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Towards a Liberatory Pedagogy

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ABSTRACT

Towards a Liberatory Pedagogy

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This study focuses on how liberatory pedagogy can be enriched by incorporating into its praxis the most significant themes postulated by feminist critical theory and various pedagogical strategies articulated by "cultural workers" and "border crossers". In particular it means acknowledging the diversity of women's experiences of oppression in a patriarchal, racist and classist society and teaching an inclusive curriculum as well as an oppositional world view.

The position taken is that counter-hegemonic forces can be developed through the present educational system. Through a change in curriculum, pedagogy and perspective, teachers can assist their students in affirming their voices, and validating their knowledges and experiences of oppression created by the intersection of such factors as race, gender and class in their lives. By giving them the opportunity to speak from their particular social and historical sites students are made visible and become authors of their own world. Through dialogue, students and teachers are challenged to interrogate their own knowledges, experiences, the dominant educational ideologies and link these to dominant political interests. Then, students and teachers can become critically conscious and act as agents of social change.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

This study proposes to examine the philosophical roots of liberatory pedagogy and to provide a critique of the relevant literature by drawing on feminist critical pedagogy. The specific intent is to point to the positive features of these pedagogies to develop classroom practices which could counter the present oppressive nature of schooling.

Many educational theories have explained how schools play a role in reproducing social and economic inequalities through oppressive schooling practices[1]. The objective here is not to provide an account of these theories, but simply to indicate that liberatory pedagogy draws on their insights into the nature of schooling and to argue that education can be a productive rather than simply a reproductive process. That is, liberatory pedagogues refuse to view oppression and inequality as all encompassing. In light of this, liberatory pedagogy proposes a method whereby teachers can assist students in understanding the extent of their oppression. By validating student's knowledge and experiences, and by assisting them in critiquing school knowledge, dominant ideologies and practices, teachers, can empower students and encourage them to resist oppressive educational practices and

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[1] These theories are referred to as "Cultural and Social Reproduction Theories". Some of the most important work on "Reproduction" theory has been done by Bourdieu, P., and J.C. Passeron. Reproduction in Education, Society, and Culture (1990 [1970]), Bernstein, B. Class, Codes and Control. Vol. 3 (1979) and Bowles, S., and H. Gintis Schooling in Capitalist America (1976).

ideologies.[2] Students can then extend the practice of resistance to the public sphere.[3]

Although reproduction theories have been useful in illuminating the various ways in which schools reproduce the social, cultural and economic relations and inequities already existing in society, they make little or no attempt to understand how individuals contest the mechanisms of reproduction in schools. This is done by effectively burying the subject under a blanket of ideological domination whereby s/he is void of consciousness, choice, will and purposeful action.[4] The result is a view of schooling which is

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[2] *"Power" and "Empowerment" are terms which I use throughout this thesis. I use Foucault's definition of power which is "knowledge and domination". It is exerted over populations by elites (government, business, etc.) by controlling the production and filtration of knowledge in society. This kind of power is considered to be "suspicious" because it is invisible. Given that it is invisible, it is therefore also difficult to remove. However, power is not always negative and exerted in a "suspicious" way. Rather, it can be positive when it is exercised as resistance or when it is used as a form of cultural and social knowledge production outside the realm of domination (Foucault, 1980). "Empowerment" refers to exercising power in an effort to help others exercise power (Luke and Gore, 1992). In this sense, one is exercising positive power which exists outside the realm of domination. Hence, teachers aiding students in critiquing ideologies and practices, while validating the student's own knowledge, is seen as an exercise of power for empowerment. Contributing one's knowledge to the construction of society is indicative of empowerment.*

[3] The theory of "Resistance" is articulated by Aronowitz, S. and H. Giroux in their book, Education under Siege (1985). This theory proposes that students can, with the assistance of critical teachers, critique, resist and transform oppressive schooling practices, ones which invalidate student knowledge and experience. "Resistance" theory is embodied in the pedagogical notion of "language of critique and possibility".

[4] Ideology legitimates the "suspicious" power about which Foucault writes. Liberatory pedagogy is primarily built upon a critique of the dominant ideologies which we have internalized and which legitimate power. However, ideology critique is also linked to the need to radically transform the present relations of power. Critiquing the dominant ideologies entails questioning common sense knowledge and the

deterministic, mechanistic and ultimately pessimistic. By ignoring the role which schooling may have in the promotion of societal change, reproduction theories deny not only the active nature of individuals but also the contradictory nature of social relations within this dynamic world order.

The pessimism produced by reproduction theories has been countered with a heavy "dose" of optimism by liberatory pedagogy which defines schools as centers for change. Liberatory pedagogy combines a critique of schooling practices and ideology with individual action to counter the oppressive capacities of schooling practices. To do this, liberatory pedagogy must first recover the subject by lifting the blanket of ideological domination which covers her/him and which prevents the subject from self-determination. At this point, the individual is viewed as an agent of change and acts not only to resist oppressive educational practices but also works towards transforming a society which advantages few individuals, into one which meets the collective needs of all individuals.

While addressing problems which few educational theorists have attempted to address is laudable, liberatory pedagogy is not without its limitations. Among the most important of these is that liberatory pedagogy expresses inequality and oppression solely in class terms. It does not address other forms of oppression such as those based on

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everyday practices which we take for granted and to link these to dominant interests.

gender and race, nor how schooling does indeed reproduce gender and race relations.

Recently, feminist critical pedagogy has attempted to understand race and gender oppression[5] and their relation to class oppression as well as how schools reproduce unequal race, gender and class relations. It is important at this point to define feminism. While there exist many definitions of feminism I have drawn upon bell hooks' definition because I believe that she addresses the factors which impact the most on women's lives starting with patriarchy which immediately gives a woman a gendered identity and defines her in relation to men. Moreover, hooks' definition makes us conscious of the fact that race and class also impact heavily upon women and that women's lives will not show significant improvement unless class and racism are eradicated along with patriarchy. For bell hooks feminism is

> ...the struggle to end sexist oppression. Its aim is not to benefit any specific group of women, any particular race or class of women. It does not privilege women over men... Feminism as a movement to end sexist oppression directs our attention to systems of domination and the inter-relatedness of sex, race and class oppression (hooks, 1984, p.26-31).

Feminist critical pedagogy does not reject the philosophical foundations of liberatory pedagogy but rather

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[5] I draw upon bell hooks' definition of "Oppression" which is the "absence of choices". Hooks states that oppression varies considerably among individuals depending upon how their lives are defined by the interconnection of class, race and gender factors. For further elaboration on hooks' discussion of racism, sexism and classism see Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center (1984).

builds gender and race oppression into the liberatory pedagogy problematic. By expanding the definitions of concepts used by liberatory pedagogy (such as oppression) in an effort to illuminate the various experiences of individuals, feminist critical pedagogy broadens the scope of human perspectives acknowledged by liberatory pedagogy. The fundamental aim of feminist critical pedagogy, like that of liberatory pedagogy, is to fight exploitation and oppression at every level while working towards the construction of an inclusive democratic society which will meet the needs of all individuals rather than a select few.

To construct a truly liberatory pedagogy then, one which encompasses the experiences of a large number of individuals, it is necessary to combine the ideas of liberatory pedagogy with feminist critical pedagogy. However, because feminist critical pedagogy relies so heavily on the concepts articulated by liberatory pedagogy, it is first necessary to understand the foundations of liberatory pedagogy.

Outline of the Theoretical Foundations of Liberatory Pedagogy

Although the next chapter elaborates on the major concepts used in this thesis, it is essential to provide some general information about the origins of these concepts. It is important to note that the theoretical foundations of liberatory pedagogy[6] are to be found in the Frankfurt School

[6] Liberatory Pedagogy is also referred to as Emancipatory Pedagogy.

of Critical Theory , Antonio Gramsci's concept of hegemony and Paulo Freire's educational theory and practice of conscientization. All of these theories are inspired by Marxist social and economic theory[8]. A major distinction between this stance and liberatory theory is the latter's rejection of the concept of economic determinism. Further development of these theories includes a critique of ideology which has since become the foundation of liberatory pedagogy. Consequently, there is a shift in emphasis of promoting change solely in large societal structures like the economy to promoting resistance and change in smaller units such as the individual and groups.

The Frankfurt School of Critical theory contributes the concept of human subjectivity to Marxist theory and hence to liberatory pedagogy. Jurgen Habermas (see footnote no.7) refused to see the individual's behavior as determined by structural factors. Rather he viewed the human subject as a powerful force which shaped objective reality and in turn was

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For an excellent account of the work of the Frankfurt School of Critical Theory see David Held, Introduction to Critical Theory: Horkheimer to Habermas (1980).

[8] Marxist social and economic theory postulates the notion that economics is the major determining factor in an individual's life. Within a capitalist system (which is characterized by two classes; owners of means of production and the workers) one's class in society will determine among other things, their educational and employment opportunities, health and well-being, individual and collective rights and how much freedom they have. Liberation of the working class can only occur through revolutionary struggle intended to overthrow the capitalist system and replace it with a new social and economic order, communism. For further elaboration on Marxist social and economic theory see The Communist Manifesto (1965) and Capital (1954) by Karl Marx and Frederick Engels.

shaped by it. In this way Habermas believed that the subject and object existed in a dialectical relationship and not in a dichotomous relationship. Given this view of the subject and object, Habermas stated the importance of focusing on human interests, needs and purposes as these would shed light on how individuals mediated the interests of dominating structures in society. He proposed analyzing the everyday life of individuals as it was within the parameters of the everyday experience that individuals were confronted by and struggled against the dominant structural barriers and ideological messages. Thus, the everyday sphere of life was seen as a political sphere and must be investigated.

Herbert Marcuse, also of the Frankfurt School, maintains that societal ideologies of control permeate the human unconscious and work to shape attitudes and actions in favor of the capitalist system (Marcuse, 1955). However, emancipation is possible through a critique of these ideologies. **Emancipation** is defined as the liberation from externally imposed oppressive practices, forces and beliefs which prevent individuals from self-actualizing (Freire, 1993 [1970], Giroux, 1983, Weiler, 1988).

Giroux elaborates on Marcuse's concept of the unconscious and posits the need to explore it by recovering and interrogating the subjective forms which students bring to school. **Subjective forms** include the personal histories, dreams and experiences which students bring to school. An exploration of these subjective forms reveals how societal

ideologies and structures construct subjectivities especially around issues of class, race and gender, and how these shape the meanings which individuals give to objective reality and social relations(Giroux, 1983).

Gramsci contributes to the concepts of human subjectivity, consciousness, emancipation and ideology. He recognizes that while individuals live in a **hegemonized** state, whereby their consciousness is saturated with the dominant ideologies, they nonetheless retain, "good sense" and the ability to think dialectically (Gramsci, 1971). By becoming critically conscious, individuals possess the ability to assume **counter-hegemonic** positions in institutions which diffuse hegemonic ideology t'rough its practices. **Counter-hegemony** refers to resisting oppressive beliefs and practices within schools and other institutions and undertaking organized and conscious collective oppositional actions (Gramsci, 1971, Giroux, 1983). According to Gramsci, schools are one of the institutions in society where critical consciousness can be raised among students by teachers who act as **"organic intellectuals"**, individuals who have an understanding of the historical and economic forces which have shaped the "common sense" world (Gramsci, 1971).

Freire provides further elaboration on the concept of human subjectivity and on the ability of individuals to become critically conscious. However, Freire focuses specifically on schools as centers for social change and on

teachers as active agents of change. The role of teachers is to assist students in becoming cognizant of the forces which exploit them. Freire defines this process as **conscientization.** Conscientization is accomplished through a process in which teachers assist students in problematizing knowledge, language and lived experience. Once students have located the sources of their own disempowerment, they can work towards emancipation. Freire advocates not only the importance of becoming critically conscious but also the importance of linking consciousness with political action (Freire, 1993 [1970]).

Aronowitz and Giroux contribute the notion of teachers as **"transformative intellectuals",** to Freire's work. Transformative intellectuals are the most important powerful agents of change in schools because they can plan, think, design and implement curriculum policies and practices. (Aronowitz & Giroux, 1985). Their goals could be to assist students in becoming critical agents by analyzing knowledge and relating this knowledge to their "life world" and by becoming active agents in resisting practices which do not validate their knowledge. This can be accomplished through an understanding of human subjectivities which inform us as to how students give meaning to their lives through the complex historical, cultural and political entities that they both embody and produce. Revealing and analyzing the subjective forms grants students not only a validation of their voices and experiences but also exposes how power,

dependence and social inequality enable and limit students around issues of class, race and gender.

The Boundaries of Liberatory Pedagogy

There are many limitations to liberatory theory and pedagogy. Among them is the idea that schools can actually generate some kind of long-lasting positive change in society. Many theorists believe that a corresponding change in other societal institutions must necessarily take place if a change in school pedagogy is going to make an impact outside of the "four walls of the school". Another limitation is the notion that teachers will become conscious, critical agents who will want to empower and "liberate students". Functioning in ideologically, politically and materially restrictive conditions, teachers may be more concerned with "toeing the line" in an effort to maintain their jobs rather than taking risks to oppose and transform oppressive educational policies. Furthermore, there is the questionable expectation that students will, "en masse", want to pursue an organized, collective oppositional campaign for democratic reformation upon leaving school.

What is more realistic in this time of employment scarcity is that graduating students will focus their energies on finding jobs and keeping them, despite the fact that they may be critically conscious and perhaps aware of the need for change in society. It is also highly unrealistic to expect teachers to bring their protests outside of the

classroom and into the public sphere. As well, there is the problem that students will not adhere to the same notion of empowerment and emancipation to which their teachers or liberatory theorists adhere. Finally, there remains the question as to whether this kind of pedagogy is in fact at all empowering to students.

A most important general criticism of liberatory pedagogy is that it is gender blind; that is, it does not consider inequalities based on gender but rather concentrates on class inequalities. For an analysis of how schools and society reproduce gender inequalities it is necessary to look to feminist critical theory and pedagogy.

Feminist critical theory and pedagogy builds on liberatory theory by placing the concept of gender in the critical position. Feminist critical theorists focus on the patriarchal aspect (systemic and ideological) of society in order to analyze how gender inequalities originate (Weiler, 1988) . In this thesis, I use Adrienne Rich's definition of patriarchy which is,

> ...any kind of group organization in which males hold dominant power and determine what part females shall and shall not play, and in which capabilities assigned to women are relegated generally to the mystical and aesthetic and excluded from the practical and political realms (Rich, 1979, p.78).

Among the most important concepts which feminist critical pedagogy expands on in liberatory pedagogy is the concept of oppression. In defining oppression, gender and race must be acknowledged along with class. By acknowledging gender and

race oppression, it then becomes necessary to look not only at men's "subjectivities" and experiences but also women's and more importantly, to recognize the diversity of women's experiences as a result of the intersection of race, class and gender factors in their lives.

As well, feminist critical pedagogy proposes expanding the notion of knowledge to include women's personal experience and feelings and emotions. Liberatory pedagogy has already accepted the idea of personal experience as knowledge, but because it has not historically viewed patriarchy as an oppressive system, it's notion of personal experience does not include women's experiences within a patriarchal system. Furthermore, feminist critical pedagogy explores in a more profound way the concept of teachers as "transformative intellectuals", especially their ability to exert positive power in an effort to empower their students.

Therefore, by adding the constructs of gender and race to that of class in the definition of oppression, feminist critical theory enriches liberatory pedagogy. Whereas liberatory pedagogy once encompassed the perspectives on reality of men oppressed by the dominant class, and therefore lacked wholeness, it now can encompass a variety of human experiences and perspectives. The contribution of feminist critical theory is consequently not only one of illuminating other forms of oppression but, by logical extension, of charting a path towards eradicating them.

The following chapter provides further analysis of the major concepts underlying liberatory pedagogy and examines the relevant literature pertaining to this form of pedagogy. In chapter three I discuss how feminist critical pedagogy builds on liberatory pedagogy by introducing the concept of patriarchy as an oppressive system. These theorists also introduce the notion of difference in women's personal experiences and emotions (their knowledge) and examine the nature of "teacher" authority and how it can work to oppress rather than liberate students. Chapter four examines the notion of teachers functioning as cultural workers and as border crossers. Working as such, teachers take on a much more active role in promoting positive change. By working with a curriculum which is race, class and gender inclusive and by using pedagogical strategies which allow teachers to understand better the experiences, positions and intellectual and psychological needs of their students, teachers can more easily affirm voice and help students to interrogate both their own knowledge as well as textbook knowledge and dominant ideologies. As well, by teaching an oppositional world view teachers can help students redefine knowledge and ideologies and urge their new found critical consciousness in a transformative direction, that is, towards the creation of an all-inclusive democracy.

CHAPTER TWO

FOUNDATIONS OF LIBERATORY PEDAGOGY

As noted, liberatory pedagogy is based on a critique of dominant ideologies and a concomitant transformation of societal structures and practices informed by these ideologies. In this chapter I draw from the works of various theorists to understand how ideology exerts its power over individuals by locating itself in the conscious and unconscious spheres of our personalities, thereby influencing our ideas and actions and ultimately shaping consent for specific dominant agendas. I also explore how dominant ideologies can be critiqued by recovering, validating and analyzing individual subjectivities and voices, common sense, knowledge and culture, in order to understand how schooling can be seen as a process in achieving critical consciousness. This process requires viewing the teacher as a critical agent who, through dialogue, exercises positive power in an effort to empower students. A concept which remains constant throughout the chapter and one which is heavily promoted by Gramsci and Freire is the notion of boundless faith in every individuals' ability to liberate themselves from the stronghold of ideological domination.

Marcuse: Link Between Ideology and the Unconscious

Marcuse's contribution to liberatory pedagogy was the important notion of locating ideology within the unconscious sphere of the individual. By locating ideology within the unconscious, Marcuse was able to explain how oppressive ideologies shape personalities, obscure reality and function to retain the present structure of domination. This it does by influencing our "structure of needs", dictating our desires and rendering present social relations as normal and unchanging. However, by engaging in dialectical thought, individuals can break through ideological domination which characterizes their unconscious.

In his book, *Eros and Civilisation*, Marcuse describes how ideology becomes integrated into our structure of needs. He states that our needs are created by institutions (such as schools) in society and nurtured into the unconscious of people who accept the premises upon which society is based. These needs then serve the interests of those who impose them rather than serving the interests of those who express them. In *One Dimensional Man*, Marcuse defines these needs as "false needs", or

> ...those which are superimposed upon the individual by particular social interests in his repression: the needs which perpetuate toil, aggressiveness, misery and injustice. Their satisfaction might be...gratifying to the individual, but...the result, is euphoria in unhappiness. Most of the prevailing needs to relax, to have fun, to behave and consume in accordance with the advertisements, to love and hate what others love and hate, belong to this category of false needs (Marcuse, 1964, p.5).

Although rooted in history rather than in human nature, these false needs appear as true needs and the present societal relations appear as if they have no links to history. By influencing our structure of needs, ideology has the ability to not only shape the unconscious but also to shape personality and reinforce, through the routines of everyday life, false needs that limit the creativity and free expression of social individuals.

> The restrictions imposed upon the libido appear as the more rational, the more universal they become the more they permeate the whole society. They operate on the individual as external objective laws... the societal authority is absorbed into the "conscience" and into the unconscious of the individual and works as his own desire, mortality and fulfillment (Marcuse, 1955, p.42).

Marcuse distinguishes true needs from false needs as

> ...those which a human being develops not only to survive physically but those tendencies towards gratification and self-determination which distinguish him from other animals (Marcuse, quoted in Bleich, 1977, p.158).

When needs are imposed rather than determined by the individual the individual's ability to self determination is blocked. Hence if the individual cannot distinguish between the true and the false they will remain dominated by external forces which perpetuate her/his repressed consciousness. Breaking through this reified consciousness, linking needs and relations to history and revealing the artificiality of our present needs is necessary if a truer and freer society will be realized. According to Marcuse, all

this can be accomplished through dialectical and critical thought which must be,

> ...capable of comprehending and expressing the new potentialities of a qualitatively different existence. It must be capable of surpassing the force of technological repression and of incorporating it into its concepts of gratification (Marcuse, 1968, p.xx).

Marcuse's interpretation of ideology and the unconscious is inevitably a positive one. Instead of viewing the unconscious as a sphere dominated by repressive needs falsely created by society, Marcuse treats the linkage between society and the unconscious as a dialectical one. In doing this Marcuse posits the dominating as well as the emancipatory possibilities of ideology. For instance, the unconscious grounding of ideology is not only rooted in repressive needs but also needs that are emancipatory in nature, that is, needs based on meaningful social relations. Giroux notes that,

> What emerges from this locus of contradictory needs are tensions both within the personality structure and larger society. Inherent in these contradictory tensions are possibilities for the full and many-sided development of "radical" needs, and the elimination of the conditions that repress them. Thus ideology, as located in the unconscious, is a moment of self-creation as well as a force of domination (Giroux, 1983, p.148).

Marcuse's theory of ideology as grounded in the unconscious is useful to liberatory pedagogy because it forces individuals to view everyday life in an historical context. Thus, our social relations, actions and thoughts are seen as originating from societal structures which have

shaped history and which we have internalized. An understanding of these societal structures within an historical context provides us not only with insight into our everyday lives but also into how our actions support the interests of the dominant class. Moreover, in defining institutions as agencies which diffuse societal ideologies of control, Marcuse makes it possible to view schooling as an ideological process and schools as places where ideologies can be critiqued, through a pedagogy which engages students in dialectical thought.

Giroux: Critique of Ideology within the Unconscious

Giroux further explores Marcuse's theory that societal ideologies of control penetrate the unconscious of the individual thereby shaping needs. He suggests a method through which these ideologies can be recovered and critiqued. This method involves interrogating individual subjectivities such as personal histories, dreams and experiences (Giroux, 1986).

Our subjectivities are our concrete real life experiences. They exist as memories which when examined reveal the contradictions between the perceptions of life which we internalize from the dominant ideologies and the real life which we live. By examining our subjective experiences, we can come to understand how the needs, ideas, beliefs and desires which are imposed on us from dominant society contrast with those which we know from our real

worlds. These "real worlds" and the cultures which characterize them are constantly devalued in schools in favor of a standard "real world", one which probably reflects the worlds of the dominant classes. In this way, our real needs, desires etc. are also devalued because our subjectivities can expose the contradictions between lived reality and the dominant ideologies which we have internalized, Giroux posits the need to establish a pedagogy that

> ...is attentive to the histories, dreams, experiences that students bring to school. It is only by beginning with these subjective forms that critical educators can develop a language and set of practices that engage the contradictory nature of the cultural capital with which students produce meanings that legitimate particular forms of life (Giroux, 1986, p.64).

Through this pedagogy we can begin to understand more than how ideologies shape needs, desires and so forth. By recovering subjectivities, we can learn how individuals mediate the dominant ideologies with the meanings which they derive from their concrete life experiences. With this notion of mediation, Giroux differs from Marcuse who presumes that individuals were passive receptors of ideology. In terms of schooling then, students mediate the ideology inscribed in many school practices (school rules, classroom social relations, school knowledge etc.), with their own experiences. They are not simply inscribed or imposed in the consciousness of the oppressed through various pedagogical means. Rather they are always mediated--sometimes rejected, sometimes confirmed by the individual.

> Human agents always mediate through their own histories and class- or gender-related subjectivities the representations and material practices that constitute the parameters of their lived experiences (Giroux, 1983, p.156).

The notion of the student as a mediator of ideologies presents a picture of schools as terrains of struggle for ideologies whereby certain beliefs and values are validated and others rejected. By extension, certain forms of knowledge, experiences or subjectivities are also validated while others are rejected.

Students then, through interrogation

> ...are to be able to understand how their own experiences are reinforced, contradicted and suppressed as a result of ideologies mediated in material and intellectual practices that characterize daily classroom life (Giroux, 1983, p.150).

In characterizing schools as sites of struggle for ideology, Giroux illuminates how groups dominate or resist the power struggle. More importantly, in characterizing schools as sites for struggles over meaning, Giroux reveals the dynamic nature of schools where individuals can generate change.

Giroux: Critical Consciousness and the Ideology of Critique

Mediation of societal ideologies with meanings individuals derive from their subjective experiences does not necessarily indicate that individuals are critically conscious; that is, they may still be unable to examine critically the societal ideologies which lie within their unconscious or which they mediate in their consciousness.

For this reason, Giroux maintains that critical consciousness begins first by recovering subjectivities. In the classroom, subjectivities can be recovered by the teacher giving students the opportunity to voice their particular life and cultural experiences, ideas and opinions in a "safe setting". Once recovered, subjectivities need to be interrogated. Interrogation involves an understanding of how subjectivities are constructed through structural factors and how they are invalidated through ideology. In other words, subjectivities need to be understood in terms of how they were shaped by factors of class, race and gender but also how these are prevented from being articulated. Furthermore, interrogation involves a linking of the construction of subjectivity to dominant interests.

Thus critical consciousness is a tool used to interrogate the relationship between the dominant school culture and the contradictory, lived experiences or subjectivities that mediate the reality of school life. In this way the production of meaning is viewed in a critical manner, giving ideology an active nature. Giroux refers to the active quality of ideology as "ideology critique"(Giroux, 1983). Ideology critique is an analysis of the production of meaning. In positing a theory of ideology critique, Giroux is able to establish the relations between agency and structure whereby the agent is capable of understanding the way in which meaning is constructed and materialized in texts or cultural forms such as books and curriculum packages. With

this view of ideology Giroux begins to develop a theory of mediation and reception which links the agent and the structure.

Giroux emphasizes that ideology critique has more than an interpretive role. It is the distinct and important precondition of radical praxis.

> Ideology critique informs critical thinking by making it into more than an interpretive tool. It situates critique within a radical notion of interest and social transformation (Giroux, 1983, p.154).

Within a classroom, having students think critically and radically means that they must not only question the ideologies which lie within their consciousness or the knowledge which they learn in school but they must understand how these have served the interests of the dominant classes. Students must understand that dominant class interests can be challenged through asserting their own knowledge and envisioning a society in which social relations between individuals are less oppressive.

Giroux's theory of ideology does posit interesting and important notions such as the linkage between structure and agency and the need to recover, validate and interrogate individual subjectivities in order to understand how meaning is produced. His notion of ideology critique is also important as it functions to contrast how and why certain meanings are validated in schools while others are not and to link meanings to dominant groups. However, a criticism of Giroux's notion of subjectivity and ideology is that they are

viewed solely in class terms. In this way, he neglects how schooling ideologies are also racist and patriarchal and how schooling reproduces and invalidates other subjectivities besides simply class based ones.

> The issue here is that **class** and power intersect within the relations of domination and resistance in the form of lived experiences that accommodate and contest the dominant school culture in a complex way. What is crucial to recognize is that schools represent contested terrains in the formation of subjectivities, but that the terrain is heavily weighted in favor of the dominant culture (Giroux, 1983, p.66).

Perhaps Giroux's most important contribution to liberatory pedagogy is the notion that ideology has a critical potential when linked to the concepts of struggle and critique. Its critical potential revolves around bringing into focus the relationships between power, meaning and interest. In this way Giroux prepares the individual for an active role in the struggle for meaning by exploring the individual's capacities for reflexive thinking and linking this form of thought to emancipatory action.

Gramsci: Ideology and Common Sense

Gramsci also locates ideology within the conscious sphere, but in a sphere characterized by the contradictory elements of common sense. Although Gramsci states that ideology has hegemonic capabilities and therefore can function to distort reality and influence individual action, he affirmed that consciousness is capable of critique and transformation. With the assistance of "organic

intellectuals" who are critically conscious agents, individuals can critique ideology within the consciousness to become critically aware so that they can "...take active part in the creation of the history of the world" (Gramsci, 1971, p.323).

Consciousness is not equated with domination but is rather characterized by common sense, "...an ambiguous, contradictory and multiform concept" (Gramsci, 1971, p.423) Common sense is informed by ideology which supplies the individual with insights into social reality, as well as distorting beliefs that mystify and legitimate it. This combination of good and bad sense within the consciousness constantly leads to contradictions in terms of meanings, perceptions, ideas and behaviors. The individual's life is thus characterized by a state of tension brought on by conflicts between the two senses within the consciousness.

According to Gramsci, the dominant class is able to gain consent for their interests because they impose their own conception of reality or common sense on all subordinate classes. Because common sense is rarely questioned and because it is diffused through cultural agencies and socialization agencies such as schools and religious institutions, common sense and therefore ideology, takes on a hegemonic characteristic, one which Renate Holub in her book *Antonio Gramsci, Beyond Marxism and Postmodernism*, describes. Internalization of the dominant ideology is useful in explaining how individuals can consent to their own

oppression. In this famous quote, Gramsci describes the force of internalized ideology in mobilizing individuals.

> To the extent that ideologies are historically necessary they have a validity which is "psychological"; they organize human masses and create the terrain on which men move, acquire consciousness of their position, struggle etc. (Gramsci, 1971, p.377).

Nonetheless, Gramsci maintains that individuals possess the capabilities to break the elusive hegemonic control which shapes their existence's and guides their actions. Because individual common sense is characterized by contradictory subjectivities, it retains the dialectical quality of contrasting hegemonic and insightful beliefs and practices. The critical quality of common sense enables individuals to understand the tensions and contradictions within their consciousness in an attempt to resist hegemonic ideology. In this way, Gramsci refuses to render the individual a determined being, rather, he is an "intellectual" who can either "...contribute to sustain a conception of the world or to modify it, that is to bring into being new modes of thought" (Gramsci, 1971, p.9).

With the assistance of "organic intellectuals", who are the "...thinking and organizing element of a particular fundamental social class" and who function to "...direct the ideas and aspirations of the class to which they organically belong" (Gramsci, 1971, p.1), individuals can become critically aware.

The concept of ideology, as common sense diffused through cultural agencies such as schools, and organic intellectuals functioning as counter-hegemonic forces in institutions saturated with ideological control, have important implications for education. In other words, teachers functioning as organic intellectuals in schools can critique common sense notions such as justice and equality and aid students in becoming critically conscious. Gramsci envisions such a school in which students are assisted in becoming critically aware as the "humanistic school".

> Thus, side by side, with the type of school which may be called "humanistic" the oldest form of traditional school, designed to develop in each individual human being an as yet undifferentiated general culture, the fundamental power to think and ability to find one's way in life (Gramsci, 1971, p.26).

With this characterization of ideology, Gramsci succeeds in accomplishing several things. First he puts the human subject in an active position by stating that ideology does not incapacitate the intervening faculties of the mind. Thus, "good sense" can overturn "bad sense" or individuals are capable of retaining a true perception of their life situation while at the same time being situated in an arena of domination which is historical. Secondly, by positing an agent-centered theory of change, Gramsci recovers a bottom-up theory of societal transformation whereby he highlights the power of individuals. Hence, societal change can occur because critically conscious individuals act upon reality and transform it for their benefit and for the benefit of others.

This theory is in contrast to structural theories which posit that societal transformation begins by first altering the dominant structures and ideologies. Third, Gramsci, with his view of consciousness as a composite of the contradictory good and bad sense, characterizes societal institutions as places where struggle between ideologies and subjectivities takes place. Not only is hegemony an elusive ideological force which is constantly being challenged but the struggle over ideologies shows that individuals are capable of understanding the contradictory messages which surround them. Fourth, by positing the concept of the organic intellectual, Gramsci succeeds in articulating a positive human force for opposing hegemonic ideology. More importantly, the role of the organic intellectual within schools is central to understanding that schools are centers where critical consciousness can be formed and counter-hegemonic practices can be developed.

A critique of Gramsci's work includes the notion that ideological hegemony serves only the purpose of keeping the working class oppressed. However, because it is diffused through so many cultural agencies and because it encompasses a variety of common sense notions besides simply those which are related to economics, it becomes obvious that ideology functions to legitimate more than a social order divided by class but possibly also one divided by among other things, e.g., gender, race and intelligence.

Freire: Ideology, Conscientization, Praxis

Freire develops liberatory pedagogy further by focusing specifically on the role of education in aiding individuals in becoming critically conscious. Within schools, critically conscious teachers guide their students through a process of conscientization whereby they first validate knowledge based in experience and then use it to critique common sense and school knowledge. What is revealed by such an exercise is that common sense and school knowledge are based on the experiences of the dominant classes. Exposing the link between common sense and school knowledge to dominant interests is an exercise in unveiling how dominant interests shape our thoughts and guide our actions; through knowledge and school practices. In this way, Freire's pedagogy is based in a critique of hegemonic ideology. However, Freire's pedagogy involves praxis because he links critique with counter-hegemonic activities. Teachers first engage in counter-hegemonic activities through implementing non-oppressive pedagogical practices such as those based in dialogue. Teachers are then expected to engage in other forms of counter-hegemonic practices outside the classroom and in the public sphere. Having achieved a state of conscientization, students are also expected to partake in counter-hegemonic practices outside of the classroom. In this way, education is seen as a process in societal transformation.

Conscientization begins first with a validation of individual subjectivities (knowledge which students already possess; that which they gain from experiencing life as a particular individual in a particular historical and social circumstance). Presently, schools rarely acknowledge the experiences and knowledge of students. Rather, through a method which Freire calls "banking education"(Freire, 1993 [1970]), schools suppress subjectivities and submerge consciousness. Students are considered "empty receptacles" which teachers are to fill with knowledge. This knowledge is then memorized yet rarely questioned to reveal its underlying interests. In this way, schools validate only one kind of knowledge.

Validation of individual subjectivities occurs through "dialogue" which is "...the encounter between men, mediated by the world, in order to name the world" (Freire, 1993 [1970], p.69). The dialogue form of pedagogy presupposes that the student and the teacher are "equals", both subjects in a world characterized by ideological and structural factors. Upon validation of subjectivities through dialogue, teachers and students use them to "...challenge the received vision of reality" (Giroux, 1983, p.18) or the vision which they receive through cultural agencies such as schools. Hence, Freire's pedagogy is based in a critique of hegemonic ideology diffused through cultural agencies.

In Freire's conception then, knowledge is steeped in values, experiences and interests particular to an individual

(Freire, 1985). In this way, he challenges the common conception of knowledge as objective and value free. In articulating a value free notion of knowledge, positivist theorists have dichotomized the subject and the object. Thus, knowledge is not considered to be created by the consciousness of the individual interacting with her/his physical environment nor is the individual influenced by knowledge, "...it is in the social experience of history that we as human beings have created knowledge" (Horton & Freire, 1990, p.194).

The assumption that knowledge is somehow universal and cut off from the interests of individuals results in a devaluing of the experiences, intuitions, values, interests and insights, or, in other words, the knowledge which students gain from their existence as a particular individual in a particular historical and social situation. In fact, since knowledge is not viewed as a human construction, individuals do not realize that their knowledge or perceptions are real and valuable reflections of reality, and most importantly they do not believe themselves able to contribute to the construction of knowledge. Freire articulates this mistrust and devaluation of the perceptions and knowledge of the oppressed.

> Almost never do they realize that they too, "know things" they have learned in their relations with the world and with other women and men. Given the circumstances which have produced their duality, it is only natural that they distrust themselves (Freire, 1993 [1970], p.45).

Understanding that knowledge is socially constructed and that it is never complete forms part of the process of empowerment of disenfranchised individuals. In other words, knowledge gives people power (Foucault, 1980, see footnote no.3). Valuing the subjectivities of students gives them a voice and adds these perspectives and experiences to the tapestry of what is considered knowledge. Having one's voice heard and validated is fundamental to a society based on democratic principles. It is a way to include oneself in the manner in which society is organized and operated. There is a need to overcome silence and articulate one's knowledge derived from individual's experiences so that s/he can be a part of the construction of reality as well as a benefactor of this reality.

Praxis

> The philosophers have only interpreted the world in various ways; the point, however is to change it (Marx's famous eleventh thesis on Feuerbach quoted in McLaren and Leonard, 1993 p.xiii).

According to Freire, conscientization naturally leads to the desire and ability to transform the relations between the dominant and the oppressed within specific historical contexts and concrete social settings. In other words, individuals cannot merely observe and understand the world but also actively participate in changing it. The ability to reflect and then to act upon reality is called praxis. Praxis is simply individuals giving their meaning to the world and transforming it. In *The Politics of Education,*

Freire elaborates on the importance of linking critical consciousness to transformative action by stating that

> ...if a radical transformation of social structures, that explains the objective situation in which the peasants are found, does not happen, the peasants continue in the same condition. They continue to be exploited in the same way. It matters little that some among them arrived at an understanding of the reason why their duality is as it is. Actually, the demasking of reality that is not oriented toward clear political action against this same reality simply lacks sense (Freire, 1985, p.157).

There are many criticisms of Freire's pedagogy. The first and most obvious is that it is situation specific. That is, his pedagogy is aimed at the liberation of oppressed populations in underdeveloped nations. It is a fact that oppression of the kind existing in underdeveloped nations may not be as prevalent in our own developed nations. However, this analysis does not dismiss the reality that our nations are also characterized by domination and oppression albeit of a more subtle variety. In this way, Freire's pedagogy cannot be imposed grid like in our cultures but must be altered to take into consideration the varying forms of oppression and domination in our unique historical and social context. Giroux speaks to this notion of altering Freire's pedagogy to suit the needs of a vastly different socio-political and cultural reality.

> There is an important qualification that must accompany the use of Freire's work in the North American context. There has been rapid change in the material and spiritual culture of the U.S. that developing forms of literacy capable of incorporating the nature and products of this transition is an enormously complex enterprise. Moreover, people need to understand the importance of appropriating these new conditions. For example they must develop the capacity to fathom how these conditions contribute to their own oppression and how society works-that is, how much more sophisticated and complex is this type of domination compared with that which operates in the underdeveloped nations (Giroux, 1992, p.251).

Another limitation to Freire's pedagogy is that it universalizes terms such as subjectivity and oppression. Like Gramsci and Giroux then, Freire thinks solely in class terms in which case schools invalidate the subjectivities of the working class and reproduce only class oppression. Connected to this criticism of lumping all of the oppressed in one category is the assumption they all have the same vision of how a more humane society ought to be organized. The reality is that individuals within this category of oppressed all experience unique forms of oppression which will alter their conception regarding which means ought to be taken to alleviate their oppression as well as what a society without oppression will look like.

A further criticism of Freire's theory is that it is overwhelmingly optimistic therefore making one believe that it is possible to overcome mass class oppression or to eradicate negative external forces which impact on an individual. An optimistic theory is highly motivating and gives people real hope that positive change will occur if one

is committed to the struggle for change. However, possessing an overly optimistic attitude can render even a die-hard supporter disillusioned if, after years of struggle, little or no change has in fact taken place. What Freire ought to stress is the fact that while it is possible to remove to some extent the negative external structural and ideological forces which impact on an individual's life and therefore to diminish to some extent class oppression, it is impossible to eradicate these forces and that therefore, individuals must constantly be engaged in critiquing oppressive ideologies and in battling oppressive forces. Gramsci addresses the notion that oppressive ideologies will always attempt to shape our attitudes and actions in favor of dominant interests, and he offers our consciousness which is, "...strangely composite and always containing contradictions between hegemonic ideology and critical good sense" as proof (Gramsci in Freire 1985, p.74). Freire acknowledges Gramsci's insight by stating that

> These contradictions may be brought to light but they may not disappear. As Gramsci reminds us, hegemony is always being re-imposed and human beings are always mediating and resisting the social forces that shape their lives (Freire, 1985, p.74).

Other criticisms include the use of the concepts of dialogue as a non-oppressive pedagogy and the ability of teachers to validate the subjectivities of their students. The subjectivities, values and interests of the teacher always mediate their pedagogical style raising questions

regarding whether they can in fact use dialogue as a non-oppressive practice.

Despite these criticisms, Freire's pedagogy cannot be dismissed. His work is without parallel in terms of recognizing the "Subject position of those most disenfranchised"(bell hooks in McLaren and Leonard, 1993 p.151). It is this subject that carries with him or her the knowledge needed to break through the ideologies and practices which seek to paint a portrait of reality that is inconsistent with the reality of the majority population. It is to this subject who is a knower that Freire seeks insight and wisdom. And it is this insight and wisdom which Freire dares to add to the tapestry of what we consider to be knowledge. More importantly, it is this knowledge which is to be used to transform the present society to one which is inclusive of the perceptions and realities of all its citizens.

Aronowitz and Giroux: The Teacher as a Transformative Intellectual

Aronowitz and Giroux's important contribution to liberatory pedagogy is the concept of the teacher as transformative intellectual. This concept is developed from Gramsci's concept of the "organic intellectual" who works to raise the consciousness of the working class. Freire further develops the role of the teacher in raising student critical consciousness by engaging students in dialogue whereby they

critique knowledge for its underlying interests and validate subjectivities. Aronowitz and Giroux go beyond Freire in their characterization of the teacher. By characterizing the teacher as an intellectual who plans, designs and implements curriculum, instruction policies and practices (Aronowitz and Giroux, 1986) they define the teacher as someone who has the freedom and ability to exert power positively and is fully aware of the empowering possibilities of the curriculum.

> The notion of a transformative intellectual bridges the relationship between thinking and acting in a way that speaks to the possibility for teachers to exercise power productively in collaboration with others (Giroux, 1992, p.165).

Empowering students involves, as Freire and others have noted, validating and critiquing student knowledge. Validating student knowledge entails on the part of transformative intellectuals critically engaging the experiences that students bring to the school. In effect, transformative intellectuals aid students in articulating their experiences inside and outside of school, legitimating them so as to make them relevant to the educational process and finally critically analyzing how these experiences are related to or influenced by the structures of dominance. Aronowitz and Giroux call the validation and critique of student's experiences an "exercise in critical literacy"; a process involving a language of critique and language of possibility.

> In short, the language of critique unites with the language of possibility when it points to the conditions necessary for new forms of culture, alternative social practices, new modes of communication, and a practical vision for the future (Giroux and Aronowitz, 1985, p.37).

Beyond simply helping students become critically conscious, transformative intellectuals are also expected to extend their energies beyond the four walls of the classroom into the public sphere of politics. In this way teachers can become involved in the political process of education and can help to create curricula and practices which do not reproduce the social inequalities in society. "In effect, we are arguing that teachers as transformative intellectuals need to become a movement marked by an active involvement in oppositional public spheres in which the primacy of the political is asserted anew" (Aronowitz and Giroux, 1993, p.51).

The notion of the teacher as a transformative intellectual has been heavily criticized by students and teachers alike. Problems with this notion emerge when teachers begin to consider themselves "transformative intellectuals" whose work is to oppose the oppressive ideologies and schooling practices. The reality is that teachers function in materially and ideologically restrictive conditions, that is, they are not free to evaluate students as they please nor to utilize pedagogical strategies which they believe will be liberating. Another problem which emerges deals with the concept of "liberation", a concept which guides the work of transformative intellectuals. Within

critical pedagogy, "liberation" is a universal term which is not well defined. "Liberation" means different things for different people and therefore it is incorrect to assume that both students and teachers will adhere to the same notion of liberation or same vision of a new society. What is more realistic is that given the diversity and multiplicity of oppressions experienced by individuals, the definitions of liberation and visions of a new society will also be diverse. Thus, a question which must constantly be asked by transformative intellectuals is, "what are we (you) seeking liberation from?" and, "what kind of a society ought we to create?".

Another problem with the notion of teachers as transformative intellectuals concerns the authority which teachers possess. Aronowitz and Giroux do not analyze the teacher's authority/power and therefore are unaware of how their authority/power can be oppressive rather than liberating. For example, without an analysis of the institutionalized power imbalances existing between students and teachers, strategies such as dialogue which give the illusion of equality may not lead to student empowerment because it leaves the authoritarian nature of the student/teacher relationship intact. Furthermore, since the transformative intellectual is considered the one who guides students towards "liberation" by planning and implementing curricula based upon the subjective experiences of their students, it is implied that teachers who practice liberatory

pedagogy are "liberated" and capable of understanding the students' subjectivities. However, can a teacher ever transcend her/his own subject position and understand the subjectivities of the students? Teachers, like all individuals are products of their experiences and socialization and have developed prejudices and perspectives particular to their own race, class and gender positions. These experiences may prevent them from transcending their own particular positions in life in order to understand the positions of others. Another criticism involves the notion of transformative intellectuals becoming politically involved or bringing their emancipatory struggles to the public sphere. It is highly unrealistic to expect teachers to partake in political activities intended to bring change to the field of education. Perhaps a more realistic option is to encourage teachers to focus on collaborating with school administrators and other teachers within the school or to enlist the help of the community and parents in order to implement teaching strategies which are liberating in a Freirean sense.

Despite its criticisms Aronowitz and Giroux's notion of the "transformative intellectual", like Gramsci's "Organic Intellectuals", remains a positive paradigm through which teachers can perceive themselves as agents of change. Most recently, the notion of the "transformative intellectual" has been expanded upon by Giroux as well as by feminist critical theorists. While I will address the way in which feminist

critical theory has added to the concept of the teacher as "transformative intellectual" in the following chapter, I now wish to turn to how Giroux has built upon this notion.

In his book entitled *Border Crossings* Giroux expands on the notion that transformative intellectuals can help to bring students to critical consciousness and effect positive change in schools and in society by affirming their voices and the knowledges and experiences which they articulate. A way of affirming students' voices is to "know" how these voices, experiences, knowledges are shaped. To understand this, Giroux suggests that teachers explore the various cultural and ideological spheres which characterize society. Within these spheres, teachers can learn how racial, class and gender ideologies and practices shape the consciousness and lives of students. Giroux defines border crossing as

> ...moving into circles of uncertainty, it means crossing into different cultural spheres, it means recognizing the multiple nature of our own identities. It means understanding and challenging rather than assuming a kind of security within the confines of academic disciplines. We must move into other spheres where we take up the specificity of different contexts, geographies, different languages, of otherness, and recognize the otherness in ourselves. The term suggests practices that reject the reified language of management, intellectual tourism, and standardized approaches to education. And we also have to recognize the partiality of our own views (Giroux, 1992, p.167).

Crossing borders also suggests the need to embrace perspectives on critical theories across the social sciences. These include critical feminist theory, critical race theory, postmodernism, postcolonialism, cultural studies, literary

theory, and the arts (Giroux, 1992). As well, by entering into other societal spheres (economic, cultural, social) Giroux underscores the need to work for simultaneous changes in all sectors of society in order to create a truly democratic society. Thus, educators are not only gaining a broader perspective on how society reproduces race class and gender inequities but they are also given the opportunities to form alliances with individuals "...who are doing this work in other ways" (Giroux, 1992, p.159).

However, border crossing is not only useful in understanding the complex relationship between various societal forces and education. It is also a way to use "...symbolic representations" (knowledge) (Giroux, 1992, p.5) to explore and affirm the individual differences which are created by the interplay of societal forces. In other words the knowledge which students assimilate helps them to understand themselves and for this knowledge to be helpful, it must be relevant to their lives. Thus, diversifying knowledge, textbooks, curriculum, just like experience and identities, becomes important.

Conclusion

From Marcuse, Gramsci, Aronowitz and Giroux and Freire, we begin to understand how dominant ideologies locate themselves both within the unconscious and conscious spheres of the mind giving meaning to our lives and guiding our actions. We also come to understand how to critique

ideologies by validating and analyzing subjectivities and common sense through a dialogical form of pedagogy whereby the teacher exerts positive power over the students in an effort to empower them.

Liberatory pedagogy is a hopeful pedagogy. However, if it is to remain hopeful and if it seeks the construction of a greater all-inclusive democracy, it must be open to new perspectives. More specifically, it must begin to address the various forms of ideologies and oppression which exist in society and how they are reproduced and contested within schools. As has been noted throughout this chapter, liberatory pedagogy has historically viewed oppression as expressed solely in terms of class. However, through the concept of border crossing, liberatory pedagogy can begin to understand the impact of societal forces on other groups of people.

The next chapter addresses the issue of gender and race inequality, through an analysis of feminist critical theory. Feminist critical theory adds another lens to critical theory. Through this lens it becomes apparent that the society in which we live not only reproduces class relations but also patriarchal relations of power. Thus our system can be characterized as being both capitalist and patriarchal. However, feminist critical pedagogy also adds to Aronowitz and Giroux's notion of the "transformative intellectual", by analyzing how the teacher's authority/power and subjectivities can work to oppress students and by making

teachers aware of the diversity of voices, knowledges and experiences which need to be affirmed if power is to be extended to women and minorities. Feminist teachers are committed to understanding the forces which have led women of various races and classes to where they are. In this chapter I also will analyze how feminist critical teachers incorporate liberatory pedagogy within their own feminist pedagogy. By adding gender as a lens through which society can be analyzed, feminist critical theory can aid in bringing many more individuals to critical awareness of their position in society.

CHAPTER THREE

FEMINIST CRITICAL PEDAGOGY

In the preceding chapter, the theoretical foundations of liberatory pedagogy were summarized. As was noted, liberatory pedagogy views oppression solely in class terms, that is, it is gender blind. By failing to acknowledge gender and race along with class oppression, liberatory pedagogy has universalized oppression. As well, in excluding patriarchy[9] as a system of oppression, liberatory pedagogy has made man's experience of oppression the universal oppression. Feminist critical pedagogy emphasizes women's experiences in schooling proposed by liberatory pedagogy. Thus, feminist critical pedagogy explores the lives of women and by doing so uncovers how patriarchy, capitalism and racism as well as the ideologies which sustain these systems have shaped their lives and their consciousnesses in a myriad of different ways.

By expanding on the concept of oppression to include not only class but gender and race as well, feminist critical pedagogy can build on liberatory pedagogy's notion of the "transformative intellectual" whose aim is to bring students to critical consciousness of their position in life; that is, to critique the dominant ideologies regarding race, class and gender which lie within an individual's conscious and unconscious spheres. Acknowledging the various systems of oppression which create varied individual experiences means that concepts such as student voice, dialogue, knowledge and

[9] See page 11 for definition of Patriarchy

empowerment must also be expanded. In particular it means acknowledging that "student voice" is not a unified voice but a legion of voices articulating many perspectives, personal experiences, oppressions and knowledge. Therefore, if dialogue, as Freire notes, is the method used to bring students to critical consciousness it must be undertaken in such a way that it respects and validates the variety of voices and by extension the experiences which they articulate.

Feminist critical pedagogy also expands the liberatory pedagogy notion that personal experience be considered knowledge by positing the notion that emotions and feelings must be considered as valid knowledge. As Weiler states, "...feeling or emotion has been seen traditionally as a source of women's knowledge about the world" (Weiler, 1991, p.463). Having historically been denied both access to, as well as input into, the world of knowledge by patriarchal societies, women have resorted to feelings and emotions as guides to knowing about the world as well as ways of, "...testing accepted claims of what is universally true about human nature, or, specifically, about women" (Weiler, 1991, p.463).

By diversifying the notion of voice to take into account gender and race as well as class, feminist critical pedagogy points to the possibility of a "clashing" of voices between teacher and students as well as between students themselves. No longer is the teacher a transparent organic or

transformative intellectual who is able to unproblematically use positive power to rescue and validate the voices of oppressed students. Instead, teachers are now complex, multi-subjective individuals whose own experiences with sexism, racism or classism renders them partial and may inhibit them from carrying out their emancipatory activities. In this way, the experiences and voices of the teacher must be analyzed just as are those of their students are analyzed. Thus, feminist critical pedagogy calls for a deconstruction of the simplistic concept of teacher power and authority articulated in liberatory pedagogy in order to understand how it can become emancipatory.

It must be noted here that feminist critical pedagogy does not reiterate the main concepts of liberatory education. It is taken for granted that concepts which define liberatory pedagogy such as ideology, consciousness, ideology critique, empowerment, dialogue and voice are also concepts which define feminist critical pedagogy. It must also be stated however, that feminist critical pedagogy is unique because it pays attention to gender and because it acknowledges women's oppression.

A Feminist Notion of Difference

Acknowledging and accepting differences in terms of women's and men's experiences is a central category of feminist critical pedagogy. Women's lives, like men's lives, have been shaped by factors of class, race and gender. When

addressing the notion of oppression then, feminist critical pedagogy cannot simply refer to a single system of oppression such as patriarchy to understand women's experience. Patriarchy has never in an absolute way determined a woman's experience, nor has capitalism or racism. These oppressive systems need to be viewed as "intersecting systems"(Anderson & Collins, 1992, hooks, 1984, Weiler, 1988) which are experienced simultaneously, not separately and because of this they are able to create both opportunities and limitations for women.

Bell hooks rejects the notion that one system of oppression (in this case patriarchy) determines a woman's experience. As she explains in her book, *Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center,* this century's popular feminist movement took the position that sexism was solely responsible for woman's oppression; (patriarchy)[10]. This is not surprising given that the movement was made-up largely of white, middle-class women who had never experienced any other form of oppression besides sexist oppression. However, in focusing solely on sexist oppression, the feminist movement falsely portrayed the female experience as a unified one and thereby called for a dismantling of only one system of oppression. By neglecting how other forms of oppression shaped women's experiences, the feminist movement marginalized women oppressed by class and race. Hooks, who experienced racism,

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[10] See The Feminine Mystique by Betty Friedan (1964)

sexism and class oppression while growing up in the American south, speaks to the reality of diversity in experience caused by the intersecting systems of oppression.

> The assertion that all women are oppressed, implies that women share a common lot, that factors like class, race, religion, sexual preference, etc. do not create a diversity of experience that determines the extent to which sexism will be an oppressive force in the lives of individual women. Sexism as a system of domination is institutionalized but it has never determined in an absolute way the fate of all women in this society (hooks, 1984, p.5).

The distinct historical and social positions which women inhabit provide them with experiences from which women draw to construct their own identities. Women as subjects thus participate in the construction of their own identities, resisting in their unique ways the structural and ideological forces acting upon and seeking to define them. As in liberatory pedagogy, feminist critical pedagogy sees becoming conscious of the oppressive ideologies and practices which seek to limit self-actualization as the first important step towards emancipation. Therefore, the importance of feminist critical pedagogy in validating women's voices, identities and differences is related to helping them understand the factors which contribute to the construction of their identities. These factors of class, gender, sexuality, history, language, culture, "individual experience" and so on are multiple and contradictory, making "...naming and speaking one's identity and location" (Luke, in Luke and Gore, 1992, p.36) a complicated matter. Nonetheless,

articulating how one's identity is structured reveals the struggles which women have had with subject producing forces. These struggles point to the possibility of "...resistance and the building of counter hegemony" (Weiler, 1988, p. 468) among women.

Teachers practicing feminist critical pedagogy attempt to use the classroom as a forum where students can name and speak their identities and locations and in doing so can make sense of themselves and their experiences. In other words, they can come to critique the forces which act upon them, both ideological and structural. However, while attempting to do this, they begin to encounter several problems. Among the first problems are practical ones involving shortage of time for discussion and large class size. A large class impedes equal opportunity discussion and interrogation of student voices. As well, the fact that the teacher must teach a required amount of subject material leaves little time for the teacher and students to interrogate textbook knowledge or to have dialogue or discussion to validate differences. It comes as no surprise then that it is usually within a woman's studies seminar course in university where issues of difference and identity are addressed as part of the curriculum.

A further problem with the concept of voicing one's experience has to do with the "authenticity" of the "voices". Voices and identities are considered to be "in progress" and not static. If our voices were always authentic, there would

be no need to concern ourselves with how our consciousness is saturated with oppressive ideologies which shape our needs and perspectives. By extension, there would be no reason to critique the "rules" which we have internalized and which we hold as true. Therefore, by simply defining who we are does not articulate our actual person, our actual state of being. In this way, teachers "...must refuse the tendency to attribute "authenticity" to people's voices when they speak from their own experience of difference, as if their speech were transparent and their understanding of their experience unchanging" (Orner, in Luke and Gore, 1992, p.86). Student's experiences thus must be interrogated and links to "...historical structures of domination and exploitation (capitalism, patriarchy, imperialism etc.) must be made (Luke, in Luke and Gore, 1992, p.49).

Further problems involve the specific subjectivities of the teachers and how these can prevent teachers from encouraging their students to voice their differences and identities. In Giroux's discussion of the transformative intellectual who exerts positive power in order to empower students, he excludes the importance of teachers' interrogating their own voices and positions of difference. Shying away from interrogation results in "...overlooking the reflexivity which...is considered integral to critical practice" (Gore, in Luke and Gore, 1992, p.62). In this way, the teacher's position of difference must also be interrogated along with the student's. Jeanne Brady speaks to

this point, "...It is not enough to respect the specificity of the voices that students bring to the classroom or any other educational site. It is also imperative to deconstruct the place from which teachers speak" (Brady, in McLaren and Lankshear, 1994, p.146). A deconstruction of the place from which teachers speak entails addressing the "...various forms of power held by teachers depending on their race, gender and the historical and institutional settings in which they work" (Weiler, 1991, p. 460). (Teacher authority and power is discussed further in this chapter).

Another problem which feminist critical pedagogy poses surrounds the issue of interrogation itself. It is accepted that interrogation of our voices which affirm our identities and speak of our differences is necessary so that we can understand their social and historical construction. In not interrogating these we risk "romanticizing" our class, gender and race differences and forgetting how these can be a result of oppressive systems. However, the problem with the notion of interrogation is that it can be intimidating. Interrogation can be seen by students as a personal attack on their own experiences, understandings and identities. In this way "interrogation" can frighten students and inevitably lead to their silencing. Mimi Orner speaks to the difficulty encountered by feminist critical pedagogues when interrogating voices. She asks,

> How do we affirm student voices while simultaneously encouraging the interrogation of such voices. How does the threat of interrogation keep students from feeling safe about their understandings and experiences of the world? Which voices are cast out once they have indeed spoken up? (Orner, in Luke and Gore, 1992, p.87).

A further problem with the concept of difference in the classroom regards assessing how "...a theory of difference can be developed which is not at odds with political solidarity" (Giroux, 1992, p.68). In other words, "...how can we explore, present ideology and difference not as instruments of division, but as unifying forces" (Orner, in Luke and Gore, 1992, p.85). Giroux states that this entails discriminating between differences that count and those that do not or "...differences that make a difference" (Giroux, 1992, p.69) and those that do not. The differences that count refer to differences in inequality which are produced by specific systems that create this inequality. Thus, political solidarity among marginalized people can be organized around tearing down, as Peter McLaren states, "...the systems of difference that are organized into concrete patterns of domination and subordination" (McLaren, in McLaren and Lankshear, 1994, p. 206).

Our "common" experience then is that we all suffer some form of oppression and our "common desire" must be to transform oppressive relations in society and to work together to construct an inclusive critical democracy. Believing that we have nothing in common undermines this political goal and lends credence to the position taken by

critics who view marginalized groups as fragmented and therefore weak political forces. This position has been voiced most recently by Carl Lasch in an article he wrote for Harpers magazine. He states, "Not only have the new social movements-feminism, gay rights, welfare rights, agitation against racial discrimination-have nothing in common; their only coherent demands aims at inclusion in the dominant structures rather than at a revolutionary transformation" (Lasch, Harpers Magazine, Nov. 1994, p.40).

A further problem associated with the interrogation and validation of difference within the four walls of the classroom is that a false impression may be created among students that inequality whose solution lies in real-world political actions is being meaningfully addressed by classroom discussions and debates. Thus, having discussed "inequality", students will no longer feel the need to partake in political action. Liberatory pedagogy however, with its emphasis on "praxis" advocates not only discussion but also political action. Becoming "enlightened" about the forces of exploitation and oppression is simply not enough. Yet, critical pedagogy does not outline how to mobilize students into taking political action directed at rectifying inequality. Carmen Luke speaks to this.

> How problematizing race, class and gender in the classroom and providing the conceptual tools of emancipatory critique will provide, beyond a more socially just and moral classroom, for the possibility of political action to enable the structural transformation required to liberate the "disenfranchised and dispossessed", and alleviate "human suffering" is never spelled out in critical pedagogy's agenda(Luke, in Luke and Gore, 1992, p.38).

Another important criticism of feminist critical pedagogy is addressed by Elizabeth Ellsworth and relates to the over preoccupation with the traditional oppressive forces of class, race and gender in establishing difference. By focusing solely on these forces, Ellsworth sees feminist critical pedagogy neglecting other oppressive systems which intersect with these such as homophobia and fat oppression (Ellsworth, in Luke and Gore, 1992).

Thus, while validating difference is important in, "...revealing the diversity and complexity of girls' and women's experiences in schools" (Weiler, 1988, p.40), it proves difficult to realize. Hence, the possibility of students gaining critical consciousness is put into doubt. Nonetheless, feminist critical pedagogy understands that "difference" is a reality which must be validated given the multiracial, capitalistic and patriarchal society in which we live. Understanding how difference can be validated may be made easier through an analysis of the authority/power of the teacher and by viewing personal experience, feeling and emotions as a source of knowledge for women.

Women's Personal Experience and Emotions and Feelings as Valid Sources of Knowledge

Closely linked to the need to understand the complexity of female subjectivities and how these are linked to oppressive systems is the need to recognize how women's personal experience is a source of knowledge. In liberatory pedagogy, understanding personal experience as a source of knowledge is a fundamental category, one that is necessary for the empowerment of individuals. However, because of its attention to the male experience within the exploited classes, liberatory pedagogy has in effect overlooked the need to understand how women's personal experience is also a source of knowledge. Feminist critical pedagogy thus expands upon the personal experience category to include women's experience. What liberatory pedagogy also failed to address was the importance of feeling and emotion as a source of knowledge. Women have relied on their emotions as a source for knowledge. In this way, feminist critical pedagogy posits the need to explore and expand this fundamental liberatory pedagogy category to include the experience, emotions and feelings of women as valid forms of knowledge.

The notion of a woman's personal experience being recognized as valuable knowledge indicates that women, like men are subjects, and knowers who shape and are shaped by their everyday lives. (Dorothy Smith, 1987). In other words, their actions have an impact on the way in which our society is constructed and in turn society impacts on women. However, women have been denied the title of "knowers", thus

their knowledge, knowledge which has shaped reality, has been overlooked, or attributed to men. To empower women, we must validate their knowledge and to do this, we must "...start...with women's experience (for what other resource do we have?)" (Smith, 1987, p.109). This experience comprises the private sphere of the home which women have for centuries dominated as well as women's experiences in the public sphere and their subject position within the capitalistic, patriarchal and racist society. In other words, it means giving them the right to speak from where they are in the world (Smith, Nov. 17)[11].

To consider women's personal experience as knowledge means not only that we must redefine (as Freire has done), what we as a society consider to be valid knowledge, that is, that which is objective and scientific. It also poses a challenge to the male perspective on such issues as human nature, human relations, reason, truth and justice since historically "knowledge" has been rooted in the experiences of men. From a feminist point of view this means challenging those male perspectives which have portrayed women as being driven by their emotions and incapable of intelligent and rational thought. These ideologies have been internalized by women, leaving them feeling "deaf and dumb" with no confidence in their ability to learn, think, or to produce

[11] From Dorothy Smith's speech at Concordia University, November, 17, 1994

original work. A validation of women's personal experience, traditions and perceptions as knowledge ultimately means that women are no longer the "...Other, the defined, the object, the victim" (Rich, 1979, p.240). Rather they are subjects who act and define themselves. Such is a necessary characteristic of power.

The move towards empowering women is not only helped by validating their experiences, perspectives as knowledge, but also by possessing knowledge of themselves as a group. Thus it is necessary to document and teach women about the struggles of women in history. Such knowledge will also have the positive effect of bringing women together, giving them a collective identity. As well, knowledge of the work and struggles of women will give women pride and worth in a system which has denied the value of their knowledge and their work. Just as men have drawn upon the history, knowledge, and struggles of their own sex to help define themselves and to gain confidence in their intellect, is it not logical to question why should self-conscious, self-defining women not

> ...need a knowledge of her own history...an awareness of the creative work...the skills..powers exercised by women in different times and cultures, a knowledge of women's rebellions and organized movements against our oppression and how they have been routed or diminished? Without such knowledge women live and have lived without context, vulnerable to the projections of male fantasy, male prescriptions for us, estranged from our own experience because our education has not reflected or echoed it. I would suggest that not biology but ignorance of ourselves, has been the key to our powerlessness (Rich, 1979, p.240).

Besides giving women a collective identity, learning about the history of women, especially of women who have suffered the most oppression in our society helps us to become less ignorant of the impact which race and class has had on them. Such insight is valuable because women can come to understand the diversity of experiences which characterize women's lives, diversity which ought not to divide but to unite women.

> Black women with no institutionalized "other" that we may discriminate against, exploit, or oppress often have a lived experience that directly challenges the prevailing classist, sexist, racist social structure and its concomitant ideology. This lived experience may shape our consciousness in such a way that our world view differs from those who have a degree of privilege (hooks, 1984, p.15).

For women, claiming the rightful power to articulate one's knowledge from one's position indicates that women can now represent themselves, speak for themselves and ultimately be responsible for what they say. This is a change from when men were given and had given themselves the responsibility to speak on behalf of women, to tell women what to know, what to feel and what to think.

Emotions and feelings as source of knowledge: Personal experience, feelings and emotions can provide a test for the universal truths and knowledge's which are supposedly based upon reason. They can provide meaning and insights into reality that reason cannot. Weiler views emotions and feelings as belonging to a sphere which is beyond rational thought stating that they can make us aware of the world

around us and can be, "...looked to as a guide to a deeper truth than that of abstract rationality" (Weiler, 1991, p. 463). As well, Jane Flax maintains that among other things, feelings as well as reason can be the locus of meaning,

> I cannot agree...that liberation, stable meaning, insight, self-understanding and justice depend above all on the "primacy of reason and intelligence." There are many ways in which such qualities may be attained-for example, political practices, economic, racial and gender equality; good childrearing, empathy; fantasy; feelings; imagination; and embodiment. On what grounds can we claim reason is privileged or primary for the self or justice (Jane Flax, 1988, p.202).

Thus, feminist critical theory does not reject reason as a locus of meaning. In fact, reason has emancipatory possibilities such as those which exist in reflective consciousness and critical reason necessary for social criticism. In these terms, reason is not merely about a politics of representation structured in domination but it also offers the possibility for self-representation and social reconstruction. Feminists therefore, cannot deny the power of critical reason and abstract discourse. To do so would be to silence women by instilling a fear of theory and anti-intellectualism, fears which will work to keep women outside of the world of academia. As well, it would reiterate the false notion that women are incapable of rational thought.

There are several problems with viewing emotions or feelings as a source of knowledge. As Weiler states

> There is a danger that the expression of strong emotion can be simply cathartic and can deflect the need for action to address the underlying causes of that emotion...shaped by dominant discourse (Weiler, 1991, p.463).

Given this, Weiler argues that feminist teachers need to understand how the dominant culture participates in the construction of emotions in shaping the identities of teachers, students, and others. The dominant culture does not simply produce knowledge and ideologies but also plays a role in shaping individual emotions, feelings, needs and desires as Marcuse has stated. This does not suggest that all emotions, feelings, desires and needs be linked to dominant interests. Feelings and emotions, like reason, gives us insight into ourselves and into our worlds. Nonetheless, it is important to understand the authority of the dominant interests in shaping emotions. Thus emotions both give us insight into a world which cannot only be reached by rational thought but also are manipulated by greater social forces. Thus, feelings and emotions have the same contradictory nature as Gramsci's "common sense" which is a combination of "good" and "bad" sense or according to Marcuse they are either "true" or "false". The problem then becomes understanding which emotions give us real insight into reality or are false representations of reality. Weiler speaks to this.

> It is not clear how to distinguish among the wide range of emotions as the source of political action. At a more theoretical level, there are contradictions involved in claiming that the emotions are a source of knowledge and at the same time arguing that they are manipulated and shaped by dominant discourse (Weiler, 1991, p.463).

The idea of regarding personal experience and emotions as knowledge raises many questions about students articulating their emotions and knowledge within the classroom. Among them is the question of whether the classroom is a place where students can articulate these. In other words, the classroom must be a place where students feel safe to speak. However, "...there are times when it is not safe for students to speak: when students' socially constructed body language threatens another; when the teacher is not perceived as an ally" (Orner, in Luke and Gore, 1992, p.81). This last point is very important. Not every student will view their teacher as an ally and in these cases, the students may be silenced by teachers who are, "...unable to acknowledge the presence of knowledges that are challenging and most likely inaccessible to their own social positions" (Ellsworth, in Luke and Gore, 1992, p.105). In other words, the racist and classist experience of a lower-class, Black, male student may bring to light insights which seriously challenge the power of a white, middle-class, female teacher. Thus, the power of the teacher to silence voices must be addressed before a discourse on validation of personal knowledge can be discussed.

Authority of the Teacher

The question of teacher authority is one which is not fully developed in liberatory pedagogy. Liberatory pedagogy and even feminist pedagogy (as opposed to feminist critical pedagogy) assume that the teacher is able to unproblematically exert her/his authority in a positive way on students so as to empower them. Through the method of dialogue, teachers empower their students by

> ...allowing them to find their own voices, to discover the power of authenticity. At the same time, they enable individuals to find communion with others and to discover ways to act on their understanding. Empowering classrooms are places to practice visions of a feminist world, confronting differences to enrich all of us rather than to belittle some of us (Shrewsbury, 1987, p.9).

However, by not exploring the "authority" of the teacher; that is the authority which is inherent in their being a member of a certain gender, race and class, the authority which they are given because of their place within the hierarchical school institution, the authority which they have because they must ultimately grade students, liberatory pedagogy fails to understand the limits of these empowering strategies. As well, liberatory pedagogy has not addressed the "authority" of the woman teacher. Women teachers must have authority in order to exercise it in an emancipatory manner. However, in this patriarchal society, women are often denied authority. Thus, their abilities to empower may likewise be limited.

It is evident that the liberatory pedagogy concept of teacher authority within the hierarchical institution of the school needs to be explored. Freire views teachers' authority as necessary for the empowerment of students and for the "...achievement of a democratic and collective ideal"(Weiler, 1991, p.461). However, the location of the teacher within a hierarchical institution gives them a certain power over their students which contradicts their ability to achieve this "democratic and collective ideal". Teachers must grade, meet the goals of the institution, and be evaluated by administrators and colleagues. In this way, teachers are not simply responsible to their students but also to their superiors, to the institution and to their peers. Balancing their responsibilities in a way which does not deny the student's freedom and yet does not get teachers dismissed from their jobs is difficult and must be explored in liberatory pedagogy. Exploring means that teachers must address the contradictions of their position and outline the structural limitations in which they function. As Jeanne Brady notes, teacher authority can only become emancipatory by recognizing the limitations of the institutions in which they work

> Informed largely by a rationality that supports patriarchal practices, teachers' authority must recognize the important limits these forces place on producing knowledge, developing non-competitive forms of learning, giving students access to the conditions necessary for producing knowledge, and building classroom social relations that are democratic and just (Brady, in McLaren and Lankshear, 1994, p.148).

The failure to address these contradictions and limitations results in negating the existence of institutional authority and a belief that the institution is democratic. This cloaking of authority in a democratic disguise leaves the reality of hierarchical authority unquestioned thereby leaving the need to address the possibility for a transformation of "...the hierarchical structures of schooling" (Brady, in McLaren and Lankshear, 1994, p.147) unexamined.

The issue of institutional authority not only raises the difficulty of trying to implement liberatory pedagogy within a hierarchical institution but also the question of teacher immunity from interrogation. That is, because teachers have "inherited" authority, they may be reluctant to question their own assumptions, presuppositions, practices, subjectivities in order to understand how these can be denying the voices of some students. However, simply because teachers have inherited authority, their work cannot be immune from criticism. Immunity can lead from exercising positive authority to authoritarianism. Mimi Orner speaks to this need for teachers to interrogate their own voices which articulate knowledges and positions of difference that can be at odds with those of their students. She maintains that feminist critical teachers ought not to think of themselves as having reached a point of "enlightenment" which renders them free from interrogation. Thus she stresses the notion of teachers being reflective in their teaching and therefore

of not only interrogating the voices of students but also their own voices as well as being open to changing their perspectives and ultimately their practices.

> The only call for change is on the part of the students. The only people who get "worked over" are the students. The only call is for student voice. Critical and feminist teachers, we are to assume, have already found and articulated theirs (Orner, in Luke and Gore, 1992, p.87).

However, while Orner expresses the need for teachers to critique their own subjectivities and pedagogies in order to understand how these can oppress students, the reality remains that teachers' practices, informed by their positions of differences, can and will always be oppressive to some people in some way. Ellsworth reiterates this point.

> S/he does not apply the role of disinterested mediator on the side of the oppressed group. As an Anglo, middle-class professor...I could not unproblematically "help" a student of color to find her/his authentic voice as a student of color. I could not unproblematically "affiliate' with the social groups my students represent and interpret their experience to them. In fact, I brought to the classroom privileges that were put at risk in fundamental ways by the demands and defenses of student voice (Ellsworth, in Luke and Gore, 1992, p.101).

Another issue of teacher authority which is not addressed in liberatory pedagogy is the concept of women teachers and authority. It is assumed, in this patriarchal society that power and authority are "...incompatible with the feminine" (Friedman, in Culley and Portuges, 1985, p.206). This does not mean that women have never had authority and power. Historically, women have exerted authority and power within the private sphere which involves

the home and the family. Also, women's resistance to practices and ideologies which have attempted to deny them power is proof that women are not powerless. As well, women's authority has been more than just determined by gender. Instead, class and race factors also figure prominently in the power equation. However, because women have been socialized in a culture that has negated their intellect and "...associated women with nature and emotion, and men with culture and reason...Women teachers often face a struggle to accept their own expertise and this is reinforced by student attitudes" (Briskin, 1990, p.7). Society's attempt to negate women's authority within the public sphere is evident in the staffing patterns of schools where men tend to occupy the administrative positions and women the teaching positions. The symbolism of a hierarchical system with men on the top and women at the bottom is revealing of the real and ideological power differential between the sexes in society.

Thus, the ideology that women cannot exercise authority pervades the four walls of a classroom. Despite the fact that women teachers are in a position of authority over students, there is still an ambivalence on the part of the students to grant female teachers the same authority which they would grant male teachers. Students also have different expectations from male and female teachers. One study found

> Students accepting high standards, discipline and toughness from their male teachers and deeply resenting any such behavior from their women teachers... Students may pressure any woman-teacher to fulfill the role of the all-forgiving, nurturing mother whose approval is unconditional(Delpit, 1988, P. 205-206).

Women teachers react in several ways to the students/societal expectations of them. Some may reject the nurturing mother stereotype and "...adopt the norms and practices of patriarchal, often male, teachers who use strict discipline, authoritarian practices, right answerism etc." (Briskin, 1990, p.9). Others may reject "...authority in favour of sharing power...validating student knowledge" (Briskin, 1990, p.9). However, the overemphasis on the principles of sharing power and validating student knowledge can lead to an abdication of their rightful power and authority which teachers must claim. As Susan Friedman notes

> In our eagerness to be non-hierarchical and supportive instead of tyrannical and ruthlessly critical, we have sometimes participated in the denial of the mind of the women...In our sensitivity to the psychology of oppression in our students' lives, we have often denied ourselves the authority we seek to nurture our students (Friedman, in Culley and Portuges, 1985, p.206-207).

Women-teachers thus need to assert authority, they need to become "empowered" in order to overcome the ideological assumption that women and authority are incompatible. They must become empowered so that they can empower their students. "Empowerment of students must entail the empowerment of teachers" (Weiler, 1988, p.152).

However, while empowerment of women teachers is obviously essential to the empowerment of students, it nonetheless must be scrutinized for authoritarian capabilities. As Weiler notes, "...it is instructive for students to see women assert authority. But this use of authority will lead to positive social change only if those teachers are working also to empower students in a Freirean sense" (Weiler, 1991, p. 461). Working to empower students in a Freirean sense means that teachers must "...recognize and encourage the capacity of their students to theorize and to recognize their own power" (Weiler, 1991, p. 462) and "...encourage them to explore and analyze the forces acting upon their lives as teachers" (Weiler, 1988, p.152). It also means addressing the contradictions between goals of collectivity and hierarchies of the school structure and the need for women to accept their authority as intellectuals and theorists, as well as the need to create a classroom situation in which students are comfortable to articulate their knowledge; a situation which enables "...people to represent themselves...to have the authority to speak"(Brady, in McLaren and Lankshear, 1994, p.148) without being terrified over the implications of what they say. Thus, while feminist concerns about the authority of the feminist teacher address questions ignored by Freire and therefore, enrich Freire's perspective, the concept of teacher authority will always be problematic. In other words, the exerting of positive power is not and will possibly never be as facile as

it is made out to be. Nonetheless, feminist critical pedagogy's attempt to understand the power of the teacher brings to light the frustrations which teachers have felt when they realize that their practices have not rendered their students empowered. Having experienced a sense of failure in attempting to empower her students through liberatory/feminist critical pedagogy, Elizabeth Ellsworth wrote an article, from which I frequently quote in this paper, describing her experience and aptly named it, "Why doesn't this feel empowering?".

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have attempted to show how feminist critical pedagogy builds on liberatory pedagogy. By expanding the notion of oppression to include gender and race oppression, feminist critical pedagogy has engaged the multiple forms of oppression experienced by people of different groups. Within these overlapping and multiple forms of domination, we can come to understand how identities are constructed and how they shift. As well, feminist critical pedagogy addresses the importance of viewing women's personal experience and feelings and emotions as knowledge. Personal experience, feelings and emotions are considered a guide to knowing about the world and play an important role in shaping and understanding relations to ourselves, others and the world around us. Finally, feminist critical pedagogy has deconstructed the concept of teacher authority. Authority is

no longer considered transparent or innocent; that is, teachers cannot unproblematically assume or exert positive power. Factors such as race, gender and class, and the way in which they interconnect to produce differences in identity, experience and positionality influence a teacher's ability to assume authority as well as impacts on the way in which they exercise it. Teachers' abilities to exert positive power is also affected by the particular ideology of the school as an institution in which they work, by their position as teachers, who must ultimately grade students, and lastly by their location within a hierarchical institution which does not facilitate the possibility of sharing power.

Various studies point to how feminist critical teachers functioning as "transformative intellectuals" attempt to give their students a voice so they can articulate their identities, their experiences of oppression, their feelings and emotions, and through careful interrogation of their voices, can begin to understand how dominant ideologies and structures have shaped these. These studies also show how, in speaking, students can understand their power in resisting ideologies and structural factors which attempt to impede their ability to self-determine. However, as was noted, it is not easy for students to speak in the classroom. Failure to perceive the teacher or students as allies, fear of interrogation, and even the doubt in the usefulness of discussion because it will not ultimately lead to a transformation of relations of power all impede students from

speaking up and "gaining critical consciousness". It is obvious thus that while feminist critical pedagogy does not solve the problems of how to empower students and teachers, it at least brings to light the important factors which can impede their empowerment.

The next chapter discusses several ways in which I think feminist critical pedagogy and liberatory pedagogy can be enhanced as pedagogies which help students to speak-up and to become critically conscious and empowered. These include viewing teachers as cultural workers and border crossers. As cultural workers and border crossers, teachers can learn to become their students' "allies" and understand their voices by inhabiting their spheres or crossing borders into their student's spheres. This suggests that teachers must learn to understand the positions which their students inhabit in life in order to be able to validate their voices. Cultural workers also help students to validate their voices and affirm their identities through a curriculum which is relevant to students' lives. Thus it is important to create a curriculum which is inclusive of the experiences, the achievements and the role of the various races, classes and genders. As well, cultural workers and border crossers redefine "borders" and "culture" and in so doing, redefine ideologies, knowledge, values etc. In doing so, they teach an oppositional world view which is inclusive of the perspectives, knowledges etc. of a greater number of individuals; that is, there is an conscious attempt to

construct the all-inclusive critical democracy about which liberatory and feminist critical pedagogues speak.

CHAPTER FOUR

TEACHERS AS CULTURAL WORKERS AND BORDER CROSSERS

In the previous two chapters I have explored the main concepts pertinent to both liberatory and feminist critical pedagogy and the ways in which critical teachers attempt to affirm the variety of student voices, knowledges and personal experiences. Affirmation of voice is necessary if students are to gain critical consciousness. To sum up then, critical consciousness is possible when teachers functioning as transformative intellectuals/feminist critical pedagogues apply their power positively to affirm the diversity of student voices, experiences, feelings and emotions and knowledge. Students then critique the dominant knowledge and ideologies which they have assimilated and must continuously assimilate in school and in various other cultural spheres. The dominant ideologies are usually biased and advantage a select few individuals. By using their knowledge which has been validated, students can (through critique and action) challenge the dominant societal ideologies. I have also explored the factors which prevent teachers from affirming their students' voices. These include: 1) teachers' authority/subjectivities; 2) teachers lack of empowerment; 3) students feeling as if they have no allies within the classroom; 4) a curriculum which does not reflect the knowledge and experiences of the disenfranchised and female students; and 5) a feeling of futility amongst students regarding the practice of discussing and critiquing knowledge since social relations will not improve without real political change. To address some of these problems I have

suggested that teachers must: 1) constantly analyze their authority and subjectivities and see how they can be oppressive to students; and, 2) work with an inclusive curriculum, especially one which is gender inclusive. (I will further explore the notion of an inclusive curriculum in this chapter)

In this chapter, I attempt to add to these positive pedagogical strategies by suggesting that teachers not only look at themselves as transformative intellectuals and feminist critical pedagogues but that they must also function as cultural workers and border crossers. This position is particularly informed by Giroux (1992). However my position differs from Giroux's because although Giroux recognizes the need to reform pedagogy, he does not set out the guidelines or strategies as to how it can be reformed. In this chapter therefore, while I draw heavily upon Giroux's work I attempt to make more explicit the ways in which teachers, as border crossers and cultural workers, can make a difference in education.

Affirming Voice: Knowing the "knower"

As was articulated in chapter two, one of the ways in which cultural workers and border crossers can affirm student's voices is by attempting to better understand life from the positions of the students themselves. This suggests that teachers must "cross borders" or leave their own positions and get to know their students. Doing so will

address to some extent the problems associated with how teachers' authority and subjectivities impede them from validating their students' voices. As Giroux states "...teachers and other intellectuals have to take leave of the cultural, theoretical, and ideological borders that enclose him or her within the safety of 'those places and spaces we inherit and occupy, which frame our lives in very specific and concrete ways'" (Giroux, in McLaren and Leonard, 1993, p.178).

One way of getting to know the positions, cultural, ideological etc. of their students is to become a kind of qualitative researcher. That is, teachers can observe the details of the classroom, and be perceptive to the body language and voices of the students. In light of this, Adrienne Rich's advice is to

> Look at a classroom: look at the many kinds of women's faces, postures, expressions. Listen to the women's voices. Listen to the silences, the unasked questions, the blanks. Listen to the small, soft voices, often courageously trying to speak up...Listen to the voices of the women and the voices of the men; observe the space men allow themselves, physically and verbally, the male assumption that people will listen, even when the majority of the group is female. Look at the faces of the silent, and of those who speak...(Rich, 1979, p.243).

Besides being a "qualitative" researcher, another way to understand the world and position of the student is to develop pedagogical strategies which allow students to speak for themselves in their own voices. Such a perspective draws on Dorothy Smith's (1986, 1992) theory that to understand the

position, world view, perspective of a certain individual, one must go directly to the knower her/himself. This means, making the time to speak to students either inside or outside of the classroom. Bell hooks also states that,

> Whether a class is large or small, I try to talk with all students individually or in small groups so that I have a sense of their needs. How can we transform consciousness if we do not have some sense of where students are intellectually, psychically (hooks, 1988, p.53).

Cultural workers and border crossers use all non-traditional pedagogical tricks in order to get the students to voice their ideas. Besides directly speaking with them on a one on one basis, teachers can give students assignments such as journal writing and writing position papers. Within these, students can articulate their ideas more freely than they could in a research paper. Then, teachers can have students read their essays or journal entries aloud. As well, teachers can organize debates between students. Teachers must also avoid banking methods of education which submerge consciousness and challenge them to use their personal experiences, feelings and emotions to question the knowledge which they learn. To facilitate dialogue between teachers and students and between students themselves, it is possible to rearrange the classroom desks so that classes take place in a circle. As well, it is also possible to impose participation by taking attendance. By using these strategies, students are not only encouraged to speak out,

they can also learn about the experiences of others, experiences which may or may not reflect their own.

Another way to get to know the knower is for the teacher not to assume an all-knowing posture, to say outright in the beginning of the class that the teacher does not have all the knowledge pertaining to the subject matter nor all knowledge relating to life in general. While this may seem to some students as if the teacher is not prepared for the class, it also opens up the way for students to have confidence in their opinions and ideas and for teachers to learn about the students.

Being a cultural worker and border crosser is not an easy task. Teachers who teach large classes over a short period of time are not likely to be too successful getting to know the "knower" and thus affirming their voices. Also, crossing into other areas, especially ideological ones is difficult. To do so, a teacher must remain open-minded and be ready to embrace ideas which possibly run counter to their own or challenge their own experiences. For example, a white male teacher may not readily embrace a white female student's perspective on gender pay equity or affirmative action hiring policies and therefore will not want to advance and promote her ideas.

Besides being difficult, leaving one's position to inhabit the position of the "other" gives the teacher a sense of 'homelessness' because s/he is always crossing over into another terrain. According to Giroux, a border crosser is,

"...an exile, a border being, an intellectual posed between different cultural, epistemological and spatial borders" (Giroux, in McLaren and Leonard, 1993, p.180). As well, this kind of work can be exhausting. Olivia Castellano, a teacher who refers to herself as a cultural worker has found that during the process of getting to know her students she also began to internalize their pain. She states that,

> Mine is a teaching load that, in my younger days at CSUS, used to drive me close to insanity from physical, mental and spiritual exhaustion-spiritual from having internalized my students' pain. Perhaps not fully empowered myself, not fully emplumed in the feathers of my own creativity, I allowed their rage to become part of mine. This kind of rage can kill you. (Castellano, in Collins and Anderson, 1992, p.381)

However, later on she states that this exhaustion can be transformed into positive energy which can be directed at fighting the systems of oppression and their effects on students. To Castellano then cultural work becomes

> ...struggling against society to undo the damage of years of abuse. I continue to see myself as a warrior empowered by my rage. Racism and sexism leave two clear-cut scars on my students; internalized self-hatred and fear of their own creative passion, in my view the two most serious obstacles in the classroom. Confronting this two headed monster has made me razor-sharp (Castellano, in Anderson and Collins, 1992, p.381).

Going from "internalizing" student's pain, to channeling pain into positive action is an essential aspect of border crossing and cultural work. However, such a transition is not always easy nor is it certain. For teachers to keep motivated even though they know that everyday something new, sad or even tragic comes up is a feat in itself. One way of keeping

motivated, as Giroux has noted, is for teachers to surround themselves with people who are doing the same work in other areas or to subscribe to alternative political magazines and books which articulate the same ideas and give accounts of similar work being done elsewhere. In this way, teachers not only find a support system but also remain abreast of all the new pedagogical strategies and theories which are being formulated.

Getting to know the "knower", their life position, their experiences through using the pedagogical strategies outlined above is a first step towards affirming student's voices. However, it cannot by itself be relied on as a way of affirming students' voices. The teacher's work, that of validating student voices can be helped by using a curriculum which is inclusive of the experiences of students.

Affirming Voice: Towards a gender, cultural and race inclusive curriculum

Although Giroux mentions that pedagogical work ought to allow students to create or express their own knowledges and experiences and that subject matter learned in class ought to be critiqued, he does not state how this can be done. He notes that,

> The pedagogical dimension of cultural work refers to the process of creating symbolic representations and the analysis of textual, aural, and visual representations and how such representations are organized and regulated within particular institutional arrangements (Giroux, 1992, p.5).

I believe that pedagogical work intended to allow students to create and express their own knowledges can be facilitated through teaching a curriculum which is gender, race and class inclusive. An inclusive curriculum already encompasses some of the experiences of the diverse groups and genders in society and it provides students with the confidence to speak and have their voices affirmed.

As I have mentioned in chapter three, the exclusion of women and minorities from history and from school textbooks is indicative of their voicelessness and hence their powerlessness within society. Although these have contributed to the construction of society, their work, histories and voices have not been recognized for their contribution "The elimination of women's culture, particularly black women's culture, from the records does not mean that it does not exist-merely that men have made it disappear" (Thompson, 1983, p.17). An inclusive curriculum challenges gender, race and class exclusion and reflects the diversity of experiences, histories and voices of people who "...live and work in a multiracial, multicultural society" (Brady, in McLaren and Lankshear, 1994, p.146). It also challenges the assumption that knowledge is impartial. By extension, it challenges the forces which control knowledge production; that is, patriarchy, capitalism and white supremacy.

Putting women and minorities back into the textbooks, which are considered, "...a primary source of education" (hooks, 1988, p.24) allows students to see themselves in the

world and to identify themselves in history, to see themselves at the center and not at the margins. Inclusion also challenges the "universal" culture, ideologies and experiences, conceptions of males and females which students have assimilated and through which they measure their own constructed identities. As well, inclusion celebrates difference. In this difference however, unity or wholeness is recognized and partiality, the effect of exclusion, is discarded.

The importance of inclusion cannot be underestimated. Women and minorities locate themselves in the knowledge which they assimilate. Not being able to locate themselves in history, as part of the "knowers", can indicate a loss of sense of history, an indifference to the culture which one is studying and inevitably a loss of interest in participating in the class discussion of the subject matter. In other words, dialogue can be enhanced if students see themselves in the knowledge which they are studying and dialogue is important for the affirmation of voice. Moreover, seeing oneself as part of history, part of a culture and epistemological tradition is necessary if individuals are to make informed choices and to act politically. While a select few men have been allowed a history, culture and epistemology, women and minorities have not.

> Men have a continuity of culture and recorded wisdom which enables them to speak with their awareness and to learn from their mistakes and advances in a way which shapes and informs their present deliberations. Women lack this continuity, and each new generation has to confront afresh the same hard lessons learned by our foremothers (Thompson, 1983, p.17).

However, reclaiming the history and culture of women and marginalized groups, while giving them a sense of place and continuity as well as identity is not enough for the empowerment of these groups. To exult in this history blindly would be to perpetuate the current ways of thinking and current relations between individuals. Women's history and the history of marginalized groups needs to be seen in terms of how they were shaped by dominant patriarchal, race and class interests. This means that students must be prepared to critique the knowledge which they recover. In other words, they must ask not only why the history of women and of marginalized groups was not recorded, but once recovered, if that is possible, they must ask why their lives were they way they were. As Adrienne Rich states, "One important thing we can do is *discuss* the context. And this need not happen only in a women's studies course; it can happen anywhere" (Rich, 1979, p.245).

On the other hand, no one is suggesting that the entire apparatus of men's knowledge and the male academic tradition be discounted and dismantled. It is nonetheless a record of the collective history, culture and epistemology of selected individuals and this record has served as a foundation for male identity. What must be recognized is that this

collection is partial in every sense, that is, in its subject matter, lines of enquiry and ways of learning. However, women and marginalized groups, cannot become empowered by merely demanding inclusion, but also by radically interpreting the subject matter, lines of enquiry and ways of learning that have been historically defined by men.

The limitations of implementing an inclusive curriculum are many. First of all, teachers do not decide the curriculum, rather, the ministry of education does. Therefore, teachers must follow a set curriculum. Nonetheless, teachers can, through interaction with students, that is by validating their experiences and knowledge, supplement a curriculum which excludes their experiences. For example, teachers can ask students about their knowledge of the role of women in Canadian history (and students can ask their grandmothers, aunts, mothers how they have contributed to the making of Canada). Also, teachers can use various other knowledge sources to fill out the holes in a curriculum in order to make it inclusive. For example, if Canadian history is being studied and there is little in the textbooks that talks about the contribution of women, teachers can supplement the textbook knowledge with other sources (film, literature) which highlight the role which women have played in history. Also, teachers can have students write reports, sending them to nursing homes to interview elderly women about their experiences or they can interview their own relatives. As well, teachers themselves can get information

on women's contributions from the many women's organizations in their city. Such exercises are also important because they involve the students in recovering history and in interpreting it.

Ultimately, inclusion in the history books and in the world of knowledge alone, while helping students to affirm identities and to critique knowledge and therefore awaken their critical consciousness, will not in the end give way to the creation of a new system. What must also take place besides critiquing knowledge and the system is applying this new-found critical awareness to the imagining of a new society and a new way of creating knowledge and of making history. The notion of going beyond "critique" to envisioning a new society is linked to Giroux's notion of "critique and possibility" discussed in chapter two.[12] Finally, forming alliances with others who share the same commitment to reform and taking real political action must take place if change will occur. These are discussed in the next two sections.

Teaching an Oppositional World View

One of the reasons why students do not speak up in class may be that they do not feel that discussion will lead to a change in the real conditions of their life. A way of approaching this problem is to teach an oppositional world view. This implies not only critiquing the present system but

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also envisioning a system which differs from present one. Giroux notes that

> ...cultural workers need a language of imagination...that is a language of democratic possibilities that rejects the enactment of cultural difference structured in hierarchy and dominance...In opposition to this view, the concepts of democracy, border, borderlands, and difference must be rewritten so that diverse identities and cultures intersect as sites of creative cultural production, multiple resources, and experimentation for expanding those human capacities and social forms necessary for a radical democracy to emerge in this country (Giroux, 1992, p.248).

Teaching students to envision a new world is to instill them with a sense of hope, with a belief that the future will be better than the past, that the present relations of power are not static. Simply relying on critiquing the present system without offering an alternative leads to pessimism; and in a climate of pessimism it is impossible to cultivate serious motivation for change. Instead, voicing positive alternatives for a vision of a better future can motivate people to speak in class and to sacrifice their time and energy towards its realization.

> We know from our classes in Women's Studies the importance of pushing our criticism past itself to the vision that the criticism suggests. Unless we do that, we offer no hope for directing the anger that is often generated by the critical awareness, and we are left with paralyzing fury or hopeless resignation...Feminist vision is thus, not a feasibility study, but an imaginative leap that stands opposed to sexist society (Westkott, in Bowles & Klein, 1983, p.213).

Redefining ideologies: Teaching an oppositional world view means redefining the dominant values and ideologies of

society. Thus, teachers as cultural workers and border crossers must be able to envision a society in which neither greed, selfishness and ruthless competition, nor patriarchal, and white-supremacist ideologies predominate but rather a democracy inclusive of knowledges of its' citizens. Within the classroom teaching an oppositional world view means critiquing and re-envisioning the ideologies and practices which now exist in the educational system.

Presently, the ideology which pervades the school system and which is pervasive in society as well is what Briskin calls, "bootstrapism" (Briskin, 1990, p.6). This ideology dictates that if a student works hard s/he will succeed both in school and in life. While "bootstrapism" does give an encouraging message to students (in that it teaches them to work hard and to have hope), it is also a misleading ideology because the fact remains that hard work does not always determine a student's success in school or in life. One's gender, race and class also play a large role in whether one succeeds or not. "Bootstrapism" thus attempts to obscure the fact that there exist both structural and ideological barriers to advancement. The ideological barriers are those which convey the message that in fact boys are smarter than girls, whites are smarter than other ethnic minorities and wealthy students are smarter than poorer students. Because of these "ideologies" teachers' expectations of girls, non-whites and poor students will be reduced and this will be reflected in practice. Thus, the bootstrap ideology places

the onus on the individual to succeed and when they do not succeed, they alone are to blame. Failure also indicates that the racial, class and gender, social and economic inequalities are natural and not manufactured. Because of this, the bootstrap ideology conveys the message that individuals ought not fight to dismantle the economic, social and political barriers but rather to "leap" over them if they can. Angela Davis articulates this notion of "bootstrapism" in her autobiography. She writes

> We were told that the ultimate purpose of our education was to provide us with the skills and knowledge to lift ourselves singly and separately out of the muck and slime of poverty by "our own bootstraps."...Our teachers warned us that we would have to steel ourselves for hard labor and more hard labor, sacrifices and more sacrifices. Only this would prove that we were serious about overcoming all the obstacles before us. It often struck me they were speaking of these obstacles as if they would always be there, part of the natural order of things rather than the product of a system of racism, which we could eventually overcome (Davis, 1974, p.92).

Briskin suggests an opposition to the "bootstrapism", which is the "counter-ideology of 'agency', "Agency openly acknowledges the relations of power based on class, race, gender and sexual orientation...and that the power to change is vested in the collective will and collective action" (Briskin, 1990, p.6). This world view teaches not only the reality of how power can be used negatively but also how inequalities can be overcome through collective action.

In terms of reforming pedagogy to reflect new educational ideologies it means getting away from banking

education[13] which is the passive and obedient learning of subject matter and insisting upon critical thinking for both female and male students. As well it means having the same educational standards and expectations for all students, something which historically has not been the case since teachers have always had higher standards for middle-class/white/male students. Thus it means that girls must be taken seriously as speakers and as students, they must be allowed to speak as often and as long and be given the same praise and criticism as boys have been given. As well, they must be graded on their ideas as boys have historically been rather than on neatness and primness. These guidelines apply to students of other classes and races besides simply middle-class and white students. It means moving away from the concept that sharing knowledge is a cardinal sin and that independence and competitive learning are good and instead adopt ways of learning in which knowledge is shared, collaborative, where there is lots of talking amongst students and where the most articulate and vocal students make room for the quiet ones. These pedagogical strategies attempt to create within the student a vision of democratic society in which everyone's knowledge is included.

Redefining ways of knowing and thinking: Besides teaching a world view in which racism, sexism and class

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inequality do not predominate and teaching new ways of learning, teachers must teach a vision of the world in which the present ways of thinking of both men and women are improved. This means that the new world does not have women acting and thinking like men because if "we teach women to behave like men, we not only reproduce students according to the conventional requirements of patriarchy, but risk the further separation of "...educated" feminists from other women in the wider community" (Thompson, 1983, p. 124). To add to this, Adrienne Rich states that "Men in general think badly: in disjuncture from their personal lives, claiming objectivity where the most irrational passions seethe, losing, as Virginia Woolf observed, their senses in the pursuit of professionalism" (Rich, 1979, p.244). Besides refuting a patriarchal way of thinking, racist and classist ways of thinking must also be refuted. This means that ideologies such as those articulated in the book, *The Bell Curve*[14] which set out to prove that certain races and classes have superior intellect must be refuted. The notion that western civilisation is superior to all other civilisations must also be eliminated (See *Closing of the American Mind*[15]). Similarly a visionary way of thinking cannot exult in the virtues of women, nor in the virtues of other cultures

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[14] Hernstein, Richard J. and Charles Murray, The Bell Curve: Intelligence and Class Structure in American Life (1994)

[15] Bloom, Allan Closing of the American Mind: How Higher Education Has Failed Democracy and Impoverished the Souls of Today's Students (1987)

because in doing so it would be to universalize concepts such as "woman" and "Black" as well as teaching women and Blacks to remain as they are, to not acknowledge how their experiences, emotions, needs, realities etc. have been shaped by dominant forces. Linda Alcoff explains that

> ...under conditions of oppression and restriction, women, like other oppressed groups, have developed strengths and attributes that should be corrected, credited, valued, and promoted. What we should not promote, however, are the restrictive conditions that gave rise to those attributes; forced parenting, lack of physical autonomy, dependency for survival on mediation skills, for instance. To the extent cultural feminism merely valorizes genuinely positive attributes developed under oppression, it cannot map our future long-range course. To the extent that it reinforces essentialist explanations of these attributes, it is in danger of solidifying an important bulwark for sexist oppression: the belief in an innate "womanhood" to which we must all adhere lest we be deemed either inferior or not "true" women (Alcoff, in Malson et al., 1983, p.304).

In fact, teaching an oppositional world view means refusing the either-or manner of thinking and focusing on a theory which does not polarize the sexes, races and classes or does not render the qualities of one more superior than the other. The focus should not be on asserting an essential gender man/woman, culture/nature, positive/negative, analytical/intuitive dichotomy. Rather, the emphasis ought to be on understanding how societal forces have created these dichotomies and from there build upon our personal strengths. In other words, we must "...transcend the ways of knowing privileged by the oppressive powerfuls if we are to truly make revolutionary change" (hooks, 1988, p. 36). As was

mentioned above, focusing simply on reclaiming and critiquing knowledge is not a challenge to the forces of knowledge/thought production nor to the ways of thinking which these forces uphold. Women and marginalized peoples need to focus on generating their own knowledge

> ...much as men have done-albeit in a different way and for a different purpose- so that lessons of the past can inform the experience of the present, in the expectation that we shall inherit a world which is more of our own making than the one we shall acquire form men (Thompson, 1983, p. 21).

This knowledge refers to that which is subjective and particular and based in experience and emotions; or that which is situated both historically and socially and which accommodates variety and diversity and contradictions of our different experiences of the world (Dorothy Smith, 1987; 1990). Giroux speaks to this

> Being a border-crosser suggests that one has to reinvent traditions not within the discourse of submission, reverence, and repetition, but as 'transformation and critique. [That is]...one must construct one's discourse as difference in relation to that tradition and this implies at the same time continuities and discontinuities' (Giroux, in McLaren and Leonard, 1993, p.178).

Teaching an oppositional world view means taking into consideration students' feelings and emotions as a source of knowledge as feminist critical theory has pointed out. It also means accepting individual differences as normal, that is transcending the ideology that there is only one kind of norm, a "Mythical Norm" as Audre Lorde states and which is "...usually defined as white, thin, young, heterosexual, Christian, and financially secure" (Lorde, 1984, p.115). Only

this kind of person can possess the means to the production of knowledge and therefore power within this society "It is with this mythical norm that the trappings of power reside within this society" (Lorde, 1984, p.116). There is more than one way of "knowing" and therefore it is essential that students learn about different cultures, different ways of organizing society, of seeing the world. Essentially it means allowing students to cross borders, the ideological and cultural ones which they have inherited and to draw on the insights of others.

An oppositional world view is one in which both women and men are redefined, not as oppressed and oppressor but as individuals whose choices are not limited by structural and ideological factors. Since both women and men have participated in the construction of society, and both have been shaped by societal ideologies, both must work together to transform and recreate the culture, challenge the historical and social conditions which shape consciousness and identity. "When women and men understand that working to eradicate patriarchal domination is a struggle rooted in the longing to make a world where everyone can live fully and freely, then we know our work to be a gesture of love" (hooks, 1988, p.27). To this I would also add domination by race and class.

By articulating these strategies we oppose and by envisioning alternative futures, we identify the goals and strategies for action; that is, we clarify what it is we want

to move away from as well as what it is we want to move toward. However, changing the different ways of knowing and of teaching, while addressing directly the issue of empowerment, will do little to redress the implicit sexism of the law, for example, or to alter the ideology which has kept medicine, government and science as essentially masculine/white/upper-class preserves, "The subject content may be different, but the arrangements are exactly those which replicate patriarchal education and capitalist patriarchy" (Thompson, 1983, p.122). In other words, inclusion and changing the ways in which we know are simply not enough. Political change must also come about.

Forming Coalitions - Taking Political Action

While feminist/critical pedagogy alters the classroom dynamic, it also recognizes the impossibility of overcoming the inequalities of society inside an isolated classroom. This is due to the fact that factors which have created inequalities, shaped subjective experiences exist in the political sphere. Thus, political work is essential to feminist/critical pedagogy. The notion of linking the pedagogical with the political has been addressed most notably by Freire (Freire, 1993 [1970], 1985), Giroux (1983, 1992, 1993) Teresa de Lauretis (de Lauretis, 1986) and bell hooks (hooks, 1988). They maintain that it is not enough to merely describe inequality and subjective experiences. We also must seek the factors out which cause inequality and

change them. Speaking to the notion of the how the "personal" is shaped by the "political", hooks reminds us that simply describing one's experience without linking it to structures of domination can work against change. She writes:

> In most cases, naming one's personal pain was not sufficiently linked to overall education for critical consciousness of collective political resistance. Focusing on the personal in a framework that did not compel acknowledgment of the complexity of structures of domination could easily lead to misnaming, to the creation of yet another sophisticated level of non-or distorted awareness. This often happens in a feminist context when race and/or class are not seen as factors determining the social construction of one's gendered reality and most importantly, the extent to which one will suffer exploitation and domination (hooks, 1988, p.32).

Indeed border crossers as cultural workers need to form coalitions with others who are doing the same work in other spheres. The sharing of knowledge between intellectuals makes individuals aware that problems cannot be solved by a single person, but only by working together. This acknowledges the links between the school and various other sectors in society. As Giroux notes

> Pedagogy is seen as a cultural practice and politics that takes place not only in schools but in all cultural spheres. In this instance, all cultural work is pedagogical and cultural workers inhabit a number of sites that include but are not limited to schools (Giroux, in McLaren and Leonard, 1993, p.182).

The most obvious problem with the notion of teachers undertaking political work, or even forming alliances with others doing the same work in other spheres, is that they are unwilling to do so because of either lack of time or

interest. However, teachers can attend protests and encourage their students to do so as well. They do not have to join a teacher's organization or run for public office in order to be considered as someone who is engaged in political work. Teaching an oppositional world view, teaching about what is going on in other countries in terms of democratic struggle, using the classroom as a place where political understanding is forged and sharpened and where consciousness is made explicit and urged in a transformative direction is all "political work".

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have attempted to build on both liberatory pedagogy and feminist critical pedagogy by stating that teachers must also become border crossers and cultural workers in an effort to give students voices, affirm their identities, arise critical consciousness among their students and to build bridges between schools and other societal spheres. To get students to speak so that voices can be affirmed, I have suggested that teachers first get to "know" the student. Thus, observing the student's body language as well as their ways of acting within the classroom will give teachers insight into the world of the student. I have suggested pedagogical strategies such as journal writing or talking to students individually inside and outside of the classroom and in small groups. Another way of affirming the voices of students is to validate their identities and

experiences through a curriculum which is gender, race and class inclusive. By identifying themselves in the knowledge which they assimilate, students feel more confident about themselves and their own knowledge and may be more prone to speaking out in class. Armed with a voice and an identity, students can begin to critique the present system and the way in which it attempts to exclude them, especially their knowledges and experiences. Besides critiquing the present system, students must be presented with a system which is different than this one. Such a system will be inclusive of their knowledges. Finally, to create this system, teachers and hopefully students will forge alliances with others who are also seeking to reform the system.

There are many problems with viewing teachers as cultural workers and border crossers. First of all, teachers presently possess little of the power and the time necessary to make liberatory pedagogy an empowering pedagogy. This means that it is not fair nor is it an effective strategy to rely solely on teachers to be the "liberators" of students. What needs to be changed is also the knowledge which is being filtered down to the students. That is, a change in curriculum must occur. There are many other changes which must take place both within and outside of the system of education which I have not addressed but which also must to be considered if liberatory pedagogy is to make a real impact on the lives of students. Clearly, further research is required. Perhaps studies can focus on changes in teacher's

education, in school management and in other societal spheres which influence education. For example, teachers in teacher training colleges can be taught the importance of being "cultural workers" and "border crossers". As well, school administrators can initiate teacher mentor programs where teachers can meet with and observe the teaching style of a more experienced teacher who knows how to put together an innovative curriculum and who puts the needs of the students first rather than the needs of the system. Furthermore, teachers and administrators can insist on the involvement of community groups and parents in education. The involvement of parents and community groups is important since studies have repeatedly shown that sexism and racism in schools (as manifested in teacher and student attitudes, curricula and pedagogy, for example) contribute to student failure. Parents and community groups can focus on necessary changes intended to curb such problems in the educational system.

Without doubt, there are serious criticisms of liberatory pedagogy. Besides those which I have already noted is one concerning the quality of the subject material taught in an inclusive curriculum. Teachers must be discriminating when searching for work which will be relevant to the student's lives. Not any work, of any women, man or member of a minority groups ought to be included in the inclusive curriculum. In other words, teachers must exercise their "good sense" in the Gramscian sense when choosing literature to supplement the curriculum. Similarly, there is the

criticism that teachers will only focus on dialogue and in assisting students to think critically and forego teaching them the basic skills of writing. There is no reason why teachers must refuse to be strict when teaching the basics of writing or be lenient when correcting work which is laden with spelling mistakes and incoherent sentences. To do so would be to ill-prepare students to utilize what is arguably the most important medium of individual expression, not to mention to ill-equip them for the demands of university. Blocking their access to such a medium is tantamount to silencing students' voices.

For many, liberatory pedagogy is too optimistic. However, to be optimistic is to be hopeful that change can occur. Optimism is the fuel which feeds us conscious thinkers and actors who are shaping our world to meet our needs. As teachers, I believe that pessimism leads us towards the false belief that we as human beings are determined, that the structures in which we function are only oppressive and limiting and that we can never break down the walls which seek to confine us. Without doubt, the structures in which we function as teachers are limiting. However, when we begin to know what these limitations are we also become aware of the pathways towards freedom which are available to us. Within even the most restrictive of conditions, teachers and students can always find ways to make change possible. As teachers we may have little direct influence in economic or political spheres, however, the

educational system is a link in the chain that binds all societal spheres; and, in education, teachers can, through a pedagogy which speaks to the possibility that change can occur, begin to take the necessary steps towards reform. Our influence on whether students' voices, knowledges and experiences are affirmed and interrogated is considerable. By incorporating pedagogical strategies which will help students to affirm their voices and gain critical consciousness it is certain that teachers can begin to empower students.

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