led you to do this? You must feel that it can have some impact in these places.

PM I'm sorry, Sam, but I can't take any credit for that. That wasn't my doing. It's the standard policy of Sense Publishers to make e-versions of their book available free of charge to interested readers in certain underdeveloped countries ("underdeveloped" meaning "overexploited") who would either have access to the Internet, would know somebody who did, or would be in a position to run off the book on a printer (see pg. 100). But it was something that Nathalia and I considered before choosing a publisher for our book. We wanted a diverse international audience for our work. I've had books published by many different presses and believe that we need to be part of an international conversation. Judging by the reviews and responses to the book, it's much more accessible to international audiences than other books of mine. The problem, though, is that the book is unlikely to be stocked in many bookstores, since the publishers work more by direct order through the Internet than through distributors. That's one of the drawbacks for North American readers.

SC It is clearly a focus of yours to bring critical pedagogy to the forefront in the discussion of education in the United States (and abroad). Before I dive into some more specific questions about the text, can you define "critical pedagogy" for those of us who are not so familiar with the field?

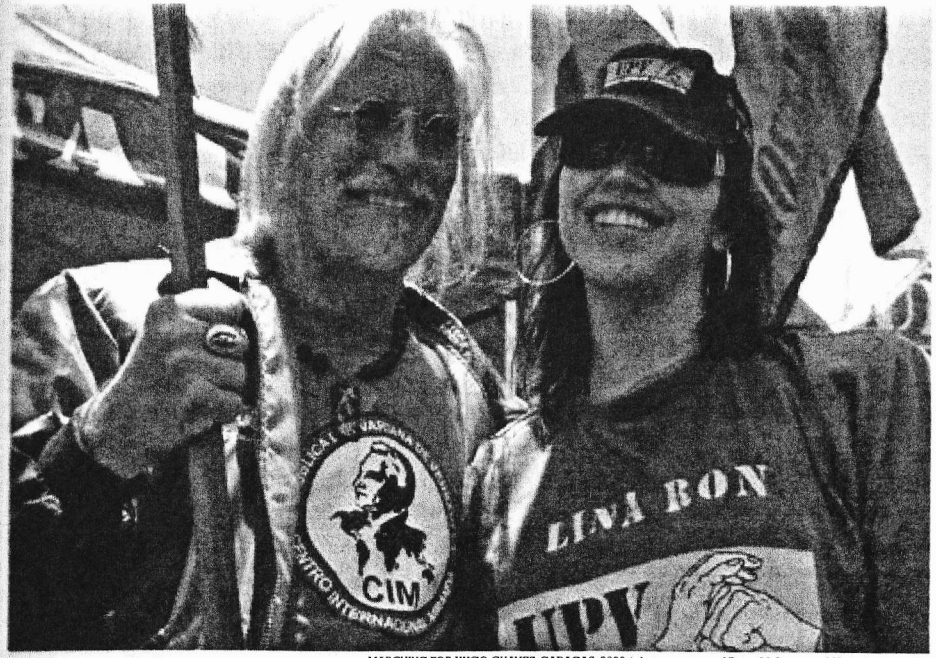
PM Well I can try, Sam. To me it seems clear that pedagogy is all about politics and politics has a pedagogical dimension. I won't have time to uncoil the revolutionary implications of that statement nor the congealed possibilities for advancing revolutions packed tightly within it. Suffice it to say that the greatest

*The title of the interview comes from McLaren and Jaramillo's latest book, *Pedagogy and Praxis in the Age of Empire: Towards a New Humanism* (2007). The publication is the subject of the interviewer's first question and is described on the previous page in the authors' joint biography.

single influence on my own development of revolutionary critical pedagogy has been Paulo Freire, but my work is not exclusively Freirean. When we speak of pedagogy, we are referring generally to teaching practices, techniques, the implementation of curriculum content and instructional design, and how all of these practices organize, in an ideological sense, a particular relationship a teacher has to her students and to the world, and helps to shape how a teacher enables or constrains a particular view of knowledge and knowledge formation that either assists students to read the word and the world (that is, to learn dialogically and dialectically), or helps to restrict access and understanding of the social world for students and their relationship to it.

Critical pedagogy, on the other hand, helps to undress the cultural formations, social relations and institutional and other organizational structures that mediate how we approach the concepts of curriculum, design, evaluation, classroom instruction, and the social construction of knowledge, such that these forms and structures of mediation become more transparent in efforts to help students locate their agency so that they can act more coherently as human subjects growing up in conditions not of their own making. It does this by providing an extensive vocabulary—essentially trans-disciplinary—that brings some of the key insights from critical social theory and puts them at the service of teachers and students. It also helps to unite various struggles against social and economic injustice and join people together in common cause against neoliberal capitalism and imperialism, without giving up on or diminishing the specificity of their local struggles.

Revolutionary critical pedagogy operates from an understanding that the basis of education is political and that spaces need to be created where students can be given the opportunity, the skills, the vocabulary, and the resources to imagine a different world outside of capitalism's law of value (i.e., social form of labor), where alternatives to capitalism and capitalist institutions can be discussed and debated and, most importantly, struggled for. It is really about developing an anti-racist, gender-balanced, anti-imperialist and anti-patriarchal approach to reading the word and the world, one that is pro-socialist, that focuses on decolonizing pedagogies. There is a growing eco-socialist dimension to critical pedagogy and one that teaches respect for the rights of animals as well. It is a tool not only to combat the great scatter of swine we find in our political arenas—the despots, the neocons, the chickenhawks, the war mongers—it is a tool to fight the social relations that give rise to them and reproduce relations of exploitation intergenerationally. Here critical educators can join forces with labor organizing, anti-free trade and anti-sweatshop campaigns, green mobilizations, indigenous movements, shack-dweller and landless peasant movements and debt repudiation coalitions.



MARCHING FOR HUGO CHAVEZ, CARACAS, 2006 (photo courtesy of Peter McLaren and Nathalia Jaramillo)

SC Some of the issues you raise in the book are extremely alarming: the treatment of Katrina survivors by the government and the media, the rapid degradation of the environment due to careless overproduction, the intense militarization of the American public (made possible in large part by the numbing images and commentary found on TV and radio), the imperialist actions of the U.S. government overseas (all in the name of freedom, of course), and so on. And yet, it seems that a great portion of the public is ignorant to so much of this. After all, according to one study you cite, 42 percent of the public "believes that Saddam Hussein is directly responsible" for 9/11; another study found that "one third of the American public believed that American military forces had found weapons of mass destruction in Iraq." What can be done to educate large numbers of people who seem totally apathetic to the world around them? How can educators help create a public that consists of cautious consumers of media?

PM I think that is an important question, Sam. In our travels, one of the things that struck us was what David Harvey calls "accumulation through dispossession" (in contrast to accumulation by expanding wage labor). Harvey is referring here to the fact that some people get very rich through plundering oppressed peoples of their rights—and here he is speaking of members of the transnationalist capitalist class who are not contributing to the global economy but nevertheless are profiting obscenely from it.

The creation of landless peasants by privatizing land, the dispossession of people from the right to healthcare, from the right to dispose of their own resources, from the right to basic necessities required to live, from protection by means of basic human rights, from access to all the conditions that create human dignity and self-worth, were issues that struck us both during our travels to South Africa, Israel and Palestine, Colombia, and Mexico. Where we found some good news was in meeting with groupes of teachers and activists united in struggling for social, economic and political justice. These groups had internalized Marx's insight into the process of humanization where human beings make themselves in every dimension of their being and must be able to do so in a critically conscious manner and in sites and settings of their own choosing. You seem to be asking: how can we be educated about this here in the United States through the media? Well, I think the way to create, as you say, "cautious consumers of media" is to understand the media at the point of production, and take into account the historical contexts in which they have operated and continue to operate. After all, one of the major industries of the military industrial complex is media production. All of us need to get beyond the manufactured fear and the hysterical rhetoric that characterizes the corporate-state-military-media complex (or simply, the "power complex") that is glibly peddling its "war on terror," and instead acquire an historical materialist understanding of why the media operate they way that they do, and in whose interests they serve. Given the current egregious concentration in media ownership, there are only five corporations dominating mainstream media in the U.S., all with interrelated interests. While public broadcasting is in serious decline, censorship of leftist viewpoints is on the rise.

This clearly requires a critical media literacy approach in schools and in various community sites within the public sphere, and is something that has interested me ever since my days in the 1970s in Canada when I taught elementary school. Developing decolonizing ways of teaching about the relationship among ideology, discourse, representation, power, and race, class and gender exploitation acknowledges that there are multiple literacies. All—and I mean all—literacies teach us something through different means and modalities of communication. What are the literacies involved in the various mass media? How do they teach us? How do they work pedagogically?

I refer to the media as "perpetual pedagogy" that teaches the imperial catechism from the curriculum of the global corporations with the imprimatur of the neoliberal state and the ideologues of the New World Order. They basically teach us market ideology—that the only way to bring about liberty, freedom and individual responsibility is through the extraction of the surplus value from the labor-power of the people. In order to accomplish their goal, the media need to forfeit their concerns for human rights (as opposed to individual personal rights) and most of all, economic justice. They don't instill in us market ideology so

much as construct us as self-conscious agents through certain discourses and practices. This of course makes a mockery of the concept of democracy as classically understood as self-management of the people by the people.

Critical media literacy can help us to slow down and reverse the current trend among legislative and policy-making bodies and political leaders who increasingly marginalize, demonize, and exclude radical opposition groups from arenas of media debate whether in a de facto or de jure sense. Critical media literacy can help us raise and answer the question: What are post-capitalist possibilities of living on our deeply endangered planet? Most young people in the United States get their daily doses of information from television and the Internet, and I would argue that it's equally as challenging to critique the mass media as, say, to unpack various arguments that appear in print for their logical inconsistencies and their various genres and figures of speech, their iconography, their signifiers and signifieds, their rhetorical conventions and tropes and their various links and relationships, and how they punctuate meaning. All of these representations can be treated as ideological "texts" that either illuminate or obfuscate (or a mixture of both) the relationship human beings have to the social relations of production in which they toil and labor. In addition, citizens and people everywhere should critically consider the complex histories, social conditions, and numerous points of view that underlie what is presented to us in the media rather than ignorantly accepting what the corporate media presents as "truth" or common sense assumptions.

The question I think that needs to be raised is how neoliberalism has disciplined and disempowered the working-class via the media and by corporate funding of the political process, loss of jobs in the unionized sector, the accumulation of massive deficits, austerity in the public sector, cutting of funds to local municipalities, etc. Students should attempt to understand the motivations and arguments of people advocating radical social change. Western capitalist states—the U.S. above all—cannot refrain from a visceral, unreflective, and politically motivated demonization of groups who are highly critical of the government because it's in their best interest to discredit serious opposition to their ideological hegemony.

WITH ALEIDA GUEVARA (CENTER), DAUGHTER OF CHE GUEVARA, CUBA, 2007 (photo courtesy of Peter McLaren and Nathalia Jaramillo)

The so-called "war on terrorism" is a preemptive strike on logic, more accurately viewed as American newspeak, a duplicitous Orwellian phrase that captures the ideological smokescreen needed by transnational corporations and the global capitalist class to gain control over oil markets and world resources in general, while crushing anyone who dares to oppose the exploitation of animals, people, and the Earth (or who oppose U.S. global military establishment with its black sites, espionage bases, secret military bases, and 725 worldwide bases openly listed by the military). A visual metaphor apposite at illustrating how American newspeak covers up the horror of human suffering appeared famously on our network television in 2003. But how many people picked up on

it? Remember the famous address by former Secretary of State Colin Powell to the UN on February 5 four years ago? The background consisted of blue draperies and a row of Security Council flags. But the draperies covered over a work of art that had hung at the entrance to the Security Council since 1985—Picasso's famous mural, the "Guernica," which is an anti-war artwork (standing 11 feet, 6 inches high and 25 feet, 8 inches wide) depicting women, children and animals being destroyed by aerial bombardment in the ancient Basque town of the same name. There is some question as to whether, at the last moment, UN officials wary of the protests moved Powell's speech to another site near the "Guernica" but not in front of it. But the point is that the initial covering up of the "Guernica" serves as a chilling visual metaphor of how words and rhetoric work to cover up the horror of war. (There is no other country in the world that has killed more people by means of aerial bombardment than the United States.) Of course this brings to mind Nelson Rockefeller's sandblasting of Diego Rivera's mural in the RCA Building in New York, in 1933, because it included a portrait of Vladimir Lenin.

If we think about it, we are living snugly in Orwell's mythical land of Oceania, and the media are able to accomplish here what the Ministry of Truth was able to accomplish in that fabled land—the creation of a giant snare in which we are to be emptied of critical thought or refused access to it. Fanatical critics of the academy like David Horowitz want to make all liberals and radicals into Orwell's Emmanuel Goldstein, Enemy of the People. That's the dream of David Horowitz and others like him who are busy attacking the academy with their "Academic Bill of Rights"—since the academy is one of the few remaining public sites that makes a fairly wide range of discourses available to students (of course with some conditions attached). Horowitz wants the academic left to be counterbalanced with neoconservative ideologues. He will even go so far as to encourage Ann Coulter to be a featured speaker on college campuses. Ann Coulter, with her mailcoat skirt, perma-fake smile, and bile-dripping tongue, represents the uber-neocon warrior woman. Fulsomely praised for her unabashed public leadership by Horowitz and his ilk, she has become the regnant model for the militant reactionaries who belong to the same fascist hive—Sean

Hannity, Bill O'Reilly, Rush Limbaugh, Glenn Beck, Michael Savage, and others. Their ideological barbarism and craven commentaries represent the most putrid form of racism and hate-mongering—a vile posturing that has become the fashionable attire of the radical right.

Overall, historically, the media have more than consented to ideological indoctrination; they have assisted it. Young people need to see that our current "war on terror" is a veritable war on democracy, waged against those recalcitrant malcontents who refuse to be beholden to institutions like the United States Treasury, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund and who threaten the interests of the transnational capitalist class (a class that will resort to any act that keeps high rates of profitability for capitalism and strengthens their hold on power) and the neo-con-quest for world Empire. If we want to stop government, corporate, and law enforcement attacks on civil liberties, free speech, and domestic dissent of virtually all kinds, we will need a new generation of media literate agents of socialist transformation. Regrettably, the socialist tradition in the United States lives on in the public eye mainly in the dictionary or encyclopedia. That's not to say it isn't vibrant elsewhere, but not in the mainstream United States. A socialist critique of the media would entail wrenching the control of communication and information systems from the elite power structure who fear that their lies and criminal acts and entrenched corporate interests will be exposed to the public, a public whom they greatly fear.

SC Speaking of the media, you point out numerous instances that display an American media that oftentimes espouses an attitude of ethnocentrism and violence. These kinds of comments ("Just blow the place up," for example) are internalized and regurgitated by viewers, and unfortunately, by their kids—I've heard some of it first hand in elementary school classrooms. What can critical educators do to combat these attitudes on a day-to-day basis?

NJ As you note, Sam, the corporate media poses a serious challenge to the critical educator especially when we consider that on average, children in the U.S. spend roughly 900 hours in school every year but 1500 hours watching televi-

sion! There is also the alarming trend of the average child who watches 8,000 murders on TV before finishing elementary school and who by the age of eighteen has seen 200,000 acts of violence on TV, including 40,000 murders. Violence is very much part of U.S. media culture; coupled with an increase in hyper-masculine, fear-factor rhetoric post 9/11, critical educators must contend with deeply ingrained belief systems that keep us farther and farther away from attaining any form of a democratic or humanist global social order. The corporate media is indeed overwhelming and can appear undefeatable. It is the main structural force that communicates neo-liberalism and that works to sustain negative views of the "other" to the masses (i.e., the non-White, heterosexual, masculine figure of U.S. Empire). But critical educators can always open a space for students to critically interrogate the production of ideology vis-à-vis the corporate media. Critical educators can offer students a language (and languages) of critique that can help them make better sense of the forces that shape the particularities of their lives. Educators can challenge the production of politically charged rhetoric, i.e., "just blow the place up" as you say, by exploring other forms of popular culture that offer young people an alternative way to relate to the "other."

Critical educators around the country are making powerful contributions to breaking through the corporate media's stranglehold on the minds of young people. They use various forms of "media" to counter mainstream communications production (i.e., spoken word, hip-hop, theatre, etc.) and we can learn a great deal about teaching and learning from those instances. But what I think is more important, Sam, is for the critical educator to see the classroom as a space of trust and reciprocity that must connect to a student's every day consciousness and lived experience. If that experience is rooted in ethnocentric and racist bigotry, then the critical educator still needs to create the conditions for dialogue to emerge. Only through dialogue can a student begin to challenge her own assumptions. And only in challenging her assumptions can a student begin to see how particular discourses are manufactured and in whose interests. It is at that point that critical consciousness is developed. All of this is much easier to write about than put in practice, but it is not impossible.

SC You discuss several educational movements in South America with which you've had some personal experience, namely the Mission Robinson, Mission Ribas, Mission Vuelvan Caras, and Mission Sucre programs in Venezuela, as well as some similar ones that are developing in Bolivia. Talk a bit about your experiences there, as I can imagine they greatly impacted your work on this book.

NJ Although we have each visited Venezuela a number of times, our knowledge is limited about how these programs are taking shape on the ground. However, based on what we have had the opportunity to see, we have been greatly impressed by the Bolivarian Missions and their emphasis on human development and the creative capacity of all individuals to create democratic social formations able to address local needs in the context of a larger project of human emancipation by means of political transformation. These missions consist of anti-poverty and social welfare programs. During one of our visits, we were able to visit one of them in particular: Mission Ribas, a two-year secondary school program (that teaches Spanish, mathematics, world geography, Venezuelan economics, world history, Venezuelan history, English, physics, chemistry, biology, and computer science), targets five million Venezuelan dropouts. This program has a Community and Social-labor Component, where groups use their personal experience and their learning to develop practical proposals to address the needs of their communities and nation.

We were fortunate enough to join in a group discussion of this component of the program in Barrio La Vega, on September 11, 2006. The facilitator of the class began by asking participants to relate their memories about the significance of September 11 in their regional histories. Participants began to recollect the Chilean coup led by Augusto Pinochet backed by the United States in establishing a military dictatorship that lasted seventeen years. The discussion focused on the murdered and tortured victims under Pinochet's rule, leading to what participants described as one of the bloodiest coups in Latin American history. From this discussion point people began to recollect their own resistance to the failed coup d'etat that marked Venezuelan history in the year 2002.

Many of those seated in the open-aired classroom chronicled the day in which thousands marched down from the shantytowns hovering over the presidential palace to defy the presumed natural order of history and to reinstate their democratically elected president. Their narratives collided against the dominant tropes of history and experience that, since 2001, locate terror and oppression within a Western Eurocentric topology.

The point for the Bolivian educators was not to privilege one form of terror over another, but to recuperate their social struggle in relation to an unfolding epoch where terror is presumed to exist outside the chronology of their historical memory. The Bolivarian project assumes multiple forms. Whereas the educational missions seek to provide the disenfranchised with the necessary skills to build a society of their own making, they are also committed to decolonizing the self from a historical legacy of oppression.

SC From reading your book, I can discern that what separates more successful socialist movements from less successful ones is their dedication to remaining "anti-hierarchical, decentralized, and grassroots." But can a movement stay this way as it grows and achieves its ultimate goal of reaching a broader audience? How can such movements avoid descending into the oppressive and essentially tyrannical depths as fundamentalist movements on the other end of the spectrum often do?

PM I get asked that question a lot. Recently, Nathalia and I spoke in the heart of the opposition to Chavez in Maracaibo, Venezuela, at a university where, unfortunately, some students were injured and killed during a protest. Before we were ordered to leave campus by the military police, we had a chance to talk about the importance of the struggle for socialism. Because we work for a Venezuelan think tank in Caracas that is pro-Chavez, and because we identified ourselves in support of the Bolivarian Revolution, the audience was very wary. But we persisted. The struggle for socialism, we said, is best animated by the poetry of Antonio Machado when he writes: *Caminante no hay camino, se hace el camino al andar* (Traveler, there is no road. The road is made as one walks).

While we can look to the past, the future and to the present to see possible directions that our struggle can take, we have to acknowledge that there is no predetermined path. As I mentioned recently in a short paper—"We don't struggle in some absolute elsewhere, lamenting having missed the rendezvous with truth. Our struggle is warm-blooded and it will end where its gestation began: in the fertile soil of class struggle. We know where we are going, because it is the only destination where we can divest our human condition of its many disguises and even then, we need to realize that we can only contest the ideological production of the capitalist class and not abolish it unless the social relations of production generating it cease to exist. The path to socialism, while continually created anew, is not a solitary one. Others before us have kicked up a lot of dust along the trail. Some of that dust is mixed with blood, and we need to tread carefully, yet not lose the determination in our step. And while workers may drop to the ground like spent cartridges in their conditioned effort to overthrow the regime of capital, their struggles exit the chambers of necessity with such an explosive force that history lurches out of its slumber in abstract, monumental time into the liminal present where the past is no longer and the future is not yet. Such a journey demands a critical pedagogy for the twenty-first century."

What I meant by these words was that we can make socialism something that is unique in each country, which is something the *Chavistas* are wont to emphasize. My mentor, Paulo Freire, would always say to me, "reinvent my work in the contextual specificity of where you find your struggle" and to me that applies to the struggle for socialism as much as for a critical pedagogy. As critical educatiors have pointed out, the contradictions within capitalism are not external relations (global vs. local) but contradictory relations internal to the process of capitalism itself that manifest themselves in market creation and territorial expansion. Instead of a reproductive praxis that helps to gain a greater advantage within contradictions between labor and capital (via small utopian gains) we need critical revolutionary praxis that aims at transcending the labor/capital contradiction itself (by the large utopia of socialism). Socialism internationally will share many features but much will be unique to its country of origin.

Also, many revolutionaries in the past felt that abolishing capitalism was enough (the first negation in dialectical praxis), but you need to move to the second negation and abolish capitalism's law of value, its very social form. In addition, there was no coherent vision of what such a society would look like. And there was too little emphasis on human development. We need to be reminded of Che's warning that you can't build a socialist society without at the same time creating a new human being. A question raised by Marx in his Theses to Feuerbach ("Who will educate the educators?") was echoed by Che when he wrote in a speech in 1960: "The first recipe for educating the people is to bring them into the revolution. Never assume that by educating the people they will learn, by education alone, with a despotic government on their backs, how to conquer their rights. Teach them, first and foremost, to conquer their rights and when they are represented in government they will effortlessly learn whatever is taught to them and much more."

To me, this mandates struggling for a different social logic—something outside the logic of commodification. This also implies the creation of a new social culture, control of work by the associated producers and also the very transformation of the nature of work itself. We are looking to create a world where, as I have said before, "a new mode of distribution can prevail not based on socially necessary labor time but on actual labor time, where alienated human relations are subsumed by authentically transparent ones, where freely associated individuals can successfully work towards a permanent revolution, where the division between mental and manual labor can be abolished, where patriarchal relations and other privileging hierarchies of oppression and exploitation can be ended, where we can truly exercise the principle 'from each according to his or her ability and to each according to his or her need,' where we can traverse the terrain of universal rights unburdened by necessity, moving sensuously and fluidly within that ontological space where subjectivity is exercised as a form of capacity-building and creative self-activity within and as a part of the social totality: a space where labor is no longer exploited and becomes a striving that will benefit all human beings, where labor refuses to be instrumentalized and commodified and ceases to be a compulsory activity, and where the full development of human capacity is encouraged."

To these words I would like to add the sentiment of Michael Lebowitz, a Marxist economist and friend, who invites us to build a world that operates by means of a direct social knowledge that cannot be communicated through the indirect medium of money: a knowledge tacitly based upon recognition of our unity and solidarity. We need to strive for that. We can, I believe, create a new kind of socialist state from the bottom up, with direct participatory democracy as its basis. And one day perhaps it will work so well that the state can eventually wither away.

SC Reading this book has affirmed for me something I've thought in the past—we live in a culture rooted in binaries: Us vs. Them, Good vs. Evil. It seems we are forever ideologically poised against an "other." On the global scale, it is the good American heroes vs. the bad Middle Eastern terrorists. But these binaries play out in much smaller ways, as you point out well. In school, kids who are deemed "special" or "different" are often pushed through a system that does little to give them a legitimate chance to succeed. This applies to kids who grow up in poverty, to English language learners, to the "learning disabled" and "mentally retarded." These groups are almost always seen as naturally disadvantaged, and the status quo is to write them off, since they'll never be effective in the capitalist mode of production and thus are not worth the cost that would be incurred by really educating them. How can critical educators help break this cycle? How can the needs of "special" learners be brought center stage in the arena of education? What will it take for the powers that be to recognize that there is more than one way for learning to take place? I imagine this will not be an easy task, as such inflexible methods as mandatory standardized testing (with a strict system of rewards and punishments) have become so integral to the system. How do we break the cycle of "endless repetition and alienation"?

NJ Unfortunately, Sam, the "powers that be" do recognize that more than one type of "learner" does exist. There is an abundance of literature in the field that il-

lustrates a variety of educational practices that can better serve the needs of these students. However, the interests of the capitalist elite and of the free market trump the interests of a humanizing critical pedagogy that can accommodate a diverse student population.

The economist William Tabb puts it succinctly. When it comes to the neoliberal model of education, three conditions must be present. First, the conditions need to be established for the failure of public service. In other words, public education services must be proven as inefficient and unable to attend to the needs of all students. Through high-stakes testing and punitive accountability policies the groundwork is established to justify the public school's failure to "educate." This leads to the second condition: the complete demise of the public school sector as a viable public service agency. Once this has been established, we come across the third condition: the intervention of the private sphere to "fix" or "rectify" the public school's failure to provide services for our youth. Now, I have only briefly articulated this phenomenon; it is much more complex and subversive than I have described here. In our book we looked at historical shifts within education policy and how the move towards privatization, high-stakes accountability, and a reduced (if not totally absent) emphasis on promoting education appropriate (i.e., bilingual schooling) for a varied student group is connected to an evolving neoliberal model of education. But we also examined these shifts in relation to the ideology of empire-building. And on this latter point is where the more subtle tactics come into form through education policy, but also educational practice in the classroom. Within this framework, education is perceived as the main apparatus of assimilation, acculturation, for a growing diverse student population into the economic and social dimensions of an increasingly imperial and militaristic *Pax Americana*.

We have tried to understand these shifts in education in terms of their historical specificity and in terms of their functional imperatives for nation-states administering a commodity-centered economy. We can see how the rhetoric of positive nationalism, i.e., equal opportunity for all, occludes both the racialized ideologies and class interests of those who act—either willingly

or unknowingly—in the service of maintaining internal cultural homogeneity and an internal colonialism.

Now, how can all of this be broken? Well, I think that there are various instances where educators are coming together to establish alternative teaching and learning practices and where communities are playing a more integral role in the schooling of youth. But systematically, it is very difficult to alter the pedagogical landscape that we have described because structurally, there is no foreseeable change. Change must take place along two dimensions—in the popular sphere and at the level of the state. Now, this leads us into another debate over the structure-agency relation. But I'll stop here Sam. Suffice to say that critical educators are always engaged and looking to create pedagogical spaces that can attend to the needs of all learners and of building a democratic social order.

SC In a perfect world, it would be great for critical educators to just break free of the system on their own, to "reject their role...as custodians of empire." Typically, however, educators who do so are basically demonized. Professor McLaren, after all, tops the "Dirty Thirty" list of dangerous professors at UCLA. It is a scary thing to consider, but people have been scandalized and worse because of their rejection of what seems to be a downright unjust system. But, frankly speaking, there will always be someone waiting to take a position and follow the rules blindly. What would you say to educators who are simply afraid to take a stand?

PM The "Dirty Thirty" scandal had a surprisingly international reach. In fact, there was an article about it accompanied by an interview with me and Nathalia in a popular magazine in Greece just months ago. According to a professor who translated it for me, I was described as being a danger to the American Dream, or something to that effect (and interestingly enough, the article was very positive about the work I was doing). There seemed to be more interest in the "Dirty Thirty" scandal outside the country than inside. Some in the U.S. who reacted to the story recognized the McCarthyite tactics of the right-wing attack. It hits a nerve. Of course, the consequences for those on the McCarthy list were

far more dire. Working as a professor to establish a counter-hegemonic, counter-public sphere is not without its risks. It's not a frictionless endeavor. As the saying goes, you can't make an omelette without breaking eggs. You can't attempt to speak truth to power without inviting some hard knocks coming your way. But you can't focus on that. You have to move forward. It's my fervent belief that critical pedagogy needs to begin with public political action, what has been called "public pedagogy." As radical educators, our prime endeavor should be to bring about an all-embracing and diverse fellowship of global citizens profoundly endowed with a fully claimed humanity—something best exemplified by the life and work of Paulo Freire. As I have said before, critical educational praxis is directive and political. But while it advocates social justice, it never, under any circumstances, should become a form of imposition.

Public pedagogy should be about achieving for humanity freedom from necessity. Critical pedagogy as critique, consciousness-raising, and class struggle bears an affinity to the process of Karl Marx's "revolutionary praxis" —what he refers to as "the coincidence of the changing of circumstances and of human activity or self-change." As I have said, "We develop our capacities and capabilities through our own activities, through our attempts at changing society. In other words, we change society by changing ourselves and we change ourselves in our struggle to change society. The act of knowing is always a knowing act. We learn about reality not by reflecting on it but by changing it." Paying attention to the simultaneous change in circumstances and self-change and creating a new integrated world view founded upon a new social matrix and social contract is what differentiates the public scholar and educator from the hegemonic educator. Public scholarship is about understanding objective class relations in the context of historical processes and social practices that are independent of our volition or will. It is also concerned with how our subjectivities are created in relation to the production of surplus value produced by social labor.

As Teresa Ebert would put it, a public scholar is a critical pedagogue who creates opportunities for explaining the constitutive impossibility of capitalism

producing equality because capitalism is structured around the private ownership of the means of production ("the congealed labor of the other") of the social surplus; equality under capitalism means the equal exploitation of human labor. This means that we need to be concerned with creating the conditions for critical consciousness, which in essence is political consciousness (which in turn is designed to illuminate the political unconscious that regulates the social totality) produced by ideological forces as they are dialectically produced through interaction with the social relations of production. It means we need to abandon a quietist and contemplative approach to critical pedagogy and embrace a more dynamic approach to linking up pedagogically to the struggle for socialism. Capitalism is a vastly expanding world system but it is not impregnable. Any socialist opposition to capitalism must be organized along internationalist lines.

SC Some would argue that "banking" is necessary, as people are born without knowledge of facts, such as 1+1=2. Explain why teaching these facts does not need to equate to "banking." In my class on Critical Issues in Teaching, this was a hot topic. Many people insisted that banking was necessary. The way I see it, even these simple facts can be taught in a dialogic way, so as to enable even the very young student to be an active participant in the shaping of his or her consciousness, i.e., he should be allowed to ask, "Why do I need to learn this?"

PM Yes, I agree with your point Samantha. The banking approach to education (filling up the students' heads by depositing isolated facts) has habituated young people to nativist and evangelical triumphalist propaganda, and has subjectively reconciled them to the objective logics of the world market. But there is another point worth making that Richard Kahn, Robin Truth Goodman, and Peter Mayo have put forward which is that some people misunderstand what Freire said about knowledge transmission. Some groups have argued that because Freire is against the banking approach to education (because, for Freire, it is a type of forced normality that produces docile, unthinking subjects), he is against cultural transmission altogether. And they argue that passing down knowledge, transmitting it if you will, to present generations from past gener-

ations is important to indigenous communities. Therefore, according to this logic, Freire hinders indigenous communities.

Following from this misrepresentation of Freire, Freire's position against the banking method means that he is against the cultural diversity (the passing on of local tribal or cultural traditions) that would be necessary for creating a more sustainable environment. But Freire stresses a dialogic, reflexive pedagogy, one that mediates the contradictions between teachers and students so that teachers become students and students become teachers—and both groups work together in resisting exploitation and systems of oppression. Why would Freire argue that tribal knowledges to be passed down to a new generation be categorized as oppression? Customs and traditions don't always need to be changed in order to fight oppression. Some might. Others might not. Often they can be a form of resisting oppression and so should be conserved—and even expanded. Here the question of context is important.

SC In your opinion, will critical, dialogic modes of pedagogy eventually create a national, and perhaps a global, consciousness in which things no longer seem "inevitable"?

NJ Well, critical and dialogic models of pedagogy can definitely play a role in demythologizing the so-called natural order of capitalism (and many other isms) but there are many forms of pedagogy that aim towards the same. I think that it is more important to connect dialogue with practical activity and to understand that any shift in consciousness must be tied to concrete social relations and the struggle to improve them. Now, I'm not advocating change in the linear or teleological sense. What I am saying is that the "end of history" (as Fukuyama put it) is not solely a question of language or of the mind. The human body is characterized by an inherently dual condition. On the one hand, bodies are the sites of discursively inscribed experience and subjectivity and on the other, bodies are formed extra-discursively as sites of resistance and intervention. When we connect the discursive sites of experience (through dialogue, let's say) with the sites of resistance, there is an opportunity for change.

SC One of the ideas frequently "banked" into our minds is the notion of Marxism/socialism as something evil, "authoritarian," or contrary to nature. You give a neat little definition of socialism on page 110 of your book: "a society based not on value but on the fulfillment of human need." It's hard to call that an evil idea. Perhaps one of the first items on the agenda of the critical pedagogue is to debunk the myths. How can this be done?

PM Well, socialism has to do with, first and foremost, economic justice. And for many politicians here in the U.S., social justice education is tantamount to supporting socialism. And for those who have been raised on Cold War rhetoric, much like I was in my native Canada in the 1950s, socialism has become a synonym for evil, specifically the evil generated by totalitarian communism. In Canada, though, the demonization wasn't as complete as it was here. For instance, in Canada, people still take pride in their socialized medicine, although neoliberal capitalism is chipping away at that slowly. Teaching youth about socialism has always been a powerful challenge. But post September 11, 2001, such efforts have been well nigh impossible. In a recent article, I cited Naomi Klein who claims that after September 11, 2001 (which was designated as "Year Zero"), the Bush administration told us that history had to begin over again. Major advances and successes achieved by social movements that had been gaining momentum before 9/11 were derailed. One of the major goals of the United States is to make sure that no socialist governments will prevail anywhere in the world such that they could serve as shining alternatives to capitalism. There is the assumption among neoliberal educational reformers that a capitalist society (because it supposedly facilitates democracy) is desirable whereas a socialist society (which supposedly leads to totalitarianism and fascism) is to be avoided at all costs—even if it means destroying a democratically elected socialist government through violent means (the case of Chile's Salvador Allende is but one storied example and there are many others, such as the recent coup attempt to overthrow Venezuela's democratically elected president, Hugo Chavez, which most certainly was attempted with the assistance of the United States).

While it is true that Marx is still occasionally touted as a visionary, the legacy

of the ex-Soviet Union that in the West made it the poster-child of the "Marxist" gulag has not disappeared. It has led many young people to disregard Marx as a thinker worthy of serious study and socialist educators into despairing whether or not there is a real future for socialism. We need to put Marx into the curriculum, to emphasize the labor history of this country (as a Wobbly myself, I would love to see the history of the Industrial Workers of the World put into the high school curriculum) and other countries, and to encourage debates about the merits of socialism versus capitalism in classrooms and also in the public square. We need to see these debates focused on the very nature of media knowledges and with the corporate control of media, how likely is this? Marx only really discussed the nature of socialist society in *Critique of the Gotha Program*, which he wrote after the struggle of the Paris Commune. Here, Marx echoes the vision of society that he outlined in *The Communist Manifesto*.

Marx saw socialism in terms of an early phase of communism in which working people have, through revolutionary struggle, seized power and abolished the private ownership of the major means of production where socialism is seen as emerging out of the muck of capitalist society and stamped with the birthmarks of the old society as well. It is important to emphasize, as do the *Chavistas*, that socialism will always carry the character of the people and culture struggling for it. Socialism teaches us that social interests should never be put aside for individual gain, that human beings should never be degraded, that human potential must be activated in all spheres of social life, and that the gap between mental and manual labor and between conception and execution must be closed. Economic and social life must be planned to meet the needs of the majority. A socialist plan of production would be developed by workers' committees, trade unionists, shop stewards, community and workers councils, and the like. Most of all, socialism emphasizes human and endogenous development and stresses the importance of creativity in both our personal and public lives. Without a knowledge of the socialist tradition and critical social theory, students will more readily come to accept neoliberal capitalism and imperialism (both economic and military or a combination thereof) as the only viable arrangements for our lives.

SC You cite Arundhati Roy's argument about violence. In it, she explains that terrorism is something of a natural reaction by the oppressed against a force which simply cannot be met on equal ground (due to an excess of arms, funding, manpower, etc.). She says, "What people lack in wealth and power, they will make up with stealth and strategy." Furthermore, Roy argues that a government cannot condemn violence without being truly open to non-violent forms of dissent: "if governments do not do all they can to honor non-violent resistance, then by default they privilege those who turn to violence." In a culture that is at times obsessed by terror, these are hugely important concepts. Is terrorism in fact the natural place war must go in a capitalist society where the government possesses the means to forcibly overtake not only its own citizens, but those of other lands as well? Is this the only way for a war to be fought by two sides, when one side far overmatches the other? If this is the case, what can be done in the here and now to prevent terrorism? Or is another 9/11 inevitable? Are Americans simply sitting ducks? I'd hate to think that's true, but logic tells me it may be.

PM Michael Rivage-Seul has pointed out that religious figures such as Dom Helda Camera and Oscar Romero spoke of a "bloody trinity" of three levels of violence: structural violence or first-level violence or violence of the "father" (social, economic, political, and military systems and arrangements, codified in law and custom that are responsible for tens of thousands of innocent deaths throughout the world each day); revolutionary violence or second-level violence or violence of the "son" (responses to first-level or structural violence); and reactionary violence or third-level violence or violence of the "evil spirit" (the reply by the state to acts of rebellion against structural or first-level violence).

In our book, we pointed out that structural violence dominates today's imperial regimes and their client states. Yet, even though this is clearly the case, revolutionary violence is the only violence officially condemned by such imperial states. Yet revolutionary violence can at least be theoretically justified in the sense of peasants and workers defending their families from aggressions of the rich represented in the levels of structural violence and reactionary violence. Many liberation theologians make this case. Jesus was very likely sympathetic

to the insurgency against the Roman occupation and therefore could possibly understand revolutionary violence even though he distanced himself from this second-level violence, as well as from the structural violence of the Roman Empire. Rivage-Seul points out that Jesus understood that second-level (revolutionary) violence would necessarily provoke a reactionary third-level violence and nothing would be changed (as his parable about the abstentee landlord and his tenants illustrated). Ultimately, Jesus did not seek the divinization of revolutionary violence. Structural violence in the United States is very rarely addressed by the state but revolutionary violence, especially post-9/11, is rejected out of hand. This rejection comes as a spectacle, whether in the image of George Bush in a flight suit landing on an aircraft carrier or saluting the troops at a baseball game. Here among the populations within the United States that are theocratic-leaning, God becomes the eternal spectator of our performing flesh and he grows very queasy when violence of imperial armies attacking the barbarians becomes a mimetic reenactment of divine salvation.

Rivage-Seul is critical of the moral authority exercised by Christians living comfortably in the U.S.A. who uncritically condemn second-level violence while excusing systematic aggression in service to U.S. corporate interests. Steve Best, Anthony Nocella and I just published an article called "Revolutionary Peacemaking: Using a Critical Pedagogy Approach for Peacemaking With 'Terrorists'" for the *Journal for Critical Education Policy Studies* that addresses some of your concerns. We conclude with an acknowledgment "that social conflicts often stem from antithetical interests that require oppressors to yield to the oppressed, something they rarely can be persuaded to do. Thus, while peacemaking strategies may fail as competing parties choose the path of violence—as has happened countless times in the conflict between Palestine and Israel—they nonetheless are worth striving for and are the first avenue of conflict transformation...Without at least efforts at peacemaking, there is no check against violence whatsoever, and societies easily degenerate into chaos, violence, and war." I am not optimistic but I am hopeful, and we need always to conjugate hope with struggle, to ask hope to conspire with revolutionary praxis.