

Review Symposium: Pedagogy and Praxis in the Age of Empire: Toward a new Humanism by Peter McLaren and Nathalia Jaramillo
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Review One: Confronting the Nattering Nabobs of Neoliberalism and the Emissaries of Empire

Introduction

In the introduction to *Pedagogy and Praxis in the Age of Empire: Towards a New Humanism*, Peter McLaren and Nathalia Jaramillo appositely point to the fact that the unfolding historical landscape is one marked by global and domestic tumult, a crisis of capitalism, and a vicious, calculated assault on the very notion of human decency undertaken by a cabal of Washington war-mongers - "poster children for torture and endless war" - operating out of "a den of McCarthy-era redivivus" (p. 3).

In many ways, this volume embodies Marx's famous (as communicated in his 1843 letter to Arnold Ruge) call for the "ruthless criticism of everything existing." As Marx contended, the criticism offered had to be ruthless in two senses: the criticism could not be afraid of its own conclusions, nor of conflict with the powers that be. *Pedagogy and Praxis in the Age of Empire* is ruthless and scorching in its criticism not only of

the Bush *junta*, wars fought on behalf of corporate interests, American imperialism and global capitalism, but of the contemporary domestication of critical pedagogy, particularly in the United States. Despite the dismal context interrogated in this book, the authors also provide invaluable lessons in the politics of hope and the possibilities of radical imagination. As such, we welcome the opportunity to contribute to this important symposium on their work.

For our purposes here, we explore four major themes that animate McLaren and Jaramillo's text: the domestic and global consequences of neoliberalism, the role of Christian fundamentalism in promulgating American imperialism, educational policy in the service of neoliberalism and empire, and the need for a revolutionary critical pedagogy in the service of democratic socialism.

'Shock and Awe' at Home and Abroad: The Ravages of Neoliberalism

The war *on* Iraq is, arguably, the definitive narrative of our time. Amidst the blood of hundreds of thousands of innocent lives and the ruins of one of the planets oldest civilizations, there is the story of a war waged not *against* terrorism but in its service. A war waged against the poor and the vulnerable in the service of American imperialism and the interests of unfettered "free market" capitalism.

In the draconian atmosphere of the U.S.-led "war on terror," the authors offer a necessary and scathing critique of the war and the larger American capitalist/imperialist project of which it is a part. Their critical assessment unravels against the backdrop of a layered and unabashedly Marxist/historical materialist critique of American hegemony that documents the links between neoliberal globalization and aggressive U.S. military posturing. As they put it, "the current situation in Iraq" and the "events which led up to it" are in many ways a "metaphor for globalized capitalism worldwide" (p. 32). For example, McLaren and Jaramillo reveal that the war in Iraq is but one of the many manifestations of a hyper-militarized form of capitalism - a scheme undertaken to secure resources, markets, and profits rather than to combat terrorism:

The drive to obtain 'free markets' and to open up investment for U.S. corporations is now accompanied by the most formidable military presence ever known to humankind, one that is fundamentally unopposed. Iraq is now

'liberated' for U.S. corporate investment and control, having been officially 'pacified' as a client state. Judging from recent U.S. history, the future will no doubt require that millions more will die in the oil-rich Middle East and elsewhere around the planet on behalf of the U.S. empire (p.25).

The authors concur with India's Research Unit for Political Economy (2003), that the "supposed suppression of terrorism worldwide merely offers 'opportunities' for the U.S. to pursue its strategic agenda without geographic or temporal limits" (p. 29). However, they note that while American empire is, undoubtedly, being aggressively pursued at the current historical juncture, the quest and growth of empire is neither the particular province of the United States nor a mere consequence of the policies of George W. Bush whom McLaren and Jaramillo mockingly refer to as "God's Cowboy Warrior." Rather, they remind us that it is the systematic and logical result of capitalism and therefore unflinchingly shine the spotlight on what should *be* the focus of substantive left criticism - the very system of capitalism itself.

By presenting a caustic analysis of capitalism and its twin brother, imperialism, McLaren and Jaramillo demonstrate the need for a socialist alternative to global capitalism. A key issue of the book, then, is the *political economy* of the war in Iraq and how it is linked to the local crisis of capitalism. The authors cleverly present Hurricane Katrina as a telling example. Not only was the governments' unwillingness to respond to Hurricane Katrina emblematic of historic white supremacy and the Bush regime's war on the poor, but the lack of resources reflected the liquidation of domestic government spending for use in imperialist missions abroad:

Much of the equipment (high water vehicles, refueling tankers, and generators) that would have been used to help New Orleans was already deployed in Iraq to help slaughter the Iraqi resistance to the occupation. Instead of being used to help the people of the United States during a time of crisis, these men, women and machines were conscripted into the service of Bush Jr.'s bloody war for oil ... (p. 15).

But more than this, Hurricane Katrina provides an entry point for the authors' examination of the devastating effects of neoliberalism at home. If the war in Iraq is a metaphor for globalized capitalism on the world stage, then surely Katrina is a metaphor for the domestic version of "shock and awe" since we can point to how the religion of the "free market" lent itself to the utter destruction witnessed in New Orleans. The neoliberal agenda so vigorously pursued by the Bush administration led

to a drastic cut in government services, including the decision to slice \$71.2 million from the New Orleans Corp of Engineers as well as decisions to let developers destroy the wetlands that once served as a natural environmental buffer all in the name of private profits. After catastrophe struck the Crescent City, the barefaced inhumanity that stemmed from the Bush administration's negligence was further exacerbated by the blatantly racist mainstream media coverage that portrayed white victims as "searching" for provisions while black residents were characterized as "looters." And, of course, there were the predictable pronouncements made by prominent Christian leaders who suggested, with typical apocalyptic hyperbole, that the hurricane was God's punishment for the transgressions and decadence of the South (p. 19).

Beyond New Orleans, the domestic version of "Shock and Awe" explored throughout the book is represented by an agenda which, in addition to tax cuts for the wealthy, favors capital freed from government restraints, deregulation, privatization and cuts in public services, a systematic dismantling of labor rights and environmental protections, and a frontal assault on civil liberties. In short, the drive toward global American empire which reflects the use and projection of political and military power on behalf of a radical, pro-corporate, anti-government, antidemocratic, free market fundamentalism that mainly benefits the global economic activities of the capitalist elite has parallels in our own backyards. In the most basic sense, Bush and his right-wing minions are seeking nothing less than the total obliteration of the New Deal and any remaining vestiges of the social safety net. One need only review Bush Jr.'s most recent budget to see this logic at work. The budget has slashed or frozen domestic programs related to health care and education while boosting the Pentagon's financial coffers with staggering increases. Education alone stands to lose \$2.1 billion - from student loans to vocational training. As some commentators have noted, such tendencies are eerily reminiscent of earlier fascist regimes where the military took up huge portions of the budget while social welfare programs were eliminated or marginalized.

Moreover, even as a delusional Bush brags about a robust economy, five million more Americans have slipped into poverty since the Supreme Court selected him as president. An additional seven million Americans have lost their health insurance

bringing the total number of uninsured to approximately 48 million people. And from 2001 to 2005, all of the income growth in the U.S. has accrued to the top five percent while the bottom ninety percent of households have seen their market-based incomes decline by 4.2 percent (Sanders, 2007). Bush Jr.'s quest for empire has spawned a deficit estimated to reach 4.1 trillion over the next ten years (p.71) and while national disparities are on the rise in the U.S., global disparity is the most astounding insofar as the richest 1% of the world population now receives as much income as the poorest 57%. In an atmosphere of mainstream media and government lies about the economic and moral prosperity of America, McLaren and Jaramillo awaken us to the reality of the ongoing crisis of both global and domestic neoliberal capitalism.

The authors convincingly demonstrate that under global capitalism nothing is safe or sacred, unless it can be appropriated in the service of the neo-liberal/imperialist project. Within the governing matrix of "free market" capitalism, the loss of human lives and ecosystems alike are explained away as collateral damage. The authors rightly contend that "capitalists accept collateral damage as part of the overall process ... as long as this collateral damage has a minimal effect on the lives of the transnational capitalist class" (p.18). The book's attention to resource depletion and ecosystem destabilization - wrought by neoliberalism - are especially relevant given the Bush administration's unqualified neglect and negation of current ecological crises befallen the earth.

Christian Fundamentalism and American Empire

A bulk of the book deals with religion moving from a wide-ranging critique of religion to a more specific critical analysis of the duplicitous role of Christian fundamentalism in the Bush administration and American hegemony broadly defined. The authors argue that right-wing Christianity is antithetical to human survival since it has been, and is used, to assert the primacy of the market. As such it has little place in combating the creeping demise of the planet. From within the belly of the morally duplicitous beast, McLaren and Jaramillo boldly assert that religion (as it stands today in many fundamentalist churches) is maladaptive to the survival of the species. What is needed they argue is "international co-operation to save the planet from the global marketplace, not efforts at asserting its dominion" (p.19).

In chapter four, "God's Cowboy Warrior: Christianity, Globalization, and the False Prophets of Imperialism" - religion, namely Christian Fundamentalism, is linked to the Bush administration, as the authors reveal its historical "positionality" as facilitator within American "capitalist democracy" and the broader imperialist project. McLaren and Jaramillo skilfully expose the powerful and influential role of Christian fundamentalism on domestic and foreign policy formation and the appropriation of Christianity in the service of the US imperialist/globalization project apropos of the historical myth about America as God's agent and messianic savior of the planet. These points warrant further elaboration.

First, we need only examine the post-9/11 rhetoric of Bush Jr. to appreciate the influence of religious fundamentalism on the increasingly fascist president. For example,

evoking the role of the raging prophet who identifies with the sword arm of divine retribution, Bush reveals the eschatological undertow to the war on terrorism ... where he likens bin Laden and his chthonic warriors to absolute evil, and the United States to the apogee of freedom and goodness (p. 124).

Of course, the impertinent hypocrisy of Bush Jr. is not lost on McLaren and Jaramillo. They chronicle the geopolitical and economic motivations of the so-called war on terror, and aptly muse over how odd it is that a so-called strong allegiance to religious doctrine has sparked the adoption of so many actions devoid of ecclesiastical merit, such as the torture of prisoners. In other words, the flagrant display of religiosity does not stop the Bush administration from perpetrating the most horrific actions. In this sense, "opportunism and hypocrisy are the operative words when it comes to assessing Bush's professed religious beliefs" (p.166).

Especially enlightening is the considerable influence of Christian organizations on the American people and policy formation - foreign and domestic - in the U.S. Chapter four presents a succinct critique of the many Christian (and other secretive) organizations which are hijacking and shaping the minds of the weak and susceptible and thus moving large segments of viewers closer to the happy idiocy of their conservative and reactionary and infantile vision of God and politics (p. 179). By far the most salient point raised in the fourth chapter is how Christian fundamentalism serves the neoliberal capitalist apparatus and the larger imperialist project. The

authors urge us not to underestimate the means by which Christian fundamentalism (or any religious fundamentalism, for that matter) can become employed - wittingly or unwittingly - by a national leader as an ideological cover and alibi for laying waste to vast numbers of enemies, often depicted as barbaric or evil (p.162). Indeed, for the Bush *junta* the imagery of a ubiquitous evil enemy has been an indispensable tool for promoting the self-serving notion of "preventative war."

Here, the crucial role of mythology cannot be overlooked. Christian fundamentalists continue to perpetuate the myth of America as God's chosen nation and Bush as the messiah. Moreover, Bush himself has done nothing to stifle such grandiose proclamations. In fact, he has done quite the opposite as is evident from even the most sycophantic accounts of his presidency. Indeed, if one sifts through the likes of Bob Woodward's *Bush at War* and David Frum's *The Right Man*, as well as Bush's own public statements, what emerges is a picture of a president who is convinced that he is on a divine mission. With regard to its murderous foreign policy, this myth allows imperialist invasions to be sanitized and refurbished as "libratory" missions. The authors appropriately conclude that when Bush remarked (in his January 2003 State of the Union address) that: "The liberty we prize is not America's gift to the world, it is God's gift to humanity," the obvious implication was that, "to reject the actions of U.S. policies is to reject God ... the United States appeals to the authority of God to legitimize its actions as God's chosen empire ... " (p. 191).

Educational Policy in the Service of Empire

The book reveals that just as religion and the media historically have been appropriated into the machinery of global capitalism and the American imperialist project, so too has education. McLaren and Jaramillo demonstrate that education is inexorably linked to the political; and thus, that the micro can never be understood without a *critical* eye to the macro level of analysis. Thus, education must be understood as both a politico-economic process and *instrument*. Education is part of the imperialist project abroad with multi-million dollar contracts and "aid" money given for revamping education, and instilling "politically 'neutral' studies," in "liberated" regions such as Afghanistan, Iraq, Lebanon, Jordon, El Salvador and Guatemala (p. 31). Domestically, education has suffered the same neoliberal fate:

Where classrooms once served as at least potentially one of the few spaces of respite from the ravages of the dominant ideology, they have now been colonized by the corporate logic of privatization and the imperial ideology of the militarized state (p.33).

Especially telling is the authors' analysis of how so-called educational reform initiatives like the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) is "implicated in the historically extant categories and practices of neoliberalism and the globalization of capital" (p.65). In many respects, NCLB has established the legislative foundations for increased privatization of education, greater control and regulation, and an emphasis on 'marketable skills' to produce surplus labor. In this regard, the authors expose NCLB as "a historical apparatus that serves to exert control over the largest and most vulnerable segments of the population in the interest of promoting capitalist consumption and the reproduction of the law of value and the value form of labor" (p.65).

Additionally, the ills of NCLB are pithily chronicled in terms of how they have facilitated a particularly alarming shift in the trajectory of militarized U.S. hegemony. Under industrial capitalism, schools were breeding grounds for efficient and complacent workers, in which students were prepared to comply with their future alienated labor. However, under the current hyper-militarized capitalism, schools are also contracted out as *military recruitment* dens, where they are forced to grant access to the military or lose federal funding (p. 76).

The book is, of course and not surprisingly, concerned especially with critical pedagogy - and particularly with the domestication of critical pedagogy. Once a fierce critic of free market liberal education as well as American imperialism and capitalist exploitation, critical pedagogy has become so absorbed by the cosmopolitanized liberalism of the post-modernized left that it no longer serves as a trenchant challenge to capital and U.S. economic and military hegemony (p.34). Moreover, its relationship to broader liberation struggles has been severely attenuated. In such a context, McLaren and Jaramillo's attempt to revivify the political roots of critical pedagogy by reintroducing the language of class struggle and Marxist-humanism comes at a much needed juncture.

Revolutionary Critical Pedagogy: Socialism Without Apologies

Pedagogy and Praxis in the Age of Empire succeeds at demonstrating the ubiquitous reach of neoliberal capitalism and U.S. imperialist hegemony; it reveals how everything and everyone, especially the poor and working classes are colonized and devoured by this global behemoth. Since we live at a time when capitalism has become an unrepentant universal system, the basis of our struggles, of our resistance, of our revolutionary praxis must be grounded in an equally universalist narrative - that of socialism. For the authors, this requires a return to Marxist-humanism, in a manner that understands and recognizes that "Marx isn't talking about class relations only but human relations" (p.110). What's more,

a true renewal of thinking about educational and social reform must pass through a regeneration of Marxist theory if the great and fertile meaning of human rights and equality is to reverberate in the hopes of aggrieved populations throughout the world (p.111).

McLaren and Jaramillo argue that we must transcend the deconstructive dalliances of those post-al theorists who have abandoned metanarratives - particularly those of Marxism and socialism - for in all of their deconstructive posturing they have ignored the most meta of all metanarratives - namely the takeover of the entire globe for the dominance of capital over laboring humanity. As more and more of humanity faces the ravages of capitalism's totalizing impulses and the savagery of wars fought on behalf of capital, revolutionary critical pedagogy points to the need to understand and confront the very essence of capitalism.

This demands moving beyond a mere reformist agenda - one which calls for a friendlier, less brutalizing form of capitalism - to questioning the very nature of capital as a social relation rooted in the selling of human labor power. The struggle against a specific form of social being as a capitalized and commodified life form - the very struggle to be "human" situates Marxist humanism at the core of any struggle to implode capital's social universe. Contrary to those who have sounded the death knell of Marxism, McLaren and Jaramillo remind us that Marxist-humanism is not straining against the boundaries of a closed ontology. Rather, it is a set of living ideas that can help us better understand the world - and more importantly - can provide a point of departure on how to change it. By revisiting the Marxist-Hegelian dialectic

through the lens of Raya Dunayevskaya's thought, McLaren and Jaramillo illuminate the ways in which Marxist-humanism can guide us in working towards the creation of a social universe outside of capital based on socialist principles and practices - not just in the sense of negating today's economic and political realities but of developing new human relations. After all, capital imposes on our lives certain forms of doing, certain forms of relating to one another, certain forms of *being*. As such, the authors prod their audience to embark on a search for a new social humanity through class struggle: "We need to work toward becoming associate producers, working under conditions that will advance human nature, where the measure of wealth is not labor time but solidarity, creativity and the full development of human capacities" (p. 111).

In calling for a new humanism - radicalized and informed by class struggle - this volume ups the radical ante in its attempt to refocus our gaze. This is particularly bold given that both Marxism and humanism have been maligned, for years, by the prevailing centers of intellectual power as "totalizing," "reductionist," and even "repressive." In seeking to rescue critical pedagogical work from the clutches of bourgeois humanism that has frequently made it functionally advantageous to existing social relations, McLaren and Jaramillo's formulations attempt to resuscitate the liberating potential of Marxist humanism by bridging the gap between the individual and the collective through a revived theory of praxis or what they call "revolutionary critical pedagogy."

Throughout the text and in various ways, McLaren and Jaramillo remind us that revolutionary critical pedagogy must be bold in its critique of pedagogical practices that are easily co-opted to mainstream versions of bourgeois liberal humanism and feeble discourses of progressivism. It must contest the palpable growth of fascism in our midst and it must forcefully challenge the neoconservative restoration we have been witnessing with the Bush administration. It must interrogate the symbolically overdetermined ideologies of right-wing evangelical Christianity, its attendant science fiction rapture theology, and the pride it exhibits in taking anti-intellectual positions on just about anything related to the public good.

Revolutionary critical pedagogy must also be fearless in confronting the myths of a benevolent American empire - those make-believe constructions that dull critical sensibilities and which promote a perpetual state of historical amnesia. It needs to be

unwavering in its commitment to expose the naked imperialism and the current pursuit of American global dominance and uncompromising in its goal of fighting imperialism in the belly of the beast. Facing up to acts of U.S. imperialism provides a crucial context for discussing world history in light of the globalization of capitalism. However, a revolutionary critical pedagogy must move beyond a narrow anti-U.S. imperialism stance and articulate a principled stand against imperialism *in general* for we must acknowledge that George W. Bush is merely the most recent conductor of the political-economic locomotive otherwise known as neoliberal capitalism.

In their conclusion, McLaren and Jaramillo cite an observation made by Arundhati Roy (2004) who insists that "there is no discussion taking place in the world today that is more crucial than the debate about strategies of resistance" (p. 195). McLaren and Jaramillo have clearly contributed to such a conversation with *Pedagogy and Praxis in the Age of Empire* and their work must be understood as a relevant component in that ongoing dialogue. Moreover, they have been courageous enough to remind us (following Roy) that if we believe democracy should be something more than the "free world's whore," something more than "Empire's euphemism for neoliberal capitalism" (Roy, 2004, p. 54, 56), we can no longer afford to remain indifferent to the horror and savagery unleashed by capitalism's barbaric machinations. They implore us to confront the contemporary role played by American militarism in enforcing a neoliberal agenda that wrecks havoc with any semblance of democracy both at home and abroad and to be ruthless in our criticism of the nattering nabobs of neoliberalism and the emissaries of empire.

Yet, alongside the pointed condemnations of the brutal social injustices inherent in global capitalism and imperialism, McLaren and Jaramillo - above all - summon us to rescue the principle of hope from the abyss of cynicism and complacency and apply it to imagining a democratic form of socialism. While it is often difficult to maintain a sense of hope in a world that grows bleaker and more dystopian with each passing day, McLaren and Jaramillo passionately urge progressive educators to safeguard the embers of hope smoldering amidst the rubble of war and to fuel even further the fires of hope wherever they may burn. Their call for radical hope provides a fitting conclusion:

Hope is the freeing of possibility, with possibility serving as the dialectical partner of necessity. When hope is strong enough, it can bend the future backwards towards the past, where, trapped between the two, the present can escape its orbit of inevitability and break the force of history's hubris, so that what is struggled for no longer remains an inert idea frozen in the hinterland of 'what is,' but becomes a reality carved out of 'what could be.' Hope is the oxygen of dreams, and provides stamina for revolutionary struggle . . . Hope mediates between the universal and the particular in grasping the concrete forms of our objective existence under capital. Hope is the medium of dialectical praxis. Revolutionary dreams are those in which the dreamers dream until there are no longer the dreamers but only the dreams themselves, shaping our everyday lives from moment to moment, and opening the causeways of possibility where abilities are nourished not for the reaping of profit, but for the satisfaction of needs and the full development of human potential (p. 55).

Review Two

As we lurch from crisis to crisis, beamed directly into our brains by satellite TV, we have to think on our feet. On the move. We enter histories through the rubble of war. Ruined cities, parched fields, shrinking forests, and dying rivers are our archives. Craters left by daisy cutters, our libraries. (Roy, 2003)

A day necessarily comes when the colonized lifts his head and topples the always unstable equilibrium of colonization. For the colonized just as for the colonizer, there is no way out other than a complete end to colonization. The refusal of the colonized cannot be anything but absolute, that is, not only revolt, but a revolution (Memmi, 1965, p. 150).

Peter McLaren and Nathalia Jaramillo's *Pedagogy and Praxis in the Age of Empire* (PPAE) best collects their founding theoretical work on the post-9/11, emergent anti-capitalist/imperialist movement that reflects an active example of revolutionary critical pedagogy. Those familiar with McLaren's recent material on the subject in books such as *Teaching Against Global Capitalism and the New Imperialism* (w/ Ramin Farahmandpur, 2004) *Capitalists & Conquerors* (2005), *Red Seminars* (w/ Compañeras y Compañeros, 2005), and *Rage & Hope: Interviews with Peter McLaren on War, Imperialism and Critical Pedagogy* (2006) will find in this latest text a further volley of unflinching and searing essays that seek to unapologetically smash like a hammer into the hateful workings of power syndicates such as the Bush cabal, American militarism, corporate media and transnational capitalist class ventures. But perhaps even more importantly PPAE should serve to call further international attention to Jaramillo herself, who is undoubtedly one of revolutionary critical pedagogy's most exciting young scholar-activists and whose contribution to the

movement is here apparent both in her first-hand praxiological work alongside McLaren throughout Latin America (and elsewhere) as well as in her trenchant analyses of the intersections of class, race, gender and culture. Her incisive focus is especially relevant in helping to explain how a Marxist Humanist framework could play out domestically at a political level in a time when the Latina/o population moves headlong towards becoming a primary, if not majority, demographic in the United States over the coming decades (pp. 91-120).

We say PPAE is a book of pedagogical theory (and in the spirit of revolutionary critical pedagogy we include performative acts of polemic within the field of theory proper), but as McLaren and Jaramillo put it, this book's work is not intended

as grist for advancing our careers in the academy but as a way of participating in a wider political project in which we attempt (to echo Henry Giroux) to make the pedagogical more politically informed and the political more pedagogically critical (p. 6).

Thus, McLaren and Jaramillo's collaborations, though often conceptually and linguistically dense, are not to be mistaken as yet another armchair speculative exercise in pedagogical pontification. Supporting this claim are a variety of personal photos included as textual bookends (which chronicle the authors' journeys and meetings with key figures/groups over the last five years in places such as the Middle East, Africa, and Latin America) which are emblems that reveal how McLaren and Jaramillo have begun to construct a critical revolutionary pedagogy that both walks its talk and which - after the spirit of Freire and Horton - in fact makes its road by walking it. Indeed, the images in PPAE often function stylistically in a manner similar to those taken of Guevara during his travels, always expressing the themes of unity, companionship and the vital embodiment of collective struggle - what Ché and Freire each meant in their respective ideas of a materialized "revolutionary love" (McLaren, 2000). It should be observed that PPAE's emblematic cover art, produced by Erin Currier, a mural of stirring revolutionary portraits of everyday warrior women of color (which serve as necessary expansions of the legacies that otherwise tend to brandish names such as Zapata and Villa), similarly helps to evoke the potential beauty and dignity of the historical struggle from below as refleshed socialist passions in the face of the American imperialist enterprise.

It is crucial, then, to recognize the extent to which PPAE attempts to both theorize and enact a critical revolutionary pedagogy that, as Gregory Martin (2005) describes, is

a radical shift of social priorities ... that seeks to enrich the knowledge base of grassroots political movements through the development of social relations (labour practices) that encourage critical analysis, genuine dialogue and problem solving based upon people's everyday knowledge of capitalism.

When most progressive academics are still engaged in coffee talk over how to better involve the local community in campus life, McLaren and Jaramillo appear to have leapt over imperialist barricades in order to speak with and forge a wider resistance to present-day colonialist domination agendas. In short, with PPAE they provide a living example of how an organic unity between critical educators, political activists in social movements, informed workers of the world, and others involved in the growing struggle against imperial capitalism can be the fertile ground in which critical revolutionary pedagogy can become rooted and begin to sprout.

By articulating a global working-class standpoint, McLaren and Jaramillo are essentially tracing the objective structures of global capitalism that have come to organize geo-political versions of the modern state as well as the social conditions of local communities across the planet. Further, by aligning their perspectives on the margins of global imperialism, their theoretical work provides an anthropological grounding that allows the authors to gain a variety of outsider-within critical ideational status on the contradictions of global capitalism that are at work within the U.S. presently. PPAE spends a good amount of energy calling out and identifying these dehumanizing aspects of the U.S. corporate-state-military-academic complex which include, according to McLaren and Jaramillo, the institution of a state of permanent war (p. 35), a rightist fomenting of anti-immigration and other xenophobic attitudes throughout society (p. 99), the rise of anti-bilingual/multicultural efforts in educational policy such as NCLB (p. 76), the corporate media and culture industry's complicity in the erosion of an educated civil society (p. 49), the blatant classism and racism underlying the Bush administration's response to hurricane Katrina (p. 8), and the ecological genocide that is a direct result of predatory capitalist expansion at all costs (p. 17). In opposition, PPAE hopes to bear witness to the birth and maturation of a movement within the field of education that realizes viscerally

the need for a new critical humanist pedagogy, an approach to reading the world and the world that puts the struggle against capitalism (and the imperialism inherent in it) at the center of the pedagogical project, a project that is powered by the oxygen of socialism's universal quest for human freedom and social justice (p. 20).

Again, McLaren and Jaramillo's mapping of the contradictions of global capitalism here in the U.S. is importantly not limited by a parochial view. Animating each individual essay and coupling the collective thrust of PPAE is, for example, the spirit of the Bolivarian revolution in Venezuela, the work of critical educators in Oaxaca, Mexico, and the historical legacy of an ongoing attempt for an emancipated Cuba. Such sites are not isolated instances of a controlled alternative to the capitalist form of life; they clearly demark for McLaren and Jaramillo a burgeoning constellation of socialist resistance that is the movement generated possibility of another world beyond the paltry business-class-as-usual driven political openings for change in the social structure of the United States.

Drawing from the energy of the international workers movements, McLaren and Jaramillo want also to re-organize a worldwide front of critical, popular educators who will comprise an "educational left" (pp. 34-64) that works in solidarity with extra-institutional revolutionary forces. One task this educational left has is to provide a map of the neo-liberal educational landscape that puts into stark contrast how the strangle hold of a corporate media oligarchy continues to distribute public knowledge through strong ideological filters, how standardized educational curricula have ossified as the normative goal of education, and how the systematic segregation of people of color in schools all challenge both leftist educators and society generally with complicated and urgent problems. One question of significant weight posed by the authors highlights one of the most pressing crises facing all critical educators and citizens: "How can critical educators reinvigorate the civil societarian left precisely at a time when we are creating a world where elites are less accountable to civil society than ever before?" (p. 52). For McLaren and Jaramillo the answer to this question largely lies in the potential for generating concrete revolutionary critical pedagogy, which in allegiance to the legacy of social reconstructivism and critical pedagogical theory on the whole, includes developing socialist sensibilities through the institution of public schooling by conscientizing "teachers, students, families and other cultural workers" (p. 63).

In the spirit of Freirian dialogue, this raises an issue for further debate within the ranks of revolutionary critical pedagogy in our opinion. On the one hand, we wonder seriously about that aspect of critical pedagogy's historical project of attempting to transform schools (as sites functioning as Ideological State Apparatuses) though the volunteristic appeal made to teachers to learn to act against their own immediate individual self-interests such that they should monkeywrench the institution from within via acts of public intellectualism. In George S. Counts's version of this social reconstructionist program (and this is going back now some three quarters of a century!), he at least expected teachers to be widely organized and empowered to dare a new social order and teach openly against class/state interests. Today, rather, one can no doubt find radical teachers here and there in many school systems (and, to be fair, much of this is doubtless a result of the work of critical pedagogy over the last few decades) but often these teachers are institutionally limited in their power such that they cannot realize the organization of trans-local threats of a kind that would demand their suspension and/or removal by panoptic superiors further up the economic food chain. Indeed, just as McLaren and Jaramillo apparently seek a revolutionary state (p. 49) but do not believe that this can be accomplished through candidate replacements in the U.S. government (we agree: John Kerry will let students be tasered as much as Bush) or perhaps any extant state (at the end of their book they soberly admit that there are no guarantees as to the meaning of Chavez's tenure, though they do have *real hope* for the Bolivarian revolution), it seems questionable then that they suggest in PPAE that schools as an institution of social reproduction might be qualitatively changed by a platform of praxis that seeks to substitute teachers-as-servants-for-the-status-quo with radical-educators-as-cultural-workers-and-anti-class-agonists (e.g., pp. 34, 85, 106).

We feel that as McLaren and Jaramillo correctly look to the direct and participatory democracy of social movements to alter social possibilities and state power (p. 114), perhaps the correlate to this thinking vis-à-vis schools could be found in the promotion of versions of nonformal popular education. Hence, just as Freire and Illich broke company over the necessity and possibilities of schooling three decades ago, we feel that revolutionary critical pedagogy would be strengthened through a deeper engagement with Illich and the anarchist-libertarian tradition in pedagogy generally (see Kahn & Kellner, 2007). Does not the increasing popularity of the home schooling

movement (its theoretical founders, such as John Holt, were collaborators with Illich), even if its popularity is now in part fueled by interest by rightist reactionaries who seek more orthodox religious curricula for their children, also offer potentials for radical "learning webs" (Illich, 1970) that would be near impossible in more formal schooling circuits? This said, we do not in fact believe that the choice to be made is of to school or not to school and instead would seek to promote a dialectical approach to the issue.

To the degree that schools do remain sites of contestation and power struggle, we therefore wonder if it is not time for revolutionary critical pedagogy to begin to mount its cultural work outside the discipline of education proper and to move its focus past school teachers to others who are or will be more directly involved in regulating the institution of schools like principals, superintendents and other community leaders. Hence, we openly muse (at a minimum) about the need for texts and training in revolutionary critical pedagogy, as well as titled professorships, to increasingly find integration in academic departments of educational leadership and organizational change above and beyond those designed to certify teachers for secondary schools. After all, we have in Freire himself an example of a radical educator who became Sao Paulo's Secretary of Education in 1989, essentially serving as the city superintendent of schools during the tenure of the Socialist mayor Luisa Erundina (Freire, 1993). While having radical educational leaders will of course itself not be enough to produce long-standing change in the American school system, at least it would allow existing and future critical community educators to have administrative counterparts so that the teachers such as Bill Nevins (p. 33) are not left open to easy rightist attacks, poor evaluative reviews and demands for their leave-of-absence or untenured removal.

While we cannot here demonstrate the complexities of our own position, or pay full homage to that which is correlatively voiced by McLaren and Jaramillo in PPAE, we believe a more significant debate still may need to be had about the nature of "the new Humanism" of revolutionary critical pedagogy. In particular we are interested in posing the problem of how Marxist humanists will articulate a political vision that turns on ideas of species. In drawing from the early Marx, McLaren and Jaramillo themselves offer a political vision of collective species being (p. 115), which as we

have seen aims at a worldwide socialist revolutionary state. While we note that there is a body of theory that seeks to trouble the concept of species being, we recognize also that there can be significant potential captured by a revolutionary humanism that can foster not only a universal basis for human rights but, as Freire appeared to express at the end of his life, an integral and ecological reality in which one's humanity is predicated by the hope for an edenic existence in which birds, trees and rivers partake of the peace and beauty of life and so enrich the humane experience that includes the non-human alongside it (Freire, 2004). But a species being manifested in response to the primacy of the class antagonism (p. 102) may not realize that however fundamental class struggle is to the capitalist epoch, this epoch itself is in reality built ultimately on the exploitation and domination of non-human species and nature (Kahn, 2007). While we do not seek to argue for the primacy of species over class, race, gender or other forms of domination, we do nevertheless feel that this cultural fact means that species itself must be included in any discussion of the generative matrix of social antagonisms. Indeed, Herbert Marcuse in his own deployment of a critical theory of emancipated species being appears to have recognized exactly this point and his theories on the relationship between the human and non-human animal, on the one hand, and society and nature, on the other, should be more closely examined in this respect (Kahn, 2006).

Now, it must be noted threefold that McLaren has himself publicly called attention to issues of speciesism, has mapped the theoretical importance of revolutionary critical pedagogy's engagement with the meaning and sustainable limits of humanity as a form of "ecological justice" (McLaren & Houston, 2004) and that he has been arguably the most attentive and welcoming to date of any of the critical pedagogical theorists to the need for the organization of a radical ecological politics, culture, and being. Moreover, in PPAE, McLaren and Jaramillo do themselves call attention to the dangers of environmental destruction and the threat to ecological life now manifested by global capitalism and imperialism. This is not to be taken lightly and we welcome such language and vision on the part of the authors.

Still, that the species optic could be better integrated into their work is dramatized in their account of the Katrina disaster (pp. 1-22). Here McLaren and Jaramillo illuminate the many ways in which class and race intersected to dehumanize the

victims of the catastrophe - showing that no matter how terrible the hurricane's ruin was, the sociopolitical machine that attempted to then interpolate the victims as a "different species and inhuman, as a mutant breed that had infested the Superdome" (p. 11) was more crushing still. But, of course, *homo sapiens* were hardly the only beings to suffer from the decisions made by the administration and other ruling class cronies from the federal to the local level during the Katrina event, and the plight of non-human animals in the affected regions or a more nuanced discussion of how race, class and species were articulated in non-emancipatory conjunctions by both the rich and poor, as well as by whites and blacks, could have received treatment in McLaren and Jaramillo's text. To speak of the ecological disaster and environmental crisis of Katrina without more carefully calling attention to the history of *all* who were abandoned and left to die in and around New Orleans only glosses over the horror of the specific brutality done to non-human animals in the days and weeks following the hurricane. While it is understood that no analysis can declare everything, our point here would be not to critique McLaren and Jaramillo *per se*, but rather to signal that revolutionary critical pedagogy on the whole must especially be vigilant about making visible the mass suffering of any and all beings and that it must take care not to rank oppressions such that human needs are voiced and valued even as the needs of those beings deemed non-human are likewise consigned to silence.

On the whole, however, there is no doubt that McLaren and Jaramillo have gone a long way to helping those of us in the advanced capitalist nations, who know little more about the struggle for socialist revolution around the world than occasional mainstream news propaganda and Z-Net articles, to hear the voices and hopes of a people's pedagogy that dares say "Enough!" in word and deed to empire. In short, we believe that McLaren and Jaramillo have introduced in PPAE an important and highly productive framework that can help lay the groundwork for expanding human relationships with nature, or, for beginning to ask questions such as who or what should be considered democratic participants. Their analysis of the neo-liberal educational policy of NCLB, for instance, could provide a platform for critiquing structures in science and technology education, something McLaren himself has remarked upon recently (McLaren, 2006). In our opinion, science and technology education is a crucial area in which revolutionary critical pedagogy should be highly involved, as it has arguably been under-theorized by critical pedagogy to date, and is

currently a central focus of imperialist and capitalist educational agendas. Powering the 21st century engine of war and global market places requires fresh and novel types of technology and scientific research - what Best and Kellner (2001) have termed "technocapitalism." Schools, as science and technology education policy now stands, are locked and loaded to reproduce more of the same destructive and profit bearing expressions of science and technology ushered in during the post-WWII conjuncture. Hence, revolutionary critical pedagogy should also become locked into challenging the educative paradigms that seek destructive and risk producing models for learning science and technology (Pierce, 2008).

Undoubtedly, McLaren and Jaramillo's latest collaboration has added volume to the developing Marxist framework for understanding contemporary education. They provide a bevy of conceptual analyses that will allow others to delve deeper into the recesses of predatory global capitalism and its militarization of the planet, thereby helping to suture together networks of oppression that have become reified sociopolitical artifacts of the contemporary divide-and-conquer moment. More than a mere theoretical contribution, though, critical theorists of education, critical educators across the planet, and a radicalized citizenry concerned with the direction and shape of education in the U.S. generally are reminded in PPAE that the world is larger than that which is daily fed to us by American politicians and news anchorpersons. We have much to learn still about our social and political futures, which remain open, and hence any and all efforts to build unity for a materialized opposition to the broader structures that presently attempt to determine the particular conditions of our lives is something that represents a vital sense of hope (p. 115). PPAE is thus both a pedagogical statement of needed theoretical interventions and an enactment, or performance, meant to demonstrate concrete possibilities in a time when many believe political possibilities are in short supply.

Review Three

Terrorism is the war of the poor, and war is the terrorism of the rich.

~*Sir Peter Ustinov*

As critical educators today continue to defend the public sphere from its integration or for that matter its disintegration into the neoliberal and imperialist practices of the state and of globalized capitalism, two international critical pedagogues put forth a new book that responds to these issues and argue for a renewed vision of critical "humanism." Professors Peter McLaren and Nathalia Jaramillo have just written a book with Sense Publishers, entitled, *Pedagogy and Praxis in the Age of Empire: Towards a New Humanism*, in which they examine the role of global capitalism in education and society, and accordingly, represent their efforts "to make the pedagogical more politically informed and the political more pedagogical critical" (p.6).

This is an interesting tome that brings together one of the leaders in critical pedagogy, Peter McLaren, and an emerging young feminist scholar, Nathalia Jaramillo who earned a master's degree in international education policy at Harvard University before pursuing doctoral studies at the UCLA Graduate School of Education & Information Studies. Fans of McLaren's blistering writing will not be disappointed in this volume; his revolutionary spirit is clearly evident here. Antonia Darder aptly writes that there is no question that this man of passion deserves the title "The Poet Laureate of the Educational Left" for his 'words that flame' given his highly imaginative use of language and the eloquence of his rhetorical style which cannot be easily matched (Macrine, 2005).

The focus of this book, according to the authors, is on the teasing out the difference between what stands for emblematic critical pedagogical writings that stresses reform from within the capitalist system, and the liberal and left-liberal work that has become mainstream, with what is at the heart of this book, namely the McLaren-Jaramillo uncompromising call for the creation of a post-capitalist, socialist society. This is a decidedly less nuanced book than many others that have taken on neoliberalism and globalization. It positions self-declared Marxists, McLaren and Jaramillo, as critical

pedagogues who have grown weary of the simplistic politics and cookie-cutter formulas of the current war on people. In this book, the authors metaphorically draw a line in the sand to challenge all radical educators, to choose whether to take the road to socialism or the road to barbarism, as Rosa Luxemburg named it.

The book can be viewed as a sort of 'reportage' from the field as these two critical scholars traveled the world over the past five years to observe, comment, witness and in some cases, get involved in international struggles. They write that they have been able to gauge (modestly) such struggles and crises during their journeys working and traveling to Palestine, Israel, South Africa, Canada, Cuba, and numerous times to Venezuela, Colombia and Mexico. During their trips, they were also able to meet with radical leaders, teachers, scholars and social activists in the United States, Canada and in South America. In addition to an ongoing commentary on the crucial developments over this period, i.e., Katrina, Iraq, IMF, the politics of immigration, the guest worker program, mainstream media, middle east oil, the Christian Right, the politics of class struggle, neoliberalism and educational, the book presents a critique of this new phase of imperialism and some of its most common interpretations and offers, critical pedagogy as an organizing praxis in challenging these issues. However, the authors argue that in order to be successful, that critical pedagogy needs to break out of its domesticated shell and aim at setting the bar high for a new generation of critical scholars to move forward in this direction. They add that they view the bulk of their work not as grist for advancing their careers in the academy but as a way of participating in a wider political project in which they attempt (to echo Henry Giroux) to make the pedagogical more politically informed and the political more pedagogically critical. The authors talk plainly and emphasize the solidarity of their co-authorship, the importance of "carnalismo" of working together. The book reflects the "juntos en la lucha" of two generations of Marxist scholars, an established voice in critical pedagogy for twenty-five years, and an important new feminist voice emerging in the field of critical education studies.

According to the authors, the collection of essays in *Pedagogy and Praxis in the Age of Empire* was written during a time of crisis in the United States and in capitalist societies worldwide, the result of what John Bellamy Foster refers to as "stagnation and financial explosion ... slow growth and rising unemployment/underemployment

and excess capacity" (2006, p. 7). They eloquently describe the condition of neoliberalism that includes stagnating wages, an economic surplus at the top, a redistribution of income and wealth toward the upper classes, limited profitable investment opportunities within production as a result of overcapacity in key industries worldwide, a shift toward financial speculation and the financialization of the global economy - a condition that Foster explains from the perspective of monopoly capital theory, and which he calls the phase of global monopoly-finance capital (Foster, 2006, p. 7). They write agreeing with Foster that,

capitalism, as witnessed particularly in its naked imperialism abroad, is increasingly degenerating into a kind of barbarism, where war, brutality, torture, misery, super-exploitation, all sorts of draconian measures against the poor, border security, anti-immigration, gated homes, racism, extreme environmental devastation threatening whole populations and even the globe, nuclear proliferation (and hence the danger of more terrible wars), etc., are on the rise (Foster, 2006, p. 9).

The book also takes on abuses of power and dysfunctional leadership that, in their opinion, has corrupted this country. One of the single most powerful abusers, according to the authors, is the Media. They question how civil society is being colonized by hawkish political propaganda of right-wing media pundits, many of whom advocate for pre-emptive or 'preventative' war against any country that impedes the continuation of the "American Way of Life" and who regularly denounce anti-war activists as traitors. They add that while the media is often thought to play a key role in defending democracy, it is clear that it largely serves the interests of the ruling elite, while crippling what remains of civil society in the process.

Speaking about their positions as Marxists, the authors write passionately that that they reject the notion, advanced by Foucault and other post-structuralists, that posing a vision of the future only reinforces the tyranny of the present (Hudis, 2005). Similarly, the authors reject Derrida's insistence that the fetish is not opposable. They add, "It is self-defeating in our view to embrace the advice of many postmodernists: that all we can do is engage in an endless critique of the forms of thought defined by commodity fetishism." In contrast, they write, "We believe that we can do more than enjoy our symptoms in a world where the subjects of capitalism have been endlessly disappearing into the vortex of history" (p.10). Citing Peter Hudis (2003), they note that such defeatism arises as long as critics believe that value production within

capitalism is natural and immutable. Further, they add they believe that the value form of mediation within capitalism is permeable and that another world outside of the social universe of capital is possible. They are also committed to the idea that revolutionary critical pedagogy can play a role in its realization. Adding that, "The voices and actions of critical educators will become more crucial in the days ahead. Whatever organizational forms their struggles take, they will need to address a global audience who share a radical hope for a new world." (p.6)

The authors write that one of the major debates among the left today centers around the Zapatista position of changing the world without taking power, advocated by John Holloway and others, and the position taken by supporters of Hugo Chavez and Evo Morales in Venezuela and Bolivia respectively, which advocates changing the nature of the state from the bottom up. McLaren and Jaramillo argue that,

While we have tremendous respect for the work of the Zapatistas, especially in terms of their advocacy of indigenous and women's rights, we do not believe that actions of those, like Chavez, for instance, who have chosen to take state power, are wrongheaded. We still hold out hope that the state can be remade democratically from the bottom up in such a way that it will be able to serve the interests of the poor and the oppressed. We side with the Chavista position on direct and participatory democracy and continue to support the efforts of the Chavistas to build socialism for the twenty-first century. We support the struggle to advance socialism worldwide (p. 46)

According to the authors, the overarching goal in this struggle is to strengthen the capacity of social movements to challenge the core apparatuses of capitalist state power, so that participatory democracy can flourish. They add that changing the state will not be easy, since the state is not a "fixed entity or container which holds market and society, but ... an ensemble of social relations that form a complex, intertwined temporal and special grid" (Kamat, 2002, p. 112). As difficult as it will be to challenge the complex spatial typology of power and social control of the state, McLaren and Jaramillo argue that we must not give up hope in the power of social movements both to reconfigure space and rearticulate the relationship between the state and civil society. Social movements can serve as points of departure and shed glimmers of hope for an alternative to the governing force of capital. The challenge

for all of us, according to McLaren and Jaramillo, is to recognize that the United States is as much a product of globalized capital as it is a producer of it and therefore it is necessary to translate social movements incubated within national borders into a widespread movement against capital.

McLaren and Jaramillo write that for critical revolutionary educators, the struggle for inclusive democracy stipulates working with students to build revolutionary consciousness and collective action as a means whereby we can resist our insinuation in the ugly truth of capital. This challenge can be mounted, according to the authors, most productively within the framework of an intergenerational, multiracial, gender-balanced, transnational and anti-imperialist social movement. They confer that it will not be an easy task, especially at this current moment of political despair that has infected much of the educational left. It will require radical hope.

McLaren and Jaramillo suggest that when hope is strong enough, it can bend the future backward towards the past, where, trapped between the two, the present can escape its orbit of inevitability and break the force of history's hubris, so that what is struggled for no longer remains an inert idea frozen in the hinterland of 'what is,' but becomes a reality carved out of 'what could be.' The authors add that

(r)evolutionary dreams are those in which the dreamers dream until there are no longer the dreamers but only the dreams themselves, shaping our everyday lives from moment to moment, and opening the causeways of possibility where abilities are nourished not for the reaping of profit, but for the satisfaction of needs and the full development of human potential (p.67).

In this interesting new book, *Pedagogy and Praxis in the Age of Empire: Towards a New Humanism* Peter McLaren and Nathalia Jaramillo call for a new critical humanist pedagogy, an approach to reading the word and the world that puts the struggle against capitalism (and the imperialism inherent in it) at the center of the pedagogical project, a project that is powered by the oxygen of socialism's universal quest for human freedom and social justice and anchored in class struggle.

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