

Critical approaches to Critical Pedagogy in Greece

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Abstract

This paper is an initial review of the presentations and uses of critical pedagogy in Greek educational literature since the mid-1980s. These have appeared in the form of three books and an edited volume (translated in Greek), all written by American critical educators, as well as in texts produced by Greek educators who have either written the forewords of the aforementioned books and/or have published articles that refer to issues linked to critical pedagogy's historical development and its international significance.

Keywords: *critical pedagogy, Greece, critical approach, postmodern, Marxism*

Critical pedagogy is a trend of theory and practice that emerged in the early 1980s in the United States. The term was initially used by Henry Giroux and later by Stanley Aronowitz and Peter McLaren both of whom worked with Giroux, towards giving shape to critical pedagogy's content. In addition, Michael Apple's theoretical work played a significant role in the constitution of critical pedagogy as a distinct field. However, Apple cannot be identified with it, since he has distanced himself from the direction it took in the late 1980s. In an assessment of critical pedagogy, Apple himself connects it mainly with the work of Giroux and McLarenⁱ. At the end of the 1990s, McLaren attempted to give shape to a new critical pedagogy that, in his view, should be based on the Marxist roots of the critical pedagogy of the 1980s (Gounari & Grollios, 2010). On the basis of the above preliminary remarks, the historical review of critical pedagogy in Greece presented in this paper addresses the ways in which the work of the aforementioned American critical pedagogues was presented and used in educational literature in Greek.ⁱⁱ

For the purposes of this paper and due to length limitations, our historical review will not be exhaustive. More specifically a) we will not

refer to those presentations and uses of the work of American critical educators that is, in various ways, either distorting its meaningⁱⁱⁱ and/or to those presentations and uses not informed by a critical approach of the forms that critical pedagogy adopted after 1980s, b) we will not conduct a systematic survey of the use of the work of critical educators in terms of the totality of references in pedagogical literature written in Greek, and c) in our interpretation, we will not provide an extensive and in-depth analysis of the socioeconomic, political, ideological and educational conditions in which the specific presentations and uses of critical pedagogy took place in Greece until 2011. Thus, our text can be considered as a first approach that should become part of a larger investigation of critical pedagogy's uses and presentations in Greece. In the main body of our paper we consistently avoid any comments on the texts reviewed –we simply present their arguments. Of course the choice of what elements to mention or not from the texts we review is ours.

In the second half of the 1980s, Spyros Rasis and Charalambos Noutsos were the first to present the work of Apple and Giroux in Greece. In 1986, Rasis was the editor for the Greek translation of Apple's book *Ideology and Curriculum*. In the Introduction of the Greek edition, Rasis noted that the roots of Apple's critical reflection on the curriculum could be found in a) the groundbreaking critique of radical revisionist historians of American education (e.g. Michael Katz, Clarence Karier, Paul Violas, Joel Spring and Walter Feinberg) for the movement of progressive education, b) the work of Michael F.D. Young and his collaborators in England regarding the social provenance and political definition of school knowledge as well as the social interaction that takes place inside schools (this kind of work paved the way for the development of a 'new sociology of education'), and c) various pieces of research on the mechanisms of economic and cultural reproduction. According to Rasis, Apple eloquently illustrated the role that curriculum theorists played from the beginning of the 20th century, highlighting in particular the technocratic conception that informs these curriculum theorists, having adopted the bureaucratic ethos that helps to maintain the social system and the perpetuation of economic, political, and cultural reproduction. Therefore, *Ideology and Curriculum* can help teachers both to understand educational practice in the metropolis of

capitalism and to defend themselves from the technocratic tendencies that have flooded the pedagogical debate in Greece in recent years (Rasis, 1986).

The following year, Noutsos (1987) published an article with the title *Teachers as Intellectuals. A Gramscian Approach to the Social Functioning of Education* in an attempt to capitalize on Gramsci's pedagogy in order to investigate the functional role of teachers in mainstream education. After submitting to critique certain perceptions regarding teachers' class position and class placement (e.g. the notion that they constitute a group with an autonomous educational role; or that they are integral part of a popular avant-garde; or that they are organic intellectuals of the ruling class; or that they can be categorized into conservatives and progressives) he argues that the distinction between teachers with a bourgeois consciousness and those with a socialist consciousness is correct but insufficient. Noutsos deems that Aronowitz and Giroux are moving in the direction of establishing a more refined typology, since they draw on Gramsci's notion of intellectuals in order to analyze the social function of teachers. They distinguish four categories of transformative, critical, accommodating and hegemonic teachers. Noutsos delineates the main characteristics of teachers in each category, and argues that while this typology has a sound theoretical starting point, in order to be useful it requires grounding in the particular Greek reality. This analytical work is advocate in order to examine the degree to which these categories hold true, consider the need to build subcategories, and understand the indirect ways of formulating teachers' notions regarding their social function (Noutsos, 1987).

In 1988, Rasis in his article, *The Theory of Resistance in Education*, briefly delineated the key elements of critical pedagogy. More specifically, he referred to criticism articulated after the end of the McCarthy era regarding the U.S. sociopolitical system, as well as to a revival of Marxism in Western countries. As far as education is concerned, in particular, he referred to the critique done by the aforementioned radical revisionist historians of education, radical economists (Samuel Bowles, Herbert Gintis, Martin Carnoy) and sociologists (Pierre Bourdieu, Jean-Claude Passeron, Basil Bernstein,

Michael F.D. Young), all of whom illustrated the class nature of education and its reproductive function in the context of capitalist society. According to Rasis, the understanding of educational reality provided by this work helped teachers with commitments to changing education and society through collective action. It is to those educators that Apple and Giroux^{iv} appealed in their proposal for a new theoretical approach whose core concept was resistance, a concept grounded mostly in the theory of Paul Willis's book *Learning to Labor*. They, thus, offered a dialectical model of domination and complemented these theories that were based on the concept of reproduction. According to Rasis, Apple and Giroux turned their attention to the diverse and contradictory manifestations of students' resistance, prompting radical teachers to discover those liberating elements that students express in their educational and social reality, and to reveal to their students the educational and social reality in order to contribute to collective intervention, action and social change. The process of domination, as pointed out by Giroux, is neither static nor total. Basic concepts of the theory of resistance, as systematized by Giroux, include intentionality, critical consciousness, the concept of common sense and the nature and value of human oppositional behavior. Rasis concluded that taking advantage of the contradictions of the capitalist system, when done collectively, can bring changes which, in turn, will change social reality. Rasis' work then turns to the work of Freire to provide a strategy for radical teachers' praxis for social transformation. Teachers, therefore, need to use Freire's pedagogy that is based on problems posed as questions that are directly related to the experiences of students' everyday life, so that they understand the world critically and, realizing their power, they can build a true democratic society (Rasis, 1988). In the first half of the 1990s, Rasis was the editor for the Greek translation of yet another important book by Michael Apple, *Education and Power*. In his foreword to the Greek edition, Rasis succinctly reiterated the basic elements of his above cited article in order to illustrate the importance of the book at hand, set in the dark years of the neoconservative revival of the 1980s. He further pointed out that the teachers that Apple addresses are distinguished for their love for education, their elaborate professional ethics and social solidarity, arguing that teachers were not responsible for the repression of

historical consciousness and critical thinking taking place in schools and in society at large. Rasis argued that teachers need to understand the relationship of these phenomena to capitalist social organization and the spreading of a culture of positivism, while recognizing at the same time that the then contemporary social crisis was a political issue and as such, needed to be dealt with through collective struggle aiming to overthrow existing reality (Rasis, 1993).

In the second half of the 1990s, George Grollios and John Kaskaris attempted to explore the relationship between critical pedagogy and postmodernism in a paper titled *Educational Policy, Postmodernism, and Critical Pedagogy: The Deadlock of a Relationship and the Weapons of Criticism*. This investigation was done through a brief presentation of the term 'postmodern', with particular emphasis on Jean Francois Lyotard's *Postmodern Condition*, and a brief review of the theoretical starting points and directions of critical pedagogy. The authors stressed that postmodernism expresses a questioning of the basic imperatives of enlightenment, and an intense skepticism toward rational thought, the validity of science and the potential for social emancipation. With respect to Lyotard's text in particular, the authors noted that it promotes the image of a world of symbols and a denial of collective action, where consciousness and knowledge are marginalized since the latter is converted into information. Grollios and Kaskaris presented critical pedagogy as a school of thought that capitalizes on a variety of intellectual traditions such as Marxism, feminism, Freirean pedagogy and the progressive education movement, in an attempt to establish a radical pedagogical theory and practice to work against the dominant neoliberal/neoconservative policies. In the work of important critical educators of the 1990s one can identify the influence from elements of postmodernism^v. However, critical educators do not consider society as a sum of fragmented units whose bond is a language game, nor do they accept the idea that reality does not correspond with the production of meanings. Peter McLaren's work in particular, in the mid-1990s, shows a clearer differentiation from postmodernism through a shift to basic principles of Marxism. However, the element that points to the internal inconsistency of the theoretical project of critical pedagogy in the 1990s is, the acceptance on one hand of the postmodern refusal of 'grand

narratives', and on the other hand, the support for the need for social and educational reconstruction. Critical educators overlook that postmodernism has become a powerful stream of thought mainly due to the retreat of the forces of labor internationally. Postmodernism is an attempt of theoretical dematerialization of the crisis of the developed capitalist societies and of the risks it entails for dominant sociopolitical blocks of power. Grollios and Kaskaris conclude that if critical educators do not become aware of the need to approach in detail the relationship between the economic and social crisis and the postmodern, and continue to incorporate its elements into their thinking, they will reach a theoretical and practical impasse (Grollios & Kaskaris, 1997).

In 2007 Anastassios Liambas and John Kaskaris in an article, *Critical Postmodernism, Critical Pedagogy and Ideological Schemes of Neoliberalism in Education*, investigated the reception of postmodernism in Greek education and re-examined the relationship between critical pedagogy and the postmodern. They proposed several ways in which some Greek educators (e.g. Govaris and Gotovos) cite concepts and approaches (such as diversity, tolerance to difference, multicultural pluralism, identity formation, insistence on the use of new technologies, the over-celebration of innovation and textual analysis) in order to legitimize mainstream pedagogy in Greece. In this way, they argued that these Greek educators were contributing to the constitution of pedagogical practices that appear as independent from ideological and political references, and in turn to the promotion of instructional packages of prefabricated school knowledge that the (so-called) autonomous teachers of a mislabeled student-centered, experiential, and creative school are called to implement. According to Liambas and Kaskaris, postmodernism was originally an attempt at rearranging relations between the subject and knowledge in advanced industrial societies. Critical postmodernism focused on the political, economic and cultural sides of the subject's actions, while it gave an emphasis to the manifestations and representations of power in the educational field. Critical pedagogy's shift to critical postmodernism altered its content, since critical postmodernism does not support a structural analysis of capital and the state, and at the same time, educational institutions. Equality and social justice are not central points of reference of critical

postmodernism. Liambas and Kaskaris argued that by converting analysis of social structure into the analysis of social pluralism, and replacing the concept of social class with the concept of social identity, postmodernism lost its progressive character. Worse still, they argued that it had eliminated from its agenda poverty, racism, inequality, democracy and lack of public spaces, thus functioning as a receptor of neoliberalism and neo-conservatism (Liambas & Kaskaris, 2007).

In 2008, Apple's book *Official Knowledge* was translated into Greek. In the Introduction of the Greek edition, Grollios explained the reasons that make it significant. The first reason concerns the shift in Apple's research interests as expressed in *Official Knowledge*. From the study of mostly theoretical issues dealing with the relationship between society and education, Grollios argued that Apple consolidated a shift in his work to the study of particular educational/political issues based on the already developed theoretical positions that were mostly expressed in *Ideology and Curriculum* and in *Education and Power*. These issues were first identified in *Teachers and Texts* published in 1986. In that book Apple was focusing on the use of tools developed to examine not only theoretical issues, but also older and contemporary conditions that contributed to the making up of teachers and textbooks. He considered that there was risk for the greater part of the educational community to be cut off from critical work on education, attributing this risk to the existence of a relatively highly developed body of metatheory, but a seriously underdeveloped tradition of applied middle-range work (i.e. the study of specific educational/political issues). In *Official Knowledge*, according to Grollios, the explanation for the shift in Apple's research interests towards the middle-range work is reiterated. The difference with *Teachers and Texts* lies in the analysis of specific issues (textbooks and use of technology) that are systematically linked to the analysis of conservative restoration. Consequently, these analyses might be considered more complete from a political standpoint, since the analysis of conservative restoration makes up the broader context that primarily determines the analysis of specific issues. In this sense, *Official Knowledge* consolidated Apple's shifting research interests and focus.

According to Grollios, the second reason that made the translation of *Official Knowledge* significant has to do with the particular sociopolitical circumstances in Greece. The main characteristic of the 2006-2007 school year in Greece was the mobilization in education that included a six-week teacher strike and a massive student movement that saw the overthrow of a planned constitutional amendment that would have permitted the operation under law of private universities. By and large, mobilizations with such a duration, participation, and militancy can be explained through subjective and objective factors. The former refer primarily to the pressure from problems posed by dominant politics. The latter mainly refer to the long-term social, political and ideological interventions of particular agents. The study of neoliberal/neoconservative restructuring in education and the relevant formulation of the terms of the debate against it, was one of the fundamental elements of this intervention. In this sense, the analyses contained in *Official Knowledge* offer useful theoretical and empirical material that can be used for the continuation and deepening of the study of neoliberal/neoconservative restructuring in Greek education. The analyses contained in *Official Knowledge* do acknowledge specific features of a concrete social formation, as well as the ways in which education takes shape as a result of confrontations and conflicts within this formation. Further, they capitalize on theoretical positions formed through the contribution of concepts derived from the Marxist tradition. However, despite the fertile ground that these conditions provided, the analyses did not answer certain questions. One of those questions has to do with the 'parallelist position' supported by Apple, according to which society is structured around three interrelated spheres; the economic, the cultural/ideological and the political. Every sphere is constituted by the dynamic of social class, race, and gender, and holds its own internal history. Grollios has argued that the parallelist position ignores the problem of the specific nature of how these spheres are articulated with each other (Grollios, 2008).

In the same year that *Official Knowledge* was published in Greek, Kaskaris traced the trajectory of Peter McLaren's positions in his entire work regarding the content of education. In the 1980s, McLaren dealt with the issue of educational content using the concepts of ideology and

hegemony, in order to make up a critical context of schooling, at a time when there was an attempt at its neoliberal reconstitution. Thus, he offers a penetrating theoretical review of the ideology dominating the attitudes, behaviors and notions that permeate schools and promotes the position that a process of resistance with political characteristics can be organized inside the classroom. In the 1990s, McLaren connected the content of education with literacy and noted their ideological role in the distribution of economic, political and cultural power, in an attempt to combine on one hand, the radical tradition that is influenced by Freire's work and that of neo-Marxists on social semiotics and on the other that of pragmatism and critical postmodernism. Postmodern critique (with difference, cultural diversity, and social representation at its core) enables the possibility of defining the content of education based on a multicultural strategy and identity formation that mutate as they cross the borders of meanings and social relations. However, according to Kaskaris, McLaren re-examined his positions on the content of education in the beginning of the 2000s. Based on the work of Freire and Marxist theory, he puts forth a class analysis on the content of education juxtaposing it to the adjustments of ideological arguments of the dominant neoliberal conception for education. He examines the content of education in light of a socialist humanism and argues that critical pedagogy must refer to ways of thinking that connect the classroom, school knowledge and educational structures to the material relations of society and the state. Critical conscientization, McLaren argued, is cultivated on the grounds of a dialectical critique of capitalism. Teachers as intellectuals must work to promote practices that highlight the possibility of social transformation through relations of capital/labor, as well as through the set of real social relations. If critical pedagogy is consumed in a theory for the constitution of the individual, it ends up in an abstraction beyond those processes that produce and reproduce material and ideological inequality and exploitation. Based on the above, Kaskaris concluded that McLaren closes a cycle of theoretical engagement on the content of education by highlighting those views that were recorded before postmodernism, promotes postmodernism as a field that critical pedagogy could capitalize on; and finally, he attempts to reposition critical pedagogy within a Marxist theoretical approach that is

directly linked to the demands of freedom, social justice and social equality^{vi} (Kaskaris, 2008).

In 2009, Grollios published an article titled *Social Justice and Public Pedagogy*, centered on Giroux's most recent analyses on the establishment of a regime with fascist characteristics in the United States, using corporate public pedagogy against the remains of the postwar social contract and the welfare state. Grollios argued that those interested in social justice needed to understand that Giroux's views concerning a) the establishment of a regime with fascist characteristics; and b) the fact that pedagogical debate is not limited to traditional educational institutions, are of great importance because they could connect more closely critical pedagogy and the general political theory and practice. He also pointed out that Giroux's promotion of social and racial justice is situated in his most recent work within an unfinished programmatic framework of sociopolitical transformation, and that while this framework includes the promotion of equality, public welfare and democracy, it does not include changes in terms of production. That is to say, the elements that make up this framework include changes relating to political institutions and the redistribution of social wealth, but do not touch upon the fundamental feature of capitalist sociopolitical organization, that is, the capitalist relations of production. According to Grollios, Giroux's work amounted to a proposal for an advanced version of the logic of the social contract and the welfare state. Essentially, he articulates a programmatic framework for sociopolitical transformation that is based on a quest for spaces within capitalism, that are characterized by contradictions and conflicts, seeking to create and develop alternative activities, discourses, and possibilities. This quest for spaces, usually referred to as public spheres in Giroux's work, suggests a kind of capitalism that is divided into almost watertight compartments. Giroux argues that there might be compartments in this kind of capitalism that may be transformed, but production is not one of them. By not including a program for changing capitalist relations of production, Giroux moves away from the broader sociopolitical transformation, underpinned by a democratic socialist perspective, advanced in the 1980s. Grollios stresses that a socialist perspective must be based on a democratic process of appropriating the means of

production. Socialism is not an extension or improvement of capitalism, but a system of social relations whose logic is not equated with maximization of profit, of the accumulation of capital, and exploitation of labor. Socialism is the road to liberating the creative potential of people from exploitation and oppression (Grollios, 2009).

The first edited collection of texts from representatives of critical pedagogy was published in Greece in 2010. This collection comprises fourteen chapters by Stanley Aronowitz, Michael Apple, Henry Giroux and Peter McLaren, as well as five chapters by Lilia Bartolome, bell hooks and Donaldo Macedo. All texts span work published between 1983 and 2008. In their introduction to the Greek volume, the editors Panayota Gounari and George Grollios attempted to provide a comprehensive historical review of critical pedagogy in the United States. They concluded by arguing that critical pedagogy could be said to have been founded in the 1980s by Henry Giroux, in collaboration with Stanley Aronowitz, as a theoretical project that built mainly on the work of Freire, Gramsci and American progressive education. It developed, they argued, as a way to overcome the existing approaches on the relationship between education and society that were centered on the concepts of reproduction and resistance, by developing a critical pedagogy that emphasizes the concepts of reproduction, production and reconstruction. For these key representatives of critical pedagogy, radical theories about school had to turn their attention from the question of how society is reproduced on the basis of capital's interests and its institutions, to questions of how the excluded majorities can develop institutions, values, and practices that could in turn meet their own interests and contribute to a radical transformation of education and society. According to Gounari & Grollios, since the late 1980s and until the end of the 1990s, Giroux, Aronowitz, and McLaren, attempted to integrate this project into a synthesis of elements of postmodern theories with a modernist project of democratic social reconstruction, with particular emphasis on linking pedagogy and cultural studies. It is this particular direction of theoretical research that was subjected to critique by Apple, not because he disagreed with the use of elements of postmodern theory in conducting specific analyses, but because he argued that it was moving away from the specific issues related to

schooling. Apple proposed instead a program of studying the neoliberal/neoconservative restoration in education, and how this could be opposed. In the 2000s, the editors argued, Giroux essentially abandoned the integration of critical pedagogy into a synthesis of elements from postmodern theories with a plan of modernist democratic social reconstruction. Nevertheless, he did not cease to highlight the importance of linking critical pedagogy with cultural studies and turned his attention to the evaluation and review of new conditions developing in American society, in the direction of the formation of an advanced version of liberal democratic reform and the need to create a corresponding political organization. The birth of critical pedagogy in the early 1980s, Gounari & Grollios argue, was closely linked with the rise of social movements of the previous decades. But it was also linked to their own weaknesses, combined with the weakness of the labor movement and the American Left to form a political force that could become at the very least, an effective force in curbing the rising tide of neo-conservatism and neoliberalism, if not a force of deeper change. Critical educators attempted to articulate a response to this rising tide, which they termed a language of critique and possibility, but despite the wealth of pedagogical analyses of the previous decade, this work has serious shortcomings. It lacked a specific articulation with wider political subjects and movements, a lack that, of course, is not solely the responsibility of critical educators. Therefore, even though critical pedagogy contributed in a fruitful way to the discussion of key directions for a radical transformation in education, it was, nevertheless, unable to combine them into a specific content or program with a strategic character towards sociopolitical transformation. This shortcoming was crucial for its trajectory. When at the end of the 1980s the dominance of neoliberal/neoconservative forces had consolidated within the United States, revolutionary movements worldwide were in decline and signs of the crisis were obvious in the camp of the countries of "real existing socialism". In this context, Gounari & Grollios argue, some critical educators gave in to the temptation of the new intellectual trend of postmodern theories that unsurprisingly were on the rise, and limited their political horizon to battles for democracy and diversity. Apple's critique, while correctly noting critical pedagogy's distance from the pressing issues of capitalist restructuring in education, did not get to the

formulation of the most important issue, namely the content of the sociopolitical strategy of critical pedagogy. Its limited scope is related to Apple's social analysis which has its roots in the parallelist position. The latter, does not answer the question of how the spheres of economy, politics and culture articulate with each other in modern societies, and essentially considers the dynamics of social class, race and gender as autonomous. Therefore, the parallelist position cannot be a powerful alternative to the fetishization of diversity that was based on the fragmentation of the concept of social totality, and on the dismissal of grand narratives offered by postmodern theories. McLaren's critique on capitalizing on postmodern theories, despite its ambiguities, revealed two major weaknesses of critical pedagogy mentioned earlier, that is, the vagueness of a sociopolitical strategy and the inadequacy of social analysis. It further highlighted the need to review the relationship of critical pedagogy with the tradition of American progressive education, raising the issue of juxtaposing critical pedagogy to Dewey's liberal progressive education agenda. In Dewey's work, social change is founded on moral reconstruction ignoring, to a large extent, the historical and material conditions leading to social transformation through class struggle. Therefore, according to Gounari & Grollios, through the attempt to include critical pedagogy in composing elements from postmodern theories with a plan of modernist democratic social reconstruction in the 1990s, Giroux ended up adopting a position that was largely similar to those of Dewey and the supporters of social reconstruction in 2000s. McLaren's critique, despite its potential associated with capitalizing on the Marxist tradition, is not sufficient. As mentioned earlier, critical pedagogy does not only require a clear theoretical framework that is, no doubt, absolutely necessary. Another crucial issue, especially in the context now developing in the midst of the outbreak of a new crisis of capitalism, is the production of a specific analysis regarding the shaping of the political regime and tracing a corresponding political strategy and tactics. Giroux realized this need after the attack against the twin towers and the unleashing of Bush's war against terror, regardless of the fact that he does not support the adoption of Marxism as a theoretical framework of critical pedagogy as McLaren does. His analysis on the formation of a peculiar semi-fascist political regime in the U.S. is worth

highlighting and discussing, as is Aronowitz's proposal to create a new radical party (Gounari & Grollios, 2010).

A few months after the publication of the edited volume on critical pedagogy by Gounari and Grollios, the Department of Primary Education at the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki approved Dimitris Nikoloudis's doctoral dissertation. This dissertation aims to study Giroux's and McLaren's views on literacy in relation to other views in the field of literacy. The thesis a) divides the work of the two critical educators in periods, seeking in every one the theoretical influences they have received, basic concepts they have used and shifts in their political and pedagogical positions, in order to analyze their relationship with their views on literacy, and b) compares the views of the two educators with other perspectives on literacy such as traditional and functional, in order to highlight their own perspective.^{vii} Nikoloudis distinguishes two periods in Giroux's work. In terms of the first period (1980s) he emphasizes Giroux's effort to articulate a neo-Marxist critique by bringing together various theoretical influences such as the Frankfurt School, progressive education, Freire's pedagogy, and the views of Foucault and Gramsci. He notes that the use of concepts such as identity and desire forecasts the reception of postmodern ideas during the second period of his project and is connected with the absence of a clear plan for sociopolitical transformation, as well as with a naive reformism. In the second period (1990s), Giroux attempts to synthesize the theoretical traditions of postmodernism, feminism, liberation theology, and cultural studies and gives shape to the concepts of border pedagogy and public pedagogy, linking pedagogy with social and political theory. Despite careful avoidance of reactionary postmodernism, Giroux's rejection of grand narratives, stress on the functions of social superstructure and the concept of the subject, downplaying of class relations of exploitation and the role of the state, as well as the downplaying of class struggle, seal Giroux's political position as a leftist liberalism characterized by elements of radical thought. According to Nikoloudis, the work of McLaren can be divided into three periods. In the first period, McLaren is influenced by phenomenology, ethnography, symbolic interactionism, the views of Foucault, Dewey, Freire and Giroux, and is driven by liberal humanism towards a radical neo-Marxism, similar to that advocated by

Giroux during that same period. His work in this period aimed to study the daily school life and reproduction of social relations of power that develop inside schools, as well as those processes that make up student subjectivities that are characterized by opposition and resistance. The devaluation of the importance of economic and political organization of contemporary societies forecasts the influence of critical postmodernism in his work during the second period (1990-1997). During this period, McLaren approaches human action and the social world focusing on the concepts of identity, subjectivity, experience and language, downplaying the concepts of social class and class conflict. After 1997, during the third period of his work, his views change and become distinct from those of Giroux. He argues that the era of monopoly capitalism is not over and that Marxist theory is still relevant and timely. Therefore, the formation of a revolutionary critical pedagogy is seen as a critical issue in the conditions of globalization and neoliberal dominance and must capitalize on the concepts of value, surplus value, commodity, exploitation, power and class struggle. However, despite the theoretical and political shift towards Marxist theory after 1997, McLaren continues to use the concepts of identity and critical postmodernism, but in a much more careful way (Nikoloudis, 2010).

Conclusions

Based on all the above and given the limitations of our historical review delineated at the beginning of this chapter, we can conclude that the bibliographic production on critical pedagogy in Greece has increased significantly in the last decade. In the 1980s we have Rasis's introduction to the Greek translation of *Ideology and Curriculum* and two articles that present aspects of critical pedagogy by Noutsos and Rasis. This small bibliographic production, while important since it presents for the first time the work of critical educators without distorting its meaning, it demonstrates that the interest to present and capitalize on critical pedagogy in Greece is limited only to the work of two academics.^{viii} In the 1990s, we witness a decline in the interest since we have only Rasis's foreword to the Greek edition of *Education and Power* and an article that addresses the relationship between critical pedagogy and postmodernism by Grollios and Kaskaris. In the 2000s, there is an increased interest in critical pedagogy. After the translation of two of

Apple's books (*Educating the Right Way. Markets, Standards, God and Inequality*^x and *Official Knowledge*) and the articles by Kaskaris, Liambas & Kaskaris and Grollios, we have the publication of a large edited collection of essays (edited by Gounari & Grollios) on critical pedagogy, and Nikoloudis's Doctoral Dissertation that deals the evolution of views and ideas of two key critical educators. Despite this increase in interest, critical pedagogy in Greece continues to concern either people who teach at the University or who are associated with it.^x Indeed, most of them are affiliated with one particular Department, that of Primary Education at the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, where there seems to be a tradition of engagement with critical pedagogy that started with the work of Rasis in the 1980s and 1990s. In other words, critical pedagogy in Greece has not become a serious concern for teachers of primary and secondary education. This issue is related to the fact that there are not, to our knowledge, any attempts to build critical pedagogy into schools through specific interventionist practices. A central characteristic of the presentations of the project of critical pedagogy in this paper is that they support the form it took in the 1980s and/or they critically approach the form it took in the coming decades. The first presentations of key aspects of critical pedagogy made in the late 1980s and early 1990s by Rasis and Noutsos emphasize its value for teachers aiming at the emancipation of students and the radical sociopolitical transformation or they approach the teachers' social function and do not contain elements of critique on the form that critical pedagogy took in the 1980s. The first theoretical critique of critical pedagogy emerges in the second half of the following decade and concerns an issue for which there were already differing views expressed among American critical educators: the use of postmodernism. Grollios and Kaskaris note the internal inconsistency of the theoretical project of critical pedagogy in the 1990s, that is, the acceptance, on one hand, of postmodernism's rejection of grand narratives, while supporting the need for radical social and educational transformation on the other. Their position is clear: if critical educators keep on incorporating elements of postmodernism in their problematic, they will reach a theoretical and practical impasse. Based on their statement at the beginning of their text that they actually explore the relationship between critical pedagogy and postmodernism starting with

the notion that class struggle on an economic, political and ideological level is a core issue for the interpretation of the social reality at hand, it becomes obvious that their critique of critical pedagogy refers to the way the latter took shape in the 1990s and that their theoretical point of departure is Marxist.

A similar direction and theoretical starting point -despite their differences- can be found in Liambas and Kaskaris who argue that critical pedagogy's shift to critical postmodernism in the 1990s altered its content, because the latter does not support a structural analysis of capital, the state, and educational institutions. They highlighted how it replaces the concept of social class with that of social identity and its point of reference is not equality and social justice. Nikoloudis sees these tendencies in the political positions of Giroux and McLaren in the 1990s, classifying their work then as a left liberalism characterized by elements of radical thought. This characterization is based on their then dismissal of grand narratives, devaluation of class relations and of the role of the state and of class struggle, and their accentuation of the functions of social superstructure, experience and language, as well as the concepts of identity and subjectivity.

Beyond the critique on the shift of critical pedagogy towards postmodernism, other theoretical critical remarks are made by Grollios at the end of the 2000s. These refer to: a) the support of the parallelist position by Apple and b) the circumvention of the issue of changing relations of production in the programmatic context of sociopolitical transformation suggested by Giroux.

These critical remarks are linked to each other and have, much like the reviews mentioned earlier on the shift of critical pedagogy towards postmodernism, a Marxist theoretical starting point. The parallelist position supported by Apple, is questioned because it avoids the problem of the specific nature of the articulation of the economic and cultural/ideological and political spheres, a problem addressed in Marxist theory that considers the role of economy crucial. The programmatic sociopolitical framework proposed by Giroux is questioned because it bypasses the problem of changes in the field of production thereby

limiting itself to changes in political institutions and social wealth redistribution, as opposed to Marxist approaches to the socio-political transformation that considers it a fundamental problem. Critique on the shift of critical pedagogy towards postmodernism and its theoretical weaknesses mentioned earlier, are interpreted by Gounari and Grollios in their conclusions of their historical review in 2010. The shift to postmodernism was due to the weakness of the labor movement and of social movements in the U.S. to form a political organization that could play a decisive role in shaping the socio-political power correlations. The lack of connecting the basic directions of a radical transformation in education put forward by critical educators with a particular sociopolitical transformation framework that this political organization would promote on the basis of integrated social and political analysis, created the conditions for a move towards postmodernism in conditions of consolidation of the dominance of neoliberal/neoconservative forces within the United States and the defeat of socialist ideas internationally. The result was that critical educators limited their political horizon to a battle for democracy and diversity.

The criticisms made by Gounari and Grollios are not meant to undermine critical pedagogy. On the contrary, in their extensive historical review the editors state that many aspects of the works of critical educators could be used in Greece, particularly the synthesis of pedagogical views of Gramsci and Freire, a large number of analyses on specific issues of neoliberal and neoconservative restructuring and the connections of pedagogy with other fields of study. Furthermore, they consider that the most essential issue that emerges from these critiques is the need for an awareness of the complexity of constructing a pedagogy that would challenge the existing social order and would set as its main purpose to contribute to radical social, political and educational transformation. Such a project cannot but address the key issues of a concrete definition of a theoretical framework on which to base itself, of a social and political analysis and its sociopolitical strategy, a clear definition which, of course, does not refer to theoretical immobility and self-sufficiency.

Generally, we can say that the presentations and uses of critical pedagogy discussed here cannot be identified neither with the sanctification of its representatives nor with a mechanistic transfer of analyses and views, which convert the theoretical contribution of critical pedagogy into a dogma. The effort to understand the context in which critical pedagogy was developed, as well as the study of trends that make it up, is an important project that would enrich and strengthen the relevant debate in Greece and internationally. Today, in particular, in conditions of a political and social state of emergency in Greece that systematically crush peoples' rights and dissolve what is left of the provisions of the welfare state in healthcare, social security, and education, teachers in all levels of education who do not find themselves locked in the narrow horizon of neoliberal, neoconservative and technocratic directions, must be aware of the past and present of critical pedagogy. This will enable them to use this knowledge in order to make important contributions towards the formation of a new political movement in education and in society that would tip over the current power correlation and pave the way for a new, socialist Greece.

ⁱ Gounari and Grollios refer to Carlson & Apple, 1998.

ⁱⁱWe use the terms “presentation” and “use” together so as to show that writing a text in the Greek language on the topic of critical pedagogy has inevitably a “presentation” character since it necessarily conveys views written in English and obviously serves goals, regardless of whether these are explicitly stated.

ⁱⁱⁱ See Grollios, 2003 and Axiourgou, 2009.

^{iv} Rasis refers to Apple, 1982, and Giroux, 1983.

^v Grollios & Kaskaris refer to Aronowitz & Giroux, 1993.

^{vi} Kostas Skordoulis also refers to McLaren's shift towards Marxist theory in 2000s underling that McLaren's transition from critical pedagogy to revolutionary critical pedagogy can't be interpreted simply as a change in the name of the theory (Skordoulis, 2009).

^{vii} We will not present here the findings of Nikoloudis's analysis about the relation between Giroux and McLaren' views on literacy with the theoretical influences they have received, the basic concepts they have used and the shifts in their political and educational positions, as well as the comparison of their views with other

perspectives on literacy not only because of space limitations, but also because they deal with an issue that requires a separate discussion.

^{viii} Rasis and Noutsos were teaching at the time in the Department of Primary Education at the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki and the Department of Philosophy, Education and Psychology at the University of Ioannina, respectively.

^{ix} Published in 2002 without any introduction or preface to the Greek edition and under the title *Modernization and Neoconservatism in Education*. See Apple, 2002.

^x Grollios and Liambas teach in the Department of Primary Education, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, where Nikoloudis completed his doctoral dissertation and Kaskaris is a postgraduate student, while Gounari teaches at the University of Massachusetts Boston.

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