Beyond the Neoliberal Imaginary: Investigating the Role of Critical Pedagogy in Higher Education

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Abstract

This article uses the qualitative case study approach to investigate the lived experience of three faculty members in higher education who identify themselves as critical pedagogues during an era of neoliberal restructuring. This research explores what the possibilities are for enacting critical pedagogies within a neoliberal climate of educational restructuring in higher education at a Canadian university located in South Western Ontario. The principle goal of this research is to gain a deeper understanding of how neoliberalism is shaping the experience of those practicing as critical pedagogues in higher education and why critical pedagogy is of increasing importance in an era of neoliberal restructuring.

Key Words: *Higher education, neoliberalism, critical pedagogy, democracy, global education, social justice and equity.*

Introduction

Globalisation and systems of neoliberal accountability are influencing every aspect of social life, including education. Higher education, traditionally an enterprise to foster deeper knowledge, creativity, and critical thinking, is increasingly challenged as the purpose of higher education has become

connected to economic productivity and for creating citizens for a knowledge economy. The need for becoming aware of the perpetuated ideology of neoliberalism has become paramount to the challenges of critical pedagogy, as it forces neoliberalism and globalisation, each, to be wholly reflexive of position and context. Critical educators are advocating for change and the significance of challenging neoliberalism becomes our quest for the direction of an alternative logic; one that challenges the conservative neoliberal imaginary, treasures the narratives of *all* people as originally promised through democracy, and critically examines both how and for who quality education is organised (Smith, Ryoo, and McLaren, 2009). Thus, critical pedagogy, as elaborated by critical theorists such as Paulo Freire, Henry Giroux, and Peter McLaren is relevant to all people and all nations seeking an alternative to the stranglehold neoliberal capitalism possesses over the organisation and purpose of higher education.

Research

 A synthesis of the literature reviewed reveals the discourses surrounding the massification of higher education, neoliberalism, and the gap in existing research. There are voices missing from this research and these voices belong to academics in higher education itself. Therefore, the main objective of this research is to investigate the possibilities for enacting critical pedagogies within a neoliberal climate of educational restructuring in higher education. I will investigate this by seeking the professional experience of three faculty members in higher education from a Canadian university located in South Western Ontario, who are sympathetic to the principles of critical pedagogy and practice dialogical teaching and learning in higher education. The research will focus on how they reconcile neoliberal efficiencies and competencies with the importance of critical pedagogy and critical thinking. I will investigate these

questions by exploring the writings of Paulo Freire and other contemporary critical pedagogues. Methodologically, I will use qualitative research in the form of the case study; as, the qualitative case study and a "small sample of open-ended interviews adds depth, detail, and meaning at a very personal level of experience" (Patton, 2002, p.17).

Research Questions:

1) What are the possibilities for enacting critical pedagogies within a neoliberal climate of educational restructuring in higher education?
2) How has neoliberalism shaped the experience of three faculty members in higher education, who are sympathetic to the principles of critical pedagogy and practice dialogical teaching and learning in higher education, while reconciling neoliberal efficiencies and competencies with a commitment to such an approach?
3) What is the possibility of critical pedagogy in the context of neoliberal restructuring of higher education; and, how is critical pedagogy of increasing importance at the start of the twenty-first century?

Conceptual Framework

This article will be divided into four sections. Section one, beginning with this introduction, provides the reader with my research questions, conceptual framework as advanced by critical pedagogues Paulo Freire, Henry Giroux, Peter McLaren and others, context of my research, rationale, and purpose. It becomes important at this point to distinguish and define two principle terms that will be threaded throughout: critical pedagogy and critical thinking.
Peter McLaren (1995) argues how critical pedagogy challenges the traditional perspective and hierarchical role of the teacher- student, creates an anesthetised society where the dynamics of power, economics, and history are

represented in a Western, Eurocentric, and androcentric manner that maintains the ideologies of the status quo and no longer should be endorsed (McLaren, 1995). More specifically, when speaking to the challenges of critical pedagogy, McLaren (1989), suggests:

> The challenge of critical pedagogy does not reside solely in the logical consistency or the empirical verification of its theories; rather, it resides in the moral choice put before us as teachers and citizens, a choice that American philosopher John Dewey suggested is the distinction between education as a function of society and society as a function of education. We need to examine that choice: do we want our schools to create a passive, risk-free citizenry, or a politicized citizenry capable of fighting for various forms of public life and informed by a concern for equality and social justice (p.158)?

Henry Giroux (2010), posits,

> Critical pedagogy, unlike dominant modes of teaching, insists that one of the fundamental tasks of educators is to make sure that the future points the way to a more socially just world, a world in which the discourses of critique and possibility in conjunction with the values of reason, freedom and equality function to alter, as part of a broader democratic project, the grounds upon which life is lived (p.10).

Paulo Freire (1970/2011), defines critical thinking as the "plentitude of praxis" (p.131), this is to mean, that critical thinking is experienced through action, action that is informed through critical reflection which establishes a manner of thinking that directs one from an innocent form of "knowledge reality" (ibid) to a deeper level, a level that empowers one to begin to discern the "*causes* of reality" (ibid). Freire (1970/2011) offers what some consider his foremost contribution to deconstructing the complex relationship between that of student, teacher, and

knowledge through the creation of his concepts of *banking education* and *conscientização*.

In his later writings, Freire's (1998) pedagogy addresses the challenges to education brought about by neoliberalism with regard to "ethics, aesthetics, politics, and research" (Roberts, 2003, p. 455). Freire discusses liberation, power, ideology, agency, injustice, and the formation of knowledge (Roberts, 2003). The dominant discourse of neoliberalism prophesied as inevitable created through an ideology supported by those who argue economic and social inequity as a necessary function and outcome within societies based upon meritocracy and open-market logic can be challenged. A new critical-democratic neoliberal imaginary can be achieved by that which Freire posits as cardinal ethical understandings which, stress the human capacity to investigate, analyse, criticise, apply worth to, choose, rupture from, and hope, as the foundation for opposing the conservative neoliberal imaginary which has become commonplace (Roberts, 2003).

A core belief of Paulo Freire and for many who embrace the perspective of critical pedagogy is that human fullness will never be achieved, it is an ongoing fluid process influenced and shaped by history, class, culture, economics and most importantly knowledge. Freirean philosophy is not idealistic; however, it is hopeful and in being so creates one way in which Freire diverges from the philosophies of Marx and the critical theory of the Frankfurt School. While many of Freire's writings build upon the Hegelian philosophy of dialectics, Marx's theory of dialectic materialism, and Sartre's existentialism (Dale, 2003); he expands upon these philosophies in important ways that have made Freire such an important contributor within the philosophy of education. Freire, similar to Marx, argues it is the ability for self - awareness, creative thought and ultimately our species' ability to create change, which makes us as human beings truly distinct (Blackburn, 2000). The concept of human

potential for transformation is essential to Freirean philosophy and is captured when Freire suggests, "no reality transforms itself" (1970/2011, p. 53). Similar to Marx and critical theory, Freire also borrows from the Hegelian philosophy of dialectics. Simply explained, dialectic is a contradiction. Hegel believed contradictions were necessary within society for they provide a method for defining and understanding our world, and chose this method for understanding historical transformation (Ritzer, 2008). Hegel posited that these contradictions are creations of our mind and therefore could be resolved through the reasoning of our mind itself. Marx and Freire, however, did not subscribe to this belief and hence developed the important concept of praxis for understanding our world (Ritzer, 2008; Freire, 1970/2011). Freire advocated for the liberation of all people; his humanist perspectives argue how the individual within society possesses the power to transform their own oppression. He suggests that although education has historically been used as a political mechanism for control and domination, once transformed, education becomes the key for liberation.

Critical Pedagogy is a culmination of many different theories and as a result has been criticised for its complexity and ability to be taught and understood. It has been criticised as a grand theory negating the local experience while focusing on the universal experience of oppression, and at times has been accused of being class focused (Macedo, 2011 in Freire, 1970/2011). Thus, significant challenges occupy the thoughts of those who subscribe to the ethos of critical pedagogy. Paulo Freire states that,

> these issues include, but are by no means limited to, the manner in which subjectivity is constituted in language; the relationship among discourse, social action, and historical memory; the connection between interpretation; and, how forms of authority may be addressed and justified in the context of a feminist

pedagogy (Freire, in McLaren and Leonard, 1993: X).

However, while there are those whose aim is to make critical pedagogy more accessible, there are also those who recognise that in so doing they risk simplifying the strength in its ability of remaining mindful to the global dynamics of difference (Freire, in McLaren and Leonard, 1993). Also of significance to the growth of critical pedagogy, and at the same time its challenge is the awareness of new voices and approaches to liberation and transformation that are not defined through a Western world understanding of stories of emancipation. Narratives of liberation must remain contextual and yet at the same time, similar to Diasporas, they must seize the opportunity to embrace and act globally (Freire, in McLaren and Leonard, 1993).

Critical Pedagogy was inspired to empower, it beckons individuals to begin to question not only the type of knowledge presented to them but the meaning of this knowledge. Freire argues for the solidarity of men and women in their quest for humanness; it is within his discussions of the human consciousness that Freire's critical pedagogy begins to emerge as a philosophy of its own, one enshrined in hopefulness. Crucial to the understanding of critical pedagogy is its awareness of the practice of power; such awareness is not endorsed to maintain certain hegemonic experiences of privilege; rather this critical consciousness is designed to facilitate the development of new social constructions founded on diverse customs, communications, and characteristics (Freire, in McLaren and Leonard, 1993).

Important then is the recognition of multiple forms of power and authority within any given society where inequality proliferates and implicates the understanding of diverse lived experiences. Cornel West (1993) summarises this best when he suggests, "Freire's project of democratic dialogue is attuned to the concrete operations of power (in and out of

the classroom) and grounded in the painful yet empowering process of conscientization" (West, 1993, in McLaren and Leonard, 1993, p. XIII). Critical pedagogy is *liberatory pedagogy* (Freire, 1970/2011); it provides the form of praxis that enables transformation, transformation, which is brought about through human consciousness with intent (Freire, 1970/2011). Through transformed education individuals will learn how to critically address the right to resist and unpack the many forms of oppression that directly or indirectly threaten their survival and human right. Neoliberalism, for the purpose of this research, will be defined as economic policies that focus on,

> macroeconomic stability; cutting back government budgets; privatization of government operations; ending of tariffs and other forms of protection; facilitating movement of foreign capital; emphasizing exports; charging user fees for many public services; and lowering worker protections through flexible labour markets (Klees, 2008, p.312).

Thus, "neoliberalization has meant, in short, the financialization of everything" (Harvey, 2005/2007, p.33).

Context

As a result of the intensification of globalisation, discourses recognising the merits of diversity in and outside of education are increasing (Rizvi and Lingard, 2000). However, the debate with regard to a hierarchy in curriculum and standardisation in education appears to simultaneously captivate and paralyse us within the neoliberal imaginary. Neoliberalism creates changes to methods of quality assurance and accountability in higher education, and in so doing leads to "the obsession with what Lyotard calls 'performativity'- everything to be translated into easily measured outcomes" (Mayo, 2009, p. 96). This creates a hierarchy in curriculum as measurable outcomes

force institutions of higher education to place an economic premium on what is deemed optimum while eliminating that which is deemed un-necessary (Mayo, 2009).

Worldwide, institutions of higher education continue to advocate science and professional curriculums over the value of the humanities. In an economic climate where we have become inundated with media messages on the importance of quality education for the growth of knowledge based societies, where creative thinking is being espoused for its importance in research and development, and becoming an entrepreneur is not only esteemed but valued, many systems of education continue to debate the significance of a liberal-arts education over the usefulness of a vocational education (Postiglione, 2013).

Historically, it was during the period of prolific industrialisation in the early 1900s that the power of the church would become eclipsed and many developed societies would observe the explosion of the bureaucratisation of education. In the aftermath of World War II, mass education became the shared experience of many in the developed world. No longer would basic education be used to maintain the privilege of a few; nor, would the function of education be used solely for that which Emil Durkheim posited as an instrument to impart moral guidance. Thus, replacing both the tradition of privilege and the moral guidance of religion becomes economics (Davies and Guppy, 2010).

Currently, the intensification of globalisation is the driving force in contemporary times for the massification of higher education and the structural change of the university as experienced worldwide. Shifting from industrial economies to knowledge economies becomes the key to a nation's growth and sustainability; hence, access to higher education becomes significant to goals for both individual and state wellbeing (UNESCO, IIEP Newsletter, 2007). Speaking to this, Altbach and Knight (2007) posit,

> [g]lobal capital has for the first time, heavily invested in knowledge industries worldwide, including higher education and advanced training. This investment reflects the emergence of the "knowledge society", the rise of the service sector, and the dependence of many societies on knowledge products and highly educated personnel for economic growth (p.290).

Diversity as a result of globalisation is experienced politically, economically, and culturally; thus, access to higher education in a globalised world creates challenges as access causes institutions of higher education to redefine traditional and often times hierarchically based notions of who the learner is, and necessitates transformation for who the learner is becoming.

The issues of access to higher education are many. Within a neoliberal climate of educational restructuring, the purpose of higher education as a system for democratisation is questioned and replaced by economic productivity. This change has created significant debate and these debates highlight the tensions between the value, growth, and enrichment higher education imparts, while challenging concepts that knowledge skills alone lead to the creation of "active citizenship" (Borg and Mayo, 2006, p.23 in Mayo, 2009. p. 97). Jacques Delores (1996) when creating a collaborative report for UNESCO writes of these tensions and nearly two decades later they continue to provide insight, for it is during this period of significant expansion in higher education that the acknowledgement of the limits to neoliberalism requires us to rethink the pathways of inclusion for all future learners who do not envision higher education as a possibility:

> The tension between...the need for competition, and ...the concern for equality of opportunity: this is a classic issue, which has been facing both economic and social policy-makers and educational policy-makers since the beginning of the century...Today... the

> pressures of competition have caused many of those in
> positions of authority to lose sight of their mission,
> which is to give each human being the means to take
> full advantage of every opportunity (Delores et al,
> 1996, Pp. 17-18).

Thus, while policies on diversity and multiculturalism frame and provide important democratic foundations for access and equity in higher education, they are not enough. Institutions of higher education in Canada and throughout the world must not lose sight of the societal values revealed, explored, and challenged in higher education. Therefore, the form of education chosen by society becomes an indication of the character of that society (UNESCO, 2008).

Rationale

During a time when higher education functions as a system of almost exclusively preparing the student for the knowledge economy, the threat of neoliberalism becomes manifested in higher education. There are those in higher education who now more than ever before question its responsibility and ask, what form of education is required for a future world society (Connell, 2013; Giroux, 2012, 2013b; Apple, 2011)? Higher education, once believed to be the forum for engaging and defending citizenship has become criticised for its market driven paradigm reducing its primary role for creating citizens within a society to a commercial base ideology shaping all levels of education with no talk of mutual leadership or critical social responsibility. Far too many institutions of higher education have become driven by economic, military, and vocational interests that lack authentic effort in the humanities; thus, contradicting the traditional intention of university and higher education (Giroux, 2012).

In Australia, where the neoliberal imaginary has had a growing effect on higher education (OECD, 2007), Raewyn Connell posits three consequences of the neoliberal agenda-

> First, is the reproduction of global dependency. We are positioned in global as well as local markets, and the global market leaders are Harvard, Columbia, Cambridge and their peers. Their curricula serve as the gold standard… Local intellectual cultures are undermined, and the potential wealth of global diversity in knowledge formation is shrunk to a single hierarchy of centrality and marginality… Second, is the entrenchment of social hierarchies in knowledge production and circulation … Third, and perhaps most serious, is the impact of market logic on our relation with truth (Connell, 2013, Pp. 3-4).

Connell (2013) argues for a global dialogue where alternatives to neoliberal policies are explored through contemporary forms of "intellectual labour" (p.8), which necessitates the need to incorporate different bodies of collaboration built upon mutual respect, including a crucial association with present knowledge so that the development is enlightening. Assisting institutions to nurture such activity will be challenging; however, it is a challenge *worth our intelligence* (ibid).

Purpose

The purpose of this research is to investigate the possibility of critical pedagogy in the context of neoliberal restructuring of higher education. This article argues for the pursuit of a pedagogy with cosmopolitan intent; one, that in "lifting complex ideas in to the human space" (Said, in Giroux 2012) critically engages the learner and educator so to create "border literacy" (Giroux, 2012); which, Giroux defines as learning to read and write from different perspectives. This is an extraordinary concept when applied to the challenges of social justice and equity; for, while there are those whose

aim it is to internationalise higher education, there has been little focus paid to "different ways of knowing … transforming them [institutions of higher education] from patriarchal bastions into more gender and ethnically inclusive institutions" (Mayo, 2009, p. 98).

As a result of the intensification of globalisation, there becomes a dire need to create connections between critical pedagogy, education, and employment. University is a space that should create ideas; educators who function as political activist and argue for forms of pedagogy that close the gap between higher education and everyday life (Giroux, 2012) are needed to challenge the present neoliberal imaginary. Yet, for those who advocate the importance of critical pedagogy, the question becomes how does one reconcile neoliberal efficiencies and competencies with a commitment to such a pedagogical approach? Herein lies one of the many challenges for those in higher education; for, as Easthope & Easthope (2000) posit, if neoliberalism is perceived successful in education, it is only as a result that it has been accepted as a natural extension to many of the professional beliefs that already exist.

Methodology

Drawing on qualitative case study research I intend to investigate the impact of neoliberal accountability regimes on faculty members who identify as critical pedagogues. One of the principal goals of this research is to gain a deeper understanding of how neoliberalism has shaped the experience of those practicing as critical pedagogues within higher education and why critical pedagogy is of increasing importance at the start of the twenty-first century.
As a form of qualitative research I have chosen case study methodology as conceptualised by Robert Stake (1995) and Robert Yin (2003). Hesse-Bieber and Leavy (2006), state, qualitative research "differs in terms of [its] assumptions

regarding the extent to which knowledge can be "objective", most qualitative paradigms agree on the importance of subjective meanings individuals bring to the research process and acknowledge the importance of the social construction of reality" (p. 75). Baxter and Jack (2008), claim that the qualitative case study is one path in education research that promotes the examination of an experience or event within its context utilising multiple sources. It is this approach, which "can safeguard that the case or cases being studied are studied not through one perspective but rather multiple perspectives which in turn affords a variety of issues to be exposed and understood" (p.544).

Hence, by choosing the case study method and the approach of the qualitative interview my goal is to create an analysis that is rich in breadth and depth, while providing an authentic and meaningful account of my participant's experience (Patton, 2002).

Data Collection

Patton (2002) suggests that the significance of the qualitative interview lies in its ability to "to capture how those being interviewed view their world, to learn their terminology and judgments, and to capture the complexities of their individual perceptions and experiences" (p.348). Therefore, in order to develop a deeper understanding of neoliberalism in the context of higher education, an instrumental case study was conducted using the standardised open-ended interview as conceptualised by Patton (2002). Patton (2002) suggests this interview approach as it affords the researcher the ability to conscientiously design each question prior to the interview, while respecting the importance of the participant's ability to answer using his or her own voice.

Choosing the method of purposeful sampling, participants were required to be a faculty member of Education, Social Science or Humanities; and to identify themselves as a critical pedagogue. Patton (2002) indicates how purposeful sampling used in qualitative research creates a detailed account of the participants' experience, where the researcher is then able to study the issues that are paramount to the purpose of the investigation. The standardised open-ended interview best informed my research, for the principal features of it allow for interview consistency, it uses limited time wisely, and assists in the process of data analysis through its comparative ability.

Data Analysis

Robert E. Stake (1995), when discussing data analysis for case study research states, "At no point in naturalistic case research are the qualitative and quantitative techniques less alike than during analysis. The qualitative researcher concentrates on the instance, trying to pull it apart and put it back together again more meaningfully- analysis and synthesis in direct interpretation" (p.75).

Once the interviews were completed for this research, a data analysis using an approach informed by critiques of neoliberalism and critical pedagogy theorists was enlisted. While Patton (2002) cautions that no formulaic recipe exists for qualitative analysis, each interview conducted for the purpose of this research was transcribed, breaking down original text so as to separate rich experience from possible incidental. This highlighted important patterns and the substance of that which was being investigated within this research.

Following shortly after each interview transcribed, the coding process was then conducted leading to an analysis of the data. Coding of my interviews consisted of several readings

of the transcribed work, with each reading providing me the opportunity to highlight, underline, circle key terms, and comment on the interviewee's responses while adding notes with regard to non-verbal body language. I also included within the transcript notes thoughts and questions. No formula exists for qualitative data analysis, thus leading Patton (2002) to suggest, "no way exists of perfectly replicating the researcher's analytical thought process. No straight forward tests can be applied for reliability and validity" (p. 433). Each qualitative interview is as exclusive to the research as the analysis used for each qualitative investigation.

Findings

The findings presented are from interviews conducted with three faculty members from a university located in South-Western Ontario, Canada. Each interview conducted provided me with the opportunity to investigate the impact of neoliberal accountability regimes on faculty members who identify themselves as critical pedagogues. For purposes of confidentiality the participant's names have not been used. Each of the participants interviewed for this research are critical pedagogues in an institution of higher education, with two of the participants instructing at an affiliate to the larger University that one of the participants is a faculty member of. All three participants are in the field of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences; they each expressed the importance for ongoing research on neoliberalism, critical pedagogy and issues of equity and social justice.

Existing literature struggles to define neoliberalism as a result of globalisation; however, Hall, Massey, and Rustin (2011) suggest, that while "the term 'neoliberal' is not a satisfactory one…that naming neoliberalism is *politically* necessary" (p. 10). Ball (2012), attempts to create clarity regarding neoliberalism when he posits *three waves* of the

neoliberal project: *'proto' neoliberalism*, *'roll-back'
neoliberalism*, and *'roll-out' neoliberalism* (p.3). Ideology,
then, performs the function of messenger by circulating and
authenticating projects of power and privilege, further
propagating notions of the neoliberal imaginary (Hall &
O'Shea, 2011). Neoliberalism is penetrating all levels of
social life and informing what many now accept as everyday
thinking. Regarding education, Ball (2012) suggests,
"Education policy is being 'done' in new locations, on
different scales, by new actors and organisations" (p.4). As
a result, academics teaching and researching during this
phenomenon too must *adapt, reflect and learn"* (ibid).   The
faculty members selected for this research speak to these
struggles, while providing rich accounts of how neoliberalism
challenges and concerns them, both, philosophically and
pedagogically. Thus, it is in analysing these interviews that,
while many themes emerge, there are three that are most
prevalent: The Neoliberal Mystique; Quality Assurance & the
Audit Culture; and Transgressing: Global education,
Neoliberalism, and Critical Pedagogy.

The Neoliberal Mystique

When considering the research question of how
neoliberalism has shaped the experience of faculty members
in higher education who are sympathetic to the principles of
critical pedagogy and practice dialogical teaching and
learning, while reconciling neoliberal efficiencies and
competencies with a commitment to such an approach, each
participant is asked what *they* think of neoliberalism. The
answer each participant provides begins to shed light onto
the ambiguousness of neoliberalism. The corporate presence
in higher education cannot be denied as demonstrated by
the prolific rise in enrollment rates in nations such as Brazil,
whereby "between 1995 and 2008, the growth rate of
private sector enrollment was 259.3%, while the public
sector growth was around 81%" (Gomes et al., 2012,

p.236). When discussing internationalisation and higher education, Altbach and Knight (2007) share,

> [m]ost of the world's more than 2 million international students are self-funded, that is, they and their families pay for their own academic work. Students are therefore the largest source of funds for international education-not governments, academic institutions, or philanthropies (p.294).

Therefore, there is growing concern that the domination of neoliberal markets within and between nation-states is creating an ability to silence both citizen and state, while simultaneously re-creating a class power not experienced since the pre-Depression era (Harvey, 2007). Thus, further complicating how we have come to understand higher education, citizenship, and globalisation is the prolific spread of neoliberalism. It quickly becomes clear, as each of the research participants begins to share their perspectives on what they think of neoliberalism, just how layered and complex neoliberalism is. It is this complexity that one participant speaks to when they state, "it's a question to struggle with…I mean to look at it, you have to work with it, to look at it from different perspectives. It would be *easy* for me to say it's [neoliberalism] a bad thing". Stephen Ball (2012) speaks to these complexities in the forward of his book *Global Education Inc*. (2012), when he states,

> I do not take up a simple or obvious position in relation to neo-liberalism…what I am trying to do here is to provide tools and methods for thinking about neo-liberalism rather than telling you what I think you should think (2012, p. xiii).

When speaking to neoliberalisation, David Harvey (2007) suggests that the accepted inquiry of the dynamics at play tends to focus on the mix between the strength of neoliberal beliefs, the urgency to acknowledge the financial pressures of different kinds, and more efficient paths to remake

government so as to advance an ambitious environment within the world market. Although each have played a compelling part in neoliberalisation, the absence of any probe of the class power endeavored are surprising. However, Harvey (2007) argues that the one unrelenting experience within the contextual story of neoliberalism has been its global habit to escalate social inequality and to unmask the most disadvantaged aspects of society to the cold exactness and blunt consequence of pushing those with less to the outer edge. What is even more confounding for Harvey is the customary acceptance of this as a small or regrettable outcome of neoliberalism. That this could be the actual intent of the newly incarnated neoliberalism emerges as inconceivable (Harvey, 2007).

Thus, one participant when speaking to inequality and issues of power and exclusion shares, "I think that it [neoliberalism] is incredibly oppressive of difference and diversity, it is such an effective way to obscure power". While another states, "as it stands, it [neoliberalism] is really designed to maintain old systems of power that are exclusionary". As an ideology each participant shares neoliberalism as being dangerous, with one participant stating,

> I think that it is *the* most dangerous, probably, current of thought that exists right now globally. I think that the danger in neoliberalism is it's *over simplification* and its *a-historicism*. I think that for me those are the two pieces that trouble me the most, because I think that as an instructor, my students find those aspects the most difficult to refute.

Gomes et al., (2012) speak to this *over-simplification* and *a-historicism* when they state, "We would like to stress that the contemporary social condition of globalising HE cannot be properly understood without a thorough exploration of all the socio-historical phenomena…" (.p.222).

When placing under the lens issues of Programme prioritisation and competition another participant shares, "increasingly we are being told it's about the number of bums in seats. So, we have to think of ways to increase student numbers to justify our existence". Thus, the university as an institution finds itself at the start of the twenty-first century as an organisation increasingly having to re-shape itself in the image of and for big business. Higher education is now a product; higher education, once the forum for discussion and exploration is now viewed as a mean to an end for employment, and this is causing those who teach as critical pedagogues in higher education to consider this as highly problematic. One participant shares,

> We are always being pushed toward thinking in austerity terms, [how] we think about education. It [neoliberalism] has framed education in a very problematic way; that education should *not* be connected to social justice, should *not* be connected to thinking about equality. That education *should be* about the accumulation of wealth or at least fulfilling middle class aspirations. That education should be about becoming a *citizen with money*, as opposed to or in addition to a citizen who thinks more broadly about the world.

Altbach et al.'s (2009) work reveals that higher education once viewed as an institution that endorses public good, the development of community, citizenship, quality of life, while encouraging economic growth has more recently become viewed as a launch for private good as universities themselves seek to create bridges to prosper from both globalisation and the mobility of people. Thus, as globalisation continues, the movement of people, the expansion of curriculums in higher education, and the growth in distance learning assisted through the proliferation of technology, it has become argued that newer methods for quality assurance are not only required but also significantly needed.

What then is the possibility of critical pedagogy in the context of neoliberal restructuring of higher education; and, how is critical pedagogy of increasing importance at the start of the twenty-first century? This next section looks at the impact of neoliberalism on teaching while further exploring Programme prioritisation and the unexpected discussion on the interconnectedness of teacher evaluations and performativity in the era of the audit culture.

Quality Assessments & the Audit Culture

Davies and Guppy (2010) posit that there has never before been as much discussion on accountability and performance measures in education as there are at present. Global comparisons become provocative tools for heads of state as higher education increasingly becomes market-driven and curricula are valued for their economic usefulness. However, to suppose that the marketplace or marketplace indications can appropriately decide *all* is to suppose that *all* in theory can be treated as a product. The marketplace then, it is supposed, creates the proper model for all personal activity (Harvey, 2007). As educational performance measures in terms of teaching quality and student outcomes are increasingly adopted in higher education, Ball (2012) when discussing performativity signals Lyotard (1984) and suggests that it is the archetypical shape of neoliberal politics that embodies "subjectivity, institutional practices, economy and government. It is both individualizing and totalizing. It produces both an active docility and depthless productivity" (Lyotard 1984, P. 38 in Ball, 2012, P. 33). El-Khawas et al (1998) in their report for the World Bank suggest that many researchers have recorded that quality assurance protocols have resulted in institutions of higher education paying "greater attention to issues of effective teaching and learning… Quality assurance systems that focus on institutions… have found that institutional management has improved, that strategic planning has been strengthened

and that programs have become more responsive to changing needs" (p.7). However, they caution, limitations have also been noted, such as conformity and an insurmountable amount of administrative tasks. This has led to challenges of administration in higher education eclipsing at times the educational concerns that reinforce the pathways to quality assurance. Further, they argue that in consideration of these transformations, this present era of educational practice may become antiquated by the movement toward quantified frameworks and resolved procedures for a number of quality assurance systems.

When considering how neoliberalism has shaped the experience of academics in higher education, who are sympathetic to the principles of critical pedagogy and practice dialogical teaching and learning in higher education one participant when speaking to both the challenges that arise from measures of performativity and the consequence of teacher evaluations as an academic in higher education states:

> I have a colleague who acknowledges that if he taught the class the way he wanted to, he just recently got tenure, his teaching evaluations would cascade; they would plummet! Because right now, he teaches… *he's funny*… he teaches what the *students* want to hear. He's got it all pieced together, very aesthetic… But, that's not really how *he* wants to teach the course…there is a way in which these performance incentives, which [at our university] are not really performance incentives because we don't get merit pay… makes it difficult to stand against…So, I think that those kinds of mechanisms are troubling…

Altbach et al., (2009) indicate that queries regarding the intent of higher education have become increasingly weighted, in particular, for developing nations where the requirement for those skilled in the sciences and technologies, as well as those who can provide guidance

through their fortuitous knowledge in the humanities, and are creative, adaptable, and provide ethical wisdoms for social growth are sought. Thus, it is Atlbach et al.'s (2009) position that quality assurance has become a principal focus in higher education as many countries and their institutions of higher education compete to prepare their students for the knowledge economy and the goal of achieving a variety of capabilities to engage with a more complicated and interconnected world are required. However, this leaves open the role of democracy; if education is to become *just* within the rush of neoliberal capitalism we must begin to, as Stuart Hall (2008) suggests, move away from a *politics of guarantee* towards a *politics of possibility*. In order to achieve this, the question becomes what is a democratic education and what does democracy mean to education? Freire (1998) posits a democratic education involves a language of possibility, one in which a, "pedagogy of questioning gain[s] ground against a pedagogy of answers" (p.61).

If quality assurance has become a principle focus for many countries and their institutions of higher education to prepare their students for the knowledge economy and the goal of achieving a variety of capabilities to engage with a more complicated and interconnected world are required, what one participant shares in their discussion on the possibilities of critical pedagogy within the context of neoliberal quality assessments/evaluations holds very serious implications not only for the integrity of teaching, but of equal significance, the integrity and hope of how the learner is to engage with the material being taught:

> I think teaching critical pedagogy is *difficult because of* the neoliberal context… It's like student evaluations of teaching. I have colleagues who do extraordinarily well and they're excellent colleagues, I'm not disparaging them in any way at all. But, if you are telling students that Canada is racist, which they [the student] do not want to hear and that our assumptions are racist, *and*

that they might have their own implication in this racism… Those kinds of things don't go over well on teaching evaluations. So, when institutions look at individuals who teach challenging topics and compare them to their peers, and compare them on something like a student evaluation of teaching, you're penalised for doing that kind of work…

A disconnect is created then between the literature consulted and the reality of this academic's lived experience or does it become a misunderstanding of how we define *knowledge* economy? The potential for critical pedagogy to unpack social and political experiences becomes one of its most daunting tasks, even more so at present as a result of neoliberalism. Joe Kincheloe (2004) speaks to this challenge when discussing what he terms the *Great Denial* in education, whereby conservative educators have for far too long existed in denial of the political aspect of education. In the *Great Denial*, curricula and curriculum that disregard the threat of the status quo are perceived as empirical and politically correct (Kincheloe, 2004). Kincheloe (2004) suggests that critical pedagogy argues how such judgments are not founded on a comprehension of power and are dismissing how social participation is constructed through unequal patterns of power.

When discussing who performs the evaluations of teaching and the potential implications of this one participant states that the evaluations used at the institution in which they are a an academic are student-teacher evaluations; which, while she agrees that the student should be involved in the assessment process, she also fears that this potentially places the student in the role of expert. When discussing the implications of the current method of assessments this same participant shares,

I have a colleague, a good friend, who teaches at another institution right now, she is a woman of colour and her teaching evaluations are not as high… they are very good,

but they are not as high as they would like them to be. She has had to put together literature on how women of colour have a difficult time in the classroom because of things like, white students can't read their body language, and because she complains about racialism she looks like she has a vested interest and she's whining. Whereas, I complain about racialism [as a white person] and I make my career off of it… quite easily.

What are the implications of such assessments other than to maintain a status quo? In an era of internationalisation of higher education ought there not exist a reciprocated understanding and respect of Other? It is to this experience that Freire (1970/2011) shares,

> Those who steal the words of others develop a deep doubt in the abilities of the others and consider them incompetent. Each time they say their word without hearing the word of those whom they have forbidden to speak, they grow more accustomed to power and acquire a taste for guiding, ordering, and commanding (p.134).

Another participant when discussing evaluations in teaching shares how she finds an environment in universities is created that encourages performance rather than an instructor's education philosophy. This same participant, who is a member of another faculty, shares that while evaluations of teaching in her department administer both peer and student-teacher evaluations, they prove no less problematic,

> Our peers evaluate us all! It's a realisation…I'm not quite sure I'm making a criticism, but that it's a broader realisation, because I don't think that you *shouldn't* be held accountable for the things that you do, we all have jobs to do and we all should be committed and so forth. But, I think it's the kinds of things that get left out. It's the kinds of relationships that we have with students, it's the way we mentor students, it's the ways that our *philosophy* of teaching informs how you connect with

> students, how you teach them, how you feel about them. Those things cannot be scored! ... There's a *human* type of relationship that we are invested in with our students that a 2.5 on a paper, for me, cannot capture!

Thus, neoliberalism is changing how we perceive educational values. Globally, there is a push to link higher education to 'human capital' through program prioritisation and an increasing focus on efficiency and effectiveness. However, accountability measures while needed to ensure quality in higher education often conflict with what is deemed equitable, just, and autonomous. Giroux (2013c, in Lake & Kess, eds. 2013) posits that there is more at stake here than the crisis of government and the suppression of *critical thought*. Too many spaces for learning have become *dead zones*. Giroux continues by stating that too often now the learning environment has become a space void of creativity, critical thinking, or reflexivity. Higher education, he argues, has diminished its civic view for corporate interests by re-shaping itself as an accreditation industry for the learner and a laboratory for the reduction in faculty members.

Transgressing: Global Education, Neoliberalism, & Critical Pedagogy

This next section will be devoted to the increasing focus on global education, what role neoliberalism is thought to hold within that, and why critical pedagogy could be of importance to global education. Global education at the start of the twenty-first century is big business; global education is now a product marketed to attract foreign students, sold, and used to create alliances to set up foreign campuses as a method for the massification in higher education and a means to create a market ready supply of labour for foreign local business (Ball, 2012). However, Rizvi and Lingard (2010) suggest that unique to the university environment, more so than any other institution, has been its ability to

profoundly engage in issues regarding diversity. Thus, universities are at the heart of contested meanings of personal and learned existence, as they contend with the ever growing challenges and opportunities from a diverse population, while simultaneously grappling with transformations brought about through globalisation, the knowledge economy, and as a result the economically fortuitous environment that now presents itself.

Although there has existed a history of mobility for the learner in higher education, of recent past it had been made accessible for those deemed academically talented from developing nations as a result of scholarships. Then slowly toward the end of the last century a shift began that correlated with neoliberal globalisation whereby mobility in higher education became synonymous with economic trade rather than global aid. Global higher education driven and framed by the neoliberal rationale in the 21st Century has become perceived as a window into industry (Rizvi & Lingard, 2010). However, there are also those who are critical of this current direction and what is meant by global higher education. Therefore, it becomes important, as the shift in higher education moves from a liberal system to a neoliberal system to understand concepts and approaches of global higher education, the contradictions, and the implications (Spring, 2009).

Schugurensky (2006) suggests three historical periods that help to define the concept and purpose of higher education and these are: 1) The initial liberal custom of the university as guardian to virtuous and humanising principles, 2) The university as a service organisation for the production of human capital to fulfill professional/corporate requirements, and 3) The university as advocate for social justice and change. Increasingly what is observed at present are universities functioning explicitly as service organisations for the production of human capital, which is creating a greater focus in higher education on foreign student markets and

faculty as research entrepreneurs, where ultimately knowledge is treated as a product (Schugurensky, 2006 in Spring, 2009). Therefore, it becomes these current concepts and approaches in global education that create tensions for the academics interviewed for this research with one participant sharing,

> Well, here's where I start to get nasty. I think that the whole notion of global education, not to be completely cynical, but the dominant rationale within the discourse is definitely to facilitate, I think, a work force that is comfortable working for businesses that have locations internationally. So, in the same way that researchers are being (says quietly) *forced?* (Now speaking with excitement) *Urged?* You know *challenged* to do international research. I think that it's the same thing for students; and, do I think that is to solve the problems of the world? Only if you can make a buck from it; I think that the whole *global education* thing is more designed to attract international students here, to attract international researchers- the top one's- here, and to open up new interesting sites for research.

What then are the possibilities and purpose of critical pedagogy in global education within a neoliberal climate of educational restructuring in higher education? Bourdieu (1979/1984) when contemplating the distribution of power and "the strategies for use in these struggles" (p.315) argues, "now economic capital and educational capital- are simultaneously instruments of power and stakes in the struggle for power; they are unequally powerful in real terms and unequally recognized as legitimate principles of authority or signs of distinction"(ibid). In 1999 in an effort to define the understandings and purpose of higher education in a globalised world, Ministers of Education and university leaders of twenty-nine countries in Europe set forth a document titled *The Bologna Process*. Contrary to popular thought, the European University Association (EUA) declares that the intent of this document was not to 'harmonise'

higher education between European states; rather this document was created to recognise the complexities of globalisation, to improve mobility, quality, and access in higher education, to inspire, protect, and advocate for both the individual nation-state, the autonomy of the university and the global learner; and, to be an ever evolving document (EAU/AUCC). When considering these characteristics of the Bologna Process I am reminded of Bourdieu (2005) once more who posits, the "real is relational" (Bourdieu, 2005 in Gomes et al., 2012, p.222).

For close to a decade the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada (AUCC) observed the activities of the EUA, both its challenges and successes, through the adaptation of the Bologna Process. However, it was not until 2009 that the AUCC met with the EUA to discuss the Bologna Process and its implications for Canada and the future of global higher education (Report of the 2009 AUCC Symposium). While the research participants in this study do not directly speak to the implications of the Bologna Process in Europe or Canada; as faculty members in a Canadian university that has only of recent begun to aggressively pursue global education what each share with regard to the challenges and implications of neoliberal globalisation and how this translates in higher education leave many questions for this researcher. One participant who remains open to the potential of neoliberalism and global education shares,

> I think it [global education] has a lot of good possibilities for a vibrant, diversified community. I have not seen it here [in this institution]; I have not seen that translated here; at least not in this space. I think that in terms of exchange and collaboration, I think that the goal is a good one and it should be an ongoing one. But, I also think there is a wider cast and search for that one elusive student or students, who can bring more money into the institutions. We charge people from China or India lots and lots of money to come here. I cannot

speak to what other people do on campus, but just from my own observations, sometimes we set people up for failure. Because, the goal isn't really…how do you *help*, *nurture*, and *prepare* this person to meet the goals they have? But to how much money can they bring into the institution. I think we set students up and we do them a great dis-service in that regard.

As nations, such as Canada, increasingly decentralise their systems of higher education, universities are placed in positions of having to seek funding elsewhere, and often this is through increasing their foreign student enrollment and through creating international partnerships in research. Thus, Altbach and Knight (2007) posit, "[g]lobalization may be unalterable, but internationalization involves many choices. Globalization tends to concentrate wealth, knowledge, and power in those already possessing these elements" (p.291). When speaking of global education one aspect that is mentioned is international research and how this affects faculty. One participant shares,

> What I see right now is *pressure* at *all* levels in the university for everyone to have an international dimension to his or her research. For example, researchers who wouldn't necessarily be drawn to international work, or have any experience in it, are jumping on board... Often, if they demonstrate an international dimension to their research, they are more likely to receive funding…I can speak to one example where I was in Africa doing research… to see researchers coming from Canadian universities…with *no* African experience, *no* cultural context, *no awareness*, initiating research agendas that I would find problematic within that specific cultural, political, economic…you know I think that really is part of the problem- the way knowledge is produced when it is about the Global South, *without* any consultation with those communities, *without* any kind of *interpretative* context. What are you doing except practicing neo-colonialism? So, what do I think? We are creating a context for it; *we*, are creating a generation of scholars that aren't necessarily critical

about it, particularly if they don't come from a critical faculty…

Rizvi and Lingard (2010) suggest that if knowledge for economy and understanding of Other are to be viewed as central to the goals of education then there is a requirement for economies and culture to be understood as historical and fluid in a manner that moves away from focusing on tradition to a manner that explores the subjectivity of these differential experiences. Critically important then are the questions we ask, 'for what purpose', 'for whose benefit', and 'whose knowledge'? Freire (1970/2011) suggests,

> [n]ot all men and women have sufficient courage for this encounter-but when they avoid encounter they become inflexible and treat others as mere objects; instead of nurturing life, they kill life; instead of searching for life; they flee from it (p.129).

This then leads us into our next discussion of why critical pedagogy would be of importance to global education and why a critical pedagogic philosophy is of importance in higher education.

Although democracy maintains itself as the focus for what the meaning of education should be, how and for who education should be organised, and how it should be administrated; the core essence of a democratic education challenges citizens to ask, "what kind of a society do we want and what kinds of politics will help us get there" (Apple, 2011, p.23)? Thus, Giroux (2013a) argues that there emerges an obligation within higher education, specifically, to create a pedagogy that is at the heart of the principal worth of politics, an obligation that leads to liberation. When asked why critical pedagogy would be of importance to global education and if they could explain, one participant shares,

> I remember going to a talk a few years ago on campus where some students had gone on an exchange and they were invited to come and talk about their experiences. I remember sitting in a presentation where a young woman, very smart, talked about two experiences she had had so far in her career as an undergrad. I think she had been to France and she had been to an African country. It was really interesting how she talked about going to France to *learn*, but going to Africa to *help*. And, I thought "OH! Okay"? *This* is why we *need* critical pedagogy! How do you unpack that! I don't necessarily blame the student for that because I thinks its… part of my responsibility as a teacher is to say there are different ways to look at it; that's my job. But, what informs this idea that you're going to France to learn, but going to Africa to help? It really struck me. I thought that was such a powerful moment! It was a moment that reminded me of the importance of doing the kind of work that we do, to *disrupt* these kinds of ways of looking at the world. To shift our thinking to *yes*, you can actually go to an African country and *learn* something! You can go to India and l*earn* something! You don't always have to be in the heart of the Western civilization to learn…

This response speaks directly to the research question as to how critical pedagogy is of increasing importance in higher education at the start of the twenty-first century. It is to this that in *Teaching to Transgress* (1994), bell hooks suggests that if we were to investigate critically the time-honoured role of the university in its quest for that which is principled and collaborative regarding what is deemed as knowledge, it will become achingly apparent that preferences which, endorse Eurocentrism, androcentrism, and I would add capitalism, have perverted education so that it is in no shape or form about the pursuit of liberation. Thus, hooks (1994) beckons for the acknowledgement of Other, an acceptance of diverse knowledge, an unpacking of traditional ways of knowing, and an insistence that we revolutionise the learning environment, in curriculum and curricula, in a manner that explores ways to resuscitate a soul into a nefarious and doomed institution.

As measures of austerity increase many of the minor dynamic mediations that were created to transform higher education, to create a more liberal space for difference are at risk of being de-valued or deleted. These risks ought not to be overlooked. Neither must the shared responsibility of Other shift due to a belief that we have yet to create or apply the ideal action (hooks, 1994). However, to create a space in higher education that embraces every element of diversity we must have the *will*. Or, as one participant shares when speaking to the question of the importance of critical pedagogy,

> It is really important to me, and the more I see a shift away from critical pedagogy the more invested…I think it's important for me to become more invested in it. So, I don't want to hear conversations about why we're living or how we're living in a post-racial society, or a post-feminist society, because we're not yet. I don't want to have conversations about why we don't need to address homophobia anymore, because after all gays and lesbians can get married in Canada. So, I never want to be seduced into that kind of conversation. And, it's so easy, *so easy*. So, I think for all of those kinds of reasons, some of the reasons, it's much broader than that. But, those are the things that I teach and the things that I'm interested in. For me, I see a good deal of *value* in that.

I will share one last discussion regarding how critical pedagogy has come to be perceived in the academy and its pedagogic importance in higher education from the perspective of another participant who speaks to its significance being in the *reflexivity of privilege* when she states,

> I think we do tend to think that critical pedagogy is old fashioned. I think people… think it's old fashioned in the academy and there's a shinier discourse out there- its social entrepreneurism and it's public partnerships. They sound so great, like you can have your cake and eat it too. Like all right! I can have a social conscience, but can

have a really great job too, my really big house, and be a Prof, and be off for sixteen weeks a year! All those great things, and have my sabbaticals and stuff. We forget how privileged we are in higher ed., and that's probably a frightening thought. The *privilege*… and the *reflexivity* of our *privilege* has to start here!

Conclusion

This is an inauspicious road, for he who takes it- passive, lost, ruined- becomes henceforth the creature of another's will, frustrated in his transcendence and deprived of every value. But, it is an easy road; on it one avoids the strain involved in undertaking an authentic existence (de Beauvoir, 1949 in Kolmar/Bartkowski, 2010, p. 152).

Neoliberalism has carved out for each a challenge, a challenge to transform higher education and our understanding of Other. This will not be an *easy road*. One of the principal goals of this research was to gain a deeper understanding of how neoliberalism is shaping the experience of those practicing as critical pedagogues in higher education and why critical pedagogy is of increasing importance at the start of the twenty-first century. Specifically, this article attempted to answer the following questions: What are the possibilities for enacting critical pedagogies within a neoliberal climate of educational restructuring? How has neoliberalism shaped the experience of three faculty members in higher education, who are sympathetic to the principles of critical pedagogy and practice dialogical teaching and learning in higher education, while reconciling neoliberal efficiencies and competencies with a commitment to such an approach? What is the possibility of critical pedagogy in the context of neoliberal restructuring in higher education; and, how is critical pedagogy of increasing importance at the start of the twenty-first century?

If there could be one resonating implication from this research it is this- neoliberalism at the start of the twenty-first century has evolved in such a manner as a result of globalisation that it defies definition. It is complex, situated, sophisticated, and for some carries the belief of possibility. However, from the literature consulted and the interviews conducted one other thing is apparent, neoliberal globalisation has been extremely effective in restoring class power to a degree not experienced since the pre-Depression era and this carries with it many dangers with regard to increasing social inequality at a rate not experienced before. The other element that is surprising is how little attention has been devoted to this in research (Harvey, 2007). Neoliberal globalisation is transforming government to governance, citizen to consumer, while simultaneously creating a combination of people who are increasingly mobile, morally flexible, while being capable of communicating civic, corporate, and humanitarian worth (Ball, 2012). Thus, what becomes prevalent in this research is that while there exists a neoliberal mystique it is this mystique itself that perpetuates the ideology for the neoliberal imaginary. Therefore, in order to critically engage with how society defines neoliberalism a broader discourse is encouraged as to how we have come to think of neoliberalism by studying how it has evolved, its context, who it benefits, and who it leaves out.

Further, highlighted in this research is that while teacher evaluations are an important aspect of higher education, the present form that is dependent on quantitative measures simply cannot capture the value of those who engage critically with their student, their curricula and curriculum. The present evaluation methods also run the risk of placing the student in the role of expert while systematically reducing what an instructor does from performative to performance. New methods of assessment are required, methods that are able to capture the value of what is being taught and who is teaching, without reducing a discipline or

a person's worth to a number on a page. Global education, through the massification of higher education, is a newer phenomenon and the implications are vast; thus, better methods that are sensitive to cultural, political, social and economic diversity are required.

Similar to Ball (2012), this research is not exhaustive in any form; many things are missing due to the scope of the subject, such as both regional and international students' perspective on neoliberalism and how neoliberalism and globalisation are perceived to have changed their own educational experience, the value that many graduate applications now place on cultural capital for those applying, how this might exclude those who have not had the same opportunities due to socio-economic circumstance and the implications this holds, the pressure some students feel to choose a study path in higher education that will directly lead to employment; and, the possible consequence this holds for both the learner and society in time.

The academics selected for this research each spoke to these struggles, while providing deep and rich accounts of how neoliberalism challenges and concerns them, both, philosophically and pedagogically. I have endeavored to make the most striking points in this research, to peel back the mystique society has come to place on how we think of neoliberalism and how this is affecting those who practice as critical pedagogues in higher education in the hope that this will inspire more to begin engaging with the *reflexivity of our privilege*. I hope to inspire and point out that which Hall (2009) terms not a *politics of guarantee*, but rather, a *politics of possibility*. To new ways in which to accomplish our goals and ideals, to other ways in which to think about what is going on *out there* and *in here*. This will be a challenging road, however, it is a challenge worth *our intellectual labour*.

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