

ORIENTATION AND EDUCATION:  
CRITICAL CONSTELLATIONS IN THE NEW MILLENNIUM

John David Kitchens

A dissertation submitted to the faculty of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the School of Education (Culture, Curriculum, and Change).

Chapel Hill  
2007

Approved by:

Dr. Lynda Stone

Dr. Thomas James

Dr. George Noblit

Dr. Della Pollock

Dr. James Trier

© 2007  
John David Kitchens  
ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

## ABSTRACT

JOHN KITCHENS: Orientation and Education: Critical Constellations in the New Millennium

(Under the direction of Dr. Lynda Stone)

Applying concepts from both critical theory and progressive education, this dissertation is a study in curriculum theory. Employing the encompassing metaphor of education as travel, this project describes the dispositions of orientation, disorientation, and misorientation as it investigates pedagogical practices that develop skills necessary for students to navigate their future travels as adults. As such, this describes a spatial curriculum theory that is situated in place and in the everyday lives of students. It investigates various ways students can come to know places, curriculum, and each other through dialogic inquiry. Though the value of “getting lost” or disoriented is explored, this dissertation is nonetheless largely concerned with how the high school curriculum is preparing students for their future travels as adults (their ability to map and navigate their environments), as well as instilling in them cooperative habits of journeying. All of which runs counter to current test-centered education that misorients students according to an economically competitiveness and material individualism. Critical constellations relate to the students’ exercises in cognitive mapping both their geographic surroundings as well as curricular landscapes. Such constellations also involve a historical understanding of the present as well as politicizing curriculum so that students are addressing issues of power, oppression, social and environmental justice. Finally, it argues for arts integration and particularly performance theory as a means of transformative education and cooperative learning.

## DEDICATION

This is dedicated to my parents, Dan and Emily Kitchens, who made this all possible.  
Thank you for all the love and support.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to acknowledge the following people for their aid, support, feedback, guidance, and encouragement: my committee and especially Lynda Stone; Amy Anderson; Chris Osmond; Bill Pinar, the CHG; the students, faculty, and staff of the School of Education at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill; and to all the professors, teachers, and students who have served as mentors and inspiration.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

### Chapter

1	INTRODUCTION: WHERE ARE YOU GOING? WHERE HAVE YOU BEEN? .....	1
2	WHAT WE TALK ABOUT WHEN WE TALK ABOUT CURRICULUM: MAN GAVE NAMES TO ALL THE ANIMALS .....	31
3	HISTORY AND REDEMPTION: LET THE DEAD SPEAK FOR THE DEAD .....	74
4	THE POVERTY OF STUDENT LIFE: THE SPECTACLE AND YOUTH CONSUMPTION.....	119
5	CRITICAL CONSTELLATIONS: TOWARD A SPATIAL CURRICULUM THEORY .....	157
6	DISORIENTATION AND THE DÉRIVE: IMAGES AND (OF) EVERYDAY LIFE.....	194
7	CONCLUSION: WHAT A LONG STRANGE TRIP IT'S BEEN.....	221
	REFERENCES.....	234

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION:

#### WHERE ARE YOU GOING? WHERE HAVE YOU BEEN?

Come, my friends,  
'Tis not too late to seek a newer world.  
Push off, and sitting well in order smite  
The sounding furrows; for my purpose holds  
To sail beyond the sunset, and the baths  
Of all the western stars . . .

Alfred, Lord Tennyson, *Ulysses*

#### *On the road*

Call it bravado. Some years ago—never mind how long precisely—having little or no hindrances or shortage of privileges, and nothing particular to keep me bound to any one geographic location, I thought I might travel abroad, and as a matter of mostly happenstance abetted by family connections, I found myself traveling to the rainforest of Bolivia to hike about and experience another horizon of the world. *It is a way I have of driving off the spleen, and regulating the circulation.* At the time I was living in Colorado and enrolled in what was my third and final undergraduate institution, a major university located at the foothills of the Rocky Mountains. It was a time of wondrous, fortunate, and foolhardy exploration; it was a time of meandering about in nature and in literature and in identity; it was also a time of precarious arrogance and naive pursuits; but most importantly, it was a time of personal freedom and mobility, and hence, it was a time when I was afforded the luxuries of digressions. In other words, it was a time when I had the privilege of getting lost.

While others quietly take to the ship, I will follow the horizon by foot, hoof, canoe, car, plane, or by sea. *There is nothing surprising in this. If they but knew it, almost all people in their degree, some time or other, cherish very nearly the same feelings towards the unknown with me.*<sup>1</sup>

In 1994 I went to Bolivia, alone, and not really speaking Spanish, much less the indigenous languages I would encounter in the rainforest. After about two weeks in La Paz—Bolivia’s largest city nestled in a smog-covered bowl at over twelve thousand feet in the Andes—I rode an overcrowded bus down a narrow, serpentine road dropping thousands of feet through the mountainous, tropical jungles and into the lowland rainforest. At times the road was simply a vertical wall segmented only by a small, winding grade, sometimes barely the width of our bus, reminding me of one of those roads along the cliff rims in old cartoons except that these mountain walls were covered with a magnificent, green, hanging vegetation. I peered over the edge at the dramatic descent as we passed in and out of misty clouds with what seemed to me a reckless casualness of the driver. It was the dry season and the bus kicked up the sandy dirt from the road. People left the windows open because it was hot and the dust blew in the bus adding an earthy grit to everything I ate or drank. I’d brought some boiled eggs and bread for sandwiches along with my Drum cigarettes, all of which I shared with the old man sitting next to me. I don’t think he spoke much Spanish as I think he was probably Armaran or Quechechuan, the two major indigenous peoples in Bolivia, or maybe he just couldn’t understand my poor pronunciation. Nor could he read the Spanish words I pointed to in my translator dictionary. Nevertheless, I rolled us cigarettes as we shared egg sandwiches and communicated politely with nods and gestures, but ultimately

---

<sup>1</sup> If this sounds familiar, see the opening paragraph of *Moby Dick*. Italics are direct quotes from (Melville 1851/1998, p. 21)



my lack of linguistic breadth hindered me from a more shared experience in this land, which in and of itself was not so strange as much as I was a stranger.

Frequently the bus would drive under cascading waterfalls and the water pounded loudly on the roof of the bus and then less loudly on our luggage strapped to the top and then loud again before quickly becoming a fading hiss. We slowed down to pass through small villages—hardly roadside attractions—where children ran to the windows to sell fruit and candy, drinks, cigarettes, and cocoa leaves. As we made it to lower elevations we drove through numerous streams and small rivers, usually not more than a foot deep, but the water line on the sandy banks suggested much higher possibilities. The seat of the bus was an aged red vinyl and the springs were broken or warped and after nearly nineteen, bumpy, frightening, exhilarating, and ultimately mundane hours with only two stops—one an unexpected search by the military—I was glad to get off the bus. It was very early the following morning and still a few hours before dawn when the old man beside me shook me awake and motioned towards the door. I stepped out on to a dirt road, and in a matter of seconds a man climbed on top of the bus and untied and tossed me my backpack. The bus had already begun driving off as he was still climbing back in, and as it disappeared into the darkness, I heard laughter. I had been the only *gringo* on the bus. The sound of the engine faded and I was left to silence. And then an orchestra of unknown insects and amphibians slowly resumed their symphonies as though my interruption had never occurred. In the streak of open sky above the road—that which was not veiled by the canopy of trees—I stood under a brilliant myriad of stars unadulterated by any electricity for hundreds of miles. For a moment, I basked in the beauty of the vista. I have only seen stars so intense from certain places in the Rocky Mountains and the more remote deserts of Arizona and Utah, but when I

found that I could not recognize a single constellation, much less find the North Star, I felt the creeping realization that I was dangerously out of my element.

*A journey of a thousand steps*

I open with that story because it introduces a number of topics that this dissertation addresses, for example, the notion of traveling into new territories, language/communication, a method of orientation that in a different context, didn't serve me very well (i.e., the stars from a different position on the globe and what would always be a limited star field because of rainforest vegetation), storytelling, and autobiography. It illustrates that constellations, something often thought of as steadfast and immutable, in fact, change with one's position, with one's perspective. As will be shown later, they also change over time. Regardless, that's not the only time I've been lost in the wilderness, probably not the last, but luckily for me, I eventually "find my way," or have thus far. Perhaps one of the oldest educational analogies is the comparison of education to a journey, and while conceptually this comparison is rather common, almost to the point of being cliché, I consider it suffused with thematic possibilities and certainly my own experiences with travel certainly contribute to this significance. Among the numerous (excessive?) thematic analogies available in the metaphor of education as a journey, I will describe the dispositions of orientation, disorientation, and misorientation. Though I explore the values of "getting lost" or disoriented, this dissertation is nonetheless largely concerned with how the high school curriculum is preparing students for their future travels as adults (their ability to map and navigate their environments), and in this sense the notion of orientation becomes a goal of education. However, every metaphor has its limits and I do not want to constrain myself to only working within the bounds of a given analogy.

There is no shortage of discussion of the value of metaphors in the educational literature, much of it punctuating their effectiveness working with preservice teachers. For Maxine Greene, “A metaphor not only involves a reorientation of consciousness, it also enables us to cross divides, to make connections between ourselves and others, and to look through other eyes” (1997, p. 393). In Herbert Kliebard’s article, “Curriculum Theory as Metaphor,” he notes,

the power of [the] metaphor to fashion allegiances and control attitudes . . . To see the school as if it were a factory and the curriculum as a means of production is not merely to make an observation; that metaphor has imbedded in it an element of persuasion. (1982, p. 15)

If there is an element of persuasion embedded in my choice of metaphor, it is because I have grave concerns about the direction our school systems are heading, as well as society at large. Ten years earlier, Kliebard (1972/1975) published a short article in *Teachers College Record* in which he relates 3 curricular metaphors: production, growth, and travel. Kliebard describes the production as a “process carefully plotted” in which the student “is the raw material which will be transformed into a finished and useful product” and he adds that “great care is taken so that raw materials of a particular quality or composition are channeled into the proper production systems and that no potentially useful characteristic of raw material is wasted” (p. 84). He puts a more favorable spin on the other two metaphors of growth and travel. Karen Baptist (2002) has explicated the former in an article describing six separate views of the garden as a metaphor for curriculum. Obviously, my concerns are with the metaphor of travel.

Kliebard’s discussion of each metaphor is brief, but his description provides an adequate beginning. He writes,

The curriculum is a route over which students will travel under the leadership of an experienced guide and companion. Each traveller will be affected differently by the journey since its effect is at least as much a function of the predilections, intelligence, interests, and intent of the traveller as it is of the contours of the route. This variability is not only inevitable, but wondrous and desirable . . . (1975, p. 85)

While Kliebard nicely stresses the individual, I would also add the emphasis of a cooperative journey with shared interests in group arrival. Maxine Greene describes classes she taught in historical contexts of education as “an open-ended adventure into the landscapes of the past” (1997, p. 387). In 1978 she compiled essays, lectures, and professional presentations written between 1974 and 1977 in a book entitled, *Landscapes of Learning* (1978). In these essays she weaves educational theory, literature, and philosophical subjects such as phenomenology, existentialism and ethics to address subjects such as “emancipatory education,” the “artistic-aesthetic,” the “predicaments of women,” and various other social and educational issues. Moving gracefully from the works of Dewey to Sartre, Woolf to Merleau-Ponty, Marcuse to Baudelaire, Freire to Habermas, and Thoreau to Camus, she addresses emancipation, consciousness, and a sense of ““wide-awakeness,”” and the need to “transcend passivity” (p. 2). I have similar goals, intents, and am influenced by a few of those theorists as well as others. Nonetheless, in her preface she provides an eloquent statement that summarized her title and advances the driving metaphor of this dissertation:

Transcendence has to be chosen; it can be neither given nor imposed. It is my view that persons are more likely to ask their own questions and seek their own transcendence when they feel themselves to be grounded in their personal histories, their lived lives. That is what I mean by “landscapes.” (p. 2)

For this dissertation, I use the term landscapes to refer to curricular landscapes that the class is traversing—that is, actual subjects and materials that the class studies. However, it is my intent that by including, indeed infusing, the personal histories and everyday lives of the students in that content (as they traverse/experience it), that this will successfully “ground”

the students in these landscapes in ways that provide the opportunity of choosing the transcendence that Greene describes.

*You are here*

This metaphor of education as a journey is implicit in the aphorism, “You have to know where you’ve been to know where you are going,” and I would first make explicit the skipped proposition that by knowing where you have been, you then know where you *are*, and only *then* can you know where you are going, and moreover, how to get there. The best directions are nullified if one cannot get any bearings as to where that one is in accordance with those directions. This would be the function of the **You Are Here** arrows on maps at kiosks in shopping malls, theme parks, and national landmarks across our nation.

Furthermore, as this little maxim was often used in the Civil Rights Movement, I, too, will expand this to mean not only an evocation for individual self-awareness, but also a call for a group/class/community consciousness, i.e., where *we* have been and where *we* are going. Accordingly, this project asks “Where is here?” and “How did we get here?” However, this work doesn’t seek so much to answer those questions but to propose how educators and curriculum can enable students to answer them for themselves. It will nonetheless point to some directions of where we are going as well as consider ways that the students might have, and take, a more active role in determining, or at least affecting, that direction.

Imagining education as a journey implies understanding education as traveling, as an experiential process, practiced and performed. As such it means to provide students with the essential skills for travel, and is ultimately aimed at eventually allowing students to apply those skills on student-led excursions, and then ideally as adults. Additionally, learning is recognized as what happens in that process, based on the experiences traversing and

discussing various curricular landscapes (cultural and earthly landscapes too). This means understanding curriculum not only as the landscapes they travel, but also the discussions they have while they traverse those landscapes, which will be described in terms of “curriculum as complicated conversation” and the dialogic classroom in chapter two. This metaphor also raises the spatial considerations of curriculum theory, a theme that is already present in the educational discourse. This spatial move not only addresses education “situated” in “curriculums of place,” it also allows me to address the notion of cartography, or the means in which the curriculum is represented as the landscapes students are traversing. This involves the mental and literal processes of mapping that people use to orient themselves as well as representing their journey as a class. As such map-making not only becomes an activity for students, but it raises questions of representation and validity in deciding how we construct maps—both curricular maps as a class and mental maps as individuals—and generally how maps can contribute to the notion of orientation in education. It also represents my own attempt at “metacartography.”

This project hopes to disrupt linear, common sense applications of causality, while not expunging causality completely. Instead, this aims at revealing both the inherent complexities of any causal relationship as well as promoting a better understanding of those complexities. Furthermore, it emphasizes the cooperative construction of maps and the necessary inclusion of various perspectives, incorporating those often marginalized or neglected voices as well as the students’ voices. Again, a better understanding of where *we* are, makes it easier to then know how to get where *we* are going, which implies that there is some unanimity regarding where we want to go, and how we might get there. Obviously, this won’t always be the case. It would be nice to think—but too simple—that this will

necessarily lead to friendlier and more peaceful relations between students and their communities and the world. Indeed, there are “no guarantees,” but if nothing else, it may serve as a counter balance to the emphasis on identity politics and a competitive classroom ethos, and instead promote and model for students a more collectively oriented deportment.

### *Metaphors matter*

I think it is also worth acknowledging the negative side of my metaphor of education as travel as in it we can find a certain sexism and racism embedded in our society. For example, for a man to describe another man or proclaim himself as having “been around” or as someone who has “been around the block a few times” implies a knowledge of getting out of one’s own environment and a wisdom gained from experiencing worlds besides one’s own. Just as the pejorative description, “he ain’t been around” suggests a naivety or haplessness, or a brand of local simpleton, experiencing nothing beyond a small horizon. Having “been around” connotes, for men, both temporal, geographic, and cultural experience. Whereas when such a phrase describes a woman, as in having a reputation as a “girl who’s been around,” this usually ascribes a level of sexuality promiscuity or disrespect. Indeed, clearly this relates to the element of masculine control of the behavior of the female gender. Such control and containment can be seen in various historical manifestations such as keeping women at home, in the kitchen, or in the fields. And if a woman were to be in the city, especially at night, there was a time when it was expected that she have an escort lest she be seen as a woman “of the streets,” which again means something different for women than for men. Such spatial limits, whether imposed ideologically through social norms or outright verbal or physical intimidation certainly belie the history of masculine control. Such control also seems related to knowledge, in terms of what women were allowed to be

exposed to (usually gilded in some chivalric code or safety). For a long time in our country, women, remaining in the home, the kitchen, or fields, were left out of various civic discussions, political affairs, and education beyond social etiquette (that reinscribed their passive captivity) and the technical training of their duties at home.

This metaphor also reveals the history of racism in our past as spatial and temporal limitations were placed on many minorities but especially African-Americans. That blacks were not allowed in certain places, and most particularly after dark, also reveals the sense of white, masculine control of the other. Examples range from curfews, the privilege to enter (or not) spaces of private property such as the home, and racial slurs used to keep black people “in their place.” Such racism and spatial containment (of the knowledge and experience associated with travel) can be seen in a distinction that was often made in the sense that if a black man displayed any sort of attitude or defiance, the adjective of “city” would sometimes be disparagingly applied to the subject, whereas the humble and compliant “country boy” is complementary to the absence of such boldness. Spatial elements of control and domination and its relation to both place and knowledge can be seen as many of the African-American men who served in the U.S. army during World War II had traveled to Europe and other places and saw other worlds where diversity existed without such overt forms of subjugation. Too, they had been taught certain skills, entrusted with important responsibilities, and in some cases, given authority. When they returned to the U.S. after such experiences they were not going to accept the second-class-treatment so easily, and many historians refer to this experience as an important factor in U.S. Civil Rights Movement.



However, despite those negative historical qualities, I still find the metaphor useful. Walter Benjamin recounts an old German saying: “When someone makes a journey, he has a story to tell” (1936/2002, p. 144), and this places a much more palatable spin on the idea of travel and experience. In this next chapter I will address another negative side of this metaphor—that of imperialism and the obsession to know the other, often at their expense—but for the most part, I hope to use this metaphor of education as a journey and the various metaphors that analogy evokes in its more positive possibilities. As such I will explore how education can develop appropriate skills for high school students to more competently navigate the societal waters and landscapes they soon will be sailing or traversing as they leave the harbors and trail heads of their homes and schools (and in schools before they leave). I use this metaphorical schematic to connect theory to the practice of teaching and there are a few metaphorical considerations working in conjunction: considering education as traversing various curricular and literal landscapes; curriculum considered as those landscapes *and* the complicated discussions that students have to come to know both those landscapes, themselves, and their fellow companions; and finally, and a notion of curricular (critical) cartography which entails constructing maps that both accurately and creatively reflect those landscapes *and* the students’ experience of traveling through those sites.

#### *To run the course*

As defined by Pinar (Pinar & Grumet, 1976; Pinar, Reynolds, Slattery & Taubman, 1995; Pinar, 2004) *currere* is the Latin infinitive form of curriculum, “to run the course,” or as Kincheloe (1998) translates it, as does Slattery (1995), as “running the race course,” wherein the noun form of curriculum is the “track” (Kincheloe 1998, p. 129), or the “course.” Hence, many schools name their curriculum as the “standard course of study.” Because of

those “standards,” certain destinations are more or less determined, but the routes taken to arrive and the amount of time spent there are still, to some degree, left up to the teacher (although some school systems have adopted fairly unyielding “curriculum pacing guides” which amount to rigid schedules in addition to standardized tests to ensure uniformity). Clearly, there are numerous factors that determine curriculum. There are state and local government school boards, the material texts that a school possesses (for example, this is a large determining factor regarding what novels a whole class can read). There are other requirements made by department chairs, administrators, and/or parents, as well as expectations set by businesses, corporations, and/or colleges in an increasingly competitive educational market. Indeed, it will be argued the more recent trend of a test-centered schooling warrants this more student-centered philosophy of education. Indeed, I argue that current educative purposes and the widespread test-oriented education seem to misorient and disorient students respectively. Though I find some influence from Dewey, I will argue that even a student-centered education will become an inappropriate descriptor as this project will promote a more future- and community-oriented curriculum. Regardless, the point is that while the course is somewhat laid out for the teacher, there is some agency in the routes and time taken as well as the modes of transportation.

According to Pinar the dominant metaphor in the field of curriculum theory is relating curriculum as “a complicated conversation” (Pinar, 2004). This conversation is not only one that takes place in schools between teachers, students, texts, and standard courses of study, but also within the academic halls and at conferences as well as among other voices such as churches, parents, community groups, politicians, and then the multitude of voices from what is collectively called the media industry (entertainment, advertising, news, the Internet, etc.).

With all the different voices talking at once, some competing, some complementing, some contradicting, some speaking languages or rhetoric an individual doesn't understand, it can sometimes be confusing, even disorienting, especially when so many of those voices are attached to images which will be covered in chapter four. Some voices articulate messages "that really speak to us," some grumble offensive rants, and some just babble outright gibberish or frenzied, apocalyptic admonitions. Sometimes it can become quite difficult, especially for youth, to hear the messages from what might be considered the "appropriate voices."

To be sure, consensus as to who are the "appropriate voices" remains elusive and is in fact, a passionately contested topic. Furthermore, it seems all that more difficult for individuals to find, create, practice, and hear their own voice in the cacophony of so many, and it also appears increasingly more difficult to get large, diverse groups to converse nicely, much less sing songs in unison or compose them collaboratively. This model of curriculum as complicated conversation will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter, but I imagine these conversations as how students "make sense" of the landscapes they traverse. As such, language becomes a recurrent and paramount theme throughout the dissertation. For as much as my memory and education can be linked to the educational situation of a class, a teacher, a book, or a backpacking excursion, certainly a large contribution to those learning experiences were the conversations that occurred with that class, that teacher, that book, myself, and/or with those I was traveling. However, "curriculum as complicated conversation" also has to do with what that conversation is about, and this will be the subject of chapter three.

*The (re)present(ed) course*

After this introduction generally revisits some of the ideas expressed above, the next chapter proceeds to depict the theory of curriculum I am using as it converges with my overarching theme of education as a journey. As stated, chapter two explores the limits and possibilities of a dialogic pedagogy in which curriculum is understood as the conversations students have while traversing curricular landscapes and constructing the tales of their journeys as a dialogical model of education. It also addresses the potential problems inherent to such a model. Chapter three locates this curriculum in the disciplines of secondary education, and while maintaining a necessity of interdisciplinarity—as well as the application to any discipline—this places a paramount importance on history. Thus, it would seem incumbent that I make a gesture toward the social studies curriculum, though I would avoid disciplinary categories, advancing more thematic and interdisciplinary inquiries that just so happens to stress history and geography. While chapter three largely finds inspiration in the work of Walter Benjamin and educators associated with critical pedagogy, chapter four describes (and attempts to apply) Guy Debord's theories of the "society of the spectacle" in how it relates to youth culture and the loss of history. Although I find the work of Walter Benjamin to be extremely useful and relevant—even prophetic—the historic moment he was addressing is past, and I find Debord's work more contemporarily applicable. Moreover, I think the work of Guy Debord complements Benjamin both in the theoretical foundations of their work, but also in various concepts that, even if they didn't treat the same, they addressed similar topics, for example: phantasmagoria/spectacle, commodities, history, and place, especially the cityscape.

In chapter five I consider a spatial curriculum theory that is situated in place and aspires for a socio-historical understanding of the landscapes students traverse and how that

understanding can be represented in various texts, including maps, and hopes to offer more complicated notions of causality as situated in constellations as opposed to a linear depictions. It also describes a “curriculum of place” (Pinar 1991; 2004; Pinar et al., 1995) as a means of situating education. Chapter five is nonetheless more concerned with explanatory knowledge and with critical representations of content, and it is particularly attentive to mapping the public sphere. However, to complement this, and not to be neglected by it, chapter six describes another side to such cartography that offers attention and expression to the personal sphere and to the imaginative and fantastic. This employs creative, artistic, playful, and performative activities in and about those landscapes. While the former seeks to provide more or less accurate “maps of meaning,” the latter seeks to experiment with semiotic relationships and play in the fields of signifiers as well as exceed the boundaries of historical and even rational depictions, and perhaps create “liminal” spaces of performance and meaning-making.

As opposed to the orientation, the sense of direction, and the awareness of the landscape stressed in chapter five, chapter six stresses disorientation, getting lost, the unknown, and perhaps, the not yet existing. As opposed to understanding what *is*, chapter six emphasizes what is not, what is unknown, and perhaps unknowable, but also, what isn’t but could be yet to come. This section applies arts integration, performance theory, and following those chapters is a conclusion that attempts to bring all of this to a completed form. Generally, I feel like each chapter fits together in a constellational relationship, but I do try to provide a connecting narrative even if I occasionally break from the metaphorical frame. Indeed, in the first few chapters, there are places when discussion of traveling is completely absent. However, I am attempting to lay a theoretical foundation, and I feel whatever

disjointedness exists, or the disorientation it creates, is rather slight and is also somewhat justified as a matter of form based on the theory presented herein. Each chapter has an introductory sketch ranging from autobiography to world history to scientific data. Not only do each of these anecdotes introduce a theme covered in that chapter and the dissertation as a whole, they also provide a narrative structure, though not necessarily continuity. While I can't claim that they embody an exemplary model of my ideas, I do hope that these seemingly incongruent or unrelated texts became connected through the act of inquiry and study, and through figurative images and experience. Regardless, in the end I believe what I will have described as a spatial curriculum theory is not only representative of much of the current scholarship in the field, but also an explication of a notion of curriculum theory as working through my understanding of critical pedagogy and as well as other theoretical criticisms.

### *The purposes of education*

Contributing to the continuing contestation about public education is the lack of congruity regarding the purposes of schools. Ask any sample of students, teachers, administrators, professors, or parents what preparation is of utmost importance in the child's education and the answers will invariably vary, although preparation for the job market appears to be quite common (and seemingly commonsensical). It can be said that this project falls into the strain of pedagogical purposes historically associated with progressive and critical pedagogies, and is essentially concerned with, and invested in a community-oriented and "competent" citizenry, although it may advocate a philosophy that is quite different from those who have historically been associated with those educative movements. To be sure, until one defines what it means to be a "competent" citizen, it could be anything from

vocational training to basic awareness of the voting process. And indeed, some people's idea of building a better society is framed in a homogenized vision based on exclusionary values. My own motivations are, in part, generated by critical theory and critical pedagogy and thus, this project is concerned with how systems of knowledge/power construct, or at least shape, peoples' consciousness and identity, and how education can combat uncritical, passive acceptances of hegemonic and material oppressions, inequities, and injustices rampant in modern society. As such it is concerned with how capitalism—particularly now in the totality of the mediated, multinational, corporated world of globalization—produces various ideologies and social relations within the quotidian practices of students (particularly through acts of consumption and commodification) and how those practices perpetuate destructive behavior patterns and social inequities (destructive to people, places, and things, not the least of the latter would be the environment). Furthermore, it addresses how schools tend to normalize and perpetuate such conditions, and how teachers and students can nonetheless work against those tendencies.

In *Experience and Education* (1938/1997) and elsewhere (e.g., 1916/1952) John Dewey argued that any purposive model of education has the fundamental need for a philosophy of experience, and that there exist a necessary intersect between this philosophy and the purposes of education. In the remainder of this introduction, I shall explicate the philosophy of experience and the purposes of education as they intersect in this project. Dewey's book (1938/1997) was addressing what was at the time a debate between "traditional" and "progressive" education, but his arguments remain poignant for us today. This dissertation does not attempt to cover the current arguments regarding progressive education, which, depending on who one reads, is considered the cause of educational

problems today or education's savior s the successes and/or failures of progressive education are blamed or attributed to various culprits and advocates respectively. Nor does this study claim to espouse an orthodox Deweyan model even if it draws from some of his philosophy. This project is focused on secondary education and derives its Deweyan influences regarding his insistence on history and geography as foundational criterion for inquiry more so than his purposes of education, excepting the goal of education as to improve society given a relationship between an enlightened citizenry and social and democratic progress. However, regarding the latter, I might be more aligned with the social reconstruction movement as this dissertation imagines an educational vision in which public secondary education can be a site of social transformation and amelioration, and in this respect owes as much to George Counts as John Dewey.

Both *Experience and Education* (1938/1997), and Counts' *Dare the School Build a New Social Order?* (1932) have a new relevancy to current debates in education, particularly if one considers the current test-centered curriculum as a modern-day version of the traditional education to which much of progressive education was reacting, and sometimes, overreacting. And at other times, one might argue—Counts for example—not being reactive enough. Regardless, Dewey and Counts' warnings that reactionary and/or aimless “progressive” education often perpetuates some of the very consequences it claims to be countering is still worth considering today. Furthermore, some of their fears turned out to be rather prophetic and a reconsideration of their work is warranted in today's conservative educational climate. Whereas Dewey was slightly more reluctant to push public schools to the forefront as agents for social change—something Counts advocated adamantly—both eventually recognized that in order to achieve the society they envisioned, one in which



every individual could realize their full potential as a member of a community, *all* social institutions, including the schools, must be directed at a more cooperative social organization. Recognizing the direction other institutions are currently headed, such as current government policy, the media industry, or the campaign of consumerism championed by multinational corporations, this project—with some sense of urgency—argues that schools must (again) move to the forefront of attempting to affect social change.

*Are you experienced?*

According to Dewey's "principle of continuity of experience" every experience has a past, present, and future. That is, every experience occurs in conditions that are affected by "previous human activities" and "every experience affects for better or worse the attitudes which help decide the quality of further experiences" (1938/1997, p. 37). According to this principle of continuity Dewey makes the distinction between experiences that are educative and "mis-educative." The latter are not experiences in which things are not learned, but that which is learned is destructive or stunting to the individual and/or society at large. Dewey gives the example of a person who learns to become a burglar as obviously there are skills learned and development occurring as the burglar grows as a thief, but this would be considered mis-educative in that not only does that produce destructive behavior, but also cuts off the burglar from other possibilities to contribute to the community. Dewey speaks of the distinction in terms of growth and direction:

. . . the question is whether growth in this direction promotes or retards growth in general. Does this form of growth create conditions for further growth, or does it set up conditions that shut off the person who has grown in this particular direction from *the occasions, stimuli, and opportunities for continuing growth in new directions?* What is the effect of growth in a special direction upon the attitudes and habits which alone open up avenues for development in other lines? (p. 36, emphasis added)

Translating this to the concept of orientation, one might ask does an orientation create conditions for further growth, that is, further travel in positive directions, or does it limit, inhibit, or “track” students in directions that preclude “the occasions, stimuli, and opportunities for continuing “for travel] in new directions?” Similarly, education might be considered misorienting if, as in the case with the burglar, the skills to navigate are acquired, but the direction of that navigation is dubious or destructive.

As stated before, within my general metaphor of education as a journey, three dispositions will be discussed: orientation, disorientation, and misorientation. One specific way that schools often misorient students is with tracking programs (there are other means) in which students are cut off from various educational opportunities and otherwise led in directions that too often limit, constrain, or frustrate their traveling capabilities, consigning them to all-too-often destructive destinations, be those the paths to prisons or wage slavery. However, it is most likely that these destinations, destructive to both students and society, are not so determined—as in students are literally being led to them—as much as it is that alternative paths are not being made available. Worse, many schools also misorient students by failing to at least attempt to counter the competitive ethos of society at large, and by doing so, misorient students into dispositions that set them up to act against each other. Schools also disorient students by fragmenting knowledge and asking them to regurgitate factoids that are never connected to each other or to the lives of students.

This philosophy of experience brings up a few considerations, the first being an earlier stated goal of orientation with a communal deportment. That is, orientation that not only emphasizes the ability of the individual to follow various and expansive opportunities of travel, but it also stresses the consideration of fellow and future travelers not only in terms of

equal opportunity, but cooperation as well. Another consideration is brought up by the following statements of Dewey: “Every experience is a moving force. Its value can be judged only on the ground of what it moves toward and into” (1938/1997, p. 38). This points to the future-oriented emphasis in Dewey’s continuity of education as well as providing criteria of value regarding the educative experience of orientation. Such value, then, is what/where it moves students “toward and into.” However, for me that orientation is still one that recognizes a past as the experiences of the present occur in spaces formed by the past.

Dewey suggests something similar when he writes

in a word, we live from birth to death in a world of persons and things which in large measure is what it is because of what has been done and transmitted from previous human activities. When this fact is ignored, experience is treated as if it were something which goes on exclusively inside an individual’s body and mind. (p. 39)

Accordingly, educative experiences must engage this relationship of past, present, and future. It will also be argued that most of this millennial generation encounters an overload of experiences, many of them enhanced through media (especially music and video), hormones, and sometimes drugs, or just the energy of youth. Some of these are still attached to or affected by “what has been done and transmitted from previous human activities,” while others could be considered to be skimming the surface of the simulacra of hyperreality. Many youth today do not seem interested or encouraged by teachers, the curriculum, or schools in distinguishing between the two, and why such a distinction is even important, and those distinctions will be addressed later.

For Dewey, in addition to the principle of continuity, “the second chief principle for interpreting an experience in its educational function and force” is that of the “interaction” of experience, which is the “interplay” of “objective and internal conditions”(1938/1997, p. 42). “Taken together, or in their interaction, they form what we call a *situation*” (p. 42, emphasis

his). The “objective” or “environing” conditions are those that affect any experience, and this consideration places a “primary responsibility of educators” to know and incorporate the everyday life of students (p. 40). This is one reason Dewey insisted that *real* progressive education was more difficult than traditional education, and Dewey mentions disappointing examples of progressive education that allowed child-centered curriculum to be interpreted as directed only by student interests. On the other hand, traditional education makes “no demand that the teacher should become intimately acquainted with the conditions of the local community, physical, historical, economic, occupational, etc., in order to utilize them as educational resources” (p. 40). The same could be said of the contemporary curriculum- or test-centered education as these “conditions of the local community” are generally ignored and rarely connected to the lives of students. By contrast, a truly progressive and properly situated education would “take these things constantly into account” (p. 40).

As important as these objective conditions are, they are coexistent to the subjective or internal side of experience, and education should address these two conditions together. Taken together, such a philosophy of experience is attuned to the educative “situation,” or the interplay of these two sets of conditions (objective and subjective) as this interaction contributes to a continuity of education that is concerned with past, present, and future. The latter of which implies an education that is guided by some sense of direction, or having an “end-in-view” and adheres to an emphasis of a future-oriented direction, but a future that is contingent on both past and present influences. Furthermore, the notion of education as orientation denotes an awareness of the educative situation as both the objective curriculum and the world (scientific knowledge) *and* in the interaction with the personal (existential) experience of the individual.

### *The history of the present*

As stated, one of the explicit goals of this dissertation is to explore ways that the history of the present can be taught and therefore history attains a certain preeminence. It will later be argued, as Steven Best does in *The Politics of Historical Vision* (1995), that there exists “an important aspect of advanced capitalist societies—the decline of historical knowledge, consciousness, and imagination” (p. xi). For some, this decline has provoked a sense of urgency as calls for historical understanding are being made from numerous and various sources (these include conservative traditionalists, left-wing historical materialists, and more mainstream social commentators who lament the “historical amnesia” of contemporary society). Dewey frequently communicated the importance of historical understanding and for multiple reasons. “The way out of scholastic systems that made the past an end in itself is to make acquaintance with the past a *means* of understanding the present” (Dewey 1938/1997, p. 78). As always, Dewey is describing education that creates experiential connections being made between content and student, and this not only means elevating education above the mere memorization of “curious facts to be laboriously learned,” (1916/1997, p. 212) but also there is the reason of understanding the historical present.

Dewey writes, “History deals with the past, but this past is the history of the present” (1916/1917, p. 214) and this will be covered in more detail in chapter three, particularly as it compares to historical materialism as conceived by Walter Benjamin, and later, the loss of history as described by Guy Debord and others. Walter Benjamin wrote of a mode of dialectical materialism which is “a mode of historical science which fashions its object not out of a tangle of mere facticities but out of the numbered group of threads representing the

woof of a past fed into the warp of the present” (1937/2002, p. 269). Dewey also uses the productive metaphor of the loom when he writes, “Historical knowledge . . . is an organ for analysis of the warp and woof of the present social fabric, of making known the forces which have woven the pattern” (1916/1997, p. 217). Recognizing that the metaphor is not perfectly transferable, I’m not suggesting there is exact congruence of the ideas they are transmitting. For example, Dewey’s use of the loom metaphor is in the context of the ethical value in teaching history, and he does not mean an anecdotal use of history to reveal virtue or vice. For Dewey, history offers assistance to “a more intelligent sympathetic understanding of the social situations of the present in which individuals share is a permanent and constructive moral asset” (p. 217). Still, the notion of “making known the forces which have woven the pattern” may not be completely antithetical to Benjamin’s “materialist pedagogy.” Regardless, this historical understanding of the present brings up the notion of causality, and this project hopes to complicate the notion, as Benjamin was attempting, and this will be covered in greater detail in chapter three. It is mentioned here as it regards the philosophy of experience and the temporal factors of orientation.

#### *A vision of the future*

The temporal factors of orientation not only have to do with understanding the past in its relation to the present, i.e., how the steps I and other individuals have taken in our past have led us to where we are today, but also how those steps were limited and guided by structural and often invisible forces of social patterns and habits. Those steps were also influenced by the steps of both those who came before us, and those who walk with us now, particularly our friends and family. In a semi-Nietzschean way I also believe that the patterns and steps of our travels develop at the earliest of ages and habits that are eternally

repeated in different conditions. Much of this will be covered in chapter three, but I imagine at this point that I have moved “beyond Dewey” or least down a different path. Though considerations of the future are part of Dewey’s philosophy of experience, at times he seemed more present-centered than future. According to Kliebard (1995), the historical curriculum of the Dewey School still maintained traces of recapitulation theory, the notion of culture-epochs, and his notion of occupations (p. 59-60), and therefore, Dewey’s historicism was sometimes guided by a different vision of past, present, and future than what I am describing here.

However, I think this still maintains a “spirit” of Dewey as this notion of orientation in an educative sense is faithful to the principle of continuity. This fidelity involves an acknowledgment of the issues described above, though perhaps with different complications, namely that experiences build on other past experiences, that curriculum must be related to the students’ everyday experiences, that it must be attentive the educative situation, and it looks to the future guided by some sense of direction. Regarding the latter, I am promoting an emphasis in historical understanding, and one that is somewhat informed by Steven Best’s distinction between dialectical method and vision:

. . . but dialectics must also be understood as a theoretical and political vision that projects future emancipatory possibilities based on the analysis of existing society and past history. Where dialectical *method* relates to analysis of present and past, dialectical *vision* is future oriented and grounds the norm of human emancipation in actual historical possibilities disclosed by a dialectical method, while seeking to overcome debilitating oppositions in social and personal life. (1995, p. 35)

What future direction is the orientation that I am suggesting be promoted by our public schools? This dissertation advocates conceiving public schools as places of potential social transformation, and holding on to a “pathology of hope” (Kershaw 1999), this places an

investment—if no longer a faith—in the relationship between an educated citizenry and the reconstruction of society.

George Counts said in 1932 that “we Americans have a sublime faith in education. . . convinced that education is the one unfailing remedy for every ill to which man is subject. . .” (1932, p. 3) This problematic faith is further complicated in that “our schools, instead of directing the course of change, are themselves driven by the very forces that are transforming the rest of the social order” (p. 3). Ten years earlier, in *The Selective Character of American Secondary Education* (1922) Counts argued an early version of reproduction theory in which “misfortune, as well as fortune, passes from generation to generation” (148; Pinar et. al 1995, p. 120). This study is committed to a specific social vision, and as such, a definite degree of direction is necessary if we are to progress to that point. Counts argued progressives should be “less frightened of the bogies of *imposition* and *indoctrination*” suggesting that each was both necessary and positive (1932, pp. 9-10). The famous pamphlet, *Dare the School Build a New Social Order?* (1932) was made up of three presentations he had given at national educational meetings including the Progressive Education Association and the National Council of Education in Washington. At times, Counts attacks progressives for remaining mired in indecision, and this resonates as a legitimate complaint about so-called progressives today:

On the one hand, they speak continually about reconstructing society through education; and on the other, they apparently live in a state of perpetual fear lest the school impose some one point of view upon all the children and mold them to a single pattern. (pp. 23-24)

Counts is first and foremost arguing that schools don’t have such power to begin with, that “unless [schools] were supported by other agencies” it is only “one formative agency among many,” and that any school based social program “could only act as a mild counterpoise to



restrain and challenge the might of less enlightened and more selfish purposes” (p. 24), which he nonetheless advocates school do. Furthermore, I don’t think “a single pattern” is what Counts is arguing for, and nor am I. Regardless, my educative vision of the future is directed at a healthier, more sustainable relationship with the planet; an effort in a more equitable and egalitarian distribution of educational opportunity, health care, and financial resources; and toward a lessening of the alienation frequently occurring amid human and earthly relations as it is inextricably related to the larger totality of global capitalism.

*In sum*

Again, this thematic metaphor of education as a journey provides several possible applications including considering education as traversing various curricular and literal landscapes, curriculum considered as those landscapes *and* the complicated discussions that students have to come to know both those landscapes and their fellow companions, and finally, a representation of curriculum and experiences that entails constructing maps that both accurately and creatively reflect those landscapes *and* the students’ experience of traveling through those sites. The first notion is based on a literal interpretation of the Latin root for of curriculum, as “the course.” In this sense the teacher is a guide along a journey in which there are expected determinations and even trajectories, i.e., the standard course of study. While that statement denotes a determined course of travel, this study will explore alternatives for teachers that stress arriving at those destinations via various routes and coming to old topics in new ways. As such the role of the teacher begins as a guide, but in many cases, aims to turn such authority over to the students themselves. The second consideration uses William Pinar’s notion of curriculum as a “complicated conversation” that students have with teachers, texts, their classmates and the world, and this idea translates into

the conversations students have as they make sense of the curricular landscapes they traverse. This opens up a discussion of the dialogic classroom, and taking on a Freirean inspired position, I engage the Burbules–Ellsworth debate about the value of dialogue in the classroom. The third notion involves the mental and literal processes of mapping that people use to orient themselves, and as such map-making not only becomes an activity for students, but it raises questions of representation and validity in deciding how we construct maps—both curricular maps as a class and mental maps as individuals—and generally how maps can contribute to the notion of orientation in education.

Maps are not mere points of arrival, but representations of those points are produced in an aesthetic process of mapping the landscapes they traverse as a class. For me, these landscapes are largely historical and geographical, spaces full stories, images, and songs ripe for the cartographic imagination of students. Too, the act of constructing maps, of compiling and locating stories as well as other content, they are, in fact, constructing their own understanding, their own knowledge of subjects as opposed to being passive receptors of knowledge. I will argue this is a truly Freirean dialogical notion of “naming the world.” While this values the imaginative, it also stresses being critical about the representations they create as much as being critical about the images and knowledge being presented to them whether by a history book, the teacher, the Internet, a Hollywood movie, or an advertisement. Many, including myself, have decried the disorientating quality of this age, though I’m not convinced today’s youth feel the same disorientation. Nonetheless, one can hardly deny the abundance of images and signs that are presented to us, and the rapidity and multitude of agents producing meaning that people must sift through to orient themselves, to gain better perceptions of how various objects within view relate to one another and influence their

movement. “Time-space compression” and other changes in our geographic perspective, along with immediate methods of information transfer within a “flat world” have created in this new generation new mentalities and expectations that must be considered.

While “The idea that school may need to help students make meaning in a time of informational chaos has never been high on education’s list of priorities” (Kincheloe and Steinberg 1995, p. 3), I believe such a goal is now an educational imperative in our contemporary age. Best and Kellner describe their book, *The Postmodern Adventure* (2001), as “a form of *metacartography*” and explain the value of map-making.

Different people use distinctive maps to make sense of the world, deploying various ideas, models, and theories to organize their experience, to orient themselves in their environment, and to hopefully replace multiplicity and disorder with structure and order. Mappings also help construct personal identities, pointing to ways of being in the world, existential options, and sense-making activities. . . (p. 8)

I believe that explicitly engaging in cartographical exercises provides students with a means to cognitively map their worlds, and thus orient themselves. To do so it must connect the content to every day lives of students, but not just by interpolating popular entertainment to get students interested in the material. Nor does it mean curricular excursions based solely on student interests, but instead, (being more aligned with critical theory and critical pedagogy) it means concentrating on how systems of knowledge/power construct, or at least shape, peoples’ consciousness and identity, and how education can combat uncritical, passive acceptances of structural sources of ideological and material oppression and injustice. Additionally, I will argue that such an orientation (to be critical) has to connect past, present, and future.

Finally, the idea of cartography also brings up the notion of representation and its various considerations such as being critical of representations presented and the viability of

maps having the ability to represent what many have claimed to be unrepresentable. The map is not the territory, and pure exactitude is impossible, nor even desirable. Indeed, the claim that this project fosters a form of cognitive mapping that attempts to both map complicated historical causal relations to the present conditions as well as local events to a sense of global totality should rightly provoke suspicion, particularly if working with high school teenagers. But as the notion of cognitive mapping is generally considered something people do anyway, explicitly drawing our attention to methods and means of that process has value in that it induces reflection about the process itself, and therefore can potentially sharpen the skills that are involved. Such construction of maps is part of an aesthetic process in which students not only create representations but learn to be critical of those and other (re)presentations.

## CHAPTER 2

### WHAT WE TALK ABOUT WHEN WE TALK ABOUT CURRICULUM:

#### MAN GAVE NAMES TO ALL THE ANIMALS

The limits of my language mean the limits of my world.

Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*

Language still remains the necessary mediation for the awakening of consciousness of the world of alienation.

Mustapha Khayati, *Captive Words*

*A citizen of the world*

After four weeks in the lowland jungles of Bolivia, I eventually picked up some Spanish, though not really enough to be considered fluent. I returned to La Paz where I would stay for a couple weeks before returning to the States. There I befriended Gustavo, a young Bolivian man who lived close to where I was staying. Gustavo spoke about as much English as I spoke Spanish—*muy pequito*—and he accompanied me around the city, explaining the things we encountered as best he could, but again, my linguistic shortcomings hindered me from learning all of what Gustavo could have taught me. Nonetheless we got along well enough but it all felt very civil, almost formal, and probably on his part, it was obligatory. I was being boarded by some Methodist missionaries (the family connections mentioned earlier), and his mother worked for the church. Though I didn't have a missionary bone in my body—didn't even go to church services while I was there—I think Gustavo made some assumptions about me. Regardless, after a few days of more or less innocuous sightseeing and cordial, if somewhat strained, conversation, I decided to ask Gustavo where I could go have a few beers, and if he would care to join me. His countenance, one of surprise

and pleasure, was my answer. I had not had a drink my entire time in the rainforest and so I was ready for more than one. Gustavo was too.

We went to a place where the bartender knew Gustavo and eventually some of his friends arrived. I will not claim to have suddenly made magical leaps in my ability to speak Spanish, and certainly this memory is tainted with the blur of alcohol. However, there was communication occurring, and much of it was more intimate and genuine than I'd had with anybody my entire trip. We started out the evening passing my translator dictionary back and forth and pointing to words. They asked questions about me and about America, and they responded to my answers with the equivalent answers about themselves and/or Bolivia. However, as the afternoon turned into evening, and beer turned into rum, the little book seemed less and less necessary. Again, I don't suppose an alcohol-induced fluency manifested, and certainly there was as much *miscommunication* as there was any transfer of understood messages. But as the night progressed we revisited words and ideas, often in the form of toasts, raising our glasses to family, lovers—both requited and not—home, music, and to various other shared experiences. Of course, those experiences happened worlds apart and in completely different contexts, but the feelings evoked, I believe, were similar. Too, we shared a conversation of body language through gesticulations, gestures, countenances, pats on the back, hugs, etc. Indeed, it may be that this conversation was relied on more heavily because of the lack of verbal abilities. Furthermore, these exchanges were not reserved for evenings in which inhibitions were sloughed with alcohol, but on the subsequent days when Gustavo and I went sightseeing, there existed, I believe, a much more genuine conversation.

### *Imperial Show and Tell*

When I went to Bolivia I was in my early twenties, and though older than many of the undergraduates around me, I had not come across post-colonial theory or multiculturalism. At the time I had never taken a class in education and held no notions of pursuing a career in teaching. Perhaps the best text that bridges the topics of these anecdotes and their relevancy

to education (and the topic of this dissertation) is John Willinsky's (1998) book, *Learning to Divide the World*. There is no doubt that many of my ideas about the value of travel at the time were partly informed by the imperial quest to know. And in the purchasing of various mementos (some of which still hang on my wall today), to show, and if an interested audience presents itself, to tell. There undeniably was (perhaps still is) a degree of exoticizing the other, and even though I had read criticisms of the noble savage in my American literature classes, due to what was at the time a nature-centered cosmology, I still romanticized peoples about whom I knew little, but imagined more natural, and naturally better, relations with the earth and each other. Indubitably, my "curious travel" provided images that I gazed upon with "*Imperial Eyes*." These are references Willinsky makes to Mary Louise Pratt's (1992) book, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation*, in which she describes many of the travel writers who were often moved to a false humanitarianism as they encountered "primitive" and sometimes impoverished peoples. He quotes her to say these curious, sympathetic travelers "'secure[d] their innocence at the same moment as they assert[ed] European hegemony'" (Pratt quoted in Willinsky 1998, p. 77). In 1994, I had not been exposed to such thoughts. On the contrary, I was informed by various members of the classical literati and other writers who advocated and romanticized travel as valuable in-and-of-itself. This manifested itself in various forms, whether it was the hero's quest as the adventurer's voyage into the unknown or dangerous; a solitary, spiritual passage of self-discovery or enlightenment; a religious, mystical, or symbolic pilgrimage; or travel as a means of broadening of one's horizons as Mark Twain writes so conclusively in *Innocence Abroad*: "Travel is fatal to prejudice, bigotry and narrow-mindedness" (1869/1996, p. 650). Indeed, as Willinsky points out, "Travel, as way of finding oneself through a greater knowledge of the other, brings us to perhaps the busiest of intersections between education and imperialism" (p. 78).

In a statement that could have been describing me as I boarded that bus taking me from the less-than-modern streets of La Paz into the "wilderness" of the rainforest, Willinsky

writes, “Not only do we seek the thrill of crossing the line and entering the space of the other, but we see this as a way of knowing ourselves and defining our place as the one who, hovering above this divide, *can* know the other and ourselves, as if to encompass the whole world” (p. 78, emphasis his). As this dissertation uses the metaphor of travel, of discovering and knowing and representing a world that is at times foreign to both teachers and students, it is appropriate to be cautioned by recognizing what Willinsky calls “imperialism’s education project.” This cultural heritage of schools, summed up as the imperative to know and exhibit the world; the obsession to collect, organize, and display; the civilizing mission; and the affirmation and edification of Western culture through this chronicling and display of the other is still dominant in many schools, even in some so-called critical theories, and all-too-often so normalized that even benevolent attempts at multiculturalism sometimes reinscribe it.

Critical attempts to become “border-crossers” can easily turn out as giving passport to dominant groups to enter marginalized territory with the typical tourists’ gaze. This not only reinscribes imperialism’s exoticizing the other, but it can also mean that those of the dominant class who possess the knowhow to navigate crossing borders will take the jobs requiring such bi/multiculturalism that otherwise might be available for those who, coming from more marginalized territories, have also learned how to navigate those borders. That point should not be taken to dissuade those of the dominant class from becoming fluent in other languages and cultures besides their own, but in doing so, they, we, and all people should be aware of their presence in such spaces, literally or otherwise. The discussion of alternative histories will be discussed in chapter three. This chapter is about the dialogue in which those conversations take place.

#### *What we talk about*

Curriculum can no longer be reduced to a list of textbooks, lesson plans, and activities, but instead should be perceived as a fluid, dialogic relationship between students, teachers, and the world. Indeed, it “is not a certain set of texts, or principles or algorithms,



but the conversation that makes sense of these things. Curriculum is that conversation” (Grumet 1995, p. 19). Grumet’s statement describes the dynamic quality of curriculum as not simply being the textbook, or a skill, but as a “moving form” that occurs in a particular environment, in particular bodies, and in conversations with texts, events, and people. In his recent book, *What is Curriculum Theory?*, William Pinar (2004) again evokes this notion of curriculum as a conversation as something opposed to an increasingly rigid and formal set of standardized content and examinations. He notes how “this term is usually employed” in the Freirean notion “to refer to more open-ended, sometimes rather personal and interest-driven, events in which persons dialogically encounter each other” (p. 186). However, he also reiterates that these conversations are much more “complicated” than referring to classroom dialogue. As such,

Curriculum ceases to be a thing, and it is more than a process. It becomes a verb, an action, a social practice, a private meaning, and a public hope. Curriculum is not just the site of our labor, it becomes the product of our labor, changing as we are changed by it. (Pinar, 2004, p. 188; Pinar et al. 1995, p. 848)

As such, this conversation “becomes the site on which the generations struggle to define themselves and the world” and hence, is an “extraordinarily complicated conversation” (Pinar et al., 1995, pp. 847-848). This points to one of the most crucial complications but one that is often overlooked, circumvented, or neglected in educational discourse: that of the generational gap. That is, that much of the “struggle” of the younger generations to define themselves and the world, is that their definitions do not always (often) match those of their parents, and too, their teachers.

Curriculum as complicated conversations also includes those conversations that create policy and the concrete discipline-oriented content approved by states, school boards, and individual school departments. It also refers to what is talked about in schools, officially or not. This may mean things ranging from prayer in school, the topics of announcements the principal makes everyday, as well as those topics that never get mentioned. Too, it refers to the various organizations and clubs that exist in a school—or don’t—such as the

Fellowship of Christian Athletes, or gay/lesbian support groups. The participation in such groups contribute to the overall learning experience of students in schools just as the very existence of an organization impart some message, some communication, to students even if they do not participate. Indeed, complicated conversations are the conversations of any given school, and hence what a school chooses to talk about or doesn't is a part of the school's curriculum. Additionally, because these students bring into the classroom and halls of schools the conversations they have at home, with their friends and families, with churches and other cultural institutions, these conversations are not relegated to only what a school chooses to talk about or not, but they are also the conversations held in the media, in the students' forms of entertainment, at their places of work and leisure, i.e., the public sphere. They are also the conversations they have with themselves internally, the often polyphonic dialogue that occurs in the private sphere. These conversations are also complicated by the silences of voices left out of the conversation, symbolic languages, the hidden curriculum, and things taught without being talked about, and said without being spoken. This includes the messages communicated through recognition and attention—or the lack thereof—and through the types of conversations society, students, teachers, administrators, and others have that (to the savvy observer) articulate unconscious assumptions and prejudices. Finally, there is both body language and physical communications ranging from countenances, contacts, gestures, gesticulations, assaults, and intimacies. A complicated conversation indeed.

*When we talk about curriculum*

Curriculum as complicated conversations means more than organizing classroom discussions to converse about certain disciplined topics (which is still better than teachers solely telling/depositing information into students about those disciplines), but the “practice requires curricular innovation and experimentation, [and provides] opportunities for students and faculty to articulate relations among the school subjects, society, and self-formation” (Pinar, 2004, p. 191). It is more than just recognizing that content knowledge as something “dynamic” (as opposed to static), and it is not simply a form of “teaching and technique,” but

the conversation *is* content (p. 195). As such, it “directs school knowledge to [an] individual’s lived experience, experience understood as subjective *and* social, that is, as gendered, racialized, classed participants in understanding and living through the historical moment” (p. 194, emphasis his).

The relationship between the subjective and social becomes paramount to Pinar, who uses the terms private and public spheres to describe those two experiences. This notion is similar, though not synonymous, to Dewey’s “situation” as defined as the interplay between the objective environment (the social) and the internal, existential experience (the personal). The social is a very complex notion as it consists of cultural institutions, the material existence of time and place, what might be considered “hard” scientific knowledge as well as abstract and invisible, normalizing influences. The personal, on the other hand, is no less complex involving the personal history of the individual as well as the complicated psyche and physiological situation of the person at any given time.

I do not want to underestimate the complexity of this existential experience of the private sphere, as it is too often that so-called critical pedagogies are so consumed with the social structures and envioning conditions of the world that they forget the bodies and minds that act in those conditions and all the internal factors that affect that action. Such psychological and physiological states are not static, but may change day to day, hour to hour, or even minute to minute. The influencing factors that contribute to the experiences and insecurities of individuals with/in their bodies, particularly teenagers, are varied. Fluctuating hormones; sleep patterns; diet, exercise and nutrition; depression; unconscious or unarticulated desires—as well as driving conscious ones—only begins to name the various contributing conditions of this physiological aspect of the private sphere. And then, this private experience occurs in public spaces; spaces that are filled with power and various influencing agents and institutions, conditions not of the individual’s own making, and often not desired.

Finally, Pinar (2004) insists “curriculum as complicated conversation” is not only talk, but action. As such, it is the “professional practice” of educators as they “exercise greater control over what they teach” (p. 196). Pinar’s book is nothing short of a call to action for educators, for teachers, administrators, parents, and academics to work collaboratively against what he describes as the “nightmare that is the present,” referring to the current situation for teachers in public schools in the United States. This nightmare could be summed up as efforts to make the curriculum “teacher-proof,” or otherwise serve to “demote teachers from scholars and intellectuals to technicians of the state,” as well as the general “focus on test scores” and suppression of “self-reflexive, interdisciplinary erudition and intellectuality” (Pinar, 2004, 2-3). Having defined curriculum as a complicated conversation that means something more than classroom dialogue, I will now turn to that process specifically as even Pinar feels obliged to attend to “the contemporary relegation of ‘conversation’ to ‘classroom discourse’” (p. 192).

By attending this notion of classroom discourse, Pinar (2004) is, in part, responding to the work of Applebee (1996), and offering more of a rejoinder to the work of Ellsworth (1997) and Burbules (2000). Pinar is largely critical of Applebee for “Having reinscribed the conventional curriculum” and otherwise creating a formulaic conception of curriculum in which conversation is merely a reference to teaching methods (classroom discussion) and not to content (p. 194). Pinar emphasizes that “curriculum as complicated conversation” is, in fact, a curriculum that is part and parcel a critique of the current situation in public schools including disciplinary content but also aimed at a more complicated understanding of the “complex confluence of many factors and forces” that make up the “present political situation” (p. 197). Clearly, it is a conversation in which he hopes students and educators alike will speak up and act out, specifically in those conversations that are affecting educational policy, but also social policy. I do not believe it is an overstatement when he says, “The hour is late and the sense of emergency acute” (p. 247). However, “curriculum as complicated conversation” also means, at least when “relegated” to classroom discourse, that

the topics of discussion are complicated by serious interdisciplinary inquiry that complements students' prior knowledge as well as forging new knowledge, and it makes explicit connections to the lived experiences of students in both the public and private spheres.

### *Dialogue in teaching*

Both Ellsworth and Burbules provide several valid criticisms of many of the common assumptions regarding dialogic pedagogy, if somewhat different in content and tone. Of course, there is a longer and more populated history to the debate of dialogics, but perhaps Burbules has done the most summative work on the topic. He has written the book, *Dialogue in Teaching: Theory and Practice* (1993), and more recently, "The Limits of Dialogue as a Critical Pedagogy" (2000). In the latter he describes six traditions that dominate the concept of dialogue in education. First, in "liberal views of dialogue, such as those of John Dewey or Benjamin Barber, dialogue is the fulcrum around which the imperatives of democracy can be reconciled with the facts of diversity and conflict" (p. 252). He notes that criticisms of this include the expectation and assumed equity of democratic participation, which often works to exclude instead of include, and quoting Seyla Benhabib (1989), "'Proponents of liberal dialogue are not sensitive enough to the fact that a theory of conversational restraint may be damaging precisely to the interests of those groups that have not been traditional actors in the public space of liberalis—like women, nonwhite peoples, and sometimes nonpropertied male'" (p. 154; quoted in Burbules, 2000, p. 253).

Second, are the so-called "good girl" feminists, a label that Burbules (2000) attributes to the radical feminist critiques of Leach (1992) and Lather (1998). In this group of "good girls" he includes authors like Deborah Tannen, Mary Belenky, Carol Gilligan, and Nel Noddings and says, "what relates all of these accounts is a linkage between a competitive, adversarial approach to public or private disagreements and the stereotypical norms of masculine behavior, and the association of "dialogue" with the more open, receptive, inclusive spirit of women's values." (p. 253). The third of the six are Platonic/Socratic-

informed ideas that view dialogue as an “interchange as a proving ground for inquiries into truth” (p. 253) and is more a method of teaching than a pedagogical disposition. Burbules notes despite the ubiquitous acceptance of the “Socratic method” in various educational settings there is a lack of uniformity in method. He explains that the origins of this view of dialogue believed in a objective knowledge, absolute, immutable, gradually grasped by humanity in course of dialogue, which, he notes, is dubious at best to most scholars today. It might be argued, that such a method could still be used to come to understand, or reveal, a more socially constructed knowledge and even multiple, contradictory ideas without necessarily having faith in absolute, objective truths. Fourth is a hermeneutic view that “tends to emphasize dialogue as a condition of intersubjectivity . . . the relational, to-and-fro movement of questions and answers toward understanding and agreement” (Burbules, 2000, p. 254). However, the notions of consensus and agreement find themselves exposed to the postmodern critique as does the hermeneutic circular approach.

I will return to Burbules’s fifth category of critical pedagogy shortly, as I draw largely from this tradition. The last category involves those ideas that “might be termed postliberal views of dialogue,” and he names Habermas as the central figure. Burbules writes that “for Habermas, all claims are filtered through the medium of discourse” and that any “communicative claim rest upon implicit norms that can be, and should be, critically questioned and redeemed” (p. 255). This way,

The grounding of truth and value claims lies in the uncoerced consensus that such deliberations can achieve . . . [and] give the outcomes of such deliberation a generalizability not based upon absolute claims of truth or rightness, but . . . secured on the nonrelative criterion of valid agreement among those parties concerned. (p. 255)

Burbules notes that critics such as Seyla Benhabib “have complained that this account of communication assumes a commonality in modes of communication” and lacks attention to the identity of the individual and hence, she “wants to situate this process in actual identities,

positions, and differences among participants. She calls this “interactive universalism” (p. 255). By “emphasizing the actual difference, embodiment, and situatedness of communicative participants” and “the ongoing conditions (social and interpersonal) that can support sustained deliberation among contesting points of view” Burbules feels Benhabib makes the “Habermasian model both more concrete and more responsive to the fact of cultural diversity” (p. 256).

### *The Dialogue Game*

In his book, *Dialogue in Teaching* (1993), Burbules addresses dialogue in the classroom in great detail, noting the significance of “play” and using a “game” metaphor “to emphasize the process, rather than the outcome, of a dialogical encounter” (p. xiii).

Grounding his ideas with the work of Hans-Georg Gadamer, Johan Huizinga, and Ludwig Wittgenstein, Burbules (1993) describes a classroom ethos based on the notion of “play,” specifically “playing the dialogue game” (p. x). Burbules offers us various rules of the dialogue game that are intended to provide consistency and continuity to dialogic encounters as well as regulate the relations among participants. He categorizes various rules into three categories of participation, commitment, and reciprocity. Differentiating his notion of dialogue from the speech acts of John Searle, and noting the influence of Searle on Paul Grice and Jürgen Habermas, he characterizes his own notion of dialogue. Drawing heavily from the drawing work of Habermas he describes four types of dialogue: conversation, inquiry, debate, and instruction. Burbules (1993) also describes the necessary emotional factors in dialogue: “concern, trust, respect, appreciation, affections and hope—are crucial to the bond that sustains a dialogical relation over time” (p. 41). Of the many emotional issues Burbules mentions, trust, it seems to me, is one of the most important and difficult to achieve

among students and teachers (both student to teacher and student to student). Indeed, many of the emotional factors that Burbules mentions are difficult to foster in classrooms composed of diverse (and sometimes/often competing) groups of teenagers. As such, Burbules discusses why dialogues sometimes fail, and also warns educators that “dialogue can be a very ‘inefficient’ way of pursuing information” (p. 36).

In order to make “dialogue” distinct from others forms of communication, and some previous notions of dialogic education, Burbules (1993) broadly characterizes dialogue as pedagogical, communicative, and relational. He also describes the dialogical relation as being “guided by a spirit of discovery, so that the typical tone of a dialogue is exploratory and interrogative” and as “having a commitment to the process of communicative interchange” (p. 8). Burbules makes the distinction between the dialogical relation and “dialogic relations” associated with Mikhail Bakhtin (1981; 1986). He writes, “while I draw from some of Bakhtin’s views, I mean something quite different by this” as “For Bakhtin, the dialogic relation is between utterances within a dialogical encounter (indeed between present utterances and all human utterances that have come before)” (p. 21). Bakhtin’s dialogic is the relation between various layers of meaning of utterances that are already present in language and contribute to the heteroglossia, the pluralistic condition of language in which utterances are produced within specific contexts that provide different meanings (Bakhtin 2001). The dialogical relation as Burbules defines it, is more related to a Freirean based notion. Indeed, Freire wrote about the dialogical relation at length, and Burbules notes how Freire has affected his thoughts on dialogue. Burbules (1993) names those influences as “the relational character of dialogue, a constructivist view of knowledge, and a nonauthoritarian conception of teaching” (p. 6). For Burbules, dialogue is inherently cognitive and emotional,



and at times his descriptions have romantic, or perhaps just hopeful, qualities as this dialogical relation has the ability to “‘carry away’ its participants, to ‘catch them up’ in an interaction that takes on a force and direction of its own”(p. 20). In this sense, the notion of play is important as contributing to this magical sensation which includes the suspension of time, the free play of thoughts and actions, and active and voluntary participation.

I do not think it is necessary to summarize the literature on dialogue in the classroom, but instead I offer both a selection of the more canonical pieces and a few criticisms of the critical model that has inspired my own. Any educator interested in how to diversify, complicate, and otherwise integrate dialogue in their classroom should consult Burbules’ (1993) book as well as other sources named herein. Nonetheless, the event of classroom discourse is so predominant in the curriculum described below, it is imperative that a discussion of its form and intent are included. The purpose of the rest of this chapter is to continue to lay the theoretic foundation of this dialogical relation and address its theoretical limitations and complications in terms of application. Regarding the guiding metaphor of travel, this “complicated conversation” is, at the very least, that classroom dialogue students have as they make sense of the landscapes they traverse as a class. I want to emphasize that the stress here will be that this is a social dialogue, or as Grumet (2004) says, “No one learns alone” (p. 49). Furthermore, those curricular landscapes—as well as the literal places of the classroom—are contested spaces as are the various dialogues that might occur in those spaces. Regardless, this chapter, and the next section in particular, will illustrate an approach to classroom dialogue that is partly informed by critical pedagogy, the fifth of the six traditions Burbules describes (2000). It will also engage some of the criticism levied against

those theories, and attempt to “work through” those complications, and hopefully present a thoroughly complex, yet applicable notion of classroom dialogue.

*What are we talking about?*

There are serious and formidable challenges for critical educators to create truly *dialogical* conditions in their classrooms, and for all of us to create in society at large. Indeed, some have argued because those conditions do not exist in society at large, they *cannot* exist in the classroom (Ellsworth 1989/1994; 1997), a critique discussed below. Nonetheless, education geared toward social change and liberation presupposes there are antidialogical conditions, and as I will later argue, those conditions exist in a “spectacular” society. In *Dialogue in Teaching*, Burbules (1993) notes that “dialogue is the centerpiece” of Freire’s “pedagogy of the oppressed” (p. 5), the latter, of course, being the title of Freire’s (1970/1999) seminal, and in critical pedagogy, canonical text. According to Freire’s dialogical theory of action, “the word” is the “essence of dialogue” as it is made up of “two dimensions, reflection and action, in such radical interaction that if one is sacrificed—even in part—the other immediately suffers” (p. 68). In the absence of reflection, there is only “activism” which is an uncritical, reactionary gesture or activity. Or in the absence of action, the word is mere “verbalism” or language emptied of its affirmative, creative and critical powers. Of course, this is bound up in the notion of praxis, which Freire defines as “reflection and action upon the world in order to transform it” (p. 33) and that “Liberation is a praxis: the action and reflection of men and women upon their world in order to transform it” (p. 60).

For Freire (1970/1999), the pedagogy of the oppressed is posited in conditions of a “Dehumanization, which marks not only those whose humanity has been stolen, but also

(though in a different way) those who have stolen it” (p. 26). Freire writes, “If humankind produce [a] social reality (which in the ‘inversion of praxis’ turns back upon them and conditions them), then transforming that reality is an historical task, a task for humanity,” (p. 33) and too, a task for education. “Just as objective social reality exist not by chance, but as the product of human action, so it is not transformed by chance” (p. 33). It is bound up in this dynamic—particularly between the role of the oppressor and oppressed—that “The pedagogy of the oppressed is an instrument for their critical discovery that both they and their oppressors are manifestations of dehumanization” (p. 30). Though, the key point to be made here is that though Freire often talks of the true word and praxis as transforming reality—e.g., “There is no true word that is not at the same time a praxis. Thus, to speak a true word is to transform the world” (p. 68)—it cannot always be taken to mean overturning oppression. It may just mean a more critical recognition of it. That is, the “critical discovery” mentioned above might be the transformation of reality that occurs, i.e., the students’ understanding of their reality has been transformed. But “A critical analysis of reality may, however, reveal that a particular from of action is impossible or inappropriate *at the present time*” (emphasis his, p. 109).

Since “Knowledge emerges only through invention and re-invention, through the restless, impatient, continuing, hopeful inquiry human beings pursue in the world, with the world, and with each other,” (1970,1999, p. 53) recognizing historical conditions becomes transformative in the sense that understanding affects social reality, and more to the point, informs their action in that reality. To be sure, Freire’s project (and mine) is one of “critical intervention” in reality toward “the permanent transformation of reality in favor of the liberation of people” (p. 83), but he admits this step of having a new understanding of the

world, or of an oppressive force, does not, by naming it, transform it (as in overturn it).

“Liberating education can change our understanding of reality. But this is not the same thing as changing reality itself. No. Only political action in society can make social transformation” (Shor and Freire 1987a, p. 175). As such, *conscientização* amounts to “learning to perceive social, political, and economic contradictions, and to take actions against the oppressive elements of reality” (Freire 1999, p. 17).

*When we talk about the dialogical?*

Freire (1970/1999) believes such transformation can only occur during a process of critical awareness, or as he describes it, as people

emerge from submersion and acquire the ability to intervene in reality as it is unveiled. Intervention in reality—historical awareness itself—thus represents a step forward from emergence, and results from the *conscientização* of the situation. *Conscientização* is the deepening of the attitude of awareness characteristic of all emergence. (p. 90)

According to Freire, until people critically reflect on their historical situation their consciousness remains “submerged,” which is language only slightly less provoking than “false consciousness.” Such ideological submersion occurs on various levels and in varying degrees, and it is perpetuated by a myriad of institutions, not the least of which is an educational system that serves a dominant elite through the banking method and other antidialogical methods. Banking education is described as a content- or teacher-centered curriculum in which teachers are clearly the knowers depositing what they know, what the curriculum “is,” into the waiting receptacle-minds of the students, those who don’t know. Passivity is key here as he says, “The more completely they [the students] accept the passive role imposed on them, the more they tend to simply to adapt to the world as it is” (p. 54), and

otherwise have no notion to transform, or even the imagination of what they might transform it into. In such a case, “the individual is spectator, not re-creator” (p. 56).

In contrast to the banking concept of education stands “the problem-posing method” which is “dialogical par excellence—[and] is constituted and organized by the students’ view of the world” (Freire, 1970/1999, p. 90). This is reminiscent of Dewey’s insistence that elements of the students’ everyday lives be used as fulcrums of student inquiry. Moreover, Freire writes, “Whereas banking education anesthetizes and inhibits creative power, problem-posing education involves a constant unveiling of reality. The former attempts to maintain the *submersion* of consciousness; the latter strives for the *emergence* of consciousness and *critical intervention* in reality” (p. 62). He contrasts the two in great detail:

In problem-posing education, people develop their power to perceive critically the way they exist in the world with which and in which they find themselves . . . Banking education (for obvious reasons) attempts, by mythicizing reality, to conceal certain facts which explain the way human beings exist in the world; problem-posing education sets itself the task of demythologizing. Banking education resists dialogue; problem-posing education regards dialogue as indispensable to the act of cognition which unveils reality. . . . Banking education inhibits creativity and domesticates (although it cannot completely destroy) the intentionality of consciousness by isolating consciousness from the world. . . Problem-posing education affirms men and women as being the process of becoming—as unfinished, uncompleted beings in and with a likewise unfinished reality. (pp. 64-65)

Given these descriptions, it is easy to say that standardized testing is only the latest form of banking education. The more teachers are pressured to “teach to the test” not only is real dialogue often being thwarted, it also means the conversation—in whatever form i.e., monological, dialogical—will be limited to “official knowledge” i.e., only the most superficial, often Eurocentric content that does not incorporate elements of the students’ particular realities. And from a more definitively critical pedagogy point of view, it does not provide students the opportunity to participate in the construction of knowledge, or to engage in

critical deliberation regarding the socio-historical institutions that operate to structure the curriculum itself (such as the testing industry); nor does it ask them consider social structures and conditions that make up their lived experiences or critique ideological notions such as the motivations they have for their own education. Additionally, considering the antidialogical nature of the standardized testing (since teachers and students have no role in making those tests), Freire's work attains a new relevancy.

Problem-posing education is not a technique of simply posing questions or problems to students about some curricular content to be studied, but instead they are questions and problems posed in reference to the students' reality, in the form of what Freire (1970/1999) calls "generative themes," so-called because they are generated by the students themselves and also because they "have the possibility of unfolding into again as many themes, which in their turn call for new tasks to be fulfilled" (p. 83). Note that generated by the students themselves does not always mean simply generated based on student inquiry or interests—though it certainly can include such—but it also means that the problems are generated by the conditions of the lived reality of the students. In another text, *A Pedagogy For Liberation*, (Shor and Freire, 1987a) Freire carries on a dialogue with Ira Shor who is also associated with critical pedagogy. The text is literally the two of them talking back and forth, and at times it feels like a call-and-response from the preacher and choir. Nonetheless, Freire states, "The methods of dialogical education draw us into the intimacy of society," and as such, it is "not as a technique, a *mere* technique, which we can use to get some results. It is not a kind of tactic we use to make students our friends," nor is it simply guided by student interests, though it should be "situated" in the lives of students (p. 98).

*Situated pedagogy*

I have already discussed Dewey's notion of the educational situation and the imperative of educators situating the curriculum in such. Chapter five will also address a situatedness in more detail. Ira Shor (Shor and Freire, 1987a) also describes a dialogical education that must be situated "in the culture, language, politics, and themes of the students" (p. 104). Recalling the generative themes mentioned earlier, Shor goes on at length,

But in situated pedagogy we discover with students the themes most problematic to their perception. We situate the critical pedagogy in subjective problem-themes not yet analyzed by students. . . In dialogic pedagogy, this turn towards subjective experience must also include a global, critical dimension. That is, we don't only look at the familiar, but we try to understand it socially and historically . . . situating pedagogy in student culture [it] does not merely exploit or endorse the given but seeks to transcend it. That is, the themes familiar to the students are not thrown in as a manipulative technique, simply to confirm the status quo or motivate students. . . . We gain a distance from the given by abstracting it from its familiar surroundings and studying it in unfamiliar critical ways, until our perceptions of it and society are challenged. (p. 104)

Regardless of whatever aspirations motivate this tactic, "Situated study presents subjective themes in their larger social context, to challenge the givens of our lives and the surrounding system dominating daily life" (p. 105). Shor thinks this is achievable by introducing or rather, having students bring in material from their cultures, writing about their experiences, and "frontloading" his courses in students' languages. The latter means beginning his classes by relying heavily on student discussion and slowly working in his voice and the academy's discourse.

Such a pedagogical stance requires not only curricular innovation on the part of the educator, it also creates more responsibilities, or at least, different responsibilities for the teacher. Shor (Shor and Freire, 1987a) describes his own experience,

This means I'm researching my students' cognitive and political levels at the course's opening, to see what kinds of critical thinking, literacy and political ideas are operating. This informs me of the developmental situation in the class, the real starting point for making a liberatory invitation. (p. 105)

Freire describes his experience and reasoning for this situatedness:

When I insist on dialogical education starting from the students' comprehension of their daily life experiences, no matter if they are students of the university or kids in primary school . . . my insistence on starting from their description of their daily life experiences is based in the possibility of starting from concreteness. (p. 106)

Shor also mentions the importance of being concrete, "The global context for the concrete, the general setting for the particular, are what give students a critical view on reality . . ." (p. 104). Hence, though the work is grounded in the students' lives and cultures—their everyday life—that material is connected to, related to, and actually becomes part of the curriculum of a class, but this becoming is also a combination, a hybrid of the curriculum brought in by the teacher or whatever structure that frames the class. That is, their culture and experience does not simply become their curriculum, but becomes integrated into existing curriculum to form a third entity, one that would necessarily be new to every class. And for critical pedagogy, it also entails attempts to understand the students' cultures and experiences "socially and historically." Sometimes critical pedagogy often leaves such imperative demands in problematically vague terms, and this topic will be covered in the next chapter, but for now, it is important to understand that the dialogue begins on the concrete streets of the students' everyday lives.

According to Freire's (1970/1999) dialogical theory of action, whether we are being critical or not, we never merely observe reality, but are always in an act of interpreting and acting in it, and those actions affect it, sometimes changing it. The point of liberating pedagogy is to encourage a more critical interpretation of reality, and subsequently, to intervene more deliberately and effectively in the actions taken in that reality, and perhaps acting toward transforming those aspects of reality that are oppressive or injurious. Both Shor and Freire (1987a) note that this does not mean that the total curriculum is determined



by the students' interest, or that they impose their liberation by sacrificing the students' utilitarian education. Freire, describes how the liberating educator may "have some dreams perhaps completely different from the students" but does not "have the right to accomplish [those] tasks in an irresponsible way. . . . [or] to deny the students' goals for technical training or for job credentials" (Shor and Freire 1987a, p. 68). Shor asks, "The liberatory teacher does not mystify jobs, careers or working, but poses critical questions while teaching them?" (p. 69). "Yes!" Freire responds, "No mystification."

Given the current situation in schools, teachers do have an obligation to prepare their students for the standardized tests that are now not only attached to college admissions, but in most states, graduation. Furthermore, educators of teachers can't deny that these future educators will have to keep their jobs by preparing their students for those tests. However, in both cases, preparation *can* occur while simultaneously asking students and teachers to critically consider those tests, the history of standardized testing, the sociology of those tests (for example, "stereotype threat"), the economics of the industry, and the interests of the *politicians* who pass such legislature, and who is doing the research that justifies it. Some of which is what Pinar would draw our attention to. Perhaps even more radical is also involving the students—those who actually have to take these tests—in such research, and by proxy their parents. I've met many parents who as a matter of commonsense want their children to do well on those tests, but also intuitively question their value. It seems preparing for those tests could be done simultaneously with such study, and could potentially lead to actions that might attempt to transform that reality, such as students and parents writing letters to administrators and politicians.

*The Monkey Wrench Gang*

There is another group that Burbules (2000) describes who are not associated with dialogue *per se*, but are, at times, ardent critics of it, resisting “good behavior,” and instead opt for “performative subversions” (Anderson quoted in Burbules, p. 256). To this group he adds Judith Butler, Patti Lather, and Elizabeth Ellsworth, and he seems sincerely appreciative of the criticism they provide, which include that normative conceptions of dialogue in education have too much faith in a rational eventuality or reconciliation; that it can be too prescriptive and potentially exclusive; that it is often guilty of its own normative impositions and limitations (or that of the teacher); that understanding often means convincing; and too much attention is given to the social sphere at the negligence of the personal and psychological. Ellsworth (1989/1994; 1997) has been one of the most outspoken critics of dialogue, particularly how it is represented in critical pedagogy. She makes several criticisms regarding critical pedagogy including an over-reliance on a necessarily rational discourse, and furthermore, that it is voyeuristic. Additionally, she claims that critical pedagogy hides some repressive myths such as the so-called “silent other,” and even more damning, that it perpetuates the exclusion of the oppressed through its own instrumentation. Her research certainly complicates the notion of dialogue and, rightly so. In her article, “Why Doesn’t This Feel Empowering? Working Through the Repressive Myth of Critical Pedagogy,” Ellsworth (1989/1994) charges,

Dialogue in its conventional sense is impossible in the culture at large because at this historical moment, power relations between raced, classed, and gendered students and teachers are unjust. The injustice of these relations and the way in which those injustices distort communication cannot be overcome in a classroom, no matter how committed the teacher and students are to ‘overcoming conditions that perpetuate suffering.’ (p. 316)

This is certainly true to an extent, but this is not a new critique to educational theorists or critical pedagogy, as stated in chapter one, George Counts had already acknowledged as much, as had Shor and Freire (1987a).

In her book, *Teaching Positions*, Ellsworth (1997) again targets dialogue in her critique, lamenting that “educators constantly invoke dialogue as a means of coming to understanding without imposition and in ways more democratic than one-way determination” (p. 48). Furthermore, she writes that

Dialogue is assumed to be capable of everything from constructing knowledge, to solving problems, to ensuring democracy, to constituting collaboration, to securing understanding, to building moral virtues, to alleviating racism or sexism, to fulfilling desires for communication and connection. (p. 49)

Burbules (2000) refers to these “exaggerated claims” as the “fetishization of dialogue” (p. 252), and one could say the same for education, (see Counts 1932 as described in chapter one). It is true that critical pedagogy sometimes gets wrapped up in its own dialogue of liberation without always tying it to material application as opposed to exaggerated abstractions. Unfortunately, to make her points Ellsworth presents at least a few exaggerated claims of her own. Nonetheless, she does reveal some definite and real obstacles of critical classroom dialogue, and her arguments should be considered for those who truly want to address dialogue with all its messy problems and complexities as opposed to a naive ideal that it is intrinsically good in-and-of-itself. Both Burbules and Ellsworth insist that any “communicative form” (Burbules) or “mode of address” (Ellsworth) needs to be questioned and are not politically neutral. However, while Ellsworth says “all” modes of address misfire, she quickly concentrates her criticism on “communicative dialogue,” which is a problematic term in itself, partly because it is sometimes conflated with traditional schooling, particularly in the anecdotes she uses to begin her book.

Ellsworth (1997) protests that “what escapes most discussions of dialogue in education is this: Dialogue—as a teaching practice advocated throughout the literature—is itself a socially constructed and politically interested relationship” (p. 48), and adds, it “is a historically and culturally embedded practice . . . a socially constructed tool with intentions built into its very logic” (p. 49). This is very true, but I’m not so sure that these intentions are as villainous as she sometimes portrays them. She goes on to say, “To deny that dialogue is a mode of address structured in history and in fact in-formed by particular interests, is to give it transcendental status” (p. 49), or one might choose to call it ideological. I will admit that dialogue is often embraced ideologically, or transcendently, as ontologically positive, or assuming it were an open, powerless invitation to participate, politically and historically neutral, and with no motive. And yet, critical pedagogy, and the dialogical model prescribed therein—which is clearly implicated in her category of communicative dialogue—has rarely projected itself as politically neutral, and most often, it announces itself as explicitly political. Consider the following quotes of Freire (Shor and Freire, 1987a),

I am convinced that liberating educators are *not* missionaries, are *not* technicians, are *not* mere teachers. They have to become more and more militant! They must become militants in the *political* meaning of this word . . . Something more than ‘activist.’ A militant is a *critical* activist. . . There is a directiveness in education which never allows it to be neutral. We must say to the students how we think and why. My role is not to be silent. (pp. 35, 50, 157)

In fact, Freire goes even further than most are willing to go: “I have to convince students of my dreams but not conquer them for my own plans. Even if the students have the right to bad dreams, I have the right to say their dreams are bad, reactionary or capitalist or authoritarian.” (p. 157). It isn’t so much whether or not dialogical education is politically neutral, but does it provide the means to the ends of its political projects?

### *Communication Breakdown*

Though Ellsworth (1997) writes that dialogue is “advocated throughout the literature” and “historically and culturally embedded,” she fails to hardly source or attend to that historical sedimentation, and instead she creates a rather ambiguous, lumpen-category of “communicative dialogue,” which she defines as,

a controlled process of interaction that seeks successful communication, defined as the moment of full understanding. For those who advocate it in education, communicative dialogue drives toward mutual understanding as a pedagogical ideal (p. 15)

Though Ellsworth claims that her notion of “analytic” dialogue” is not “the answer,”

Burbules (2000) also notes the tone of substitution in her argument,

Ellsworth thinks that, having disposed of ‘communicative dialogue,’ in the sense she describes it, one has refuted somehow the idea of dialogue itself. Sometimes she has written as if she thinks she has. But in her latest work, in fact, she actually defends an alternative ideal of dialogue, which she terms (following psychoanalytic theory) ‘analytic dialogue’” (p. 266)

In her book, *Teaching Positions*, Ellsworth (1997) uses criticism from film studies and psychoanalysis to address what is in film studies called the “mode of address,” which describes the relation between film and audience, and translating this into the educational relations, teacher and student. In the same sense that films make assumptions and/or are directed at certain, imagined moviegoers, so do teachers have imaginations of who their students are, who they are not, and the same could be said for students’ imaginations of their teachers. Furthermore, there are the imaginations of identity regarding who the teacher and individual students think they themselves are, and much of her arguments are centered around the discrepancies, “the misses,” and the spaces between those imagined identities and who they really are, the latter remaining inaccessible.

Noting that *all* modes of address inevitably lead to *misses* and *misunderstandings*, Ellsworth’s (1997) critique investigates the paradoxes of teaching that are created by these

pedagogical miscues. Presenting teaching as “giving what I do not have,” she begins her book by suggesting “teaching is impossible,” and thereby she believes she “opens up unprecedented teaching possibilities” (p. 18). Some of her conclusions are important for educators interested in dialogue, though the book will understandably agitate those who are not prepared for such a radically destabilizing position. Such a performative subversion of critical pedagogy is a motif Ellsworth seems to have embraced. Again, although she claims, “A switch from realist to a paradoxical mode of address is not ‘the answer’” (p. 17), her continued vilification of communicative dialogue, and exaltations of the possibilities inherent in analytic dialogue projects something different. She claims this is not her intent: “I don’t think it’s possible or desirable for teachers to add concerns about modes of address to their pedagogical strategies so that they can try to meet their students more directly or precisely” (p. 17). Unfortunately, such disclaimers get lost in the oversimplified representation of a corrupt communicative dialogue and the thorough privileging of analytic dialogue.

Agreeing that the all-too-often goal of schools and teachers has been to create continuity which often does more to silence, assimilate, coerce, and to persuade by suppressing many of the above-named emotions, it isn’t appropriate to find communicative dialogue (or critical pedagogy) entirely culpable or even dominant in any causal relationship of those conditions. Although teachers can produce continuity in discussion as well as lectures, and curriculum writers can produce it in textbooks and movies, the mask of continuity doesn’t fit so well when put on the face of a classroom full of teenagers. Even a “well-behaved” dialogic classroom is already quite discontinuous, full of disruptions of the unconscious, and Ellsworth is right to bring our attention to it. Furthermore, we can learn

from Ellsworth that such disruptions and “misses” and misunderstandings are, indeed, in themselves instructive.

*What you talking’ bout, Ellsworth?*

Unsurprisingly, Ellsworth (1997) incurred the wrath of critical pedagogues who accused her of “the uses of strawman tactics and excessive simplifications” and worse, “a crippling form of political disengagement” (Aronowitz and Giroux, 1991, p. 132). Other criticisms are (e.g., McLaren, 1988; Stanley, 1992) are slightly less condemning, but interestingly, they all agree that Ellsworth’s rhetoric “undermines” what each—to different degrees—otherwise describes as critical work and valuable insight. Perhaps her refusal to work within their logics of rational argumentation is more performative than persuasive, but it is, at times, problematic (and not in the good way that forces us to reevaluate our frames of analysis). My biggest complaint is that it doesn’t appear to me that communicative dialogue in the classroom has reached the epidemic proportions Ellsworth describes, especially in public schools. There is no doubt that dialogue has been fetishized, and particularly in education departments in many universities it has attained an unquestioned status of virtue, but to suggest that it is at work so ubiquitously in schools (which she does when she conflates it with the traditional classroom), is erroneous. *If only* too much communicative dialogue and the continuities of understanding were the worst of our educational problems. Instead, (and acknowledging this is worse than it was in 1997) the increasing obsession of standardization does far more to thwart communicative and analytic dialogue both, and provides mostly bureaucratically constructed monologues.

Even though Ellsworth (1997) writes, “The point is that *all* modes of address misfire one way or another” (p. 8, emphasis hers), there seems to be no recognition that there are

some issues in which participants might have worthy political interests in communicative dialogue, such as understanding global warming, and that these do not always reinscribe deleterious power dynamics of the status quo. She also fails to acknowledge that lapses in communicative dialogue and misunderstandings may also produce detrimental outcomes in numerous other settings, be they on the world's political stage or in a classroom. Burbules (2000) raises similar concerns,

Ellsworth often writes as if these [agreement, consensus, or understanding] were inherently undesirable outcomes, never justifiable as voluntary and intersubjective. This cannot be true, both as a matter of experience and of history, where such outcomes—even in the face of deep difference and conflict—have been satisfactorily arrived at, and as a matter of social and political principle, where there are occasions in which the pursuit of such outcomes, with all their risks of difficulty and failure, is the sole alternative to violent adjudications of conflict (pp. 269-270)

And though she states these misfires, seen as paradoxes, are not being analyzed in order to adjust for more corrective aim, but to investigate how theses paradoxes and misfires are themselves instructive to the reflective student and/or teacher, it would seem that such instruction is for something, and what, if not for better dialogue and/or understanding? Or as Burbules writes, “If ‘analytic dialogue’ seeks (rightly, I would say) to uncover the nonneutral, historically specific conditions under which its own interpretations proceed, is this not so that others [or oneself] might *come to share the same understanding, at least in part, about these conditions?*” (p. 268, emphasis in original).

#### *In the face of diversity*

According to Burbules (2000), dialogical education meets the most “difficulty” when it encounters diversity, and he mentions a study by Alison Jones (1999) that reveals the complexities of the ideals of the dialogical classroom and its application in diverse situations. Jones describes a class of 90 students, “nearly all women,” in a third year education college



course on feminist perspectives at a university in New Zealand. She and her colleague divided the class into two “roughly equal-sized groups” for three quarters of the class. The first group consisted of Maori and Pacific Islanders, and the second, white students. Apparently the student responses were fairly consistent in that the Maoris and Pacific Islanders were “uniformly very pleased,” while the white students were “hostile” to the division (p. 300). One white student complained, “‘When will I ever get to learn how Maori and Pacific Islanders perceive the world (since we are supposed to be so different) when we are continually separated?’” (p. 302). Emphasizing the “*contradictory pedagogical and liberatory interests at play in this multiethnic classroom*” (emphasis hers, p. 303), Jones asks, “What if ‘togetherness’ and dialogue-across-difference fail to hold a compellingly positive meaning for subordinates ethnic groups?” (p. 299). Furthermore, inspired by Spivak’s question “Can the subaltern speak?,” Jones describes the “dominant group’s responses to subaltern resistance to speaking” (p. 299).

Freire’s famously wrote, “Dialogue is the encounter between men, mediated by the world, in order to name the world. Hence dialogue cannot occur between those who want to name the world and those who do not wish this naming” (1970/1999, p. 69). Jones notes that “This model in practice sometimes struggles with internal difference, when the form of naming within a group is not shared, despite good intentions” (1999, p. 305), and she provides the work of Leslie Roman as examples regarding attempts of “consciousness raising among women” are problematized by the reality that there still exists more dominant voices among diverse groups of women. Addressing the works of Freire, (1970/1999), Peter McLaren, (1995), Ira Shor and Freire (1987b), and Aronowitz and Giroux (1991), Jones (1999) describes (and criticizes) a dialogic pedagogy that is largely congruous to my own.

As such, she writes, “an ideal dialogical model for the classroom asserts that stories and meanings of less powerful as well as more powerful groups will intermingle and ‘be heard’ in mutual communication and progressive understanding” (p. 307). Although she admits that critical pedagogues “recognize ongoing structural power differences and conflicts among voices,” she still finds in such discourse a “touching [misguided?] faith in the talking cure of storytelling, and the possibilities for verbal space making” (p. 306). Accordingly, such a dialogic model is aligned with potentially (ideally) offering an education that leads us “toward an egalitarian, multicultural, and democratic social order in the classroom—and elsewhere” (p. 307).

Using the work of Gayatri Spivak and Homi Bhabha among others, Jones (1999) asserts the “imperialists resonances” of the dominant groups’ desire to know the other that “re-insures the authority of the colonizer” (p. 309). As such, “Border crossing and recognition of difference turns out to be *access for dominant groups to the thoughts, cultures, lives of others*” (emphasis hers, p. 308). Furthermore, she argues that this dominant groups’ “desire for the other” is “at the heart of call for classroom dialogue” (p. 303). Jones refers to this as a “cannibal desire” to know the other that is simultaneously a “*refusal to know*” (p. 313). Confessions of ignorance by the dominant group are, for Jones, not an appeal to understand “the other,” but an appeal that “the other” understands them, offering them “absolution” from their dominance, and to otherwise assure the dominant that they are not complicit in past and present oppression. As many others have noted, (Ellsworth 1989/1994; 1997; hooks 1989; Spivak 1988), Jones (1999) agrees that the subaltern have never been “silent” and argues that “the real exclusion is not that of the subordinate at all” but “the dominant group’s exclusion from—their inability to hear—the voice of the marginalized” (p.

307). She goes on to argue that this “inability to hear” is “*misrecognized*” as the “silence of the subaltern” (p. 307). This inability to “hear” amounts to an exclusion of the subordinates ability to “speak.” To explain she quotes, Maria Lugone:

We and you do not talk the same language. When we talk to you we use your language: the language of your experience and of your theories. We try to use it to communicate our world of experience. But since your language and your theories are inadequate in expressing our experiences, we only succeed in communicating our experiences of exclusion. (Quoted in Jones 1999, p. 307)

Finally, she notes that calls for dialogue also reinforce power dynamics as the dominant group as willing to “*grant a hearing to* the usually excluded and suppressed voice” (p. 307) and, using the language of Bhabha, this potentially serves as methods of “‘surveillance and exploitation’” (p. 309), arguing that “even good intentions by the dominant groups are not always sufficient to enable their ears to ‘hear,’ and therefore for the others to ‘speak’” (p. 308).

*We like to watch*

This brings up the notion of voyeurism, a charge also levied by Ellsworth (1989/1994) who is “suspicious of the desire of the mostly White, middle-class men who write about the relation between teacher/student [as this desire] becomes voyeuristic when the voice of the pedagogue himself goes unexamined” (1989/1994, p. 313). Certainly the “voice of the pedagogue” should be examined both by the pedagogue and, perhaps to a more limited degree, the class. I cannot change my position as being born a white, male from the middle-class South, but just because I cannot change it, this does not mean that I can ignore it, or try to imagine it shouldn’t matter, or that I shouldn’t reflect upon the historical and present conditions that are inherent/inherited to that position. Agreeing that such reflection should inform one’s positionality, I think accusations of voyeurism are exaggerated when

applied to critical pedagogy, though perhaps not wholly unwarranted. Unfortunately, we live in a voyeuristic society, and as Willinsky (1998) has shown, we have a voyeuristic past, particularly in education.

In addition to the voyeurism of so many websites (both porn and more innocuous sites such as MySpace), the popularity of talk shows and reality tv appear as evidence for such voyeurism as they offer a multitude of images of humiliation, fear, physical discomfort, psychological anxiety, criminality, and violence against and perpetuated by various “others.” Indeed, an abundance of images and other sensational spectacles are provided for viewers, some of which enjoy cultish followings with millions of viewers such as *American Idol*. Additionally there is the tendencies of so-called tv dramas to constantly push the envelope regarding the graphic images and special effects they will show to capture the viewer, often at the expense of plot and character development—much less anything political engaging—that would require the viewer to dive beneath the surface of the phantasmagoria to attune to deeper or more complicated considerations. Movies often only offer more of the same, and furthermore, many of the video games are constructed around afflicting violence to “the other,” be it aliens, international terrorists, or another “real” player sitting next them or sitting across the globe. Such sadistic voyeurism is a challenge to all educators, especially dealing with teenagers who are often enmeshed in many of those media. Accusations of voyeurism within critical pedagogy, while they may be true in some cases, may also serve to deflect a legitimate expression of moral outrage.

Even if dialogue in the ideal state as it is oft described is veritably “impossible” because of the unjust conditions of the historical moment, the question remains as to whether or not is still a worthy educative method. Critical and/or dialogical pedagogy alone may not

be able to change the material conditions of the historical moment, and yet the point is that those conditions that impede dialogue in its ideal state are precisely the subject of inquiry and discussion. This is what is customarily avoided by both educators who naively use dialogue to promote a preconceived consensus and more traditional education that avoids the conflicted lives of student and merely represents “just the facts” and basic skills. At the very least, dialogic inquiry—when guided by student and teacher generated questions—is inherently more democratic than traditional and test-driven education. On the other hand, it would seem to me that the classroom *can* become a different place than the society that conditions it, and not so much that it will overturn and erase the historical inheritance of our nation’s past, but (and this is where it can be quite unlike society at large) it will talk about it, face it, complicate it, and perhaps empathize with those who have been maligned by it, and maybe even project a future that is different.

Yet, even if dialogue and critical pedagogy weren’t held accountable for the historical conditions in our society at large, the requirements for true dialogue often described in the literature does make it seem impossible at times. For example, Freire (1970/1999) talks of a “profound love” and Burbules (1993) discusses several necessary emotions and virtues, including concern, respect, appreciation, affection, and hope (pp. 36-40), that must exist between participants. Such emotions are not something that a classroom full of teenagers always feels toward one another. First of all, the obvious response is that it would necessarily begin with the educators’ love for their students. They not only should feel this way toward all their students, despite differences of ideas and values, but model this for the rest of the class. But the relations between students are far more difficult to contain given the competitive ethos that exist both in society and in schools. Of course, you can’t force kids to

love one another, but you can model and explain why it is valuable to do so. Nonetheless, teenagers are unpredictable and sometimes impetuous people that challenge attempts to create an atmosphere of trust and interdependence. That is to say that not only is there often an absence of love, respect or affection, there is outright animosity. Indeed, competition is not only existing in society at large—looming on their horizon and in their thoughts, in the form of college admissions, the job market, and reality tv shows—but these students are already pitted against each other as they vie for attention from each other, from their families, their teachers, and even larger audiences. Such audiences exist as judges in sports competitions, spelling bees and debates, scholarships and grants, and then even wider forms such the possible audiences to whom kids present themselves on the Internet at such sites as Myspace.com and Youtube.com.

*Do we have an understanding?*

This finally brings up the authoritative role of the teacher in a dialogic classroom. The classroom and learning can be a place where cooperation and listening are valued, even expected, and certainly there are gradations of this as there will be resistance from some of the students. A classroom teacher usually has to begin with more authority before turning it over to the students, and this process begins by providing students with an interest in—as in an investment—in the responsibility the teacher hopes to give to the students. But as Freire and Shor (Shor and Freire 1987a) say, authority is necessary for real democracy, and they draw a distinction between the teacher as authority and authoritarianism. As Freire says,

the question is not for the teacher to have less and less authority. This issue is that the democratic teacher never, never transforms authority into authoritarianism. He or she can never stop being an authority or having authority. Without authority it is very difficult for the liberties of the students to be shaped. Freedom needs authority to be free. . . . The question nevertheless is for authority to know that it has its foundation in the freedom of other . . . (p. 91)

From a pragmatic level, the authority of the teacher must remain to secure the safety of the students, and while critical pedagogy does insist that conflict are taken as topics of discussion and inquiry, it is at times justifiable for the teacher to use authority to avoid or suppress an issue in a given moment in the classroom.

Thankfully, teaching is a longer process made up of many such moments that occur over days, weeks, months, and years. Just because a teacher stops a dialogue from escalating to a dangerous situation, that doesn't mean the teacher never returns to that dialogue again. Furthermore, there are numerous opportunities for other conversations, perhaps in more intimate settings, one-on-one conversations or journal entries in which students are asked to reflect on their particular feelings toward a volatile issue. Finally, I am going to argue that the classroom itself provides greater pedagogical possibilities precisely because it is, in fact, *not* a perfectly democratic space, and that the teacher has more authority (and hence, responsibility) than just an equal voice in a room of many, and must be more than an arbiter of open discussions. Furthermore, I argue that such an attitude rejects the notion that "teaching is impossible," but knows it simply isn't deterministic.

Perhaps most importantly, understanding is an essential educational directive, albeit never the absolute situation Ellsworth (1997) describes when she defines communicative dialogue as "successful communication, defined as the moment of full understanding," (p. 15). Burbules (2000) makes the point well enough when he writes "misunderstanding is not an all-or-nothing-state; in real, situated contexts, degrees of misunderstanding are mixed with degrees of understanding" (p. 270). Pinar (2004) also makes a point to describe the educative task of understanding, and particularly, the ethical implications of that task which informs the why and how we as educators accept such a responsibility,

It is our understanding that informs the ethical obligation to care for ourselves and our fellow human beings . . . understanding the relations among academic knowledge, the state of society, the process of self-formation, and the character of the historical moment in which we live, in which others have lived, and in which our descendants will someday live. (p. 187)

Furthermore, this ethical question is not simply a point of understanding and knowing, but the foreground for action. Grumet (1988) challenges that curriculum should not only inform understanding, but also be the ground for action, “In order for curriculum to provide the moral, epistemological, and social situations that allow persons to come to form, it must provide the ground for their action rather than their acquiescence” (p. 172). Curriculum should be grounded by a deliberate engagement of ethical and existential choices that are not merely hypothetical or abstract, but connected to the everyday lives of the participants. Knowledge and ethics become the ground of their action and the outcome is not how one performs on a test, but how one understands and participates in the world.

*What name shall(has) be(been) given to the child?*

Returning to Freire’s notion dialogical encounter as humans name the world, and his acknowledgement that “dialogue cannot occur between those who want to name the world and those who do not wish this naming” (1970/1999, p. 69), it does not presume these relations to be equal. Quite the contrary, it precisely aims at making those inequities of the present the content of discussion, including the history of such namings, and by such, it offers a renaming that acknowledges and even incorporates past namings. In Bakhtinian terms, it addresses the heteroglossia of the naming, the historical residues of those titles, and in terms of critical pedagogy, it addresses the power relations in those various historical appellations. Yes, man gave names to all the animals, and yes, we are all born into a system of names that we did not choose. And yes, many of those names occurred (and still occur) in



brutally oppressive conditions. The classroom is not a place where all that can be forgotten or ignored, to then begin with a clean slate for new names; nor should that be the goal. For one, what purpose would that serve but various schools coming up with idiosyncratic names that had no communicative value beyond their classroom? Instead, the classroom is a place where we can look critically at the historical namings that have occurred, and begin to imagine new names, not as whimsical appellations of the moment (though I will argue for an element of play and irreverence being a part of the naming), but as a critical naming of the present. Such a naming involves a historical cognizance of the content as well as the intentional exposure of the contradictions and complications of the naming, of the different, competing appellations, and the power relations behind them. In order for the students to have an interest in those acts of naming, they must be invested in the content, and more challenging, each other.

The first way this process begins is that instead of a teacher beginning with a given content, or what they know, they begin by finding out what the students already know, and how what they know about the curricular topic matters to them in terms of value, of usefulness, or affectation in their lives. This also involves getting the students to ask questions about those same topics that are the basis for the generative themes of inquiry. One of the most repeated complaints by most students in high school is that besides the utility of college admissions, most knowledge content has little relevance to their world. This, of course, could not be further from the truth, and it is the goal of the critical educator to reveal how particular subject content does, indeed, interact in their lives. Furthermore, critical pedagogy aims to reveal that interaction as laden with political values and power dynamics that may be invisible to them and that may serve to disarm democratic relations.

Inviting the students to dialogue about their realities, about their values, and their perspectives of a given content accomplishes a few important things. One, it makes their perceptions and valuations of that reality part of the content of inquiry, bringing it into the process. It also offers the “official knowledge” as only one perspective, or even better, it reveals that official knowledge is highly contested, and that often those that are fighting for one version over another have an invested interest in that representation. Finally, the ultimate goal is to then be able to rename and to remake the content. “Dialogue is a moment where humans meet to reflect on their reality as they make and remake it” (Shor and Freire, 1987a, p. 98). This process is a social experience. As Freire (Shor and Freire 1987a) argues “Knowing is a social event with nevertheless an individual dimension. What is dialogue in this moment of communication, knowing and social transformation?” (p. 99)

*The last word (almost)*

When I was traveling in Bolivia, it cannot be said that language had been neutralized. In the local context of sitting among Gustavo and his friends, English was not the language that held currency. Though Spanish could be seen this way, I think of it differently. Regardless of which language held greater currency and/or power, there was yet a third language that was created between us that was not Spanish or English. It was a simple and rudimentary level of communication that was based around the little translator dictionary of mine, and again, the body languages of smiles, gesticulations, embraces, etc. Each of us had our own language, but to communicate with each other we had to engage in this other language, a third language constructed from pieces of the other two. Similarly, Shor (1992) describes what he calls the “third idiom,” which is the language that he and his students create as a hybrid of his language (the academy’s) and theirs. He believes he is able to create

this in his classrooms by frontloading the beginning of the course with student discourse and then introducing gradually the content and discourse of the curriculum (the academy) to produce this third language. As such, “The third idiom is invented anew in each classroom, situated in the students’ language and developmental levels, in the specific subject matter, and in the political climate of the school, college, or community” (p. 256). In Shor’s view, this is a “linguistic, aesthetic, and political achievement of dialogue,” and that it “transcends the divided discourses spoken before” (p. 257), and as such, it is a “counter-structure to traditional education” (p. 260).

Shor (1992) believes comedy can help contribute to relieving some of the tensions that may be present but he also uses it as a tool to reveal the “joy in moments of illumination” as well as using humor to reconsider, challenge, and overturn representations offered by various texts, including popular culture. For Shor the class itself becomes a “living archive” of subjects that one might use humor to address, though he makes it clear that none of which is to be done at anyone’s expense. Furthermore, he is not referring to a negative satire or humor aimed at the students’ values, which may be harder to foster particularly among the students themselves. While he leaves such caveats rather vague, he acknowledges the difficulty. Shor’s “third idiom” is similar to the description Burbules gives of a Gadamerian view of dialogue which he calls a “fusion of horizons” (Gadamer qtd. in Burbules, 1993, p. 113). Such a fusion is not merely to convince others to come to an understanding already present. In other words, “this ‘fused horizon’ is not found, but created; it is established in the conversational exchange itself” (p. 113). This language then, becomes a “translation” but as such,

Translation does not need to be complete or perfect for this [significant degree of mutual understanding] to occur: in any ongoing attempt to understand one another we

will need to build upon what has previously been established in common as a way of bridging additional areas of difference. This process may involve analogy, metaphor, paraphrase, or indirect reference . . . (p. 115)

Given the sometimes antagonistic dispositions of students, this may be very difficult and as Burbules admits, “it may or may not be successful” (p. 115).

Burbules (2004) believes adding an element of play also encourages the possibilities of creating new languages, and new territories. Grumet uses the spatial metaphor when she describes arts integration as creating a “third space” (2004, p. 65). While this term has specific denotations in cultural studies and critical geography, for her it represents “a new space that invites the students’ interpretations and resymbolization of the disciplines” and she describes it as “an unmarked field” that can become “blended space, or new knowledge” as the students “display the sense that the students make of what they study” (p. 66). It will later be argued that such aesthetic integration not only provides more motivation for student investment in the curriculum, but, especially through the use of performance theory, it offers various strategies that we can complicate the conversations that are the curricula of our classrooms. Surely classroom relations cannot reconcile the oppression that exists in society, but it can try to not unconsciously or intentionally reproduce those injustices. The goal of this project is to discover and chart these third spaces, renaming territories in a language that is a “third idiom” as a critical and aesthetic renaming and remaking of the world.

### *No easy road*

The work of Ellsworth and Jones reveal the complications that are part and parcel the dialogic classroom. However, their work is not perfectly transferable to public high schools as their research involves college and graduate classes. Moreover, it seems to me these lessons should be taken as how to proceed in dialogue with greater humility, with caution and

greater awareness, and in various forms, but not as calls to cease dialogue entirely. Their work does serve to remind us that there are some discussions that subordinated groups may have that should not be available for the perusal of dominant or public groups. And it also demands greater attention to “hearing” the voices of the subaltern (both in terms of what is heard but also the conditions in which the messages are being spoken). These considerations will be taken up throughout this dissertation, but these ideas contribute to what makes curriculum as conversation as so complicated. However, curriculum as complicated conversation is not synonymous with classroom dialogue in general, and must take place in multiple forms, not just open discussion. As a method it means dialogue situated in the lives of students and based on some student-generated inquiry, but as a form it can take many shapes. These can include, and are certainly by no means limited to, large and small group discussion; reading groups; portfolios, lectures; formal papers; poetry; song; journaling; questions and answer; blogs; hypertexts; performative, visual, plastic, oral and written artistic expression; and within my metaphorical analogy, maps and travelogues as well as other, various modes of communication, and some of these methods will be addressed later.

Part of the problem with so much of the discussion of dialogue and understanding is that it has relegated “knowing” to inter- and intrapersonal relationships. While these are very important, and contribute to the educative process, much of what I am addressing is dialogue in regards to coming to understand content as much as each other and/or ourselves. Therefore agreement and consensus do not necessarily equate with successful learning, or successful dialogue, and that differences, are not only allowed, but desirable. That is, students will forever “see” the curriculum landscapes differently than their classmates, though it seems plausible, even desirable, that semi-collective depictions are possible. As

stated before, curriculum as complicated conversation is not only how we talk, but *what* we talk about. Generally, the answer to that for me is history, and this means including alternative histories and autobiographies as described by Pinar and others (discussed in the next chapter). It also means situating it in place and in doing so, it becomes related to the experiences and lives of students. But even if what we describe is not perfectly mimetic to the events of the past—or even articulated uniformly among students—there are identifiable objects and events of the past that through interpretation can be articulated in ways that are collectively related to the lives of individual students. Furthermore, it is not only the historical facts as they are connected in various constructed and interpreted webs of causality that is important, but equally (perhaps more so), the allegorical and thematic frames used to study and articulate such facts, for example, the theme of reconciliation or redemption.

Accepting that there are “no guarantees” and recognizing dialogue as thoroughly complicated by considerations of both the intrapsychic experience of the individual *and* the social structures that complicate that dialogue, diversity is addressed in the subjects of these curricular discussions. And finally, it is also education toward something, in terms of a directive goal. As those associated with critical pedagogy have always admitted, this is a road rife with pitfalls. As Shor (1992) writes,

Empowering education is thus a road from where we are to where we need to be. It crosses terrains of doubt and time. One end of the road leads away from inequality and miseducation while the other lands us in a frontier of critical learning and democratic discourse. This is no easy road to travel. (p. 263)

What follows represents a vision that not only looks to where we’ve been to better understand where we are, but also, it looks ahead to where we want to go. As such the classroom becomes a space where students can begin to practice recognizing, discussing, deliberating, debating the conditions of society, and in the course of that dialogue, perhaps

transform certain spaces, if only the classroom at first, into something different. And perhaps seeing that it can be done, these students will potentially leave the school and go into society and reproduce better relations among participants. After all, “a road is made by people walking.

**CHAPTER 3**  
**HISTORY AND REDEMPTION:**  
**LET THE DEAD SPEAK FOR THE DEAD**

There is no document of civilization which is not the same time a document of barbarism.

Walter Benjamin, *On the Concept of History*<sup>2</sup>

Every smallest step on earth has been paid for by spiritual and physical torture.  
Friedrich Nietzsche, *Genealogy of Morals*

*In medias res*

According to most historical documents, sometime around 100,000 years ago, *Homo sapiens* lived among a few other highly evolved and developed hominids, eventually winning out in a 7 million year game of extinction while migrating around the globe. Sometime around 50,000 years ago there is evidence of biologically and behaviorally modern human beings, and sometime around 30,000 B.C., the Cro-Magnons entered Europe and the Neanderthals who inhabited Europe at the time disappeared. Language is thought to have existed (Diamond 1999). Most high school textbooks begin with the Paleolithic Age (the Old Stone Age), lasting from 400,000 B.C. to about 7,000 B.C., in which progressively evolving hominids existed as clans of hunter-gatherers. This is followed by the Neolithic

---

<sup>2</sup> I have sourced this title (as opposed to the more well-known “Theses on the Philosophy of History”) because I use this later publication (Benjamin 1940b/2003) throughout this dissertation. This line also comes from Benjamin’s essay (1937/2002) “Eduard Fuchs, Collector and Historian.” The first date cited denotes the year the piece was published, or if it was not published, then the approximate date it was written is provided.



Age (New Stone Age), which lasts until around 3,000 B.C., during which time there were advances in agriculture, which in many cases dramatically changed the nomadic, hunter-gathering patterns that were tens of thousands of years old as humans began to settle in particular places. Advances in mathematics, astronomy, medicine, and engineering occurred, and civilizations cropped up in Mesopotamia in which religion was the predominant feature of everyday life. King Hammurabi ordered his Law Code that organized daily routines as it had been passed down to him from the god, Shamash. Soon Egyptian culture flourished and the pyramids are said to have been built. A group of nomads known as the Hebrews, who probably originated in northern Mesopotamia, made their way into Egypt where they were enslaved. These people would later escape to Canaan (Palestine) and eventually enjoy some prosperity, particularly in the time of King David, who captured the city of Jerusalem and made it the religious and political center of Israel. The rise and fall of the Assyrian Empire occurred while Greece experienced an intellectual renaissance, after which the Romans built their empire. Jesus of Nazareth is born and executed. The Roman (and Roman Catholic) influence extended throughout most of Europe, particularly the south and west, while Germanic tribes developed in northeastern Europe. During the next period, warring European nations expanded their empires, colonizing lands across the globe including the Americas. Artistic and intellectual renaissances flourished and then came the Protestant Reformation and then the Copernican Revolution. The Enlightenment and Industrialization were followed by the U.S. Revolution and the first of the French Revolutions.

In 1792, a few years after the storming of the Bastille, the *sans-culottes* stormed the Tuileries Palace. Then came the Terror. Then came Napoleon, another form of terror, and a limited monarchy was restored in France. The 1820s and 30s witnessed numerous

revolutions all over Europe, including France again in July 1830. And in 1848 and 1849, again Europe experienced numerous major revolutions and reforms, and again in France, resulting in significant power shifts, during which time Marx was writing as was Darwin. Prussia led the German unification movement and in 1862 Bismarck became prime minister. After the Franco Prussian War, the communards barricaded the streets in the Paris Commune of 1871. Unification under the Second Empire in Germany was aided by an economic boon in the late 1800s, and Berlin became a major economic and cultural hub in Europe.<sup>3</sup> Nietzsche was writing. Liberal reforms in the first years of the Empire, coupled with the strong economy, created opportunities for Jewish families, and on July 15, 1892, Emil Benjamin and his wife, née Paula Schönflies, both from bourgeois families, had the first of three children, Walter Benedix Schönflies Benjamin (Bullock & Jennings 1996). Elsewhere in 1892, Tchaikovsky's "The Nutcracker Ballet" publicly premiered in St. Petersburg. J.R.R. Tolkien was born in South Africa and would soon move to England where Buffalo Bill Cody's Wild West Show toured with the Sioux Chief, Long Wolf, and 7-year-old White Star, who both die on tour (returned to South Dakota to be buried in 1997). In the United States an early version of "The Pledge of Allegiance" appeared in "The Youth's Companion," and the first long distance telephone line was opened between Chicago and New York.

*The nightmare that is the present*

I hope the reasons for beginning with such a history will become clear as I chose that storyline of history with various intentions, but not because I think these events (as they are expressed here) represent a perfect or even exemplary prototype of my ideas. Within the

---

<sup>3</sup> This summary is a chosen amalgamation of significant events that are represented in Western History textbooks for both high school and college students. Depending on the textbook, the old and new stone ages, if covered at all, are often given the most modicum attention.

metaphor that I've established, I am largely concerned with the historical and spatial terrains of curricular landscapes. As such I am not only concerned with history as a landscape itself but how that landscape has changed over time (throughout history). Furthermore, I am interested in not only coming to know the historical landmarks that make up a given landscape, such as the list of events cited above, but also the relationship between those events including the distance and sometimes-impassable fissures between. The following chapters will take on the latter while this chapter is more directly concerned with the historical events themselves, particularly which events get covered and why.

In his book, *What is Curriculum Theory?* (2004) Pinar's motivating effort is to understand and demonstrate the "nightmare that is the present," and he mostly means the current situation for teachers in public schools in the United States. In doing so, Pinar sets up a "constellation" of historical events for his readers, a constellation that he attributes some sort of causality and which is made up of historical moments in educative policy but also in society at large. Nonetheless, it should be noted this particular constellation is presented to a fairly specific audience: mostly new educators and administrators in the field of education. I will argue later that constellations have to be situated with/in specific audiences, and therefore, will always be somewhat different and original to every particular moment. However, Pinar has a specific motivation for choosing the constellation he has, and though his audience is generally educators, it is clear that he feels this conversation is one the whole nation needs to have. Indeed, by asking educators to commit to having these conversations in public schools is perhaps one of the more applicable ways to get this conversation into society at large. Many children do go home and discuss with their parents what they talked about at school that day, and of course, this brings up one of the most obvious pitfalls of this

course of education. Some parents will certainly have reactionary responses to the explicit politicalization of their child's education. But the argument of critical pedagogy is that it is *already* political, only too often veiled in neutrality and objectivity, which has a politics of its own: one of perpetuating the status quo.

Pinar (2004) explains that understanding this nightmarish present means recognizing the history of curriculum reform, particularly going back to the Cold War, the Kennedy Administration, the National Curriculum Reform Movement, and the Civil Rights Movement. Regarding his audience of educators, he connects these events to the formation and activities of organizations—such as NCATE (National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education)—policymakers, and educational institutions. However, the conversation he wants educators to commit to having in their classrooms is more recognizable in his discussion of the Cold War and the Civil Rights Movement. Pinar describes how the trauma of those events, and more specifically how the racism and misogyny that underlie those events “have been deferred and displaced into public education” and we cannot begin to face “the internalized consequences” of those events without recognizing the events that preceded them (p. 9). Advocating that educators recognize the “past in the present,” Pinar is also describing his method of *currere* that is largely autobiographical as it is dialogic, as we “talk back” to our history. He quotes Ralph Ellison, “We tell ourselves our stories so as to become aware of our general story” (as cited in Pinar 2004, p. 46).

Pinar (2004) intends for students to not only incorporate their own, individual autobiographies, but also hearing those of others, particularly those narratives of the African American experience from slavery to freedom. For Pinar, these provide eloquent and admirable tales of self-affirmation and self-mobilization toward freedom (that he hopes

educators might use to inspire us to overcome our own professional subjugation—he, of course, recognizes that the two incidents are experientially incomparable). However, they also provide some of the voices to a specific conversation that Pinar is suggesting is long overdue. Furthermore, he states this deferment and displacement of our racist and misogynist past exists, because, in part, of our continued refusals to talk about it, hear about it, reflect on it, or listen to it, and this has not only prohibited convalescence, but conversely it has often meant the intensification and propagation of the racist and misogynist attitudes, behavior, and conditions that have led to, and are part of, the current situations in the United States and elsewhere. Nevertheless, in a broader sense he wants us to look to the Civil Rights Movement for inspiration too, especially as a movement largely conducted by students. This particular point provides both inspiration, and more importantly, a model for all educators today. Moreover, the Civil Rights conversation took place at a time in history when people came together in hopes of realizing a dream, one that has yet to come true.

### *Is a dream deferred*

Pinar's notion of deferment and displacement is inspired by Freud's theory of deferred action (*nachträglichkeit*) in which traumatic experiences remain latent until they are expressed and experienced in new circumstances and are often displaced into other subjective experiences. Deborah Britzman (2000) similarly evokes Freud's notion of *nachträglichkeit* in a chapter about the "deferred action" and "difficult knowledge" present in the pedagogy of Anne Frank's diary. Her chapter contributes to a book entitled, *Between Hope and Despair: Pedagogy and the Remembrance of Historical Trauma* (Simon, Rosenberg, & Eppert 2000), which is part of the continuing work of Simon and Eppert, addressing notions of historical trauma, memory, "witnessing," and pedagogy. In a reference to this work, Pinar (2004)

explains that in the study of African-American autobiographical practices, he hopes to “participate in a pedagogy of witness and testimony” (p. 61). This will be addressed later in this chapter, but returning to the notion of *nachträglichkeit*, the difficult knowledge inherent in traumatic experiences is discovering how they become manifest in later and sometimes disparate events. According to Pinar, just as this involves a “working through” of repressed elements in an individual’s history, so too must society face and reflect its own traumatic events. He explains:

Just as serious autobiographical work requires the surfacing and re-incorporation of repudiated elements, cultural progress requires analogous reconstruction . . . [Such social] autobiographical labor aims to reconstitute the nation that exists as the reincorporated elements redefine the terms of a new deal, new subjectivities, a new nation, and a sustainable planet. (39-40)

Pinar is also describing his method of *currere* that is largely autobiographical as it is dialogic, as we “talk back” to our history. Pinar goes on to argue for a “curriculum of place” and this will be discussed more in chapter five. This chapter is devoted to the notion of telling stories so that we become aware of our more general story.

As the previous chapter suggested, curriculum is not only the course we run, the landscapes the class traverses, or the various places they stop, but it is the discussion that goes on along the journey and that informs students of those places. It is the conversation students bring in from society, the conversations they have with their friends, families, and themselves, as well as the conversations they have with texts, teachers, and the other material that I am metaphorically referring to as the landscape. It is the conversation they have with each other as they make sense of their landscapes and how they understand those places. As the previous chapter suggested this conversation is not simply classroom dialogue—though certainly that is part of it—but utilizes various forms of dialogue, monologue, journaling,

prepared scripts, improvised role-playing, lectures, etc. This chapter is more concerned with the nature of the understanding (historical) of those landscapes and the particular places and points of interests (curricular topics) that teachers and students stop and study in detail. As it has been stated throughout, the curriculum I am describing emphasizes a historical understanding of content and as such it would take up the mantra, “Historicize everything!” (Jameson 1981). Autobiographical research necessarily involves stories and most importantly, stories about our past. Regarding the landscapes and locations students visit, we will find that places too have stories to tell, and this chapter argues for not only historical understanding, but that history is largely inclusive of stories, particularly of people, and their memories. I believe this is expressed in the following quote from the prologue to Herman Hesse’s (1919/1985) novel, *Demian*: “I cannot tell my story without going a long way back. If it were possible I would go back much farther still to the very earliest of years of my childhood and beyond them to my family origins” (p. 7). In this statement Hesse acknowledges that all of our stories actually begin with a history that goes “a long way back,” and that even our personal histories don’t simply begin the day we enter this world, but were in the making before we even existed.

Pinar (2004) quotes Selwyn Cudjoe in describing how the social, the subjective, and the intellectual merge in African American autobiographical practice in which “*me-ism* gives way to *our-ism*” (p. 46, p. 208), and it is clear he hopes to extend this attitude to his readers and the classroom. However difficult, our challenge in education is to foster such a disposition in diverse classrooms that are often made up of students who, under normalized social conditions, exhibit and maintain separate and competing interests. Certainly American individualism and competitive capitalism lend to “me-ism” more so than “our-ism.”

Recognizing that the classroom is often made up of the incarnations of this individualism and competition amid the inequities of the material world, our challenge is to “teach against the grain,” to oppose existing prejudiced and privileged attitudes, and offer alternative “pedagogies of possibilities” (Simon 1992). This chapter gestures toward the field of social studies, but attempts to avoid reinforcing or falling into existing curricular categories, continuing to argue for an interdisciplinary curriculum “situated” in the history, place, and everyday activities of the students. Remaining in the context of understanding this curriculum as a complicated conversation, I hope to recognize the complications and difficulties these educative directives will undoubtedly encounter, and hopes to prepare educators to meet and overcome those difficulties by acknowledging the complications.

*Social Studies and (in) history.*

This is not the place to propose a restructuring of the social studies curriculum, and certainly that structure has been, and still is, the topic of much debate. Calls and criticisms from the left, right, and middle demand deconstructing, reshaping, or returning to older models of a mythological ‘golden era.’ Excepting perhaps language and literacy education, social studies may be the most contested sight of curriculum as at least two very opposing sides stake out territory there. On the conservative side are those who promote social studies to encourage national identity, assimilation, and a patriotic citizenship. On the more radical side, social studies education is a vehicle for social change, student empowerment, and sometimes intended to liberate the “oppressed,” or emphasizes a critical citizenship that involves an active and political engagement with the world. Then, of course, there are liberal and progressive models in between those two poles of the spectrum. Historically, social studies education has been tied to the very purposes of schools and Stanley and Nelson



(1994) note that there is a close link between historical social events in our nation and the social studies curriculum, e.g., immigration and assimilation, or the Cold War and patriotic citizenship. They also draw a line dividing those who advocate social studies as cultural transmission and those who promote critical thinking. Noting that there are many variations, they argue “the basic orientations fall into three broad categories: subject-based, civics-related, and issues-focused” (p. 268). And within these three orientations different politics could be expressed, and each could be done in a manner that promotes cultural transmission or critical thinking. Although one might ask if these two are necessarily exclusive as Dewey himself made a similar distinction, but he seems to place this dichotomy in the series of false “either-or” scenarios he is criticizing (1938/1997, p. 78).

In terms of cultural transmission, I am not advocating transmission of patriotic indoctrination. However, framing patriotism as blind nationalism alienates too many of our students that have parents in the military, who feel a sense of patriotism themselves, or who otherwise will react to such discussions by shutting down or disengaging. We must frame these conversations in ways that encourage a voluntary and interested participation, not a defensive one. This means not only lecturing less, but not leading our own questions. I myself recognize the tendency to ask questions already having the answer in mind. This is why the student-generated questions are so important. However, I certainly am not advocating an uncritical acceptance of cultural transmission. Instead, I am arguing that students be offered a much broader exposure to various cultures as well as allowing them the freedom of choosing, refuting, and combining the pieces of those cultures as they will. This will be discussed later but I find a model for such an idea in the Freedom Schools of the Civil Rights Movement. Indeed, the organizers of the Freedom Schools prompted teachers to use

discussion as the “basic method of instruction” (Chilcoat and Ligon 1994, 150). These discussions were guided by sets of questions, either student generated, or produced by the organizers. One group of questions that was introduced to the students, and ones that I am suggesting we offer students today are, “What does the majority culture have that we want?” and “What does the majority culture have that we don’t want?” and “What do we [or other cultures] have that we want to keep?” (143).

Though first officially endorsed by the National Education Association in 1916, Stanley and Nelson (1994) cite David Saxe to suggest that social studies education is much older than this, and in its origin was oriented toward social welfare. They write social studies has “two main arteries of origin—history and social improvement” (1994, p. 267), and they then trace the development of social studies education in American education and in doing so, give considerable attention to Dewey noting his paradoxical association with progressive education. Naming him as “the single most powerful influence within the progressive tradition,” they also note how he distanced himself from the Progressive Education Association and so-called progressive educators who misinterpreted his ideas. Though there is a difference in the political orientation of the curriculum described herein, Dewey’s influence cannot be downplayed. Stanley and Nelson write, “In the case of history, Dewey believed our purpose should not be to have students memorize historical information but to develop a historical mindedness” (p. 273). Pinar (1991; 2004) laments what Christopher Lasch’s called “presentism,” which is our society’s inclination to forget the past and furthermore, to “live for yourself, not for our predecessors or posterity” and I would add “community.” In a way that, for me, is reminiscent of Dewey’s “history of the present,”

Pinar quotes Faulkner by saying ““There is no such thing really as was, because the past is” (Pinar 1991, p. 173).

### *Situated history*

In *Experience in Education* (1938/1997) Dewey describes historical understanding in a manner that sounds very similar to Pinar’s insistence of autobiographical knowledge as understanding self-formation both as individuals and as society:

Just as the individual has to draw in memory upon his own past to understand the conditions in which he individually finds himself, so the issues and problems of present *social* life are in such intimate and direct connection with the past that students cannot be prepared to understand either these problems or the best way of dealing with them without delving into their roots in the past. (p. 77).

As mentioned earlier, Dewey wrote, “History deals with the past, but this past is the history of the present” (1916/1997, p. 214). That present must be situated to the lives of students in meaningful and useful ways, and for Dewey, history and geography perform such a task. Dewey describes history and geography as “the information studies *par excellence* of the schools” (p. 210). Dewey writes,

The function of historical and geographical subject matter . . . is to enrich and liberate the more direct and personal contacts of life by furnishing their context, their background and outlook. While geography emphasizes the physical side and history the social, these are only emphases in a common topic, namely, the associated life of [people]. (p. 211).

However, it seems clear that history and geography should not be taught as disciplines divorced from each other, nor from the students’ individual experience, nor from present social conditions. Instead, history and geography should inform student inquiry; that is, they should “supply the subject matter which gives background and outlook, [and] intellectual perspective” to student investigations (p. 208). Dewey believed that when geography and

history are used in such a manner, students increase their “ability to place [their] own doings in their time and space connections” (p. 208).

Dewey included the study of nature in geography and in chapter five of this work, geography and environmental studies will be collapsed into a notion of place. Hoping that I do not contribute to a divorce of history and place, history will be emphasized here. I argue that this can also be related to the demand of “situated pedagogy” made by Shor and Freire and others associated with critical pedagogy. It might also be added that their problem-themes might appeal to Dewey’s sense of student-centered and process-oriented education. Regardless, Shor and Freire talk about situating learning in student dialogue, and I am hoping to describe a pedagogy not only situated in their dialogue, which is generally situated in the present, but also their stories, which recalls the past, and their place, which evokes a sense of the material and community. It should be noted that situated pedagogy in its “critical” sense has a different political agenda than that of Dewey, whose politics, though different and more understated, are not totally absent in his work.

As stated earlier, and as Stanley (1992) has shown, critical pedagogy is probably more related to the social reconstructionists who, though having some Deweyan roots, wanted education to act as an agent for social change. Dewey, on the other hand, was less willing to “counter the effects of conservative indoctrination with a counterindoctrination from a leftist perspective” (Stanely and Nelson 1994, p. 274), and he seemed to have more faith that the students as future citizens, after having been properly educated, would be better prepared to solve the challenges of their society. Of course, Shor and Freire would not want to call their work indoctrination, though conservatives most likely would, and vice versa.

Nonetheless, what has been outlined is a call for historical understanding of present conditions and themes situated in the everyday lives of students.

### *Historical Vision*

Moving beyond Dewey to a more future oriented consideration of history, Steven Best (1995) argues that there exists “an important aspect of advanced capitalist societies—the decline of historical knowledge, consciousness, and imagination” (p. xi), and calls for historical understanding are being made from numerous and various sources (all over the political spectrum). As stated before, one of Pinar’s (2004) targets is the presentism he sees into today’s society. In his book, *The Politics of Historical Vision*, Best (1995) describes the similarities and differences of the critical theories of Marx, Foucault, and Habermas, claiming all three reject positivist goals of value-free theory and approach history to promote critical consciousness and political change. To be sure, Best explains the substantial differences in their approaches to politics, power, and history as well as their methods and what social change each considered desirable. Nonetheless, he describes that in the vision of history of those three theorists, “the past is employed to disrupt the present; to show how reified economic, political, and technological imperatives rule over social life; and to allow an alternative future where human freedom can become a reality” (p. 209). Best also notes each of those three have “blind spots and reductionists tendencies” (p. 255) and he argues for a “multiperspectival vision” that advances a notion of historiography that “requires hermeneutical sensitivity, empathetic and imaginative reconstruction, and reflexive methodological sophistication” (p. 237). Though I follow a different theoretical lineage than Best does, I think the one I follow appertains to his described historical vision and has the potential to “inform practice in an emancipatory way by breaking the grip of the present, by

developing a countermemory that recalls positive forms of past life and past freedoms, and by projecting the norm of human liberty into an alternative future” (p. 259)

Walter Benjamin is not often immediately associated with the field of education, although a younger Benjamin did write about school reform and sometimes he scribed explicitly pedagogical essays. Much of his writings on school reform originate in his participation in the so-called Youth Movement of Germany in the beginning of the twentieth century. Up until his early 20s, Benjamin was actively a part of the German Youth Movement, largely influenced by a teacher he had: Gustav Wyneken. The German Youth Movement was made up of various types of schools ranging from tame attempts to tinker with traditional curriculum and presentation—including dialogue driven classrooms—to harmless nature traversing precursors to the Outward Bound School, as well as the militant and fascist precursors of Hitler’s Youth. At this time his work speaks to the “spirit and solidarity of youth” and the adult repression of youth in the pre-WWI German culture. Revealing what was apparently somewhat of the zeitgeist in much of Germany, he promotes a youth lead cultural revolution, or at least a self determining youth. One early piece written in 1914-15 (when Benjamin was 22), “The Life of Students” begins,

There is a view of history that puts its faith in the infinite extent of time and thus concerns itself only with the speed, or lack of it, with which people and epochs advance along the path of progress. This corresponds to a certain absence of coherence and rigor in the demands it makes on the present. (Benjamin 1915/2000, p. 37)

Here there is evidence of notions that would be raised again and again by Benjamin, most notably, a criticism of a universal concept of progress in history and the relation of history to the present. It is possible that had he entered the academy he would have produced even more explicitly pedagogical material. Educational matters predominated much of

Benjamin's thinking and intellectual development as a young adult, even when he grew older, they found expression in such pieces as "Eduard Fuchs, Collector and Historian" (1937/2002) and "Convolute N" of the *Arcades Project*, (1940a/1999) and in other works. In *The Dialectics of Seeing* Susan Buck-Morss (1989/1999) describes Benjamin's "materialist pedagogy" in which "knowledge that provided 'access to praxis' was crucial;" indeed, she adds, "Everything depended on it" (p. 289).

There is a distinct break from Benjamin's early educational reform work and that which occurred later. This appears to be a product of both his separation from the Youth Movement (a separation due to both his increasing age but also as the Movement became more virulently militant and nationalistic) and as he began to seriously consider the question of Marxism. Like so many others of his time, he read the popular book, *History and Class Consciousness*, by Georg Lukács (1922/1997), and would later form relationships with other Marxists such as Theodore Adorno and Bertolt Brecht. Too, there was his passion for a Bolshevik Latvian woman who was involved with the theater named Asja Lacis. Regardless, Benjamin's later works are much more mature although less pedagogically overt, and they are still largely informed by Marxist notions, especially historical materialism.

Despite these notions, or indeed, because of them, Benjamin's work is worthy of our consideration. America's aversion with class is slowly receding as its inclusion into contemporary political and pedagogical dialogue is slowly trickling down from academia, as can be seen in the acceptance of the term, 'socioeconomic status.' However, sincere and deliberate discussions about social class and economics are not generally part of the mainstream American dialogue, and I argue schools could function to inaugurate such dialogues and perhaps they will become less of an aberration. Indeed, I believe there exists a

“culture of silence” in Freire’s terms, regarding socialist education, and this, among other things, means that such socialist imaginations are inaccessible to a significant portion of the population.

*Nothing but a pack of lies*

In the essay, “Eduard Fuchs, Collector and Historian,” Benjamin (1937/2002) writes, “There is no document of culture which is not at the same time a document of barbarism. No cultural history has yet done justice to this fundamental state of affairs, and it can hardly hope to do so” (p. 266). This expresses, I think, a similar sentiment to the African proverb that tells us that until the lion’s have their own storytellers, the tale of the hunt will always glorify the hunter. Clipping in pieces of Benjamin, Buck-Morss (1989/1999) describes it as such, “If all historical continuity is ‘that of the oppressors,’ this [Benjamin’s] tradition is composed of those ‘rough and jagged places’ at which the continuity of tradition breaks down . . . (p. 290). Benjamin was writing in a different time than ours and post-colonial theory, feminism, and multiculturalism have now rightfully brought previously under-represented voices and histories to our attentions and begun the process of “talking back” to dominant traditions of historical continuity (acknowledging this had always been going on). There are numerous texts that have taken up such a goal specifically within the discipline of history such as the well-known *A People’s History of the United States: 1492-Present* by Howard Zinn (1980/1995), and his later edition, *The Twentieth Century* (1984/2003).

In 1980 Howard Zinn (1980/1995) wrote, “We must not accept the memory of states as our own” (p. 9) and announced his intent to “tell the story of the discovery of America from the viewpoint of the Arawaks, of the Constitution from the standpoint of the slaves, of Andrew Jackson as seen by the Cherokees, . . . (p. 10). Though empathy might prove useful,



his point is not merely to “grieve for the victims and denounce the executioners,” fearing that “those tears, that anger, cast into the past, deplete our moral energy for the present” (p.10). Still, though he admits the lines between oppressor and victim “are not always clear,” he still insists that “in such a world of conflict, a world of victims and executioners, it is the job of thinking people, as Albert Camus suggested, not to be on the side of the executioners” (p. 10). Even though such alternative histories have become less rare, they have not become in anyway mainstream, and I don’t think we can take for granted that our history classrooms are nurturing “thinking people.” Indeed, in our present historical moment, the “struggle against fascism” (Benjamin 1940b/2003, p. 392) seems no less important, especially if one considers a sort of economic fascism that remains slightly more oligarchical than autocratic. And those that wield power remain mostly White Western Males whose access and maneuverability—their speed, ability, and comfort in mobility—is more or less limitless, kept in check by market equilibrium as much or more than regulation from political institutions that are all-too-often part and parcel of this group. More recently Zinn (2002) edits the New Press People’s History Series which reexamines various historical eras such as the Renaissance or the Cold War, “revisiting old stories in new ways” (p. xiii). For example, *A People’s History of the American Revolution: How Common People Shaped the Fight for Independence* by Ray Raphael (2002) devotes chapters to the roles of Women, African-Americans, and Native Americans in the American Revolution.

James Loewen’s (1995) book, *Lies My Teacher Told Me*, is another text that is not uncommon in history classrooms. Loewen begins his book by stating “High school students hate history,” and yet, “Outside of school, Americans show great interest in history” (p. 12-13). He bases that last statement on the popularity of historical fiction and film. He also

charges that history is the one subject that college professors routinely have to unlearn and/or reteach whatever—if anything—was retained from high school history. He even says, “indeed, history is the only field in which the more courses students take, the stupider they become” (p. 12). Of course, there are some teachers who would take exception to this, but his incrimination is not levied at teachers, rather at textbooks. “Textbooks almost never use the present to illuminate the past” and, “Conversely, textbooks seldom use the past to illuminate the present” (p. 13). In his study he looks at twelve textbooks, and among other things, Loewen finds tensions and sometimes faults in the in the overriding spirit of nationalism, a tendency toward “heroification,” and “the conflicting desires to promote inquiry and to indoctrinate blind patriotism” (p. 14). Furthermore, he notes how editors of most history textbooks have the tendency to produce clones of their competitors, which means the most traditional cultural reproduction of history occurs, and it seems plausible to assume the makers of standardized testing seek a similar reciprocity in content. “Even though the books bulge with detail,” he laments that “none of the facts is remembered, because they are presented simply as one damn thing after another”(p. 15). Furthermore he asserts that “Textbooks stifle meaning by suppressing causation” (p. 15). He describes this as concentrating on the twigs and branches of trees and thus missing the forest.

#### *Those who control the present*

In another critique of the textbook industry, Michael Parenti’s (1999) *History as Mystery* charges that the way history is taught in school is a “miseducation” in that the “popular version of events that enjoys maximum circulation, and is seriously distorted in ways that serve or certainly reflect dominant socio-economic interests” (xii). According to Parenti, much of this miseducation reinforces America as a classless society with an

ideologically uncontested identity. This distortion occurs on two levels. The first is unconscious, or the unintentional distortion by historians, textbooks, teachers, and news and entertainment media that unwittingly are “wedded” to the dominant ideology in American mainstream culture. But second, he is also clear that he believes much of this “distortion is willful, perpetrated by those who are consciously dedicated to burying the past or shaping of our understanding of it to suit their interests” (p. 4). Sounding at times very Orwellian, he writes, “Those who control the present take great pains to control our understanding of the past” (xi). Furthermore, like Zinn, Loewen, and so many others listed within this dissertation (including the author), his intent is that “a better understanding of the past will offer revelatory insights into the present—just as our understanding of the present helps us to understand our past” (xviii). To make his point, Parenti provides several studies that have looked at various textbooks that leave out histories of class struggle, socialism, and various other omissions in American history.

It is not at all uncommon to find Zinn’s books (1980/1995; 2003) being used as supplemental history texts in many history classrooms, especially at more progressive schools. Usually, if these books are used at all, however, they are used with “honors” classes or otherwise, the advanced history classes. Too often these classes are disproportionately composed of more affluent and white students who possess the necessary social, economic, and cultural capital. In those schools that have embraced the liberal, political correct discourse of humanist pluralism, it makes perfect sense to teach Zinn to the honors classes. Recognizing the faults of the dominant order is, to some, an acceptable goal of education. Yet, teaching this to the dominant class usually leaves that class intact, and if anything, only teaches them how to remain dominant in a more humane way. Teaching such histories to the

underclass or marginalized, on the other hand, could be a threat to the dominant class. Hence, teachers of history classes composed largely of lower class and minority students usually do not provide their students with the more inflammatory material, but instead suppress such material with the standard myths of history and the deliberate omission of provocative histories that might act as models of resistance and rebellion. And if any material is offered as inspiration, it is all-too-often an inspiration aimed at economic productiveness. This amounts to an occupational motivation that has less to do with contributing to a community than empowering one's consumer power; it is a pedagogy that privileges individual mobility within the existing structures of the society. Such education foregoes any notion of a cooperatively mobile social organization, and certainly excludes any critique or strategy regarding the transformation of existing structures. Furthermore, a more structural challenge to books like Zinn's is that the increasingly important standardized tests do not draw many of their questions from such texts, and hence, teachers too often feel obligated to concentrate on that material which will be on those standardized tests.

### *History and Critical Pedagogy*

While those discussions remain largely about the textbook industry, there is also a plentitude of material regarding such alternative histories in the field of critical pedagogy. In Donaldo Macedo's (1994) *Literacies of Power: What Americans Are Not Allowed to Know*, he criticizes "our common culture" (particularly as reproduced by E.D. Hirsch's infamous list) as "poisonous pedagogy," a phrase he takes from Alice Miller (1990), which describes an education as the reproduction of cultural material intended to create an obedience that is

imposed not only through received false cultural information but also through the omission of cultural facts, such as the horrendous crimes that have been omitted against humanity in the name of Western heritage, in order to prevent the possibility of keeping dangerous memories alive. (Macedo 1994, p. 67)

He even creates a two-columned list of sample topics from Hirsch's *Dictionary of Cultural Literacy: What Every American Needs to Know* (Hirsch, Kett, and Tufel 1988) alongside "another reference point" which he describes as "What every American needs to know but is prevented from knowing" (p. 69). In critical pedagogy other alternative histories find expression in notions such as "border pedagogy," "counter-texts," "counter-memory," and even "insurgent commemoration." For Aronowitz and Giroux (1991), counter-memory "represents an attempt to rewrite the language of resistance in terms that dignify public life, while at the same time allowing people to speak from their particular histories and voices" (p. 124). As such they posit counter-memory as a democratic discursive analysis that critiques and disables particular subjectivities while empowering others, and understanding how "difference" is organized variously in assorted configurations of power within the public sphere. Schools, teachers, and students obviously contribute to this organization, consciously or not, and indeed, their book is an appeal for all those concerned to recognize those configurations and be willing to not only redefine their position in such, but work to alter those configurations (p. 124-125). Furthermore, "'counter-memory' necessitates 'a critical reading of how the past informs the present and how the present reads the past'" (p. 124).

The terms Aronowitz and Giroux (1991) use to express the tension between the old configurations and the new are "custom and remembrance," which they take from the work of Bruce James Smith. Custom, they write, "constructs subjects within a discourse of continuity in which knowledge and practice are viewed as a matter of inheritance and transmission" and is prone to view counter-memory as "unpatriotic" (p. 125). Remembrance, on the other hand, is a "language of public life that promotes an ongoing dialogue between the past, present, and future" (p. 126). As such, "it is a vision of optimism

rooted in the need to bear witness to history, to reclaim that which must not be forgotten” (p. 126). This all seems to be congruent, both in content and motivation, with Pinar’s notion of complicated conversations.

Aronowitz and Giroux are clear that counter-memory is not synonymous with “humanist notion[s] of pluralism or a celebration of diversity for its own sake” but instead it hopes to transform “oppressive relations of power” by educating both teachers and students in how they are implicitly involved with the dominant and oppressive forces, how they may function to reproduce them, are also subjugated by them, and can act to transform them (p. 126-127). The latter requires “a vision of public life that calls for an ongoing interrogation of the past that allows different groups to locate themselves in history while simultaneously struggling to make history” (p. 126). There are, of course, others associated with critical pedagogy who have taken up this issue (e.g. Giroux, 1992; Giroux and McLaren 1994; McLaren 1995; etc.). In his groundbreaking *Ideology and Curriculum* Michael Apple (1979/2004) asked, whose knowledge, whose history, whose perspectives and experiences are privileged in education? And then more recently he and Kristen Buras (Apple and Buras 2006) take up those same questions in *The Subaltern Speak: Curriculum, Power, and Educational Struggles*, which also serves to remind us that this struggle is still ongoing.

### *Teaching Against the Grain*

The work of Roger Simon offers a particularly Benjaminian version of critical pedagogy, though it cannot be said that he has engaged Benjamin’s work in a comprehensive or exhaustive fashion. This is not to discount the work he has done, though my take will be somewhat different, but Benjamin’s oeuvre is rather immense and I certainly am not claiming my own engagement as encyclopedic. Simon (1992) gets the title for his book, *Teaching*

*Against the Grain: Texts for a Pedagogy of Possibility*, from a phrase of Benjamin's, who wrote the "task of historical materialism is to brush history against the grain" (Benjamin 1940b/2003, p. 392). Simon (1992) describes his work as "not a recapitulation of Benjamin's writings nor an attempt to interpret their significance and limitations" but to "read Benjamin as an educator" (p. 138). Additionally, his chapter in *Between Hope and Despair: Pedagogy and the Remembrance of Historical Trauma* (Simon, Rosenberg, & Eppert 2000) also references the work of Benjamin as influential and that book as a whole addresses some of the issues which are of immediate concern for this dissertation. In this last book, the editors write an introduction in which they advocate a "*remembrance/pedagogy*" that engages people in "particular forms of historical consciousness" which they describe as an "indelibly social praxis, a very determinate set of commitments and actions held and enacted by members of collectivities" (p. 2).

For Simon, Rosenberg, and Eppert (2000), remembrance is a "*strategic practice*" that maintains "efforts to mobilize attachments and knowledge that serve specific social and political interests within particular spatiotemporal frameworks . . . aligned with the anticipation of a reconciled future" (p. 3-4). Furthermore, remembrance "endeavors to bring forth into presence specific people and events of the past in order to honor their names and to hold a place for their absent presence in one's contemporary life" (p. 4). For them, this is not an invitation, but an "assignment." Such production of knowledge also involves a "difficult return" that challenges students regarding "what it might mean to live, not *in* the past but *in relation with* the past, acknowledging the claim the past has on the present" (p. 4, emphasis in original). In considering "remembrance as critical learning" they address "how to enact telling stories of traumatic histories that encompass not only a repetition (a retelling) of the

story of another but also the *story of the telling of the story*” (p. 7, emphasis in original).

Benjamin would certainly approve of their attention to the activity of production, and this will be of concern throughout what follows.

*Between Hope and Despair* (Simon, Rosenberg, & Eppert 2000) engages learning

that seeks to accomplish a shift of one’s ego boundaries, that displaces engagements with the past and contemporary relations with others out of the narrow, inescapably violent and violative confines of the “I,” to a receptivity to others, to an approaching of others. (p. 8)

For them “remembering well” involves a humbling regarding the students’ attentiveness to the testimony, as being called as a witness, not to testify, but to *listen*. Remembering well also involves “a working through that takes into account the particularities of the space/time of one’s engagement, the particular investments one brings to remembrance, and the continuities and discontinuities one enacts in relation to it” (p. 7). Finally, they suggest that remembrance is “a means for an ethical learning that impels us into a confrontation and ‘reckoning’ not only with stories of the past but also with ‘ourselves’ as we ‘are’ (historically, existentially, ethically) in the present” (p. 8).

Simon (2000) addresses one of the complexities of such an education in his chapter that attends to how and why we teach historical memories to those students who feel such events are “what has never been my fault or my deed,” a phrase he gets from Emmanuel Levinas. In doing so he draws on the Jewish notion of *zakhor* which he says can be translated as “both an imperative and an obligation: ‘remember’” (p. 10). Bearing witness to the past becomes a “space of intervention” in the present, as “To witness as an act of *zakhor* is to constitute this intervention as a realignment of memory and the present” (p. 11). For me, the notion of teaching what many students will feel “has never been my fault or deed” seems to be a paramount challenge to educators when the content alone can create “sides.”



How can one talk about the inequality that is present in our history as well as our present system and still neglect how it is present in the classroom, in the everyday lives of students? Some teachers do, but others avoid both considerations entirely, wanting to maintain “peace” in the classroom even when that means the reproduction of subordination. Therefore, they do not teach history, and especially recent history, in ways that reveal its presence in the present; additionally, they do teach history in a way that attempts to evoke a persona—that is, political—experience with the content.

As has already been discussed, one of the more identifiable claims of Benjamin’s theory of historical materialism is that history has been the tale of the victor and suppresses alternative histories. For Benjamin, remembering and retelling the tales of those victims is not only to save them from being forgotten, but to attempt to guard against how such alternative histories, if recognized at all, can become the tools of the oppressor. As such, alternative histories become merely unfortunate events in a progressively unfolding history, whether progressing toward a more perfect, democratic humanism, or the proletariat revolution, or even the messianic redemption he sometimes described. None of which, it seems, were inevitable. Perhaps later in his life they all seemed utterly unlikely. The exact nature of this messianic redemption (for example, whether or not it a successful or conscious attempt to combine theology with Marxism) is a subject of much debate among Benjamin scholars (see Buck-Morss 1989/1999, pp. 242-248; Tiedemann, 1984 and 1999), but for me it is enough to think of it as simply allegorical. As such, the messianic reference of an apocalypse or “Judgment Day” refers mostly to revelation (not Revelations the book), or a day of reckoning.

*The horror! The horror!*

It is important to understand the historical moment in which Benjamin was writing. Benjamin is part of the Modernist critique of the Enlightenment and Industrialization, but he, along with Nietzsche are sometimes seen as pre-cursors to post-structuralism and sometimes aligned with Foucault (see Aronowitz 1981; McRobbie 1993/2000). As part of the former he was a vehement critic of progress in history, and as part of the latter he imagined a nonlinear, discontinuous history. Other aspects of his work may very well be precedents of postmodern thought including but not limited to these ideas: the crisis of representation; the use of montage; questions of production, interpretation, translation, and language; and considerations of memory and involuntary memory. Regarding history, much of his critique was levied at a universal notion of history that views human progress as an inevitable course of human development, especially one that followed a linear continuum of history. However, it is important to note that Benjamin is attacking a certain notion of historicism and universal history, particularly the notion as he quotes, to reveal the past “as it really was” (Ranke) or otherwise history that holds a dogmatic attachment to accuracy. As a counter to the popular historicism of his time he offers his description of “historical materialism” which is developed specifically in the following essays: “Eduard Fuchs, Collector and Historian” (1937/2002), “On the Concept of History” (1940b/2003), “Paralipomena to ‘On the Concept of History’ (1940c/2003), and “Convolute N” of *The Arcades Project* (1940a/1999). These are some of Benjamin’s later works—some just sketches—all written during the last few years of his life, excepting *The Arcades Project*, which he worked on sporadically for the last thirteen years of his life.

In one of Benjamin’s latest sketches, the unpublished “Paralipomena to ‘On the Concept of History’” (1940c/2003), he writes that historical materialism “would threaten the

three most important positions of historicism” (p. 406). The first of which is a universal idea of history which he compares to “a kind of Esperanto,” which is a form of internationally constructed language that reduced linguistic principles to basic universals. Such a language still possessed Eurocentric roots and syntax, and, much like notions of a universal history, it universalized and privileged particulars as though they were the transcendent experiences of all of humanity. The second position he is criticizing is the tendency to present history as an epic narrative, what he refers to in another essay as “the whore called ‘Once upon a time’ in historicism’s bordello” (1940b/2003, p. 396). This is not the “Epic Theater” of Brecht, but refers to many historians’ tendencies to employ the narrative form to history, to create linear causalities and “historical continuity,” and to otherwise present history as epic adventures of the famous and celebrated. I have already begun to address the last criticism regarding the critique in terms of the textbook industry, critical pedagogy, and alternative histories. The “third bastion of historicism is the strongest and the most difficult to overrun. It presents itself as ‘empathy with the victor’” (1940c/2003, p. 406).

Such empathy positions the educator as well as the students and poses the greatest challenge to the historical materialist’s effort, and I will add, it also is the greatest challenge to the educator. The following quote, or similar versions, appears in the Fuchs article (1937/2002, p. 267), “On the Concept of History” outline (1940b/2003, pp. 391-392) and its “Paralipomena” (1940c/2003, pp. 406-407), which for me suggests Benjamin’s intended emphasis. I will be quoting the latter since this was the latest of the three written, and I would just reiterate here that this quote is his criticism regarding history’s tendency to empathize with the victor.

The rulers at any time are the heirs of all those who have been victorious throughout history. Empathizing with the victor invariably benefits those currently ruling. The

historical materialist respects this fact. He also realizes that this state of affairs is well-founded. Whoever has emerged victorious in the thousand struggles traversing history up to the present day has his share in the triumphs of those now ruling over those ruled. The historical materialist can take only a highly critical view of the inventory of spoils displayed by the victors before the vanquished. This inventory is called culture. For in every case these treasures have a lineage which the historical materialist cannot contemplate without horror. They owe their existence not only to the efforts of the great geniuses who created them, but also to the anonymous toil of others who lived in the same period. (pp. 406-407)

Benjamin employs the term “horror” to describe the positionality of the historical materialist, and I would say this is not only a position of discomfort, but also of agitation. Benjamin acknowledges that this “state of unease which marks the beginning of any critique of history worthy to be called dialectical” but sees this as a necessary “unease over the provocation to the researcher, who must abandon the calm, contemplative attitude towards his object . . .” (1937/2002, p. 262). To be sure, many students will not want to “go there,” to enter those realms of discomfort and engage in dialogues that would address, bring attention, or otherwise testify to their privilege or their oppression. Indeed, many teachers might not either, and others still would argue that having conversations that would reveal the discrepancies and horrors of the abuse of power is not the business of schools at all.

The above passage seems to offer a very difficult response to the problem raised by teaching “that which was not my fault or deed.” Past injustices may not be the fault or deed of our present students, but our present students may indeed be reaping the rewards of past injustices. And adding to the difficult knowledge that *that* alone already implies, there are in almost any given class in public schools, of course, a number of students who have inherited the unjust aftereffects of past injustices in the present. Jameson (1981) sums up such a reading of history as it must recognize that

all the works of class history as they have survived and been transmitted to people the various museums, canons, and “traditions” of our own time, are all in one way or

another profoundly ideological, have all had a vested interest in and a functional relationship to social formations based on violence and exploitation; and that, finally, the restoration of the meaning of the greatest cultural monuments cannot be separated from a passionate and partisan assessment of everything that is oppressive in them and that know complicity with privilege and class domination, stained with the guilt not merely of culture in particular but of History itself as one long nightmare. (p. 299)

How educators address the material causalities of those differences, and its inherent tension, without provoking animosity among their students, is a delicate balance. As I have said before, addressing alternative histories and issues of testimony within a homogenous group, whether subaltern or not, is quite different than with a class who is more heterogeneous in terms of privilege and power. Working with teenagers requires considerable caution as we must evoke students to take on the responsibilities of bearing witness of their own volition, not only by obligation. Perhaps, at the very least, I must be willing to address (and model the performance of such engagement) the recognition of the “horror” in my own history. As educators we must be responsive and sympathetic to students’ resistance is to “go there,” and this calls into questions the places where it is no longer the teacher’s responsibility to lead, guide, follow, drag, or otherwise take their students.

### *Materialist historiography*

By contrasting historicism with his theory of historical materialism, Benjamin provides apt descriptions of the latter’s constitutive elements. For example, he writes, “Historicism offers the eternal image of the past whereas historical materialism presents a given experience with the past—an experience that is unique” (1937/2002, p. 262; see also 1940b/2003, p. 396). This eternal image of the past falls into the concept of an epic, universal history that “musters a mass of information to fill the homogeneous, empty time. Materialist historiography, on the other hand, is based on a constructive principle” (1940b/2003, p. 396). He adds in the “Paralipomena” that “the historical construction is

dedicated to the memory of the anonymous” (1940c/2003, p. 406). And if one also applies an excerpt from the “Convolute N” of *The Arcades Project*, he warns, “It is important for the materialist historian” to understand that “what one customarily calls its ‘reconstruction’ [is] one-dimensional” and that “‘construction’ presupposes ‘destruction’” (1940a/1999, p. 470). This “destructive or critical momentum of materialist historiography” is precisely what “blasts” the “historical object” from “historical continuity” (p. 475). He writes, “from time immemorial, historical narration has simply picked out an object from this continuous succession. But it has done so without foundation . . . its first thought was then always to reinsert the object into the continuum . . .” (p. 475). Although he is talking about historical literature, and I am talking about curriculum, I think the following quote reveals an analogous characteristic between the two:

The contemporary who learns from books of history to recognize how long his present misery has been in preparation (and what the historian [teacher] must inwardly aim to show him) acquires thereby a high opinion of his own powers. A history [education] that provides this kind of instruction does not cause him sorrow, but arms him. (1940a/1999, p. 481).

This weaponry, such “critical momentum,” is indeed one of knowledge, the “destructive” knowledge that would “blast” or “explode” the continuum of history, which is to say, to provide the historical object such a form that it cannot be reinserted in the continuum. It is not simply a matter that it no longer supports the newly formed or historical object or that it doesn’t fit, but that the destructive character explodes the continuum, leaving only ruins for new constructions.

In a short essay published in 1931, “The Destructive Character,” Benjamin (1931/1999) writes, “The destructive character knows only one watchword: make room. And only one activity: clearing away. His need for fresh air and open space is stronger than any

hatred.” (p. 541). Indeed, Benjamin goes further to distance a sense of destruction that has acrimony as its source, “The destructive character is young and cheerful. For destroying rejuvenates, because it clears away the traces of our own age. . .” (p. 541). I will return to this attitude and possibilities of the destructive character later in this dissertation, but regarding history, “the destructive character has the consciousness of historical man . . . and a readiness at all times to recognize that everything can go wrong” (p. 542). What can go wrong? I believe in this essay we see the beginning of what Benjamin would later call the “Critical moment” which is when “the status quo threatens to be preserved” (1940a/1999, p. 474). In “Convolute N” he writes that “the destructive momentum in materialist historiography is to be conceived as the reaction to a constellation of dangers, which threatens both the burden of the tradition and those who receive it” (p. 475). The constellations of danger threaten this “destructive momentum” as every historical object possesses a revolutionary potential. He continues, “In reality, there is not one moment that does not carry its own revolutionary opportunity itself” (Benjamin as quoted in Tiedemann 1999, p. 944). If such potential is left untapped (as it almost always is) this is the moment of “catastrophe” which is “to have missed the opportunity” (1940a/1999, p. 474) for “a revolutionary chance in the fight for the oppressed [suppressed] past” (1940b/2003, p. 396; see also translators note no. 27 page 400).

The reaction to the constellation of dangers, that is, historical materialism, is also itself a threat to continuity and empathy, that is, to the yoke of tradition and its ability to harness the people. In “On the Concept of History,” he (1940b/2003) said,

Articulating the past historically does not mean recognizing it ‘the way it really was.’ It means appropriating a memory as it flashes up in a moment of danger. . . The danger threatens both the content of the tradition and those who inherit it. For both, it is one and the same thing: the danger of becoming a tool of the ruling classes. Every

age must strive anew to wrest tradition away from the conformism that is working to overpower it. (p. 391)

Regarding this moment of danger, Benjamin (1940b/2003) warns, “for it is an irretrievable image of the past which threatens to disappear in any present that does not recognize itself as intended in that image”(p. 391). His theory of historical materialism aims to seize the historical object as it appears in that moment of danger, that is, in the moment when it is about to be either forgotten, glossed over, or otherwise used as a tool of the ruling class to maintain the continuity of history and empathy with the victor. According to universal notions of history, if harm has been rendered to others, such instances are just unfortunate events in a continuum, a universal view of historical progress, as progressing toward something, whether it be a more perfect democratic humanism or the proletariat revolution or theologically described redemption. Also, this empathy might also be likened to the sympathy Jones (1999) describes as the reassurance sought by the dominant group that they are no longer implicated in any oppression that happened “back then.”

Grounded in a tradition dedicated to having theory inform action, Benjamin (1940a/1999) writes that the historical materialist “presentation of history as a goal to pass, as Engels put it, ‘beyond the sphere of thought’ (p. 475). As such, knowledge is put to practice in political action. His criticism of the Social Democratic Party in the Fuchs essay (1937/2002) lies in their failure to do so:

The Social Democrats opposed their own slogan, “Knowledge is Power,” to the slogan “Work and Education,” . . . But the Social Democrats did not perceive the double meaning of their own slogan. They believed that the same knowledge which secured the domination of the proletariat by the bourgeoisie would enable the proletariat to free itself from this domination. In reality, a form of knowledge which had no access to practice, and which could teach the proletariat nothing about its situation as a class, posed no danger to its oppressors. (p. 265)



Indeed, the very problem was that “class” was not a consideration in the educational effort, and much like in America today, the personal political situation of the given individual is neglected, even suppressed, by educational efforts aimed at a nebulous public. He writes,

Nor could a solution even be envisioned, so long as those to be educated were considered a “public” rather than a class. If the educational effort of the party had been directed toward the “class,” it would not have lost its close touch with the scientific tasks of historical materialism. (p. 264).

Regarding the situation of the Social Democrats, he lamented, “At that time, only a few people realized how much truly depended on the materialist educational effort” (p. 265), but the Social Democrats missed their opportunity.

*Back to the history (of the present)*

As “historical materialism conceives historical understanding as an afterlife of that which has been understood and whose pulse can be felt in the present” (1937/2002, p. 262), recognizing that pulse is imperative. In fact, recognizing or constructing the connections to the present is precisely the act that the historical materialist employs to blast the event from the continuum of history and its universal empathy: by recognizing “the constellation into which his own era has entered, along with a very specific earlier one” (1940b/2003, p. 397). These constellations can be seen as the expression of the relationship between past and present.

It’s not that what is past casts its light on what is present, or what is present its light on what is past; rather image is that where what has been comes together in a flash with the now to form a constellation. (1940a/1999, p. 462)

Just how these critical constellations are formed, specifically with “dialectical images” will be addressed more deliberately in chapters five and six. For now, I only want to emphasize that these constellations reveal the “claims” the past has on the present, and I now return to a quote I’ve already recalled:

Historicism presents the eternal image of the past, whereas historical materialism presents a given experience with the past—an experience that is unique. . . . To put to work an experience with history—a history that is originary for every present—is the task of historical materialism. The latter is directed toward a consciousness of the present which explodes the continuum of history. (1937/2002, p. 262; see also 1940b/2003, p. 396)

Originary to every present would in part, be defined by the students of any given class (both the group of classmates and the students social/political class). That alone would make each class unique, but there are several ways a given educative experience can be made unique. This means that the historical subject is connected to the students' present experiences, aiming for a "political" experience with the past and its relationship to the present.

As stated before, Benjamin's (1937/2002) complaint that the Social Democrats failed because "those to be educated were considered a 'public' rather than a class" (p. 265) points to the need (but missed) to politicize the educational effort, and in this case that would mean an economic (class) education. Benjamin complains that the socialist educational efforts at the turn of the century were "guided by the star of cultural history" and therefore failed to see the "destructive element" of a materialist pedagogical effort (p. 268). He writes, "Culture appears reified. The history of culture would be nothing but the sediment formed in the consciousness of human beings by memorable events, events stirred up in the memory by no genuine—that is to say political—experience." (pp. 267-268). Today, to experience something politically has to mean something more than to experience something as a class, though that certainly should be part of it. It must also be aware of other differences and heterogeneity, including gender, race, sexuality, ethnicity, etc. As such, I would propose a more holistic sense as expressed by the maxim, "The personal is political." Indeed, one might be tempted to take on the mantra, "Always politicize" which I would say means both a historical and economic critique. When Benjamin began imagining the "awakened

consciousness” he described in *The Arcades Project*, he called it a “Copernican revolution in historical perception” in which “politics attains primacy over history” (1940a/1999, pp. 388-389). And according to Rolf Tiedemann (1999), “Benjamin’s historical materialism can hardly be severed from political messianism” (p. 944).

*Let the dead rise . . . to testify!*

I would now like to conclude by returning to the work of Simon et al. and Benjamin’s notion of messianic redemption. Benjamin’s well-known description of a painting by Paul Klee begins to sketch the messianic and redemptive powers of the angel of history, and for my purposes, a historical materialist view of history. In it Benjamin describes the angel of history who has been caught up in the storm of progress, helpless against the continual catastrophe that is history.

There is a picture by Klee called *Angelus Novus*. It shows an angel who seems about to move away from something he stares at. His eyes are wide, his mouth is open, his wings are spread. This is how the angel of history must look. His face is turned toward the past. Where a chain of events appears before *us*, *he* sees one single catastrophe, which keeps piling wreckage upon wreckage and hurls it at his feet. The angel would like to stay, awaken the dead, and make whole what has been smashed. But a storm is blowing from Paradise and has got caught in his wings; it is so strong that the angel can no longer close them. This storm drives him irresistibly into the future, to which his back is turned, while the pile of debris before him grows toward the sky. What we call progress is *this* storm. (1940b/2003, p. 392)

In this image, Benjamin tells us that the angel of history would like to “awaken the dead” and I believe this is the messianic redemption he describes. Earlier in this essay he writes,

The Messiah comes not only as the redeemer; he comes as the victor over the Antichrist. The only historian capable of fanning the spark of hope in the past is the one who is firmly convinced that *even the dead* will not be safe from the enemy if he is victorious. And this enemy has never ceased to be victorious. (1940b/2003, p. 391)

“*Even the dead* will not be safe” from a universal history bound up in a notion of progress in which the stories of the dead, the alternative histories of the vanquished, if taken up at all,

merely become the tools of the oppressor, the Antichrist, or the present day rulers. In the very same sense that Benjamin complained that the education campaign of the Social Democrats failed because it told them nothing of their situation as a class, and was hence no threat to the ruling class because such knowledge gave them no access to praxis, even the inclusion of alternative histories in history classrooms does not necessarily redeem them, and furthermore, less often it is victorious over the Antichrist, depending on how one interprets that.

Regarding the educational efforts to redeem the dead (that is to go beyond mere inclusion of alternative histories), “remembrance” as described by Simon, Rosenberg, and Eppert (2000), serves as an attempt at such redemption. Remembrance is described as both a “*strategic practice*” and a “*difficult return*” (p. 3), and the “issue in both . . . is how the relation between the living and the dead is configured and enacted” (p. 5). On the one hand, as a “strategic practice, remembrance is aligned with the anticipation of a reconciled future in which one hopes that justice and harmonious social relations might be secured” (p. 4). Echoing the horror Benjamin addresses, they add that such practice “is a hope that anxiously attends to a horrific past in expectation of the promise that . . . there will be a better tomorrow” (p. 4). On the other hand, “remembrance is enacted as a *difficult return*, a psychic and social responsibility to bring the dead into presence . . .” (Simon, Rosenberg, & Eppert 2000, p. 3), and, quoting Derrida, “‘learning to live with ghosts’” (cited in Simon, Rosenberg, & Eppert 2000, p. 8). Likewise, Benjamin (1940a/1999) writes, “The historian is the herald who invites the dead to the table” (p. 481). However, what makes this return “difficult” is “how to live with what cannot be redeemed, what must remain a psychic and social wound that bleeds” (Simon, Rosenberg, & Eppert 2000, p. 5), and too, the difficult

knowledge found when students attempt to face the *nachträglichkeit* of their present deferred from the past.

Also echoing the sentiments of Benjamin, remembrance as both a “strategic practice” and a “difficult return” are aligned with notions of continuity and discontinuity. However, Simon’s (2000) chapter addresses these considerations more deliberately, and as mentioned before, he is describing the Jewish notion of *zakhor* which addresses the listener “with its demand: remember” (p. 11). However, Simon presents the “paradoxical practice of *zakhor*” which “must forever negotiate the tension between, on the one hand, providing a sense of continuity and confirmation, while, on the other hand, renewing the significance of memory through making evident a cited past’s discontinuity with immediate existence” (p. 11). As such “remembrance as continuity and confirmation” refers to the practice and tradition of building historical memory, especially through repeating established texts. However, this usually implies a certain “allegiance” among groups that are connected by these “emotionally charged identifications with narratives and symbols” and “specific memories” of various “groups, be they families, communities, or nations” (p. 12). Noting the differences that may be present in a classroom, he seeks the “points of connection” that calls “one to an imaginative affinity. . . [and] evoking forms of empathetic identification” hoping to create a “community of memory” (p. 12). While continuity seeks connections with “similar elements of one’s own experience,” discontinuity, on the other hand, addresses how “the memories of others [are] ‘remembered’” in a way that “that unsettles and destabilizes” and “disrupts” one’s “own past and present” (p. 13). He claims that “remembrance becomes a practice that supports a learning from ‘the past’ that is a fresh cognizance or discovery that unsettles the very terms on which our understandings of ourselves and our world are based” (p. 13).

While he does note some of the risks involved in this curriculum, Simon thinks such stories, at best, can create spaces of learning that “disrupt the present, opening one to new ways of perceiving, thinking, and acting” (p. 13).

### *Judgment Day*

Simon describes the interrelationship between testimony and witness. As such he writes, “testimony is always directed toward, indeed requires, witnesses” which he then defines as “those prepared to accept the obligation of reading, viewing listening, and subsequently responding to an embodied singular experience not recognizable as one’s own” (p. 18). What is interesting is the responsibility called forth regarding the witness, but he says very little about how students may respond to such charges. Regardless, this seems to resonate with another quote from Benjamin.

Of course only a redeemed mankind is granted the fullness of its past—which is to say, only for a redeemed mankind has its past become citable in all its moments. Each moment it has lived becomes a *citation à l’ordre du jour*. And that day is Judgment Day. (1940b/2003, p. 390)

The *citation à l’ordre du jour* is described by the editors as “a citation to be taken up as (part of) the business day,” or “a citation of pressing concern at a given moment” (1940b/2003, p. 398n), which, for me, seems to connote an official summons or at least, an official agenda to hear the testimony or address an issue. But it seems Benjamin (1940a/1999) can’t resist the theological language, as he writes elsewhere “. . . in remembrance we have an experience that forbids us to conceive of history as fundamentally atheological, little as it may be granted us to try to write it with immediately theological concepts” (p. 471). Again, I do not intend on entering the debate on whether Benjamin’s use of theological concepts was a lingering religious mysticism or simply allegorical language of a dialectical investigation. Such allegorical language has new, and sometimes frightening resonances in today’s world,

when discussions of “end times” and notions of the impending “apocalypse” are not uncommon in many circles, as the popularity of the *Left Behind* series indicates.

Even if it can be said that Benjamin was attempting to develop a class-based ethos that is, perhaps, not appropriate for our historical moment, and he is addressing a different form of fascism than exists today, what is applicable, it seems to me, is that the history presented in many history books and classrooms represent America in a similarly progressive and universal fashion as an exemplar nation, embodying the highest representative of human evolution, and furthermore, if alternative histories are present at all, they all-too-often result in tokenism, assimilation, or progressive universalism. Furthermore, regardless of the differences between the two historical moments (Benjamin’s and ours), his message that “Every age must strive anew to wrest tradition away from the conformism that is working to overpower it” (1940b/2003, p. 391) seems relevant to our current age. Traditional education, as bound up with notions of American exceptionalism, still overpowers any attempt at a radical transformation of the historical conditions, even more so in the test-driven economy of education. Furthermore, those textbooks that do address notions of causality often do so in very linear and one-dimensional ways, particularly through the use of timelines, or in Benjamin’s terms, “to tell the sequence of events like the beads of a rosary” (1940b/2003, p. 397).

Still, it would seem that fascism does exist in America, and much of it exists in the history of manifest destiny, and American exceptionalism and U.S. pride. As Huey Long once said “When Fascism comes to America, it will be draped in an American flag.” Furthermore, the notion of “manifest destiny” is a perfect example of how something is often taught in schools to the effect of empathy and progress in that it is taught as something that

occurred “back then” and has no relationship to present day forms of imperialism and expansion. In other words, it is taught as though it has no bearing on the rulership in today’s world; it is given no claim on the present, but presented solely as a condition of history. Furthermore, it is taught in a way that usually produces history as list of facts, and not contributing to the historical memory as a “public pedagogy of remembrance, a decidedly socially inflected repetition, or better, a rearticulation of past invents through which [participants] incur a responsibility” in the present (Simon 2000, p. 9). Simon calls on educative projects that people’s “stories are meant to fill in details and provide the human dimension of history through images that mobilize a complex of thought and feeling, making transparent an account’s intertwined personal and historical significance” (p. 17). I believe this also gives a “unique” experience with the past, particularly when the stories of the students themselves, and relating back to the theme of this dissertation, these stories fill in the “memorial landscape” a class traverses (p. 9).

### *Paint it black*

However, I must also note that there are notable differences between Dewey and Benjamin (and myself). For example, I agree with the following passage of Dewey’s:

An intelligent study of the discovery, explorations, colonization of America, of the pioneer movement westward, of immigration, etc., should be study of the United States as it is to-day: of the country we now live in. (p. 214)

It should be acknowledged that Dewey and Benjamin (and I) would no doubt go about such a study very differently. While Dewey skirts a pseudomaterialist description of mans’ relation with nature, it is clear that when he says, “Economic history deals with the activities, the career, and fortunes of the common man as does no other branch of history” (p. 215) this is not a call for a historical materialist perspective. This is even more evident when he writes,



Economic history is more human, more democratic, and hence more liberalizing than political history. It deals not with the rise and fall of principalities and powers, but with the growth of the effective liberties, through command of nature, of the common man for whom powers and principalities exist. (pp. 215-216)

Almost every word in this statement strikes against a history of class struggle; against economic history has being largely dehumanizing; against a view of economics that is the antithesis of being more “liberalizing than political history;” against a notion of “politicizing history” that necessarily includes an economic critique that emphasizes the inextricable interconnectedness between “the rise and fall of principalities and powers” and economics and the individuals place in that situation; and finally, against a notion that the “command of nature” is inherently linked to the alienation of man from both nature and himself. As such it is totally incongruent with Benjamin and Debord. But as stated earlier, I have not professed offering an orthodox vision of education that is attached to any one theorists whom I reference, be it Pinar, Dewey, Debord, or Benjamin.

Another distinction can be seen in Dewey’s description of using biographies to help teach history. In a language that betrays his conservatism, Dewey writes,

The biographical method is generally recommended as the natural mode of approach to history. The lives of great men, of heroes and leaders, make concrete and vital historic episodes otherwise abstract and incomprehensible. They condense into vivid pictures complicated and tangled series of events spread over so much space and time that only a highly trained mind can follow and unravel them. (p. 214)

While Dewey does admit that biographies, and one might include autobiographies, are “misused” when throwing such stories of great “men” into “exaggerate relief” compared to the “social situations which they represent” (p. 214). I think it is clear this is not a call for “alternative histories.” And when he suggests that such stories amount to a “sugar coating,” it is not a sugar coating to sweeten “what hurts” in history, but that which “makes it easier to swallow certain fragments of information” (p. 214). Still Dewey’s use of stories amount to

more than a cure for tedium, or at best, the vitalizing thread that stitches together those “tangled series of events spread over so much space and time.” Nonetheless, this is very different from any sort of history “against the grain,” that might intentionally be critical of those “great men,” or raise alternative women and men and children up in their stead, and it is even further away from a notion of studying “historical trauma” and “testimony.”

However, Dewey did mention the failures of history as well as the successes, and I would also take a cue from Dewey (and I think Pinar would agree with this) that we cannot take history and paint it black. Even if such a color is often appropriate, there’s little to be gained by depressing or angering students, even though there is veritable evidence in history that should naturally arouse those feelings in people. Perhaps some conversations deserve to be hostile. But it isn’t the duty of the teacher to intentionally provoke those in students. Let the dead speak for the dead; they have plenty to say that might arouse both anger and excitement, as well as sadness and joy.

### *Ghosts’ stories*

There seem to be two paramount aspects to this. The first must be the stories of affirmation of life, and human spirit, compassion in the midst of cruelty, particularly those that stress that individual acts do matter. Second, because the reality of history is that there are stories that should incite sadness or anger in students, and not just in stories that take place “back then,” but in recent history as well as the present. When this is the case, then it is up to the teacher to provide a proper outlet, expression, and perhaps recourse or action based on those feelings. All of which, I believe, lends itself to Pinar’s use of autobiography, both of the students as well as historical subjects. This may mean that the assignments are for students to carry on a dialogue with such people, seeking out the answers to their

questions in the written tales of historical figures. It also means that we ask the dead to speak, and that we listen to the stories of ghosts. But more particularly it means students' use autobiography to connect their life histories to broader historical events and social (political) considerations, and in chapter six, these stories will not only be situated in the lives of students, but also place.

As much as I agree with what I've taken from Benjamin, that as educators we cannot overlook the horror of our past, our nation's, our community's, perhaps our family's, I also argue that history cannot solely address "what hurts" or the negative side of history, as both Pinar and Dewey both attest. While there are events in our history that remain traumatic and proper healing and reconciliation cannot take place until we address these events, hear the testimony and take on the responsibility of a witness, there are also stories of affirmation, achievements, and overcoming that must also be included in historical research, especially with students. And I would like to say that this expression or action would ideally lead to "communication," "reconciliation," "redemption," "transformation," "transcendence," or "liberation," though I do not think we can assume these will occur. Alas, as Deborah Britzman writes, "sometimes the story cannot end," and as Ellworth, Jones, and others have rightly said, sometimes communications breakdown, misses occur, there are fractures and gaps in understanding. Sometimes those breaks can be instructive in-and-of themselves. But for many grander notions of messianic culmination or revolutionary realizations are impossible at best, and at the worst, misguided. And finally, none of this is to argue that students should not learn the main topics of history, but this is addressing how those topics are learned, and following the next chapter, this dissertation will explore the "how" and in doing so, will revisit many of the topics previously covered. But the next chapter first looks

at the contemporary age, as well as contemporary students, for while Benjamin was prescient—arguably prophetic—of many of the upcoming advances of late capitalism, he did not quite foresee the “Society of the Spectacle” or the totality of globalization.

**CHAPTER 4**  
**THE POVERTY OF STUDENT LIFE:**  
**THE SPECTACLE AND YOUTH CONSUMPTION**

The real poverty of student everyday life finds its immediate, fantastic compensation in the opium of cultural commodities.

The Situationist International, "On the Poverty of Student Life"

The spectacle has spread itself to the point where it now permeates all reality. . . the globalisation of the false was also the falsification of the globe.

Guy Debord, *Comments on the Society of the Spectacle*

*The Disenchantment of the world*

The 1700s witnessed the Enlightenment and the beginnings of Industrialization as well as the U.S. Revolution and the first of the French Revolutions. In 1792, a few years after the storming of the Bastille, the *sans-culottes* stormed the Tuileries Palace. Then came the Terror. Then came Napoleon, and another form of terror, after which a limited monarchy was restored in France. The 1820s and 30s witnessed numerous revolutions all over Europe, including France again in July, 1830. In 1848 and 1849, again Europe experienced numerous major revolutions, and dozens of smaller ones from Paris to Vienna and from Rome to Berlin. There were also numerous peaceful reforms and a general optimism regarding the future of human liberties, including the rights of women. A proliferation of social tracts and theories propagated among the people, for one, the work of Karl Marx. Darwin was also writing and a little later, Nietzsche. In France, there were significant power shifts, and after the Franco Prussian War, on March 18, the communards barricaded the streets in the Paris Commune of 1871. Unification under the Second Empire in Germany was aided by an economic boon in the late 1800s, and Berlin became a major economic and cultural hub in

Europe. A so-called second industrialization accelerated economic growth, and Europe entered a time of prosperity which brought along the expansion of the middle class, and excepting the various groups of malcontents, human progress appeared to be an unstoppable steam engine on the right track. Then the first of the “world” wars would ravage Europe. On February 5, 1916, Hugo Ball, Emmy Hennings, Hans Arp, Tristan Tzara, Marcel Janco and Richard Huelsenbeck, a group of dissenters and refugees gathered in Zurich to perform at the Cabaret Voltaire, and Dada was born. In 1918 Max Weber claimed that the “fate of our times is characterized by . . . above all, by the ‘disenchantment of the world’” (Weber 1918/1996).

For most countries in Europe economic recovery followed soon after the war and what were once distinct class lines, in addition to other categorical delineations, become more complex and less discernible. The rise of new forms of mass media meant a larger and more heterogenous public had a growing role in cultural production. Such populist influence and burgeoning forms of democracy created illusions of social stability and autonomy when in fact, soon to come were cataclysmic shifts in authority by means of violent overthrows and despotic seizures of power. Concepts such as alienation and mass culture continued to be examined as objects of theoretical and literary critique. Franz Kafka wrote *The Trial* and later, Sigmund Freud would write *Civilization and its Discontents*, and in 1929, José Ortega y Gasset wrote *Revolt of the Masses*. “The Great Depression” in the U.S. triggered economic problems in Europe which contributed to more political upheavals in areas that were already politically unstable, and consequently, the second, and even more catastrophic “world” war erupted. Again, it would not be long after the war before much of Europe, and certainly the United States, would enjoy a widespread economic recovery. Furthermore, profound technological development offered large numbers of people unprecedented access to an increasingly affluent standard of living. And again the rise of more democratic forms of government complemented by the substantial economic growth—again expanding the middle class—produced a renewed faith in human progress. In most industrialized and democratic

nations, more people were experiencing more security, more education, more opportunities, more material luxuries, more leisure, and more freedoms than ever before. To many, capitalism was a shining success. But for others, while material wealth appeared to be more widespread, this was nonetheless accomplished by oppressive forms of domination and inherently inequitable institutions, and for others it was also accompanied by a greater psychological and spiritual poverty.

*And now the SI*

Among the avant-garde groups cropping up in Europe during the middle of the twentieth century, a few of them combined in 1957 to form the Situationist International (SI). For twelve years this organization published the Paris-based journal *Internationale Situationiste* and disseminated other publications, books, pamphlets, movies, and graffiti before finally disbanding in 1972. They reached their height of popularity due to their role in the May '68 worker and student revolts in France. In its early, more aesthetically oriented stage, the SI was, in part, a reaction to Dada and Surrealism, but their impetus soon turned more overtly political, developing into an incisive critique of modern capitalism. They championed radical methods of agitation to promote their revolutionary goals as idealistic, and perhaps unrealistic, as they were. Their theory, protected for years in fear of assimilation, iconism or dogmatism, nonetheless continues to resurface in academic circles, usually in art history, media and cultural studies or political and social theory. Fifty years later, their critique has stood the test of time, and it is finally beginning to trickle into education discourses. They did write on student life and their critique certainly has an implicit pedagogy. The following chapter will contextualize the SI in history and in theory, and then go on to explore their critique of alienation, materialism and the loss of history, and the implications of aspects for educators. It should be noted that because of their aggressive, sometimes belligerent and violent tactics, their association with public schools requires some prudence.

While their noted ambitiousness betrayed the brashness (and perhaps potential) of youth, most of the theory generated within their critique reveals an insightful understanding of modern society. Not only has this influenced many contemporary critical theorists, much of it is still relevant today. Indeed, it may be even more indispensable now than ever as the conditions they describe (particularly Debord) have only exacerbated over the last five decades. Generally, the SI articulate a vociferous anger at the ignominies of modern capitalism and a profound belief that a better way is possible. They also have a rather active history of attempts to reveal both these ignominies as well as the possibilities of change to large numbers of people. Acknowledging their idealism, educators are behooved to learn their theory as it still offers insight to our modern era. There is an educational message as one of their stated goals is “setting autonomous people loose in the world” (Knabb<sup>4</sup> 1981, p. 140). For those educators who yet have the “audacity of hope” and for those who still imagine the students of today have some ability to affect, even determine the future instead of being assimilated by it, the theory of the SI offers tactics that not only attempt to reveal what is, but also advance the imagination and creation of what could be. There are at least two considerations that the critique of the spectacle raises for educators in addition to the material they wrote on student life. The first is the spectacle’s mediation of everyday life through images and acts of consumption and the second is the loss of history.

#### *A love story*

In his book, *Guy Debord*, Anselm Jappe (1999) examines the history of French Marxism noting that socialism in France was “traditionally less Marxist than elsewhere,” and that early incorporations of Marx were either along the French Communist Party line—a cursory economic determinism—or various hybrids combined with the theory of the then-contemporary thinkers. Jappe also suggests that “the humanist and historicist Marxism of Sartre presents not a few parallels with the Situationist ideas, even though the Situationists

---

<sup>4</sup> Many of the SI’s articles were unsigned, and have been translated and compiled in the anthology edited by Ken Knabb (1981).



“expressed the greatest contempt for Sartre” (p. 127). Steven Best (1994) writes a notable article locating the theory of the SI in history and particularly in relation to other cultural Marxist such as Georg Lukács, Henri Lefebvre, Antonio Gramsci, and some of those associated with the Frankfurt school. He then goes on to illustrate the correlations and differences between Debord’s *society of the spectacle* and Jean Baudrillard’s *hyperreality*. Debord was certainly openly pessimistic, especially later in his life, and always hostile toward misconceptions of his work, despite his insistence that there was no dogma, but he never arrived at the fatalism Baudrillard does. While Debord wrote of the totality of the spectacle, he refused to accept impossibility of social change (Plant 1992; Best, 1994; Jappe, 1999). He furthermore led a fairly active life attempting to instigate that change.

After Marx, there were two theorists (and two particular texts) that heavily influenced Debord and the Situationists: Georg Lukács (*History of Class Consciousness*) and Henri Lefebvre (*Critique of Everyday Life I*). Debord would have only read Lukács, but he became friends with Lefebvre before an eventual falling out, or as Lefebvre describes it: “a love story that didn’t end well” (Jappe 1999, p. 74). For a while Lefebvre was a prominent member of the communist party and the first professor of Marxism in the French University system. He had past ties to both Dada and Surrealism, having known Tristan Tzara, Andre Breton and several others associated with the two movements. He shared with the Situationists similar ideas, particularly the idea of locating social transformation at the activity of everyday life. Lefebvre’s reputation as a heretic no doubt also contributed to his attractiveness to the Situationists, who were very critical of most academics. The public rivalry between Debord and Lefebvre, typical for the SI’s tradition of contestation, occurred after claims of plagiarism on a piece of work that Lefebvre published on the Paris Commune. Such claims are odd considering the SI openly engaged and encouraged such activity. They quoted Comte de Lautrémont (Isidore Ducasse) as their influence for such action: “‘Ideas improve,’ said Lautrémont, ‘The meaning of words participates in the improvement. Plagiarism is necessary. Progress implies it.’” (Knabb 1981, p.171). This was a necessary part of their

project as many of their writings, especially Debord's book and movie, *The Society of the Spectacle*, were quotes and paraphrases of earlier writers pasted together along with original commentary. Perhaps they just wanted the attribution, but regardless, the influence of Lefebvre's tutelage and writing is enormous, although many would argue that the influence was really a two way street, and that no small part of what Lefebvre was publishing at the time were the results of collective discussions he was having with the SI, and particularly Debord (see Plant, 1992, pp. 63-64; Shields, 1998, p. 91-92).

#### *People who talk about revolution*

In his book, *The Society of the Spectacle*, first published in 1967, Debord (1998) formally revealed the theoretical constructs of his critique of modern society and the alienation that it produces. He defined modern society as a spectacle in which individuals are portrayed as spectators of their own lives, experiencing even the most intimate of gestures as observers as opposed to active participants. The SI argued modern capitalist society was inundated by an alienation so ubiquitous that it supercedes all areas of one's lived experience including the emotions, creativity, and desires a person has. As Sadie Plant (1992) describes

the Situationists argued that these alienated relations of production are now disseminated throughout capitalist society. Leisure, culture, art, information, entertainment, knowledge, the most personal and radical of gestures, and every conceivable aspect of life is reproduced as a commodity: packaged, and sold back to the consumer. (p. 11)

This sounds like a rather grand and inescapable totality, but Plant does point out that

the Situationists argued that although the ubiquity of alienated relations does indeed make them increasingly difficult to contradict, it is always possible to identify some point of contrast or opposition to them. The desires, imaginings, and pleasures of the individual can never be completely eradicated. (p. 12)

Their optimism, however fatal, is illustrated by some of their slogans such as, "We have but a single choice: suicide or revolution."

Whether they were spray painted on a wall, printed on posters, or in publications and other forms of propaganda, and with a particular flare for agitation, they were fond of saying

things like “we have a world of pleasure to win, and nothing to lose but boredom” or “down with a world that the only guarantee that we don’t die of starvation has been purchased with the guarantee that we will die of boredom.” Others include:

After God, Art is Dead; Don’t change the employers, Change the employment of life; People who talk about revolution and class struggle without referring explicitly to everyday life, without understanding what is subversive about love and positive about the refusal of constraints, such people have corpses in their mouths; The more you consume, the less you live; Think globally, Act locally; Under the paving stones, the beach! (qtd. in Plant, 1992, p. 75; Vaneigem, 1994 p. 279; Marcus, 1989, p. 31).

Taking their cue from Dada, there certainly was a level of shock value as well as a negating element, and these should be reconsidered in an era in which media shock effect and sensationalism is part and parcel to the modern day spectacle, and in which image dominates the word. Furthermore, in today’s political environment and specifically the mounting criticism regarding the “failure of the left,” one argument is that the right has been successful in making more political progress because of their use of jingoism and catchphrases. Many on the left often balk at such tactics, complaining that the issues are much more complicated than that and they refuse to join in such undignified banter with political pundits and spin doctors. Freire condemns sloganization, and critics such as Giroux (1992) and Lather (1996) have eloquently and rightly defended the use of complicated language. There is no doubt that catchphrases and political platitudes only oversimplify complicated issues, but there might be something to be learned from the SI (and the right). While certainly the density of their essays revealed a level of complexity, the SI still believed that the right phrase or slogan did have a power to awaken people, or perhaps better put, to begin (not replace) the necessary conversation.

#### *Bureaucracy of controlled consumption*

It is necessary to explore this concept of alienation in more depth, and particularly in what it means to the spectacle, and then finally, what that means for students and educators. Beginning with the presuppositions of Marx—namely that in capitalism there exist economic

imperatives at work that necessarily mean the economy has superceded its human producers and runs according to itself, and thus humans (and human relations) are now subjugated to it—the SI believed organic social relations tied to a notion of community are alienated in a social order determined by the political economy. This means that as the economy becomes independent, humans, in a wide variety of degrees, become its subjects, allowing (perhaps) for some relative autonomy for a few. Some would scoff at such a totalizing statement but Fredric Jameson (2000) states rather candidly the clarity of this claim.

Let us be serious: anyone who believes that the profit motive and the logic of capital accumulation are not the fundamental laws of this world, who believes that these do not set absolute barriers and limits to social changes and transformation undertaken in it—such a person is living in an alternative universe. (p. 284)

It seems obvious to many that the political economy concretely and materially dictates a great deal of the experiences of the everyday life of most people, if only in the number of hours people work every week. People in the U.S., it is worth mentioning, work more hours than in any other industrialized country (see Schor 1992).

It should also be noted that this economic subjugation occurs and combines with other social forces and factors including one's gender, race, region, religion, etc. Denying a pure economic determinism, such a critique only insists in the recognition of economic factors, along with others, that greatly affect both the positionality and identity of any individual as well as the limits and capacity of one's political activity (or inactivity) and social mobility. The hierarchy of labor was much more distinct in earlier times, and it isn't any wonder Marx wrote so much on the alienation of the labor. Alienation for Marx, occurred on three levels: work, relations with others, and themselves. At work, it was because the laborer was a mere "appendage to an iron machine." Assembly line style of work made workers only a tool in the process, unconnected with the product that was

produced, as the worker might only have a small role in the production. Additionally, capitalism means the economy supersedes its human producers as it subjugates people to it, but also to each other as it produces social relations between individuals and ultimately between humans and themselves. As such alienation is always about separation, from humans with each other, from their work and life, and from themselves.

Additionally, the commodity becomes fetishized as the labor involved to make it becomes abstract and the commodity itself takes on relations and meanings beyond its use and intended purpose, including symbolic powers (for example, status). As stated before, such alienation also occurs in human relations in which similar abstractions dominate the activity of humans in the social order, now divorced from organic social relationships, as these processes and relations become objectified by a capitalist society. Georg Lukács described this as reification, whereby objects, people, and inter-personal relations take on this fetishized life becoming rationally objectified and “Taylorized” in a system of meaning and value above and beyond (abstracted) the material production, from use value, or organic social needs. Instead they are products of a rational bureaucracy of values in which human activity and commodity exchange becomes instrumentalized according to various capitalist relations and quantification that may be irrelevant or contradictory to “natural” social relations. The SI believed that consumption, not production, was now the driving force that creates this subjugation, alienation, and reification, or as Lefebvre described it, “a bureaucratic society of controlled consumption” (Lefebvre 1947/1991).

*Capital accumulated to the point where it becomes image*

The SI’s critique, along with some other neo-Marxists, argues that production no longer was the basis of social order, but has been replaced by consumption. Best describes it

as the point when “commodity production becomes the purpose of society and maximization of profit is the purpose of commodity production” (Best, 1994 p. 43). This does not take production out of the equation, nor the alienation inherent to it, but having colonized the territory of production completely, alienation has now occupied the spaces of consumption and leisure. It could be said that just as Lukács combined,

Marx’s concept of commodity fetishism with the Hegelian concept of objectification to produce a theory of reification as the contemporary capitalist form of alienation of human subjectivity. . . . Debord, reading Lukács many decades later, was able to relate Lukács’s theory of reification of labor in the commodity to the appearance of consumerism in the long postwar boom of Keynesian capitalism . . . [and] as Lukács was writing during the first period of Fordism, that of standardization and mass production, so Debord was writing in the second, that of variety marketing and mass consumption. (Wollen, 1989, p. 31)

In the opening line of *The Society of the Spectacle* Debord (1967/1998) states, “The whole life of those societies in which modern conditions of production prevail presents itself as an immense accumulation of spectacles” (p. 12). As Jappe (1993/1999) points out, this is a *détourned*, or altered, version of Marx’s opening line *Capital*, as is another one of the more poignant definitions of the spectacle<sup>5</sup>, “The spectacle is not a collection of images; rather, it is a social relationship between people that is mediated by images” (Debord 1967/1998, p. 12). Jappe (1993/1999) describes it thus, just as with Marx, “money accumulated beyond a certain threshold is transformed to capital; according to Debord, capital accumulated beyond a certain threshold is transformed into images” (p. 19). Or as Debord’s (1967/1998) puts writes more deliberately, “The spectacle is capital accumulated to the point where it becomes image” (p. 24). The spectacle is another level of abstraction. Indeed, according to Jappe (1993/1999) the spectacle is the “highest form of abstraction” to the extent that it is “a visualization of the abstract link that exchange establishes between individuals, just as for

---

<sup>5</sup> See Marx (1867/1978) “The wealth of those societies in which the capitalist mode of productions prevails, presents itself as an immense accumulation of commodities” p. 302 and “capital is not a thing, but a social relation between person which is mediated through things” in Jappe (1993/1999, p. 19).

Marx, money was the materialization of that link” (p. 19). Or as Best describes it “Within the abstract society of the spectacle, the image becomes the highest form of commodity reification” (Best 1994, p. 49).

In her book, *Born to buy: The Commercialized Child and the New Consumer Culture*, Juliet Schor (2004) describes various aspects of youth consumer culture. Schor’s book is just one of numerous other books that make similar arguments about materialism and commercial culture are widespread in American culture to various deleterious effects (e.g., Wright 1997; Kilbourne 1999; Lasn 1999; Klein 2000/2002). More than mere subjugation to the economy and the alienation of labor and subsequent human relations produced, which could be said of historical situations other than modern capitalism, the Situationists described and decried contemporary life as a process of social alienation produced by an everyday life centered around commodification and consumption. Debord (1967/1998) wrote,

The spectacle corresponds to the historical moment at which the commodity completes its colonization of social life. It is not just that the relationship to commodities is now plain to see—commodities are now all that there is to see; the world we see is the world of the commodity (p. 29).

Indeed, marketers certainly try to attain such a goal. Schor (2004) reports that one marketing agent who works in the “buzz unit” of a large marketing firm says that they attempt to create a “‘360-degree world’ in which the consumer is ‘constantly bombarded.’ The agency uses the somewhat more delicate term ‘infinite consumer touchpoint possibilities” (p. 75). By a colonization Debord means that the commodity, or the production and consumption of it, regulates the use of time (work and leisure), place and material, as well as thought and behavior, as it also creates material and semiotic (ideological) currencies and hierarchies, and otherwise corresponds to the moment when the “political economy established itself as at once the dominant science and the sciences of domination” (p. 29) Put succinctly, the SI wrote “Everything is said about this society except what it really is: a society dominated by the *commodity* and the *spectacle*” (Knabb 1981, p. 319)

*Tween Spirit*

Such consumption is very evident in the youth as it has been growing rapidly over the last few decades. Children from four to twelve years old spent \$6.1 billion in 1989. In 1997 they spent \$23.4 billion, and \$30 billion in 2002 which amounts to an increase of 400 percent. Those aged twelve to nineteen spend considerably more. In 2002 their personal spending amounted to \$170 billion (Schor 2004, p. 23). Children are also becoming shoppers at earlier ages, and then there's what the industry calls the "influence market," which refers to the influence children have on many parental purchases. "[James] McNeal estimates that children aged four to twelve directly influenced \$330 billion of adult purchasing in 2004 and 'evoked' another \$340 billion. . . Global estimates for tween influence topped \$1 trillion in 2002" (p. 23). According to Juliet Schor, this influence is why there are Ford and Embassy Suites commercials on Nickelodeon. She notes there are various reasons for the rise of such influence (20 percent a year according to one of her sources). She suggests changes in parenting styles have explicitly turned over more purchasing decisions to kids. Unlike past generations in which parents made most purchasing decisions with less child influence (where mom and dad know what's best), today less authoritative parents evoke their children's consumer desires as a matter of choice or "learning opportunities." Children's choices are being elicited at earlier ages as children are more often choosing their own clothing and food, often in the form of fast food, snacks, and candy.

There is something called "guilt money," which is a term marketers have for those purchases made by parents who have less time to spend with their children so they compensate with toys and other purchases. Furthermore, the less time parents have in general, the less time they have to "cajole kids to eat products they don't like or to return rejected purchases to stores" (Schor 2004, p. 25). Then, of course, there is the "nag factor." One report Schor quotes suggests that only thirteen percent of parents are resistant to the nag factor and one 2002 poll has seventy-one percent of twelve to thirteen year olds admitting they will repeat their request for an item after their parents say no. "The average number of asks is about eight, but over a quarter of kids ask more than ten times" and half of them



report they are usually successful in getting the product (p. 62). Finally, kids today are also extremely technologically savvy and brand oriented, and many parents now believe that their children “know what’s best,” or at least, more informed, regarding product and brand selection (pp. 23-25).

According to Schor, one of the more injurious aspects of the commercialization of youth culture is the increasing “age compression” in American youth. The phrase denotes the practice of marketing messages and products designed for older kids to younger ones, and is exemplified by the tween market. “Twens are in between teens and children and tweening consists mainly of bringing teen products and entertainment to ever-younger audiences” (2004, p. 56). Furthermore, “Nowhere is age compression more evident than among the eight- to twelve-year-old target. Originally a strategy for selling to ten to thirteen year olds, children as young as six are being targeted for tweening . . .”(2004, p. 56). Much like the toddler stage (now a ‘given’ stage of child development, it was popularized by department stores in the 1930s), the tween is a fabrication of marketers not child psychologists. The SI had already recognized that “‘Youth’ is a publicity myth profoundly linked to the capitalist mode of production” (Knabb 1981, p. 326), and moreover that “more and more young people are . . . subjected to blunt, undisguised exploitation at the earliest age. . .” (p. 320). According to Schor (2004),

Children have become conduits from the consumer marketplace into the household, the link between advertisers and the family purse. . . They are the first adopters and avid users of many of the new technologies. They are the household members with the most passionate consumer desires, and are most closely tethered to products, brands, and the latest social trends. Children’s social worlds are increasingly constructed around consuming, as brands and products have come to determine who is “in” or “out,” who is hot or not, who deserves to have friends, or social status. (Schor 2004, p. 11)

Furthermore, whereas advertising marketers used to target the mothers to sell products for children, today they take deliberate and concerted aim at children who then pressure parents to buy the products they desire.

### *Emotional branding*

According to James McNeal, who Schor (2004) defines as “the nation’s most influential estimator of the size of the children’s market,” total advertising and marketing expenditures directed at children reached \$15 billion in 2004 (p. 21). Annual conferences for tween and teen marketers abound, segmenting and targeting various categorical populations. There is no attempt to veil the predatory nature of these meetings with workshops titled, “Emotional Branding: Maximizing the Appeal of Your Brand to Hispanic Youth” and “Purchasing Power: Capturing Your Share of the Tween Wallet” (p.21). Schor investigates the predatory nature of the marketing industry describing the marketers’ ability to naturalize consumer desire, their rapacious, often unethical attitude, and the deleterious effects of advertising. There is a certain element of conspiracy to their tactics with aggressive strategies the industry members themselves call “viral and stealth techniques,” which include creating a buzz about products and otherwise getting “under the radar” to an increasingly savvy and cynical consumer. Paradoxically, the more people seem to mistrust advertising the more ways marketers find to win us over. Schemes to create a buzz or conduct research on trends have begun to use extraordinarily elaborate and often ethically questionable means to their capitalist ends. Word of mouth is more credible than advertising and companies are using clients as salespersons themselves whether by planting people in public places and the Internet to rave about products or through product endorsement campaigns. For example, the Girls Intelligence Agency (GIA) recruits girls from ages six to eighteen to become GIA “agents” and one tactic is to have them host a “slumber party in a box.” An agent, a girl deemed to be the alpha type (this type is sought out routinely by marketing firms) is recruited to host a slumber party in which the products of a GIA client are presented and feedback is recorded., (Schor 2004, p. 76; also see [www.girlsintelligenceagency.com](http://www.girlsintelligenceagency.com)).

In an interview with Schor (2004), one marketer deeply embedded in the industry confessed to her, “I am doing the most horrible thing in the world. We are targeting kids too young with too many inappropriate things” (pp. 57-58). According to Schor, the child

marketing industry is mired in developmental psychology models and unable to see that “the naturalization of consumer desires has been codified into a set of timeless emotional needs all children are believed to process” and “standard practice consists of matching those universal needs to particular products” (p. 44). These needs are “defined similarly throughout” the marketing industry and the first is gender differentiation. At the same time the marketers are attempting to make their products appeal to gender differences and qualities, they are, of course recreating those, and often in stereotypical ways. “Boys want action, and they want to succeed. By contrast, girls are thought to want glamour” (p. 45). Also of note, any product that is considered unisex is most often marketed with boys in the advertisements because there is a hesitancy for boys to purchase products they believe are feminine. Success and mastery are other needs that are generally attached to child products as well as love. Sometimes fear is also used but perhaps one of the most insidious tactics is sensory stimulation, in which one major executive for a major marketing agency described their “need to create sensory overload” for kids. The executive goes on to say, “The product is a trigger for over-satisfying kids’ senses” (Schor 2004, p. 46). Indeed, some commercials are a veritable onslaught on the senses.

*In a world of irrational irrationalization*

The full title of the Strasbourg Pamphlet is “On the Poverty of Student Life: Considered in its Economic, Political, Psychological, Sexual Aspects, and a Modest Proposal for its Remedy.” In it the SI wrote that

Modern capitalism’s spectacularization of reification allots everyone a specific role within a general passivity. The student is no exception to this rule. His is a provisional role, a rehearsal for his ultimate role as a conservative element in the functioning of the commodity system. Being a student is a form of initiation. (Knabb 1981, p. 320)

It should be noted that the SI were directing their critique (with a good deal of contempt) at the French college student, but at least some of their message is transferable to students today. They wrote, “Student poverty is merely the most gross expression of the colonization

of all domains of social practice” (p. 320) but that “in reality, if there is a ‘youth problem’” in modern society, it simply consists in the fact that youth feels the profound crisis of the society most acutely and tries to express it” (Knabb 1981, p. 326). Looking at the literature coming out of education, cultural studies and youth culture, the youth in America are in a lot of danger. They are “demonized by Hollywood” (Giroux 1996) and “Caught in the Crossfire,” in a war being waged against them by both America (Grossberg 2005) and corporate culture (Giroux 2000). And the research presented by Schor (2004) seems to be evidence of a “predatory culture” (McLaren 1998). Given the assault on youth, it should not surprise us that some of them are fighting back, often with tragic consequences. I admit, youth exist in a precarious historical moment and that there are a multitude of real dangers that are potentially “right around the corner,” or far more likely, visiting their Facebook or MySpace page or chat rooms. Compared to many of the dangers that do exist, predatory marketers may not seem imminently threatening to American youth. However, the SI believed that “Commodity reification is the *essential* obstacle to a total emancipation, to the free construction of life” (Knabb 1981, p. 335) and I am arguing that American youth are especially susceptible to commodity reification and that is both destructive to the individual students as well as our society at large.

Jappe (1993/1999) points out that fetishization not only denotes a “false” understanding of the “‘real’” economic system, but it “implies that the whole of human life is subordinated to the laws dictated by the nature of value and in the first place to the necessity for value to increase continually” (p. 16). This is often described in the way the commodity always has to appear to be the latest, best version whether it is the most advanced cell phone<sup>6</sup> or the newest news report or the latest American Idol. Additionally, tv shows and movies are always having to be just a little more heinous, a little more graphic, sensational, humiliating, tense, violent, etc. depending on their genre. As many Americans are also influenced by a

---

<sup>6</sup> Now cell phones include email, Internet, video, datafiles, music libraries, global positioning devices, etc.

similar fetishism regarding the appearance of the bodies as one can see in the form of dieting (and in extreme but not rare eating disorders), plastic surgery, breasts implants, etc. More importantly, because these laws are not based on value in terms of communal orientation or generally for an all-inclusive human benefit, but instead those laws are dictated by economic and social (but still largely self-interested) imperatives, they are ultimately antagonistic to humanity, becoming, for example, the driving forces that produce ecological damage, war, and poverty. However, it isn't simply the destructive or exploitive qualities of these economic imperatives that create alienation, although they certainly contribute to it, but as we shall see, alienation is about the separation between authentic human nature, or what might be referred to as organic social relations, and the lived environment produced by the spectacle, or more literally the political economy, of which the spectacle only expresses in image. "Of arms and the man the spectacle does not sing, but rather of passions and the commodity" (Debord 1998, p. 43).

The alienation decried by the SI affects nearly everyone regardless of class, race, gender, sexuality, religion, and/or geography, although all of those certainly affected the expressions or conditions of this alienation. As noted before, the SI did make room for exceptions to such a totality, but I want to make it clear that the expressions and intensities of these alienations are as *different for people as people are different*, and hence, alienation manifests itself in a myriad of ways and in multitudinous degrees and as dependent on many factors, such as region, gender and race. The SI rarely took on issues of gender or race as such subordinations, they thought, were microcosmic examples of the larger totality.

The necessity for the commodity—and hence for the spectacle, whose role is to *inform* the commodity world—to be at once universal and hierarchical leads to a universal hierarchization. . . in a world of *irrational rationalization*. It is this hierarchization that creates *racisms* everywhere. . . But the repulsive absurdity of certain hierarchies, and the fact that the entire world of the commodity is directed blindly and automatically toward their protection, leads people to see—the moment they engage in a negating practice—that every hierarchy is absurd. (Knabb 1981, pp. 158-159)

Regardless, I would say that today, and especially in the United States, race and gender as well as other factors must be positioned preeminently in the production of political critique and action. In 1966 the S.I. published an essay describing the Watts Riots in L.A. in 1965, applauding the effort to some degree as part of the “*new proletarian consciousness* (the consciousness of not being the master of one’s own activity, of one’s own life, in the slightest degree) [that] is taking shape in America” (Knabb 1981, p. 156). The continued,

A rebellion against the spectacle is situated on the level of the *totality* because—even if it were only to appear in the single district of Watts—it is a protest of people against inhuman life; because it begins at the level of the *real single individual* and because community, from which the rebelling individual is separated, is the *true social nature* of man, human nature: the positive supersession of the spectacle. (Knabb 1981, p. 160)

Here one begins to get closer to those “organic social relations,” which are based on the “social nature” of humanity. And as will be shown, the models of those cannot be found in the past, but in the future.

#### *Bonded to brands*

Though notions of “false consciousness” are unpopular at this historical moment, it seems apparent that notions of identity are materially grounded in many actions of consumption, especially in youth culture. According to Schor’s (2004) research, by the age of eighteen months, kids can recognize logos and are asking for products by brand name before their second birthday, and “Upon arrival at the schoolhouse steps, the typical first grader can evoke 200 brands” (p. 19). Apparently, American youth are much more materialistic than other children in the world.

Contemporary American tweens and teens have emerged as the most brand-oriented, consumer-involved, and materialistic generations in history. And they top the list globally. . . More children here than anywhere else believe that their clothes and brands describe who they are and define their social status. American kids display more brand affinity than their counterparts anywhere else in the world; indeed, experts describe them as increasingly “bonded to brands.” (p.13)

A 2001 Nickelodeon study of ten-year-olds found that on average any given student has memorized 300 to 400 brands and that 92 percent of the requests of eight to fourteen year olds were brand specific (p. 25). Some experts say that three-year-olds already “believe that brands communicate their personal qualities, for example, that they’re cool, or strong, or smart (p. 19). Thus “Companies spend billions to create positive brand associations for their products, attempting to connect them with culturally valued images, feelings, and sensibilities” as companies have to differentiate their products that are more or less interchangeable (p. 26). “There’s a copycat sameness to sodas, fast food, candy, athletic shoes, jeans, and even music and film” so that distinctions among commodities are often little more than the labels—often prominently displayed as in the products of Tommy Hilfiger—and as such, “They turn brands in to ‘signs,’ pure symbolic entities, detached from specific products and functional characteristics” (p. 26). Furthermore, brands are often used as tools of inclusion and exclusion, all of which embody one of the definitive aspects of the spectacle. Thesis number 4 of Debord’s *Society of the Spectacle* states, “The spectacle is not a collection of images; rather, it is a social relationship between people that is mediated by images” (1967/1998, p. 12).

The SI wrote, “The real poverty of student everyday life finds its immediate, fantastic compensation in the opium of cultural commodities” (Knabb 1981, p. 323). Obviously there are cultural differences in styles, types, and rates of consumption, but they often, quite consciously and deliberately, use choices of consumption to create identity, group formations, and exclusions. At the forefront of what drives much of youth consumption, is the ever-changing, often unpredictable theme of what is “cool.” The veritable goose that lays the golden egg in marketing, what’s cool is defined differently by various youth groups, and can manifest itself in numerous incarnations. There are, however, some themes that are recurrent including being older than one’s age, a certain status associated with excessive or at least visible material consumption, “antiadulthood” (unless it is embracing adult themes and activities themselves), and sometimes there’s an “edgy,” element which varies depending on

demographics, particularly gender. Also, a common notion of what's "cool" is being socially exclusive, or as one marketer put it, "'Part of cool is having something that others do not. That makes a kid feel special. It is also the spark that drives kids to find the next cool item'" (Schor 2004, p. 48). This incessant need and flux of coolness perfectly epitomizes the notion of fetishism in which the ascendant quality of being cool is not often the function of a product but the symbolic power it attains, particularly as something others don't have. And then as soon as they do, it has lost that power and must be replaced by the next thing. Another example of fetishism at work can be seen in the

enormous efforts devoted to product innovation, in the form of adding and subtracting ingredients and changing features and colors. In cereals, a popular trend has been to add candy and other sweets. Examples include Oreo O's, Reese's Peanut Butter Puffs, and Mickey's Magix . . . Heinz created green and then mystery color ketchup. . . Parkay sells blue margarine. There's also General Mills Glow in the Dark Yogurt and Kraft's Blue's Clues macaroni and cheese. (p.123)

There is also something called "brand extension" which is the practice of turning products into a "vast matrix of other products" as when tv shows lead to cereals, clothing, school supplies, collectibles, cards, board and/or electronic games (p. 26). Finally, such consumerism seems to be common among "mainstream" American kids regardless of their social class. Indeed, as some research as shown, (see for example Nightingale 1993) many kids of impoverished backgrounds engage in a "compensatory" consumption as a "means of compensating for economic, racial, and sexual humiliation" (p. 143). Regardless, and noting the exceptions of certain specific cultural groups that are not affected by consumerism (e.g., the various religious communities such as the Amish, some indigenous populations or certain immigrant groups), it is clear that commodities in the form of the images they offer and the satiations of the desires they create are frequently consumed by youth to mediate social relations among and within themselves.

*The right life*



One might say that such conspicuous consumption by youth does not mean that they are being duped, or consuming in states of oblivion. Indeed, marketers admit that their predatory tactics are necessary because children have become much more savvy consumers. However, this does not mean that youth understand the political economy that produced the commodities or the destructive consequences of their act of consuming them (i.e., environmental and social consequences). Nor does it mean they understand who benefits or suffers from their consumption. It seems that a pedagogy that would address such consumption would first be situated by the student's consumer choices, and then *politicize it*, that is to explore the political economy of the companies that are producing the commodities, particularly in the contradictions of the costs and benefits of both the production and consumption. That would mean everything from the workers who make the products to the companies' environmental policies as well as the political organizations, lobby groups, social organizations, and other affiliations of the companies. It would also include a media literacy studying the advertising of the companies as well as how the students use the products in social relations among themselves. Finally, it would also include how this consumption can be tied to both historical and global issues. Regarding the former, many companies have affected American political and economic policy through both legislative and judiciary actions, and as such, the actions and behavior of companies should be studied with the same—or indeed, more—diligence as the historical figures of presidents and generals.

The goal of which would be, for lack of a better term, to create “critical,” or at least “informed (politically)” perhaps even “ethical” consumers. When I say informed, I do not mean in terms of quality-comparison of products, i.e, why one brand is better than another in terms of the commodity itself, but informed regarding the political, economic, social, and environmental aspects of their consumption, which might, indeed, lead them to determine certain commodities are “better” than others. Some would say those are all out of reach, and perhaps this is true as I am reminded of Adorno's (1999) section called “Refuge for the Homeless” in *Minima Moralia*, which he concludes with the condemning statement, “The

right life cannot be lived wrongly” (p. 39), implying that there is no “right” life (socially, aesthetically, or ethically) within a false or wrong or malevolent society. It should be noted that this right life is not at all synonymous with “the good life” in the American value system. However, according to the SI and Debord, it was the very recognition of the system of the spectacle being inherently malevolent and antagonistic to the human social, and moreover, *impoverished*, that would awaken the people to the very need of its destruction. It just needed to be *realized*, and the SI made serious attempts to detonate that realization. In the schools of today, it may be that the best we can hope for is that students recognize that there are consequences for their consumer choices and that awareness will lead them to make choices about what and from whom they buy (for example, local produce or fair-trade products).

#### *The proletarianization of the world*

Rob Shields (1998) calls Lefebvre a “humanistic Marxist” and suggests that “what unites all of his work . . . is his deeply humanistic interest in alienation” (p. 2). Henri Lefebvre’s *Critique de la vie quotidienne* (*The Critique of Everyday Life*) was first published in 1947 and then a second edition in 1958 and the Situationists would have been very familiar with this text. In the foreword of the second edition, Lefebvre announces this book is “built entirely around . . . the concept of *alienation*” (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 3). John Moore, the translator notes that Lefebvre compresses several of Marx’s various terms into the notion of alienation. According to John Moore, whereas Marx talks of *Entfremdung* (foreignness or estrangement), *Verwirklichung* (to materialize or embody inauthenticity), *Verselbständigen* (giving independence), *Engtätussergun* (renunciation or separation from an object), and *Vegändlichkeit* (transitoriness),<sup>7</sup> Lefebvre translates them all as alienation (see Translators notes in Lefebvre 1991, p. 258n5 and Shields, 1998, p. 40). For Debord the alienation of the spectacle was grounded in separation. He (1988/1998) writes, “Separation is the alpha and

---

<sup>7</sup> Definitions in parenthesis are from Shields (1998, p. 40).

the omega of the spectacle” and with almost as much grandeur, “The triumph of an economic system founded on separation leads to the *proletarianization of the world*” (p. 20-21).

According to Shields (1998) Lefebvre believes alienation, “rooted in contradiction . . . is the distancing of subjects from the world, from themselves and from others around them” and capitalism embodies “the perfection of a system of alienation that pervades all aspects of life,” even though its roots “lie outside capitalism and capitalist society” (pp. 42-43). What Shields postulates next evokes one of the pedagogical considerations of alienation:

Living is a complex mixture of wholehearted engagement, reconciliation and alienation. Thus, for example, people approach the world around them through the model of an alienated subject-object split. Self-consciousness requires reflection that is based on establishing a critical distance from the object of study. We recreate alienation as a tool that allows dispassionate calculation about costs and benefits of action . . . living is the practice of overcoming alienation to reach a deeper level of understanding, of engagement and of reconciliation. (p.43)

As such, “dispassionate calculation” is an intentional act that is to overcome the original alienation. This reflectiveness is a worthy goal for students and teachers alike, what in the education industry are called “reflective practitioners,” or otherwise any sort of introspection that gets people to ask why it is we do the things we do. Do we not also want our students to be reflective practitioners?

Debord is usually describing an alienation that is quite opposed to any distance that provides critical analysis, but one that does quite the opposite, that covers or fills in the distance created by the alienation in the first place, and hence creating that which literally becomes the immediate landscape of the individual’s everyday activity. In language Baudrillard would eventually use, Debord (1967/1998) wrote, “For the spectacle is simply the economic realm developing for itself—at once a faithful mirror held up to the production of things and a distorting objectification of the producers”(p. 16). He also suggests this separation produces an isolationism, both individually and also the “isolationism of ‘the lonely crowd’” (p. 22) that many contemporary theorists have described. Alienation is rooted in separation, the “alpha and omega of the spectacle,” but the spectacle also “unites

what is separate, but it unites it only *in its separateness*” (p. 22 emphasis in original). On one level, the separation that leads to the “proletarianization of the world” is that which severs us from possible organic (and more authentic) social relations. Furthermore, the more deliberately one engages those spaces that seem immediate, i.e., consuming spectacular relations, the less likely one can realize the distance it veils.

The spectator’s alienation from and submission to the contemplated object (which is the outcome of his unthinking activity) works like this: the more he contemplates, the less he lives; the more readily he recognizes his own needs in the images of need proposed by the dominant system [the spectacle], the less he understands his own existence and his own desires. (Debord 1967/1998, p. 23.)

### *Ignorance is bliss*

However, there is a more abstract separation that occurs in the spectacular alienation, however masked or covered—note that the point here is that when the distance is masked or covered, it means to produce the perception that there is no distance there at all.

Contemplation of our spectacular relations only alienates us from those objects we are contemplating, even if it is ourselves. By contemplation—“the outcome of unthinking activity”—Debord does not mean the distance required for “calculated analysis” but instead, the consideration of spectacular antagonisms which offer only spectacular answers, or, perhaps, spectacular disasters. This also means the consumption of spectacular desires provide only spectacular satiation. Such a reconciliation finds expression in the Wachowskis brothers’ film, *The Matrix*, by the Cypher character, who says as he eats a steak in the matrix: “I know this steak doesn’t exist. I know that when I put it in my mouth, the Matrix is telling my brain that it is juicy and delicious. . . Ignorance is bliss” (See Griswold, Jr. 2002, p. 130). This may represent the relationship of so many consumers: “I know the desires I satiate through consumption are not real, but they satisfy my senses.” Nonetheless, this is the paradoxical relationship in that with such spectacular distancing, we are only more unaware of the distance. In fact, contemplation bridges it. This is why the SI valued *détournement* as they felt this method of taking two or more items and wrenching them from their contexts

and fusing them together in another context reveals this separation and distance in hopes to obliterate all that masks the distance.

The SI seemed to have faith that this vacuity of authentic desires and the emptiness of satiation were so widespread that such conditions could be tapped into, both revealing the poverty of those conditions and awakening the dormant animation to create different ones. Even if American youth are not on the verge of waking up to the paucity of their consumption, they are aware that their consumptive habits are less than healthy. According to one poll 63 percent of kids nine to fourteen admitted that too much advertising attempts to influence their purchases; 74 percent agreed “it’s too bad you have to buy things to be cool;” 81 percent say “lots of kids place way too much importance on buying things;” and 57 percent reported they sometimes spent too much time to “get their parents to buy you things rather than doing fun things with them” (Schor 2004, p. 22). Though this is not Schor’s language, but I would collectively call what she describes as a poverty of materialism.

#### *The poverty of materialism*

Historically poverty has been the major culprit in malnutrition and poor diet, and I would first acknowledge the millions of American children who, due to poverty, do go hungry every day despite our nation’s wealth. However, today much of our young’s poor nutrition is not because of financial poverty, but because of what they eat, even in affluence. Schor (2004) reports,

the diets of 45 percent of children failed to meet any of the standards of the USDA’s food pyramid. . . Among children aged six to twelve, only 12 percent have a healthy diet, and 13 percent eat a poor diet. The rest are in the “needs improvement” category. (p. 34)

She notes other dangers of the children’s food industries besides the nutritional vacuity of their products, such as creating addicts (especially to caffeine and sugar). For marketers, “Sugar- and caffeine-induced hyperactivity has become a highly desired state” (p. 126) and the overstimulation is complemented by the extreme advertising of the products. Schor reports youth obesity is “skyrocketing” while in contrasts there is “excessive concern with

thinness” that not only means “record numbers of girls are on diets. . . increasingly at a young age. . .[but also] a whole host of eating disorders” (p. 35). Consider the following findings by a large-scale study from MECA (Methods for the Epidemiology of Child and Adolescent Mental Disorders).

13 percent of kids aged nine to seventeen suffer from anxiety, 6.2 percent have mood disorders, 10.3 percent have disruptive disorders, and 2 percent suffer from substance abuse. Taken together, about 21 percent of this age group had a “diagnosable mental or addictive disorder with at least minimum impairment.” Eleven percent had a significant functional impairment, and 5 percent were reported to have an extreme functional impairment. (p. 35-36).

Another study found that between 1979 and 1996, “Rates of anxiety and depression went from negligible to 3.6 percent; attention deficit hyperactivity disorder rose from 1.4 percent to 9.2 percent” (p. 35). As Schor notes, what is remarkable about this information is that in a time when child poverty fell substantially from the 1980s where it had peaked at 22 percent, the physical and emotional health of adolescents has decreased (p. 36). Today, “Estimates of major depression are as high as 8 percent for adolescents” (p. 35). This, of course, does not suggest that poverty is healthy, but that our current standard of materialism isn’t either. Schor also addresses violence, tobacco, drugs, and alcohol, in media that is frequently consumed (or aimed) at young audiences. For example, one study found that more ten to seventeen year olds recognized the Budweiser frogs and Joe Camel than the vice president of the United States (p. 133).

In case there is still any doubt that materialism is a driving force among youth, in a nationwide survey of approximately 1,000 adolescents aged nine to fourteen, 62 percent said, “the only kind of job I want when I grow up is one that gets me a lot of money” (Schor 2004 p . 37). Furthermore, she reports one study that found, “75 percent of U.S. tweens want to be rich, a higher percentage than anywhere in the world except India, where the results were identical. Sixty-one percent want to be famous” (p. 13). Describing various studies on materialism and an individual’s well being, especially the work of Tim Kasser and Richard

Ryan at the University of Rochester, Schor warns us that “materialism is correlated with lower self-esteem. It is correlated with higher rates of depression and anxiety. Materialism is related to psychological distress and difficulty adapting to life” (p. 174), presumably when the reality of life does not meet their materialistic desires, or perhaps also that the satiation granted by consumption does not fulfill the promises of its seduction. According to the research Schor describes, materialists are more likely to experience negative physical symptoms such as head and stomachaches as well as negative emotions. Furthermore, those studies that involved teens suggest deep materialistic attitudes (most often defined as financial aspirations, social goals, and appearance) and a greater likelihood to suffer from personality disorders as well as engage in risky behavior. According to a survey that Schor conducted herself, she concludes that

high consumer involvement is a significant cause of depression, anxiety, low self-esteem, and psychosomatic complaints. Psychologically healthy children will be made worse off if they become more enmeshed in the culture of getting and spending. Children with emotional problems will be helped if they disengage from the worlds that corporations are constructing for them. The effects operate in both directions and are symmetric. That is, less involvement in consumer culture leads to healthier kids, and more involvement leads kids’ psychological well-being to deteriorate. (p. 167)

Then, of course, there is the environmental cost of all this consumption.

*The new mother nature taking over*

Marx’s notion of civilization imagines humans in a historical struggle against nature in order to transcend it, to dominate and control it, and otherwise relieve our earthly dependence, and the work of C.A. Bowers (1991; 1993) has notably revealed the absence of this critique in the literature of critical pedagogy. Through technology we have certainly extended our domination over nature, from air conditioning to machines known as ‘earth movers’ that literally build islands and flatten mountains. But certainly in all this independence from nature, we have only become more dependent on the technology, which is in fact, an extension of nature itself, from the simplest of tools to the space shuttle, so the further away from it, the more entrenched we are. This also has a fetishistic quality to it,

seen most simply in the addictive nature of luxuries, each computer faster than the one before, each cell phone with more functions than the last. There also exists a desperate and immediate dependency on the technology of our daily life as technology itself becomes a crutch we need to function. We need a car, a cell phone, a computer, a Blackberry and an ipod. Furthermore, this dependence toward technology has made us more susceptible to nature. Consider the “super” bacteria that are forming because of our antibacterial soaps; or the various diseases that are directly related to our technological advances whether it is pesticides or Chernobyl; and consider simply how many people would have the most difficult time if they actually had to survive for more than a few days “in the wild;” and then of course, there’s global warming. Consider how despite all the irrigation and greenhouses, climatic conditions can still wreak havoc on crops and cities; and consider how dependent we are on our ability to create and harness electricity and how vulnerable many people become when it is taken away.

Additionally, technology promises to connect people, when in fact, it connects some while isolating most others, often isolating us from the very people that are around us (think of the common public scene of people talking on cell phones). One might also consider that for all the technology we have, most of it is never used for the wide scale emancipation of people or dissemination of knowledge, but instead only serves the economy that produces it and since *that* is humanly antagonistic, so is most of the use of technology, whether in sweat shops, or in war. Lefebvre (1947/1991) sums it up: “If man has humanized himself, he has done so only by tearing himself apart, dividing himself, fragmenting himself: actions and products, powers and fetishes, growing consciousness and spontaneous lack of consciousness, organization and revolt” (p. 71; see also Shields, 1998, p. 44). If Katrina was anything beyond a terrible natural disaster, it may have also been a terrifying glimpse into one possible, perhaps, probable future outcomes. If global warming continues to create havoc through hurricanes, floods, tornadoes, droughts, fires, etc., this could potentially create an even more nightmarish divide between the wealthy and the poor in terms of the ability of



those involved to survive those disasters and then have the resources to live with sanity and dignity through the aftereffects. Admittedly the SI did have a faith in technology that has sometimes had them associated with the futurists, but I am arguing for a pedagogy that would necessarily address the environmental costs of consumption.

Our alienation from nature occurs in a separation between the relationship we have and the relationship we *could have* with nature (and with each other). Capitalistic relationships with nature are largely an ever-increasing attempt to overcome and consume nature that produces a separation that broadens (distance) with every attempt to become independent of nature but at the same time instills a dependency, however masked, or covered, as we live more and more in those spaces that constitute the masking or covering, i.e., in the dependency—living in air conditioning and eating greenhouse tomatoes, which may not necessarily be bad things. The point is that those things are produced in a system and that their values are more determined by the market economy than any other measure of human or social scale. To be sure, regulatory committees that oversee public interests check these actions, such as limiting Freon emissions, but generally, these are but limited fetters to a market economy that otherwise has little accountability in terms of the public good including environmental degradation. Regarding the distance between our current relationship with nature and the possible relations, once we add capitalism to the situation, that distance is exponentially expanded, and at the same time, exponentially masked in a way that only reinforces the capitalistic relations. This occurs because capitalism separates us from other possible relations with nature by imposing its own set of relations and reconciliations, but as stated before, spectacular antagonisms offer only spectacular solutions, and hence, suppress any solutions that involve the absolute destruction of the spectacle itself.

### *The Cartographers Tale*

“The spectacle is a map of this new world—a map drawn to the scale of the territory itself” (Debord 1998, p. 23). This quote is prescient of Baudrillard’s later use of Borges’s fable of the cartographers who build a map exactly to scale over the country so that the

people begin to see the map as the country itself, and when the map begins to wear and tear, the inhabitants mistake that for the deterioration of the empire itself. Jean Baudrillard (1981/1997) begins his book, *Simulacra and Simulation*, by referring to a fable written by Jorge Luis Borges, an Argentinian author. The story, a short snippet attributed to an imaginary historical work, is called, “Del rigor en la ciencia,” or “On Exactitude in Science.” It tells of an empire in which the art of cartography became so perfected that the map of a single province occupied the space of an entire city, and the map of the empire was the size of a province. Bored with this accomplishment, the cartographers commence to what Baudrillard calls their “mad project,” that of creating a map exactly to the scale of the empire so that it actually covered it point for point. However, the following generations did not share the same cartographical appreciations and over time, allowed the map to deteriorate. The story ends by saying that in the deserts of the empire there still can be found the tattered vestiges of that map. Baudrillard inverts this so that it is the map that outlives the empire beneath it, and says that somewhere in the deserts of the map, can be found the vestiges of the real.

The story of the inversion, which Baudrillard only alludes to, is that the cartographers build the map of the empire exactly to scale, but instead of the following generations becoming disenchanted with the map and allowing it to wear into ruins, they begin to mistake the map for the empire itself. Thus, the map, the *representation* of the world beneath it, becomes the world, and when the map becomes tattered or weathered, the public of the empire sees this as the deterioration of the empire itself, and they quickly patch and rebuild those places of the map that have begun to fade. Overtime, it becomes a continuing project to maintain the map, requiring constant reconstruction so that the project is now a re-mapping of the map or an activity of perpetual laminations. Hence, the map becomes a self-referential entity. It simulates itself, and is therefore, simulacra, copies of copies for which there is no discernable original. The map, which has now become the reality to the public, is merely an accumulation of self-referring sedimentations or layers of simulation, and

whatever empire, or whatever reality, that may have once existed beneath the layers is lost. This is why Baudrillard says the map is no longer preceded by the territory, and hence that even inverted, the fable isn't totally analogous because "Today abstraction is no longer that of the map, the double, the mirror, or the concept. Simulation is no longer that of a territory, a referential being, or a substance. It is the generation by models of a real without origin or reality: a hyperreal" (1994, p. 1).

For both Debord and Baudrillard the laminated surface of the map is the reality most people live in, the *terra firma* of our social order, and the something real or inaccessible beneath the sedimentations of history. Debord calls this the Spectacle, and Baudrillard calls it hyperreality. Where they differ is that Debord had faith that under the map, under the countless layers of history that have laminated it, there is something real, or at least, authentic, and hence the slogan "Under the paving stones, the beach!" This metaphor only becomes more vivid when one knows many of the rioters in May '68 literally pried the cobbled stones out of the streets in Paris to throw at the police while taking part in their festive rebellion. Baudrillard (1981/1997) on the other hand, says "the territory no longer precedes the map, *nor does it survive it*" (emphasis added, p. 17), and what is left is the simulacra, copies of copies from, which if there ever was an original, it is long gone, and we are left with a hyperreality, removed from any material basis, there is only symbolic exchange, implosion of meanings, and fatal extremes, allowing only for ludic play in the signs and exercises of "intellectual terrorism." The SI engaged in both, but the signs were still attached to the material world, to the cities, in the streets and in the cafes, and their intellectual agitation, which might be described as guerilla theater, manifests as violent attempts to shatter the semiotics, not simply to play in them. Baudrillard believes this can only occur in the microcosm, whereas the SI kept their attention to the macrocosm, to the totality. (Think Globally, Act Locally), believing that with enough people armed with jack-hammers, dynamite, and Molotov cocktails, the map could be destroyed entirely, and under the rubble, a new one constructed.

*Do you love her madly?*

To give a concrete example of a desire created by the spectacle, as the map on which people—and for our purposes, youth—walk, act, and play, consider the problem of anorexia and bulimia in this country. Obesity is about to pass smoking as the leading “preventable” cause of death while the proliferation of images of ultra-thin models create a semiotic association of beauty that unnecessarily causes millions of women and girls to experience low self-esteem and eating disorders. Furthermore, most of those images have been air brushed and otherwise digitally manipulated so that the “beauty” of these women is not real, but “better” than real, but passing as real. Not only does this prescribe values of what is beautiful, that prescription is an unattainable, unreal condition, and a false desire. Lefebvre described this as early as 1957,

Images with a (more or less explicit) erotic meaning, or simply the display of a woman’s body, are violently attractive. The excessive use of such images . . . is a kind of escapism which from certain angles is more like a generalized neurosis: this sexuality is depressing, this eroticism is weary and wearying, mechanical. . . it shocks, it seems brutal, and yet this effect is superficial, pure appearance, leading us back towards the secret of the every day—dissatisfaction. (p. 35, 1957/1991)

In response to these conditions, with a now-disparaged belief in an authentic subjectivity, the SI opposed “I love her because she is beautiful” with “She is beautiful because I love her,” claiming “I take my desires for reality because I believe in the reality of my desires” (Marcus 1989/1990, p. 30). But if alienation occurs outside of capitalism, even before capitalism, what’s to differentiate the desires produced in modern capitalism from any other, for example, those produced in feudal times? Debord (1967/1998) answers thus,

It is doubtless impossible to contrast the pseudo-need imposed by the reign of modern consumerism with any authentic need or desire that is not itself equally determined by society and its history. But the commodity in the stage of its abundance attests to an absolute break in the organic development of social needs. The commodity’s mechanical accumulation unleashes a *limitless artificiality* in face of which all living desire is disarmed. The cumulative power of this autonomous realm of artifice necessarily everywhere entails a *falsification of life*. (pp. 44-45).

Here we have returned to the notion of the fetishism of the commodity, which again, is dictated by its necessity to increase in value, in a continuing cycle of “improvement” that is completely removed from serving human desires or needs, but nonetheless becomes imbued with symbolic powers that create those desires and needs in humans who in turn become its servants, even if servitude, which is accepted as life itself, is only an act of purchase. Furthermore, as Lefebvre points out, “Although deprivation and alienation are different for the proletarian and the non-proletarian, one thing unites them: money, the human being’s alienated essence” (1957/1991, p. 161).

Sometimes Marxists are painted as nostalgic, looking back to a more ideal, but lost, past, but this isn’t always the case, although some (including Lefebvre) have studied and celebrated previously existing societies as dignified alternatives to capitalism until they are inevitably assimilated by the colonization of capitalism’s inherent drive toward unsustainable growth. The SI did not look backward (except to understand the present), but more notably, to the future. The real that lies beneath the map—the beach!—is not what existed before, although it might have in some cases, but the beach the SI were looking for was one in the future, and most likely has never existed before. As they said, “The revolution of everyday cannot draw its poetry from the past, but only from the future” (Knabb 1981, p. 64). The Situationists did say they wanted to forget the past, but that was last stage of the utopian goal. That was the end of history in terms of what it had been, in terms of humans being subjugated by the historical conditions, the history of the rule of the commodity. Recalling Marx’s paradox: Humans are the makers of their own conditions of living, but they are born into the conditions not of their own making, Debord and the SI believed that forgetting the past can only occur when the generational gap is erased and humans remake the conditions into which they were born. But until that has occurred, as historical materialism would dictate, the present must be understood in terms of the history from which it evolved, and with specific attention given to the material conditions that shaped it.

*The use and abuse of history*

When Debord (1988/1998) described the spectacle twenty years later, in *Comments on the Society of the Spectacle*, he would describe a new stage: the integrated spectacle. As such, the spectacle “has integrated itself into reality to the same extent as it was describing it, and that it was reconstructing it as it was describing it”(p. 9). Debord writes,

The society whose modernization has reached the stage of the integrated spectacle is characterized by the combined effect of five principal features: incessant technological renewal; integration of state and economy; generalized secrecy; unanswerable lies; and an eternal present. (pp. 11-12)

The incessant technological renewal is hardly in doubt when, as described earlier, commodities are constantly being replaced, remade, and renewed to offer the latest, fastest, and best. The integration of state and economy certainly exists which is not to say they are synonymous, but the relationship between Haliburton, Cheney, and the war in Iraq certainly lend itself to such a critique. Another example is the incest between federal lawmakers and the pharmaceutical companies and various polluting industries. “Unanswerable lies” are rampant in the information industry (think of the information and disinformation produced on the Internet) and particularly in the political arena. Whether it is “I did not have sexual relations with that woman” or “Saddam has weapons of mass destruction” or “the evidence on global warming is still undecided,” Americans appear no longer surprised at the lies that come out of our own government. Or as Debord (1988/1998) wrote, “Never before has it been possible to lie to [the public] so brazenly” (p. 22). Politicians sell the masses “accountability” for schools but not themselves, and perhaps such language should be turned on the politicians. But what is at issue for this dissertation is the “eternal present” which denotes the loss of historical consciousness.

### *The eternal present*

Recall that for Benjamin (1940b/2003), the linear notion of history was the representation of a bourgeois history, the history of the victor, an enemy who “has never ceased to be victorious” (p. 391). Similarly Debord (1967/1998), writes, “The first thing the linear model loses sight of is the fact that *the bourgeoisie is the only revolutionary class that*

*has ever been victorious;*” (pp. 56-57). The following statement regarding history and praxis by Debord also, to me, has Benjaminian undertones, “Historical thought can be saved only if it becomes practical thought; and the practice of the proletariat as a revolutionary class cannot be less than historical consciousness applied to the totality of the world” (p. 50). In both Benjamin and Debord there is the explicit call for historical consciousness of the proletariat class. Today, one might argue that this consciousness is now unavailable as the proletariat as been subsumed by the middle class and hence, are no longer the revolutionary class. Regardless, Debord was well aware of how the spectacle is particularly adroit at producing not only various forms of alienation, but also a general lack of historical understanding, and the attention Debord gives it is testament to its importance. Consider the following quotes,

[An] aspect of the lack of historical life in general is that the individual life is still not historical. The pseudo-events that vie for attention in the spectacle’s dramatizations have not been lived by those who are thus informed about them. In any case they are quickly forgotten, thanks to the precipitation with which the spectacle’s pulsing machinery replaces one by the next. (1967/1998, p. 114).

To even keep up with the incessant pulse of the spectacle requires an almost manic disposition (or schizophrenic), but for all the “rush and run” of the spectacle’s frenetic pace of presenting fetishized information, things are “quickly forgotten” and much of it wasn’t real anyway. Additionally, the notion that those “dramatizations” that “have not been lived by those who are thus informed by them” seem to missing an experiential quality that resonates with Benjamin’s when writes, “Culture appears reified. The history of culture would be nothing but the sediment formed in the consciousness of human beings by memorable events, events stirred up in the memory by no genuine—that is to say political—experience” (1937/2002, pp. 267-268). As I have already suggested, I believe politicizing those experiences will make them more personalized and hence more memorable.

Debord (1967/1998) described the spectacle as a “colonization of everyday life,” and as such, “The spectacle, being the reigning social organization of a paralyzed history, of a

paralyzed memory, of an abandonment of any history founded in historical time, is in effect a *false consciousness of time*” (p. 114). In 1988, he would add,

When the spectacle stops talking about something for three days, it is as if it did not exist. For it has then gone on to talk about something else, and it is that which henceforth, in short, exists. The practical consequences, as we see, are enormous. (Debord 1988/1998, p. 20)

The consequence is the lack of historical consciousness as “with the destruction of history, contemporary events themselves retreat into a remote and fabulous realm of unverifiable stories, uncheckable statistics, unlikely explanations and untenable reasoning” (Debord 1988/1998, p. 20). The consequences of those, as we see, are also enormous. Jappe (1993/1999) describes one of those consequences as such: “The complete disappearance of historical intelligence creates socially atomized individuals with no choice but to contemplate the seemingly unalterable progression of blind forces” (p. 35).

#### *The good, bad, and the abject*

Various contemporary theorists (besides the ones already mentioned) have lamented the loss of historical understanding, and one of the very qualities attributed to the “postmodern condition” is “an age that has forgotten to think historically in the first place” (Jameson 1991/1997, p. ix). Herein lies one of the challenges that the curriculum I am describing attempts to address. In an era when historical understanding is under assault, devalued, suppressed, inaccessible, or according to some, impossible, how, can, and to what end do we teach historical understanding? For me, the greatest concern is not so much to understand history “as it really happened,” but to what end. That is, are we teaching history in order to come to some understanding of the present conditions? Furthermore, are we teaching the history of the present that is also considering our future? Can we teach students to see the institutions, traditions, and culture of their everyday lives (and their own lives) as



historical entities? I would argue that all landscapes are historical, both the literal earthly ones as well as conceptual ones. That both the earth's landscape and the conceptual ones our students will be traversing, are, in fact, historical sedimentation and that sedimentation is rather particular to both time and place.

In a short piece written around 1932, Benjamin (1932/1999) compares the notion of memory to the excavation of an archeological dig, and particularly addresses the notion of sedimentation. This is not a metaphor I want to elaborate any further except to say what is important in Benjamin's treatment is the attention given to recent history, "the strata which first had to be broken through," (p. 576) in order to understand the deeper strata where the memory resides. Translating this into the public memory that I have discussed earlier, or a collective historical consciousness, I would argue that we need to pay attention to the very recent history. Paradoxically quite often the most recent history never gets covered in history classes in schools. The standard is too often that a history teacher is lucky to get as far as Vietnam. Looking at the recent past, "warts and all" is understandably more difficult and volatile, particularly if we personalize and politicize such subject matter, but no less important. Given these last two chapters I would conclude that there are at least two thematic lines of inquiry, or "generative themes" that should be presented to students. One is to study history as a critique of progress, both the good, the bad, and the ugly, the beautiful as well as the abject, and the divine as well as the obscene, compassion and malevolence. The second is study the students' everyday acts of consumption as they are materially wrapped up in that process. The very clothing and other products the students bring into class are veritable links to the landscapes of globalization and history.

In the previous chapters I have argued for a model of dialogic curriculum and also for the importance of historical understanding of both the public and private spheres. In the following two chapters I will try to attend to how those histories might find meaning and expression in critical and aesthetics ways, and as social processes that would attempt to create some sense of cooperation and even compassion for their classmates. While on the surface this loss of historical consciousness appears to be a temporal one, it is also spatial as well. The Situationists make this spatial turn when they write, “The *spectacle* is the terrestrial realization of *ideology*” (Knabb 1981, p. 336), and Jameson (1991/1997) also describes this as a spatial consideration “Time has become a perpetual present and thus spatial. Our relationship to the past is now a spatial one” (cited in Stephason 1989, p. 46). Globalization also is a spatial critique—one also made by Debord and the Situationists, as he (1967/1998), writes the spectacle turns “the whole planet into a single world market” (p. 27). And I as I will show in the next chapter, though not necessarily attached to history, spatial language is common in the literature of critical pedagogy. I also will return to the metaphorical considerations that I began in chapter one.

**CHAPTER 5**  
**CRITICAL CONSTELLATIONS:**  
**TOWARD A SPATIAL CURRICULUM THEORY**

Those who arrive at Thekla can see little of the city, beyond the plank fences, the sackcloth screens, the scaffoldings, the metal armatures, the wooden catwalks hanging from ropes or supported by sawhorses, the ladders, the trestles. . .

“What meaning does your construction have?” [the traveler] asks . . . “Where is the plan you are following, the blueprint?”

“We will show it to you as soon as the working day is over; we cannot interrupt our work now,” they answer.

Work stops at sunset. Darkness falls over the building site. The sky is filled with stars. “There is the blueprint,” they say.

Italo Calvino, *Invisible Cities*

Nothing distinguishes the ancient from the modern man so much as the former’s absorption in a cosmic experience scarcely known to later periods . . . It is the dangerous error of modern men to regard this experience as unimportant and avoidable, and to consign it to the individual as the poetic rapture of starry nights.

Walter Benjamin, *One Way Street*

But I am as constant as the northern star.  
Of whose true-fixed and resting quality  
There is no fellow<sup>8</sup> in the firmament.

William Shakespeare, *Julius Caesar*

*Cynosura*

Polaris, what we know as the north star, has been orienting travelers for thousands of years, but in fact—and contrary to Shakespeare—this star has not always been, and will not always be, the pole star. The pole star is the star closest to the celestial pole, an imaginary

---

<sup>8</sup> Equal.

spot in line with the north pole and the earth's axis. In appearance, this star 'doth hold his place,' while our entire star field appears to rotate around it—at least in the northern hemisphere, and it is worth noting that an enormous majority of the populated land mass of earth lies in the northern hemisphere. Nonetheless, this axis is not completely vertical but is tilted at an inexplicable 23.5 degrees, and, as many people know, this tilt is responsible for our seasons and the changing length of days during the yearly orbit around the sun. Such as it is, the pole star has been a standard point of orientation for billions of travelers and observers over thousands of years, but it hasn't always been the same star. Five thousand years ago, when the Egyptian pyramids were supposedly being completed, the pole star was Thuban, in the constellation Draco, and in the year 14,000, the pole star will be Vega of the constellation Lyra. This occurs because of a phenomenon known as the precession of the equinoxes.

Every twenty-four hours (nearly) the earth rotates around its axis, which causes the star field to appear to be rotating directly around a corresponding point in the sky, the celestial pole. And because there is a star, Polaris, very close to the celestial pole, we can look up to this star and know that direction is north. However, because there is a slight wobble in the earth's rotation, the celestial pole of the earth is not constant, but part of a circular pattern that takes 26,000 years to circumscribe. This wobble is like a spinning top that begins to teeter as it slows, but in the earth's case, the rotation is not due to deceleration. Instead this teetering happens because the earth is not a perfect sphere, but is flatter on the top and bottom, and thicker in the middle. This wobbling causes the earth's axis to teeter, and hence, the celestial pole rotates along with this teetering, circumscribing an imaginary circle above the plane, one that a single revolution transpires at a rate of approximately 1

degree every 72 years. Thus, the star closest to the celestial pole changes over the course of time, but always in the same procession over a period of about 26,000 years ( $72 \times 360$ ). It should be noted that each pole star is sometimes more, sometimes less, near the celestial pole as the cycle proceeds. Twenty-one thousand years from now, the pole star will be Thuban again, and then again Polaris, and so on.<sup>9</sup>

### *The thousand eyes of night*

Because of this precession of the equinoxes, the viewable star field changes over the course of history, which means that constellations go in and out of view depending upon geographical regions (spatial) *and* at specific times in this cycle (temporal). This has several ramifications for my purposes, which are presently to establish a more complex notion of constellations as they are conventionally imagined. Because of this precession, star charts are only good for a limited time, usually less than fifty years. Hence, we don't look up at the same stars as our ancestors did; nor do we look at the same history. The point is that when we look back at history, our perception is somewhat relational to our present and those who look at the same history fifty years earlier or later, are also looking at it from a unique vantage point. The problem is that people often fail to recognize the mutability of the past over time and of this evanescent relation to any specific moment of perception. They therefore see history as a fixed object like the stars are often thought of, unaware that our perception of history is historically and spatially specific like the stars are in reality. Additionally, although constellations are often perceived as two-dimensional images, stars exist three-dimensionally, spanning across light-years of distance. In fact, two stars on opposite ends of our visual field may be closer to each other than two stars that make up the

---

<sup>9</sup> This information can be found in most any book on astronomy under Precession of the Equinoxes.

same constellation. It is important to see that the connections we draw in the act of creating constellations are often quite arbitrary regarding the real relations between those stars.

Instead these connections are based on a specific spatial/temporal perception and the intent on grouping them in a meaningful way, and I would say the same is true for much of history.

Scientists now know that the stars are not fixed, even in their rotational cycles, but are moving through space in different directions at incredible speeds. This movement is still imperceptible except over time, but due to this movement the constellations are constantly mutating in a more random manner than the precession, but still somewhat determinable as we can calculate their speeds and directions. Furthermore, with only a few exceptions, all the stars we see are within our own galaxy, which is made up of many billions of stars rushing through space. It is estimated this vast system spans 100,000 light years across and is 10,000 light years deep and slowly rotates around its own axis at a rate of one revolution per two hundred million years. However, beyond our galaxy there are billions more; there are supergalaxies, nebulae, black holes etc., all in varying stages of development and with unimaginably huge spaces of void in between. We have telescopes that can see billions of light years into space, and it is worth noting that in this essay considering history that *history* is precisely what is in view regarding most of the celestial bodies beyond our solar system. The fact that they exist light years away necessarily means that the image we are receiving is an image at least as old as its distance, and the star “as it really exists” is as inaccessible to us as history.

In the end of this chapter I will return to the notion of constellations, but this chapter begins by addressing some of the current scholarship in education regarding the notion of place. I revisit Dewey’s call for geographical education and then describe Pinar and

Kincheloe's "curriculum of place" and David Gruenwald's "critical pedagogy of place" as models of a situated, spatial curriculum theory. I then move to more abstract considerations of cognitive mapping and critical constellations. And in this chapter I engage in a more explicit discussion of my metaphor of travel and orientation.

### *The spatial turn*

In the last several decades many social theorists have devoted a great deal of attention to certain notions of space as a concept for discursive analysis. The advent of so-called critical geography is evidence of what some have described as the "spatial turn" in social theory. More recently this turn has been evident in the field of education. Of course, considerations of place have been present in ethnographic research in and outside education. Nonetheless, various educational theorists have used spatial metaphors and language such as student-centered curriculum, distance learning, public and private spheres, secret places, border crossings, marginalization, colonization, and of course, globalization. Scholarship that addresses concepts of space varies depending on discourses while obviously there exists a plentitude of work that addresses geography as a subject and/or social studies. Other considerations include classroom geographies and historical spaces of schools and their architecture (e.g., Johnson, 1982; Hutchinson, 2004) and other "places of learning" (Ellsworth, 2005). There is increasing literature regarding learning space design and information technologies (e.g., Brown and Lippincott, 2003; Oblinger, 2006), and particularly the cartographic possibilities new technologies offer such as GIS (Geographic Information Systems), GPS (Global Positioning System), GoogleEarth/Maps, and a wealth of other material available online. Considerations of place can be found both in the adult education discourse and the international curriculum scene, (e.g., Edwards et. al, 2002;

Edwards and Usher, 2003), and there are various inquiries from curriculum theorists (e.g., Kincheloe and Pinar, 1991; Ellis, 2002, 2004;) including a cultural studies and/or critical pedagogy approach (e.g., McLaren 1994, McLaren and Giroux, 1990; Giroux 2000; Gruenewald, 2003a, 2003b).

The curriculum theory described in this project not only proposes the notion of space as an arena for discursive analysis, but for action and perhaps transformation, and as such it aims to not only use spatial analysis to address inequalities of race, class, gender, and sexuality present in particular places, but it also intends to provide a means of “critical intervention” within those spaces. It should also be noted that for many this spatial turn in social theory is rooted in a particular critical tradition and many of the above mentioned theorists claim different genealogical heritages. Also, if taken too broadly, spatial considerations in curriculum studies offer little more than a keyword in a search category. Various curricular designs exist, ranging from “expeditionary learning schools” to “place-based education,” and like so many project-centered and small school designs, the end products run the gambit regarding the particularities of their specific manifestations. While often these models only have modest theoretical underpinnings by some academic standards, Gruenewald (2003a) argues that place-based education and critical pedagogy can be mutually supportive. His work will be addressed shortly, but first, I return to Dewey.

#### *Time and space connections*

Dewey believed geography and history were “the information studies *par excellence* of the schools” (1916/1997, p. 210), and should “supply the subject matter which gives background and outlook, [and] intellectual perspective” to student inquiry (p. 208). Thus, students increase their “ability to place [their] own doings in their time and space



connections” (p. 208). It is clear that history and geography should not be taught as disciplines divorced from each other, from the students’ individual experience, or from present social conditions. Regarding geography in particular, Dewey aligns this with the study of nature, and hence, it leads directly to science in Dewey’s interdisciplinary curriculum. Geography offers the students training in the ability “to gain in power to perceive the spatial, the *natural* connections of an ordinary act” (p. 210). Furthermore, it is clear that geography was to be situated in the locality. Doing so ties the connections of the students’ everyday lives (“ordinary acts”) to the larger curricular contexts, particularly within the historical and social aspects, and today I would argue to the larger context of globalization. For his own time Dewey wrote that when these “ties are broken, geography presents itself as that hodge-podge of unrelated fragments” and a “veritable rag-bag of intellectual odds and ends” (p. 211), a lament he often made of various disciplinary subjects when they were not properly situated.

This situatedness clearly means more than just students learning local waterways, topography, and soil content: “And while local or home geography is the natural starting point . . . it is an intellectual starting point for moving out into the unknown, not an end in itself” (Dewey 1916/1997, p. 212). The study of geography was not only meant to move from the known to the unknown, but it was also related to the “associated life of men [sic]”—that is, the social and historical life of people. As such, “Nature”—that is, geography—“is the medium of social occurrences” (p. 211), thus reinforcing the complementary relationship between geography and history. Dewey clearly included economics in that relationship, writing, “Economic activities deeply influence social intercourse and political organizations on one side, and reflect physical conditions on the other” (p. 213). Acknowledging that the

economic relations to place have changed dramatically since Dewey's time, it still seems possible to relate the local geography to economic relations and particularly to globalization, whether it is local cash crops to the global market, jobs that are outsourced overseas, immigrant workers, or the very production of the clothes the students wear to school as exemplary products of the global economy.

### *Infused by place*

As stated before, the notion of place has been addressed by educators in various contexts. One of the more deliberate attempts in curriculum theory to address the notion of place, particularly in the relations of social- and self-formation, is *Curriculum as Social Psychoanalysis*, edited by Joe Kincheloe and William Pinar (1991). In this text, Kincheloe and Pinar use place, specifically the South, as an organizing principle, they illustrated through various examples of research. Stressing autobiographical, racial, and gender issues in curriculum, their curriculum theory of place is rooted in a Habermasian notion of social psychoanalysis and critical theory. They note that just as “the psychoanalyst attempts to remedy the mystified self-understandings of the [individual], the social psychoanalyst sees myth interrogation as an important step toward social progress” (p. 3). Evoking the work of Marcuse, they suggest memory and place are indispensable tools toward such analysis. And echoing one of the stated goals of this dissertation, they write, “knowing where one started allows one to understand where he or she is” (p. 4). In terms of curriculum “place becomes an important means of linking particularities to the social concerns of curriculum theory” (p. 21).

Regarding their theorizing of place, Kincheloe and Pinar write (1991) that “when events take place they are *infused by place*” (p. 7) but that “place is place only if

accompanied by history” (p. 8). This historical association as an understanding of both place and theory is important and worth quoting them at length:

The historical dimension of place informs theory on a variety of levels. A theory that does not sense its consequences in particular places, and that exists in particular historical moments is impoverished. . . A social landscape of a theory, its scene, must be infused by its connections with particular historical places, with the descriptive details that identifies them, the personalities that inhabit them, and the historical, materialist, and psychic forces that try to shape them. (8)

They also note that it is important that theory question its own “origins as a manifestation of power” (p. 8). Much of Kincheloe and Pinar’s theory of place is informed by literature studies, especially that of Eudora Welty and William Faulkner. Furthermore, they write that just as fiction uses place to “create a world of appearance,” so too, must curriculum theory “possess a particularistic social theory, a grounded view of the world in which education takes place” (p. 5).

Again in 2004, Pinar proposes a “curriculum of place,” and again, he proposes a curriculum of Southern studies that

is not a sentimentalization of the past, but a psychoanalytically-informed interdisciplinary study and re-experience of the past, so that white guilt can be experienced and acknowledged, and moral responsibility claimed. . . Unless this process occurs collectively and individually, socially and subejectively, the South will probably continue to live out—in denial—its history of relative poverty, defeat, racism, and class privilege. (p. 241)

Reminding the reader that Pinar is, in part, seeking a remedy for the “presentism” he believes affects our society. Acknowledging that “presentism is hardly peculiar to the South” (1991, p. 165 and 2004, p. 240), Pinar still feels like the deserves specific attention. While it is true the South has been so influential in U.S. history to warrant particular attention, I generally would argue that “moral responsibility” needs to be claimed all over this country, not the

least of which regarding indigenous populations, and Kincheloe and Pinar admit as much (1991).

### *Place-conscious education*

Another move in educational theory that advances the project of a spatial curriculum theory is the work of David Gruenewald (2003a; 2003b). In one article (2003b) Gruenewald calls for a “place-conscious education” basing his work on phenomenology, critical geography, bioregionalism, and ecofeminism in relation to various place-based models of schooling. Gruenewald discusses five dimensions of place that he believes can develop a place-conscious education: the perceptual, the sociological, the ideological, the political and the ecological, and he admits that this list is not exhaustive. He begins by using phenomenological inquiry to describe the perceptual dimension of place and the sensual, participatory act of perceiving the world. He hopes that an ecological ethic might develop from an empathy derived from sensorial experiences of place as well as the human relationship with, and effects on, those places. He writes that “a theory of place that is concerned with the quality of human–world relationships must first acknowledge that places themselves have something to say” (p. 624). Feeling that our modern era has “forgotten how to hear, communicate, and participate in meaning making with our places on the living earth” (p. 624), he advocates a perspective that means we *listen* to places, and as I said earlier, places too, have stories to tell.

Continuing with Gruenewald (2003b), the sociological dimensions of place refer to the social aspects of place, including identity and culture, recognizing “places are what people make of them” (p. 627). As such, “Being aware of social places as cultural products requires that we bring them into our awareness conscious reflection and unpack their

particular cultural meanings” (pp. 626-627). Gruenewald uses the literature of critical geography to describe the ideological dimension of place and as such is concerned with “how geographical space, always inscribed with politics and ideologies, simultaneously reflects and reproduces social relationships of power and domination” (p.628). Critical geography refers to a very specific tradition of analysis, usually associated with Henri Lefebvre (e.g., 1970/2003; 1974/2002; 1976), Edward Soja (e.g., 1989; 1996), David Harvey (e.g., 1985, 1990,1996), and Doreen Massey (e.g., 1994; 1995), and such a list only begins to name the founding genitors. Referring to Henri Lefebvre’s seminal *The Production of Space* (1974/2002), Gruenewald (2003b) writes, “Space is the medium through which culture is reproduced” (p. 629). Relating this to education he hopes this spatial critique will analyze an education that is often packaged as preparing workers for the global economy, and furthermore how schools are places where uneven dynamics of power, especially economic power, are reproduced.

Critical geography also informs Gruenewald’s (2003b) description of the political aspect of place, noting that while economic power (capital) has a large role in the production of places and in shaping the literal and figurative landscapes of culture and identity, that “other spatial relationships are significant” (p. 631). These include issues of race, gender, sexuality, region, religion, etc., all of which require “a radical multiculturalism,” one that doesn’t aim to move everyone—especially the marginalized—to the center, but instead “embraces the ‘spaces that difference makes’” (p. 633). This literature shares with critical pedagogy a myriad of rich spatial metaphors such as territoriality, marginality, displacement, habitat, and colonization. Finally, in describing the ecological dimension of place, Gruenewald addresses the literatures of social and human ecology, environmental justice,

and especially bioregionalism and ecofeminism to understand the person-to-place relationship in the globalized world. Gruenewald laments that educational institutions not only neglect those considerations but also promote the ideology of progress as economic growth.

Gruenewald (2003b) argues that though those five dimensions do not cover all the ways one might perceive place, taken together they not only challenge many present assumptions and absences in educational theory and practice, but also, by perceiving place in these ways, provide important learning opportunities in various places. He writes that “places [can] teach us who, what, and where we are, as well as how we might live our lives” (p. 636). This is what he means by a place-conscious education. Admittedly, such a disposition seems antithetical to a society that is more and more moving the realms of social life *indoors* or online. Perhaps the attention given to global warming will prove not only to not be a mere trend, but also encourage a greater awareness of people’s relationship to their local environment both in terms of human impact, but also of appreciation. Gruenewald notes the diverse approaches of education in which the schools engage local settings, including (but not limited to) outdoor education, service learning, community-based education, bioregional education, and several others, but then discusses three educational traditions of place-based research—natural history, cultural journalism, and action research—at greater length.

#### *A once (and future) vibrant discipline*

Gruenewald (2003b) writes that the discipline of natural history was “Once a vibrant academic discipline and standard curriculum in American schools” (p. 637) but it has seemingly been marginalized from the mainstream curriculum, and he clearly wants it

reintegrated into the school curriculum. Although he doesn't reference Dewey, Gruenewald similarly wants to situate curriculum in the local. I will return to this momentarily. To complement natural history he also invokes the field of cultural journalism as a supplementary engagement to the human and cultural element of the local community. He notes the Foxfire program as "exemplary as a model for comprehensive local history projects that engage students in interviewing community members, gathering stories about local traditions, and producing knowledge about local cultural life" (p. 638). But while those two "pathways" offer students and teachers

greater experience[s] with an understanding of the ecological and cultural life of the places that we and others inhabit . . . Action research takes teachers and students beyond the experience and study of places to engage them in the political process that determines what these places are and what they will become. (p. 640)

It seems to me that this last element of action research is fundamental to Freire's demand for the "critical intervention" in reality as a process of transforming that reality. As I wrote in chapter two, Freire's project (and mine) is one of "critical intervention" in reality toward "the permanent transformation of reality in favor of the liberation of people" (1970/1999, p. 83), but he significantly states that "only political action in society can make social transformation" (Shor and Freire 1987a, p. 175). In another essay I will address momentarily, Gruenewald (2003a) argues for a "critical pedagogy of place" as "a response against educational reform policies and practices that disregard places and that leave assumptions about the relationship between education and the politics of economic development unexamined" (p. 3). Therein he makes a more explicit appeal to critical pedagogy.

I am using Gruenewald's work to further reveal ways curriculum should be situated in the lives of students and to echo his sentiment that ecologically sustainable education be a

part of the curriculum. Indeed, the term situated has come up repeatedly thus far, ranging from Dewey's educative situation, which is the "interplay" of "objective and internal conditions"(1938/1997, p. 42), which I compared to Pinar's public and private spheres, to the situated dialogue of Shor and Freire. The latter refers to beginning a class by locating the discourse in the language of students, and I have also argued that curriculum should be situated in the everyday lives of students through the use of autobiography and other means of personalizing education. Then, of course, the very name of the Situationists denotes attention given to the situation, though I have yet to explain their use. Although they rejected the term "situationism"—a term they said had been "obviously devised by an antisituationist" (Knabb 1981, p. 45)—they said that "situationist" "denotes an activity that aims at *making* situations, as opposed to passively *recognizing* them in academic or other separate terms. . . . So far philosophers and artists have only interpreted situations; the point now is to transform them" (emphasis in original, Knabb p. 138). This last sentence is another détourned statement of Marx's. This act was a form of praxis, however playful and passionate, depending on how it was practiced. Debord announced the "central purpose" of the SI was "the construction of situations, that is, the concrete construction of temporary setting of life [places] and their transformation into a higher, passionate nature" (1957/2004, p. 44).

### *Situated pedagogy revisited*

The situatedness I want to address now is that of a situated pedagogy in critical theory and place, and particularly how Gruenewald (2003a) uses the idea in his critical pedagogy of place. But first, Freire (1970/1999) writes that

People, as beings "in a situation," find themselves rooted in temporal-spatial conditions which mark them and which they also mark. They will tend to reflect on their "situationality" to the extent that they are challenged by it to act upon it. Human



beings *are* because they *are* in a situation. And they *will be more* the more they not only critically reflect upon their existence but critically act upon it. (p. 90)

It is clear that “reflection upon situationality” on the part of individuals (students) is fundamental to Freire’s notion of critical pedagogy and of a dialogic education. Such reflection upon an individual’s situationality is part and parcel the generative themes (problem-posing) that are related to the notion of *conscientização* described earlier. Again, problem-posing is not simply a means of posing hypothetical or rhetorical problems for the students to solve, but instead is invested and directed at their situation: “the very conditions of [their] existence” that necessarily involves “critical thinking by means of which people discover each other to be ‘in a situation’” (p. 90). I would emphasize that the phrase “discover each other” is illustrative of the sociality of situation, i.e., recognizing the relationships among people, and the commitment to attending to those relationships. It is the problems posed by those relationships that become generative themes.

Gruenewald (2003a) recalls the above passage of Freire saying, “Though Freire does not thoroughly explore the spatial aspects of ‘situationality,’ this passage . . . demonstrates the importance of space, or place, to critical pedagogy’s origins” (p. 4). He argues, “Being in a situation has a spatial, geographic, contextual dimension. Reflecting on one’s situation corresponds to reflecting on the space(s) one inhabits; action on one’s situation often corresponds to changing one’s relationship to a place” (p. 4). He then advances the notion of a “critical pedagogy of place” that is informed by critical pedagogy and place-based education. He argues that critical pedagogy and place-based education can be synthesized into a mutually supportive pedagogy. However,

despite clear overlap between critical pedagogy and place-based education (such as the importance of situated context and the goal of social transformation), significant

strands exists within each that do not always recognize the potential contributions of the other. (p. 4)

Recognizing the critique of Bowers (1993) that critical pedagogy in the U.S. has often neglected ecological considerations and even projected environmentally insensitive ideologies of individualism and progress, Gruenewald (2003a) also notes that some critical educators have taken up ecological issues such as environmental racism. Still, he finds a gap between the literature of critical pedagogy and place-based education that he hopes to fill. Responding to the later work of Bowers' (2001) on the notion of "eco-justice" and other ecologically responsive literatures such as ecofeminism, Gruenewald (2003a) believes that "the insights of dissident ecological traditions help provide critical pedagogy with a challenging socio-ecological framework" (p. 6).

Gruenewald (2003a) believes that both critical pedagogy and place-based education make demands for situated curriculum: critical pedagogy "in terms of the lived experience" of people, and place-based education "in terms of ecologically sustainable cultural patterns and human and biotic diversity" (p. 10). This is important not only as an act of situating curriculum in the local, but it is adding a crucial emphasis in ecological sustainability *and* how that sustainability is implicated in the larger global economy. "Just as critical pedagogy draws its moral authority from the imperative to transform systems of human oppression, critical ecological educators" draw moral authority from the imperative to transform systems of ecological oppression or otherwise aligning "cultural patterns with the sustaining capacities of natural systems" (pp. 5-6).

#### *A critical pedagogy of place*

Addressing the Freirean notion of "reading the world," Gruenewald (2003a) writes, "For critical pedagogues, the 'texts' students and teachers should 'decode' are the images of

their own concrete, situated experiences with the world” (p. 5). Not only does Gruenewald liken this with the situatedness of place-based education, it also appears he would have us also read those images of the world ecologically. Indeed, nature itself becomes a text itself, but a living one. Gruenewald’s call for a “place-conscious education” (2003b) emphasized listening to the world, which seems congruent with “reading the world.” Listening to what the world has to tell us means decoding it both as a living ecosystem and socially, historically. But it is clear that Gruenewald hopes this communication will lead to empathy as he (2003a) advocates “curriculum geared toward exploring places [that] can deepen empathetic connections” to the outside world (p. 8). He writes,

In order to develop an intense consciousness of places that can lead to ecological understanding and informed political action, placed-based educators insist that teachers and children must regularly spend time out-of-doors building long-term relationships with familiar, everyday places. . . [asking] Where in a community, for example, might students and teachers witness and develop forms of empathetic connection with other human beings? How might these connections lead to exploration, inquiry, and social action? (p. 8)

As a model for an education that would attempt to answer those questions and act as the needed combination of critical pedagogy and an ecologically oriented placed-based education, Gruenewald offers a “critical pedagogy of place.”

Quoting McLaren and Giroux (1990), Gruenewald (2003a) notes that critical pedagogy has always been a pedagogy of place, or as McLaren and Giroux describe it, a pedagogy that “must address the specificities of the experiences, problems, languages, and histories that communities rely upon to construct a narrative of collective identity and possible transformation” (pp. 8-9). According to Gruenewald, it is “ironic” that critical pedagogy, rooted in Freire’s writings of working with rural peasants, has found its most common expression in urban education while placed-based education emphasizes the rural

and ecological (an irony he notes McLaren and Giroux have recognized—see McLaren and Giroux 1990). Regardless, he proposes two objectives of a critical pedagogy of place: decolonization and reinhabitation. Describing reinhabitation as a “major focus” of an ecological place-based education, Gruenewald (2003a) provides a definition from Berg and Dasmann, two scholars in bioregionalism. They define reinhabitation as “learning to live-in-place in an area that has been disrupted and injured through past exploitation” (cited in Gruenewald 2003a, p. 9). It seems to me that this evocation of reconciliation and moral responsibility to the environment is similar to Pinar’s call for dialogue toward reconciliation and moral responsibility in human-to-human relationships.

Echoing the need of redress, of accountability, and reconciliation, Gruenewald (2003a) writes that there are various ways in which “decolonization describes the underside of reinhabitation,” and that the latter “may not be possible” without the former (p. 9). As reinhabitation involves learning to live more harmoniously with past disruption and injury, then decolonization means recognizing the present “disruption and injury and their causes” (p. 9). As such,

A critical pedagogy of place aims to (a) identify, recover, and create material spaces and places that teach us how to live well in our total environments (reinhabitation); and (b) identify and change ways of thinking that injure and exploit other people and places (decolonization). (p. 9)

Furthermore, he writes that “From an educational perspective, it means unlearning much of what dominant culture and schooling teaches, and learning more socially just and ecologically sustainable ways of being in the world” (p. 9), and hence, is an example of teaching against the grain. Gruenewald believes this is a radical pedagogical positioning because “current educational discourses seek to standardize the experience of students from

diverse geographical and cultural places so that they may compete in the global economy” (p. 7).

*The right life revisited*

Gruenewald (2003b) turns the present educational discourse of accountability into an accountability to place, which he thinks is a revolutionary “reengagement with the cultural and ecological contexts of human and nonhuman existence” (p. 646). As such it rejects the alignment of educative goals with national standards and economic objectives that neglects the human-to-human and human-to-place relationships, and instead emphasizes these relationships as being what education (and people) should be held accountable to. Therefore, education

must be linked to the purpose that schools currently neglect: increasing the range of opportunities for human perception and experience, examining the interrelationships between culture and place, understanding how spatial forms are embedded with ideologies and reproduce relationships of power, appreciating the diversity of life on the margins, attending to the health of nonhuman beings and ecosystems, and participating in the process of place making for living well. (p. 646).

However, one might ask what it means to live well and I will address that momentarily, but quoting philosopher Berthold-Bond, Gruenewald is suggesting that “place must be *experienced differently*” (emphasis in Gruenewald 2003b, p. 645). This experience involves a sensorial empathy, or what Gruenewald (using a phrase from Thomas Berry) calls a “‘re-enchantment’ with the world” (p. 646). This can be done most immediately by taking education outside the classroom

Earlier I alluded to Adorno’s (1999) *Minima Moralia*, specifically the section called “Refuge for the Homeless” which he says that “Dwelling, in its proper sense, is now impossible” and concludes with the condemning statement, “The right life cannot be lived wrongly” (p. 39), implying that there is no “right” life (socially, aesthetically, or ethically)

within a false or wrong or malevolent society. In his discussion of reinhabitation, Gruenewald (2003a) engages the consideration of “living well” and echoes Orr’s bioregionalist distinction between inhabiting and residing in a place, the former being identified as “living well.” However, living well may not be possible to do in isolation and may require “revolutionary social change” before it can be acquired (p.9). Orr’s distinction is worth quoting at length,

A resident is a temporary occupant, putting down a few roots and investing little, knowing little, and perhaps caring little for the immediate locale beyond its ability to gratify. As both a cause and effect of displacement, the resident lives in an indoor world of office building and shopping mall, automobile, apartment, and suburban house and watches as much as four hours of television each day. The inhabitant, in contrast, “dwells” . . . in an intimate, organic, and mutually nurturing relationship with a place. Good inhabitation is an art requiring detailed knowledge of a place, the capacity for observation, and a sense of care and rootedness. (cited in Gruenewald 2003a, p. 9)

I do not know that we can teach proper inhabitation to students when residence and displacement seem to be the natural existence for so many of this modern era, which is not to say we shouldn’t try. Many of us do not live “where we’re from” and are often more tied to a job than a location, but Gruenewald seems to be offering his critical pedagogy of place as an antidote to a pedagogy of placelessness he apparently sees in contemporary education.

### *Pedagogy of placelessness*

This pedagogy of placelessness is not a phrase Gruenewald uses, but it seems to be implied in the following statement:

Because the structures and processes of schooling are based on institutional patterns of isolating teachers and students from places outside school, one can claim that schools limit experience and perception; in other words, by regulating our geographical experience, schools potentially stunt human development as they help construct our lack of awareness of, our lack of connection to, and our lack of appreciation for places. (2003b, p. 625)

I argue that this lacking of awareness, connection, and appreciation amounts to a misorientation. That is, the negative educative experience that Gruenewald describes does not orient students to any sense of place or community, but instead it dislocates them from their own communities or the history of those places. As such, history is what happened to other people in other places, globalization occurs elsewhere, and science explains the phenomena of the earth, such as global warming, without connecting it to the effects of global warming to the students' locality. This is not to say that people do not already experience place(s) in very tangible and complicated ways. Certainly they do, but too often people (students) do not understand or even consider the web of relations in which those places are involved. Nor do they often reflect upon their own emotional and physical experiences to place. Situating curriculum not only connects the students place to these larger contexts and serves to orient students by locating curriculum in the places and conversations of students' everyday lives.

Countering concerns that such place-based education runs the risk of provincialism, Gruenewald quotes Nel Noddings (2002) as saying “the risk runs in exactly the other direction” as such a pedagogy “might easily deteriorate to an education for “‘nowhere’—that is, to an unhappy habituation to places and objects that have lost their uniqueness and their connection to natural life” (cited in Gruenewald 2003b, p. 646). Indeed, in an era when many students leave the home towns of their high schools to go on to college and jobs, one might think that instilling in them an appreciation in the local environment is futile. However, I would echo Noddings insistence that it is just the opposite. Even in students will leave the localities of their schools, it may prove to be more indispensable to teach an ethic toward place that they will carry with them as they leave. That is, teaching kids about their

local communities might be less important in terms of what they learn about their communities as much as it teaches them *to be connected* to their community wherever it is and will be. And by being connected, I would also mean an ethic of caring, appreciation, and attentiveness as described by Gruenewald.

Referring to the work of anthropologist Keith Basso's (1996) work on the Western Apache, Gruenewald describes the melding of "geography, mind, and culture" in which "the interior landscape of mind, spirit, and morality is composed of places, place names, and stories that teach about the relationships between people and between people and places" (Gruenewald 2003b, p. 626). This statement defines the very goal of this dissertation as well as the pedagogy of place that Gruenewald is describing. By imagining curriculum as landscapes I am hoping to engage in the pedagogical possibilities of relating those places to stories and history and thus, to people. Furthermore, I feel some sort of morality must be constructed out of those relations. I have described a situated spatial curriculum theory as one that is situated in place, emphasizing history in both terms of human-to-human and now, human-to-nature relationships. Thus far I have described it largely as a dialogic model of pedagogy, and given the new material presented in this chapter, I would argue that many voices that are included in this dialogic model must be come from particular places. As such I would reiterate that places have stories to tell and that students investigate the messages various local places have to communicate. Such inquiry encourages students to give voice to various perspectives of a given place that may or may not have other means of articulation. This ranges from the stories that would be revealed "if these walls could talk" to giving voice to animal species in the face of local development, or giving voice to the earth itself.

*Cognitive mapping*



Perhaps no other geographers have written as much on cognitive mapping as Roger Downs and David Stea, and their book, *Maps in the Minds: Reflections on Cognitive Mapping* (1977), is a seminal text for geographers. They define cognitive mapping as

an abstraction covering those cognitive or mental abilities that enable us to collect, organize, store, recall, and manipulate information about the spatial environment. . . Above all, cognitive mapping refers to a *process* of doing: it is an *activity* that we engage in rather than an object we have” (emphasis in original p. 6)

Key concepts are representation and environment, the latter by which they mean the “everyday spatial environment” (p. 7). Representation, they say, is a portrayal, a likeness, but also a distortion. Generally it refers to “*a mental image* in a person’s brain” and as such, “cognitive mapping allows us to generate mental images and models of the environment” (p. 7). The products of these images are cognitive maps: “organized representation[s] of some part of the spatial environment” (p. 6.) In terms of creating maps, they suggest four questions that must be addressed to make a map: purpose, perspective, scale, and symbolization, (p. 64). They describe cognitive mapping as “purposive” and a “goal-directed activity” to mostly aimed at either determining spatial behavior or to give a general frame of reference (pp. 68-69). Cognitive mapping refers to “*how spatial information about whatness, whereness and whenness gets acquired, organized, and stored in such a way that it will be functional when required*” (p. 62). As such, cognitive mapping is necessarily selective as it is also interactive and organizing (p. 73), and addresses three criteria of spatial awareness: whenness (time), whereness (place), and whatness (materiality/content).

It is not my purpose to summarize Down and Stea’s (1997) book or other associated literature, but only to provide some working definitions. They do provide a nice definition of orientation that is worth quoting at length:

Orientation means knowing, or understanding, location and the spatial relations between locations. . . [W]e are oriented when we know where we are now (our present location), and we can tie together this location with a series of other locations. . . Orientation refers to the tie between our knowledge of the spatial environment and the environment itself, between the cognitive map and real world. (p. 53)

Much of Downs and Stea's study has to do with spatial problem solving and practical uses, for example navigating a city. While this does raise the question of *correspondence* by which they mean accuracy (i.e., does a map accurately represent an environment?), they seem to stress function more than correspondence (i.e., does a cognitive map serve or enable one to navigate a spatial environment?). One of their topics of discussion is the notion of "wayfinding" which they define rather literally as "the movement of a person from one location on the earth's surface to another," (p. 124). They break it into four sequential steps: "(1) orientation, (2) the choice of route, (3) keeping on the right track, and (4) the discovery of the objective" (p. 124).

Another scholar who describes wayfinding is Kevin Lynch. In *The Image of the City* (1960/1971) Lynch says that way-finding is the "original function of the environmental image" (p. 125) and the latter is paramount to his conception of orientation. "The environmental image has its original function in permitting purposeful mobility" (p. 124). For Lynch, orientation creates a certain "legibility" and his study concentrates on this legibility or clarity of the cityscape in the minds of inhabitants of Boston, Jersey City, and Los Angeles. For him this legibility or orientation is mostly positive, and getting lost is associated with a sense of "anxiety and terror" (p. 4). Orientation, or in his terms, "a good environmental image," provides an individual with "an important sense of emotional security" (p. 4). In the next chapter I will address what I think is the value of getting lost, or disorientation. What is of significance here is the purpose of orientation, and it also notable

that Lynch, Downs and Stea, as well as others, give particular attention to the notion of the image which will be addressed more in this chapter and the next. Lynch writes,

But the image is valuable not only in this immediate sense in which it acts as a map for the direction of movement; in a broader sense it can serve as a general frame of reference within which the individual can act, or to which he [sic] can attach his knowledge. In this way it is like a body of belief, or a set of social customs: it is an organizer of facts and possibilities. (pp. 125-126)

Images are not only points of reference or the subjects of observation, but also key elements in a sequential or otherwise purposeful organization. They can also be a form of organization itself, but in any case, they are *representations* of various entities. The notion of images will be discussed at greater length, and particularly how they are part of a notion of critical constellations.

Finally, Lynch (1960/1971) writes, “The landscape plays a social role as well. The named environment, familiar to all, furnishes material for common memories and symbols which bind the group together and allow them to communicate with one another” (p. 126).

Perhaps Lynch is being too one-dimensionally positive as certainly among individuals those common memories will not be uniform or absent of power dynamics, and as I am using this language to discuss curricular landscapes, so too must I acknowledge that those landscapes themselves will be viewed differently among students. Miscommunications and differences of perception and representation will certainly occur in student conversations about landscapes. Yet, a class can still be seen as building “common memories and symbols” about the landscapes they experience together, even if those experiences are different.

Lynch’s book is one of the sources of Fredric Jameson’s notion of cognitive mapping, which he describes as an aesthetic process intended to orient the individual in the postmodern space. In Jameson’s terms, this “saturated space” involves “the abolition of critical distance” and

“the suppression of distance,” and therefore produces “the need for maps” and particularly a “social cartography” (Jameson, 1984/2001; 1991/1997).

Jameson (1988/2001) writes “the mental map of city space explored by Lynch can be extrapolated to that mental map of the social and global totality we all carry around in our heads in variously garbled forms” (Jameson 1988/2001, p. 282) and that “the incapacity to map socially is as crippling to political experience as the analogous incapacity to map spatially is for urban experience” (p. 283; 1991/1997, p. 416). As such, “An aesthetic of cognitive mapping” becomes “a pedagogical political culture which seeks to endow the individual subject with some new heightened sense of its place in the global system” (1991/1997, p. 54). Such a process must recognize “the enormously complex representational dialectic” that is part of the “world space of multinational capital” (p. 54). Of course, representation is a problem; “There can be no true maps” (p. 52), and moreover, the totality Jameson wants to map is neither entirely accessible or even Real in a material sense (though it does have real material consequences). He describes this situation with Althusser’s formulation of ideology: “the Imaginary representation of the subject’s relationship to his or her Real conditions of existence” (1988/2001, p. 283; 1991/1997, p. 51 and 415). Because of this inaccessibility, it seems that (much like Downs and Stea) Jameson stresses a practical functionality and allegorical representation more so than any sort of mimetic correspondence. More candidly he admits that “‘Cognitive mapping’ was in reality nothing but a code word for ‘class consciousness’” (1991/1997, p. 418).

### *Critical constellations*

When Walter Benjamin was growing up in Berlin, it was a major economic and cultural hub of Europe, and the young Benjamin watched the city develop into a modern

metropolis. Berlin, and later Paris, would become the landscapes of much of his work, especially those that addressed the cityscape and urbanism. Such spatial considerations are present throughout Benjamin's work, whether in his discussions of the *flâneur*, capitalist modernization of the cityscape; or the spatially grounded memoirs, diaries and other autobiographical essays. In his adult life he would become a peripatetic, struggling, literary and social critic of the early twentieth century, and though he never had substantial or stable income, he managed to sojourn rather extensively around Europe. In the diary he kept in Moscow, he (1926/1986) writes, "One only knows a spot once one has experienced it in as many dimensions as possible. You have to have approached a place from all four cardinal points if you want to take it in, and what's more, you also have to have left it from all these points. . . One stage further, you orient yourself by it" (p. 25).

I now want to juxtapose the above passage with the following quote from Dominican sociologist Magaly Pineda to begin my discussion of critical constellations. "We women have been the great missing subject of history. We do not have the reference points of our past" (cited in Parenti 1999, p. xiii). First, I would ask the reader to consider these points the subjects of history as particular places among the curricular landscapes that I've been suggesting students are traversing. For one this insists on coming to those points from various directions, which I would equate with viewing subjects from different perspectives, and from various points of view in the literary sense. I don't presume that the dimensions that Benjamin is calling for are those described by Gruenewald (2003b), but I would express that educators encourage many ways students might experience these landscapes, sensuously as well as intellectually. But most important, the notion of critical constellations has to do with an effort of cognitive mapping in using historical subjects for an internalized orientation

with the past, particularly in its relation to the present. According to Buck-Morss, “Dialectical images as ‘critical constellations’ of past and present are at the center of [Benjamin’s] materialist pedagogy” (p. 290). Benjamin writes about constellations in a few places, including his second dissertation written in 1925, the *habilitation* required of German professors (which was ultimately rejected), *The Origin of the German Tragic Drama* (play of mourning). In that he writes, (1925/2003) “Ideas are to objects as constellations are to stars” (p. 34). However, the use of the phrase “critical constellations” gets more application to his deliberations of historical materialism as discussed in chapter three.

Attacking the notion of historical continuity described earlier, Benjamin (1940b/2003) writes, that the historical materialist “ceases to tell the sequence of events like the beads of a rosary. He grasps the constellation into which his own era has entered, along with a very specific earlier one” (p. 397). To describe how this constellation of past and present are connected, he (1940a/1999) writes this in “Convolute N” of *The Arcades Project*:

It is not that what is past casts its light on what is present, or what is present its light on what is past; rather, image is that wherein what has been comes together in a flash with the now to form a constellation. In other words, image is dialectics at a standstill (p. 463)

Benjamin’s language remains rather esoteric, and does not necessarily clarify what he means as he adds, “For while the relation of the present to the past is purely temporal, the relation of what-has-been to the now is dialectical: not temporal in nature but figural (*bildlich*)” (p. 463). There is a wealth of material published on Benjamin’s “dialectical image” in addition to Buck-Morss’ influential text (1989/1999). For example, in Martin Jay’s (1973/1996) consideration he seemingly determines that Benjamin’s dialectical image wasn’t dialectical enough for Adorno, particularly when Benjamin describes this “thinking [as] crystallized as a monad” (1940b/2003, p. 396). According to Buck-Morss (1989/1999), *The Arcades Project*

was an attempt to develop “a highly original philosophical method,” which she calls a “dialectic of seeing,” and as such, “it experiments with an alternative hermeneutic strategy, . . . one that relies, rather, on the interpretive power of images that make conceptual points concretely, with reference to the world outside the text” (p.6). Much like Simon (1992) acknowledged, I am reading Benjamin as an educator and not binding myself to following an orthodox Benjaminian dogma if one that is not inherently contradictory exists.

### *The Copernican revolution*

Benjamin (1940a/1999) quotes Rudolf Borchardt to describe the “pedagogic side” of *The Arcades Project*: “To educate the image-making medium within us, raising it to a stereoscopic and dimensional seeing into the depths of historical shadows” (p. 458). I think it is safe to think that these historical shadows can be related to the history of the oppressed Benjamin wants to bring into the light. It should be noted that a stereoscope, as Buck-Morss (1989/1999) defines it, is an “instrument which creates three-dimensional images, work[ing] not from one image, but two” (p. 292). Returning to my opening discussion of perceiving constellations three-dimensionally, I believe that this is relatable to perceiving causal relations of historical events more complexly than linear explanations, but are instead, seen three-dimensionally. Moreover, I believe that this figural juxtaposition means images may mean a combination of objects that may not be naturally associated with the other, stressing the differences, (distance, space) between the two juxtaposed objects. How those objects are related are for me a subjective and allegorical rendering of the spatial relation between events and the life of the perceiver.

One could think of constellations as concepts that guide our travels over historical landscapes, but I see them acting more as figural connections between present and historical

events. Moreover, through certain arrangements, these dialectical images would be experienced politically and inform actions taken in the present. The political experience seems paramount to this new form of reading the world that Benjamin calls “the Copernican revolution in historical perception,” which he describes (1940a/1999) thusly:

Formerly it was thought that a fixed point had been found in ‘what has been,’ and one saw the present engaged in tentatively concentrating the forces of knowledge on this ground. Now this relation is to be overturned, and what has been is to become the dialectical reversal—the flash of awakened consciousness. Politics attains primacy over history. (pp. 388-389).

Such a new “dialectical method of doing history presents itself as the art of experiencing the present as waking the world. . . . Therefore: remembering and awakening are most intimately related” (p. 389). Indeed, “awakening is namely the dialectical, Copernican turn of remembrance” (p. 389). The reader might recall Simon, Rosenber, and Eppert’s (2000) call for a “*remembrance/pedagogy*” that engage people in “particular forms of historical consciousness” (p. 2). This remembrance/pedagogy is described as an “indelibly social praxis, a very determinate set of commitments and actions held and enacted by members of collectivities” (p. 2) and as “efforts to mobilize attachments and knowledge that serve specific social and political interests within particular spatiotemporal frameworks . . . aligned with the anticipation of a reconciled future” (p. 3-4).

Finally, these constellations relate to a certain loss of experience that Benjamin laments. He (1933/1999) writes, “With this tremendous development of technology, a completely new poverty has descended on mankind. And the reverse of this poverty is the oppressive wealth of ideas that has been spread among people, or rather has swamped them entirely . . .” (p. 732). Benjamin described two kinds of experience (*Erfahrung*), which refers to integrated experience over time and (*Erlebnis*) an individual or isolated experience,



and he (1940d/2003) says, “Where there is experience [*Erfahrung*] in the strict sense of the word, certain contents of the individual past combine in the memory with material from the collective past” (p. 316). Attacking the dissociated information industries of his time, particularly the newspaper, he writes, “The replacement of the older relation by information, and of information by sensation, reflects the increasing atrophy of experience” (p. 316). Addressing this replacement of information with sensation, particularly a shock factor and stimulation overload, he (1940d/2003) writes the “less these impressions enter long experience [*Erfahrung*] and the more they correspond to the concept of isolated experience [*Erlebnis*]” (p. 319). In an era where information (disinformation) has more frequently been replaced by sensations and stimuli, particularly in the form of images, Benjamin’s writings have peculiar resonance. Though he does not use the language of constellations in these discussions, for me, a critical constellation must fit together historical events and the individuals experiences in this notion of *Erfahrung*, which is associated with collective or traditional memories.

Benjamin (1936/2002) writes that “*Memory* creates the chain of tradition which transmits an event from generation to generation.” (emphasis in original, p. 154). Benjamin laments that the ability to “tell a tale properly” is disappearing and with it, “. . . the gift for listening is lost and the community of listeners disappears. Storytelling is always the art of repeating stories, and this art is lost when the stories are no longer retained” (p. 149). What makes the storyteller unique, and for me, this becomes a goal for creating a classroom of storytellers, is that “the storyteller takes what he tells from experience—his own or that reported by others. And he in turn makes it the experience of those who are listening to his tale” (p. 146). Elsewhere he (1940d/2003) writes, “A story does not aim to convey an event

per se, which is the purpose of information; rather, it embeds the event in the life of the storyteller in order to pass it on as experience to those listening. It thus bears the trace of the storyteller, much the way an earthen vessel bears the trace of the potter's hand" (p. 316). As students study, recount, and produce the collective memory of places, so must their products not only place these events in their own lives—in the constellations that connect these events to their lives—it must also seek to make this a shared experience among students and furthermore, insist, (as has been suggested earlier) that students learn to listen, or in Lather's terms, students having "ears to hear" (Lather 1996, p. 534).

### *The GIS revolution*

Jameson (1991/1997) laments that the problem with cognitive mapping "lay in its own (representational) accessibility. Since everyone knows what a map is, it would have been necessary to add that cognitive mapping cannot (at least in our time) involve anything so easy as a map" (p. 409). Perhaps this "spatial logic of the simulacrum" is truly impossible to map, and worse, our "historical situation" *is* one where

even the redemptive historiography of an E.P. Thompson or of American 'oral history,' for the resurrection of the dead of anonymous and silenced generations, the retrospective dimension indispensable to any vital reorientation of our collective future—has meanwhile itself become a vast collection of images, a multitudinous photographic simulacrum. (p. 18; 1984/2001pp. 202-203)

And as such "we are condemned to seek History by way of our own pop images and simulacra of that history, which itself remains forever out of reach" (p. 25), and perhaps collective memory has been weakened to the point of atomization, leaving individuals as isolated free radicals flying through space repeatedly caught in the orbit of some sensational icon of popular culture before being pulled away by the gravitational force of another. But if any or all of those conditions do exist, I do not take those as indicators of the futility of this

educational project, but as signals of the imperativeness of it. Though I do not want to place too much faith in new cartographic technologies, there are some very interesting tools out there that create unprecedented possibilities in cartography. I do not suspect that even these will allow us to map the totality of global capitalism, but perhaps we can map the symptoms, the progress, the effects, and some of its more material consequences. Or if not, perhaps, at best we can get students to map their lives as it exist in a web or relations that is itself incapable of being mapped. I will now briefly look at some of those map making tools that are increasingly available for teachers and students.

While I understand that technological capabilities are vastly different in various schools across the country, I would like to point to some possibilities that exist. I would at least acknowledge that the “digital divide” between students only further widens the class gap between those students who possess the cultural capital (in this case technological literacy) and those who don’t. However, it also seems there is a good deal of philanthropy present in some of these companies that help make technology available for poorer schools. Most people are familiar by now with Google Maps, which offers street maps and directions to most any place in the country. There is Google Earth which is an interactive online virtual globe composed of satellite images, aerial photography, and some GIS data that allows students to visit and manipulate images of many places on earth. Indeed, Google Earth’s attempt to virtually map the earth makes Borges’ fable suddenly more apropos. Furthermore, there are all sorts of virtual and now augmented realities such as Second Life. This is a virtual world in which participants can “visit” variously constructed sites, including going back in time to the Greek city-states and temples, or Paris in the 1800s, or to fantastic, purely imagined places, or go into the future. Some sights are maintained by universities and built

for specific classes (such as architecture) while others put on art exhibits and theatrical performances. While “visiting” these places, participants interact with other visitors who may be sitting behind a computer in another part of the world (the “real” world). On many of these sites, virtual real estate is for sale (for “real” money).

If a teacher just wants to find various maps to use in class, David Rumsey’s Historical Map Collection has around 16,000 maps available online both at <http://www.davidrumsey.com> and in Google Earth. Obviously search engines and categorical divisions exist to help the individual search through this collection. While the site focuses on rare 18th and 19th century maps, it is an extremely broad and deep collection of historical maps ranging from ancient maritime maps to city streets. Two other useful map websites are [mapcruzin.com](http://mapcruzin.com) and <http://mapsgooglemania.blogspot.com>, and of course, a teacher (and student) can scan in any map they have a hard copy of and manipulate it with various software programs. It is also noteworthy that hypertext, wikis, and mashups create new possibilities for making maps (and other texts) fairly interactive, some of which will be discussed in the next chapter. One such technological advancement (indeed, for some a revolution) is GIS, which collects, stores, organizes, manipulates, analyzes, and displays various and often disparate geographical data such as census data, geological maps, political maps, historic maps, etc. Software programs allow various levels of manipulation and for a comprehensive study on the existing uses, future possibilities and challenges of incorporating GIS into the K-12 classroom, the interested reader should see *Learning to Think Spatially* (2006) published by the National Research Council of the National Academies. For a book that specifically addresses GIS mapping and history, including various exemplary examples ranging from the Salem witch trials to the causes of the dust bowl in the 1930s to

immigration and race in New York city over the past 100 years, see *Past Time, Past Place: GIS for History* (Knowles 2004). For a website that works interactively with both teachers and students to create GIS projects see <http://www.gisforhistory.org>.

### *The cartographic imagination*

Another use of use of GIS in the classroom, and specifically one that has numerous possibilities for a critical pedagogy of place, is called community mapping or community geography, which usually refers to using GIS and other mapping and research to engage students in civic action in their communities. For another website that provides help for teachers who want to create their own community mapping projects, there is <http://www.actionforchange.org/mapping/>. Additionally, there also the book *Community Geography: GIS in Action* (English & Feaster 2003), and the accompanying teacher's guide (Malone, Palmer and Voigt 2004). These resources come with lesson plans premade for the teacher as well as example case studies on mapping water quality and students' routes to school. For examples of youth projects online there is Hopeworks, which train youth to use GIS and other media to teach inner-city youth in Camden. (<http://www.hopeworks.org>). Of more interests is the Green Map System that has partnered with schools and communities organizations to create environmentally oriented maps of New York City. These maps may be the products (like so many GIS projects) of various maps merged together (for example, bike lanes and environmental pollution and a heritage map) in an ongoing effort of environmental education but also "seeing the world according to youth" (see <http://greenmap.org>). Young people use provided icons to describe locations and add narrative text, poetry, photographs and images, and other supplements to describe any given place on a map.

Even without the use of GIS, the technological possibilities are endless, if only through the use of hypertext or Google Maps. Adult educators Edward, Cervero, Clarke, Morgan-Klein, Usher and Wilson (2002) called for educators to engage themselves and their students in the “cartographic imagination” which suggests they “plunder the resources of geographers, cartographers, architects, visual artists or graphic designers to explore questions about adult education and lifelong learning” (p. 101) and I would echo their call in the K-12 classroom. Within my metaphor of traveling and mapping across curricular landscapes (and mapping the individuals’ lives), this has seemingly infinite possibilities. Creating travelogues that include links to images, video, art, poetry, text, etc., means that mapping can take on incredibly critical and aesthetic features as well as personalizing the educative journey, chat rooms, blogs or wikis can be set up for dialogue to occur in and outside the classroom and among various groups of people. In an intensely autobiographical piece filled with images called “A Berlin Chronicle,” Benjamin (1932b/1999) writes:

I have long, indeed for years, played with the idea of setting out the sphere of life—*bios*—graphically on a map. First, I envisaged an ordinary map, but now I would incline to a general staff’s map of a city center, if such a thing existed. . . I have evolved a system of signs, and on the gray background of such maps they would make a colorful show if I clearly marked the houses of my friends, girlfriends, the assembly halls of various collectives, from the “debating chambers” of the Youth Movement to the gathering places of Communist youth, the hotel and brothel rooms that I knew for one night, the decisive benches in the Tiergarten, the ways to different schools and the graves that I saw filled, the sites of prestigious cafés whose long forgotten names daily crossed our lips, the tennis courts where empty apartment blocks stand today, and the halls emblazoned with gold and stucco that the terrors of dancing classes made almost the equal of gymnasiums. And even without this map, I still have the encouragement provided by an illustrious precursor, the Frenchman Léon Daudet, exemplary at least in the title of one of his works, which exactly encompasses the best that I might achieve here: *Paris vécu*. “Lived Berlin” doesn’t sound as good. (pp. 596-597)

It would seem now more than ever, the cartographic technologies for students to create something close to what Benjamin had in mind is now possible. While it has not been my

purpose to investigate those technologies thoroughly, but to illustrate examples of technologies that could be, and are, applied to critical classroom use, this chapter has focused on the way literal maps, cognitive maps, and education in general can situate, orient, and provide abilities to navigate curricular landscapes that are situated in place. I will continue this discussion of orientation in the next chapter, but will also address the pedagogical possibilities of disorientation.

**CHAPTER 6**  
**DISORIENTATION AND THE DÉRIVE:**  
**IMAGES AND (OF) EVERYDAY LIFE**

Not to find one's way in a city may well be uninteresting and banal. It requires—nothing more. But to lose oneself in a city—as one loses oneself in a forest—this calls for quite a different schooling. Then, signboards and street names, passers-by, roofs, kiosks, and bars must speak to the wanderer like a twig snapping under his feet in the forest, like the startling call of a bittern in the distance, like the sudden stillness of a clearing with a lily standing erect at its center. Paris taught me the art of straying; it fulfilled a dream that had shown its first traces in the labyrinths of the blotting pages of my school exercise books.

Walter Benjamin, *A Berlin Chronicle*

Life can never be too disorienting.

Guy Debord and Gil Wolman, *Methods of Détournement*

*I once was lost*

I once was backpacking with a friend in the Medicine Bow Mountains of Wyoming. We'd already set up our tent, put up our gear, and when we had finished dinner we decided we should hang our food bag as we were in bear country. So we walked off with a rope tied to the bag with all our food and toothpaste in it looking for a limb to hang the bag up in a tree. We walked up about hundred feet to make sure we were far enough away from our tent before we started looking up for a suitable branch. Unfortunately we were in a lodge pole pine forest. These trees grow tall but not with very substantial branches, at least not close enough to the ground for us to sling our bag over one. After turning around a few times with our heads in the air, looking up as in the tree branches as far as our headlamps would light,



we both suddenly had the effect of having played pin the tail on the donkey. That is, we did not know from which direction we'd walked. There was a new moon and so it was dark but we could see occasional clumps of clouds through the trees. We shined our flashlights in every direction only to see similar looking clumps of lodge pole pine trunks, and in those conditions and at that distance, they all looked alike. So in a matter of minutes we were suddenly disoriented, but not lost. Not yet. But we were alone in the woods on a cold night, separated from our gear, our warm clothes, our tent and sleeping bags, and it would soon be precipitating a sleet/snow mix.

We tried to be methodical about our search. One of us would stand still while the other disappeared into the dense forest, walking in a circling pattern out from the fixed point of the other's voice in a desperate game of Marco-Polo. We began to feel uneasy with the thought of becoming separated from each other, so the two of us walked off into the darkness, and typical of those lost, began walking in circles. We came across a clearing in the trees and looked up in time to catch a brief glimpse of the stars between passing clouds. In that time, we were able to spot the big dipper and then the north star and there was some bit of knowledge: north is this way. It turned out to be somewhat useless knowledge as we didn't know the direction from which we had left our tent; nor did we know where we were. This reiterates my point about having to know where we are before we can know where we're going. Actually, knowing which direction was north actually provided some potentially useful information, particularly if a major storm had hit us, but as frustration took over, and the fear began to creep in, our search became gradually more desperate and frantic. For the next two hours we stumbled around the forest dragging that food bag around like chum.

Even as the panic was lifting up in me like a caged bird trying to take flight, we came upon a road in our search and this offered some relief, as most roads do lead somewhere, and we were pretty sure it was the road we'd come in on. We walked around looking for landmarks that we'd seen earlier that day when we hiked in, but the images of the day change at night and while we were traversing the very same ground, we saw very different things. Hemingway expresses it thus, "I know that the night is not the same as the day: that all things are different, that the things of the night cannot be explained in the day, because they do not then exist" (Hemingway 1929/1957, p. 239). As time grew on it became clear: we were lost now. We'd come to that same damn clearing again and again as we rummaged around the woods. We knew this because we had the presence of mind to leave a few sticks in the shape of a star, but this repetitive discovery of covered ground became increasingly exasperating. We were walking in circles. It eventually started to sleet and then snow, so we set up a new camp where we were. We built a small lean-to and started a fire. We spent the next four or five hours huddled in fetal positions around a small fire under a tiny lean-to drifting in and out of sleep, only wakening occasionally to add wood to the fire, dreaming of bears and women and home. The next morning we woke up before sunrise but there was enough light to see. We put out the fire and scattered our little shelter before beginning the search for our tent, which we found in a matter of minutes. It was less than seventy-five yards away and visible in this grey morning dawn from half that distance. That morning's sunrise, which we watched with warm cups of coffee, was the brightest that I've ever seen. As I have felt many times in my life, I felt the joy of being found, or of finding my way.

### *Disorientation*

In their book Down and Stea's (1997) suggest "We are lost when we are unable to make the necessary link between what we see around us and our cognitive map" (p. 53). Getting lost can be a frightening experience, and I don't want to romanticize the notion too much. Being lost in nature often provides a certain humbling experience, and it can be fatal. Getting lost in the city has its own risks, and in both cases there are a myriad of factors that can increase one's chance of getting in and out of those situations safely. Some of those factors we have control over and some we don't. I've been prepared at the right times before, but I also realize I've gotten by on certain privileges. Traveling all over this country, I recognize that my position as a white male with a decent vehicle and a credit card (for a long time my father's) has often meant that situations that for others would be truly dangerous, or at least uncomfortable, for me were less threatening and usually not even an imposition. Being lost and being in danger are not always synonymous, but certainly they can occur simultaneously.

Educationally speaking, getting lost in the curriculum is not without its risks. Students could potentially become complacent, frustrated, and even frightened. Especially for those students who are rightfully concerned about their performance on a standardized test at the end of that semester, the feeling of being lost will not likely be a position of much comfort. Therefore, whatever disorientation students are exposed to must be individually balanced with caution. One of Outward Bound's mottos is to push people beyond their "comfort zones," and I believe education should do the same carefully aim to push students beyond their comfort zones, into unknown and uncertain realms, to consider ideas and thoughts that may not necessarily reinforce comfortable and customary beliefs. Getting lost in this sense asks students to relinquish their predispositions about curricular topics and

subjects. In an article entitled “Curriculum as Affichiste: Popular Culture and Identity,” Alan Block (1998) writes that “education might be understood as the opportunity of getting lost” (p. 328). I am going to advocate the same, though I prefer the term disorientation.

My experiences with being lost and being disoriented involve different emotional experiences, the former are more frenzied or at least frustrated, and more than a little anxious. Disorientation, on the other hand, connotes a situation that is less threatening, often based on happenstance, with less or no anxiety, but is perhaps a little dizzying. I agree there’s value in being lost, but for me disorientation denotes something more akin to being “turned around,” or otherwise not having one’s bearings. I think ideally it means to be willing to abandon those bearings, and too, be willing to gain ones’ bearings from completely different points of reference, or constellations. Disorientation can lead to being lost, and both can lead to being found. But for me, disorientation denotes deliberate or accidental abandonment and/or countering of (perhaps only temporarily) the conventional points of reference. On a more critical and aesthetic level, it means a reconfiguration of the constellations that we normally use to orient ourselves, and finding other images to use as signposts, symbols, and points of reference, or build new constellations with the same “stars.” This is different from misorientation, in which people follow directions, signposts, and points of reference well enough, but that those lead to destructive futures. In this chapter I return to the notion of images, particularly how Benjamin described them, and then I come back to the idea of getting lost and discuss Block’s (1998) article at greater length. I then discuss mapping and the Situationists tactic of the *dérive*, and finally conclude with the performative aspects of curriculum theory I’ve described.

In many ways, Benjamin can be seen as a precursor to Debord. Not only does Benjamin's description of the phantasmagoria seem strikingly close to the spectacle, but also the use of montage (particularly a whole book composed of collected quotes and snippets arranged and reassembled) is very Debordian. Additionally, Benjamin's praise of the work of John Heartfield (political photomontage), his approval of Brecht's *Umfunktionierung* [functional transformation, see Benjamin, 1934/1999, p. 774], and the description Benjamin gives of montage as "the superimposed element disrupts the context in which it is inserted" (p. 778) all share similar elements with the Situationists' notion of *détournement*. It should also be noted that the methods of *détournement* have become a popular form of art, particularly in the form of "mash ups" on the Internet. Debord and Benjamin have many other similarities especially if one connects those similarities to topics without expecting exact congruence on how they addressed those subjects, which include aesthetic production, commodities, the city—especially Paris, boredom, and particularly, the image.

As I have stated before, in most places in the U.S., one can hardly escape the abundance of images, signs, and commodities that are on display for us everywhere, as are the messages each of those communicates. To be sure, this communication is not uniform; it doesn't say the same thing to different people; there are miscommunications, repudiations, or disconnections. But the messages are still there, and many of them seep in one way or another, especially as advertisers have become more stealthily, "viral," and predatory in order to catch the eye of today's savvy and sometimes cynical consumer. The pulsating rapidity and conflicting, contradicting images often become a visual cacophony, each with or without audio, sending us some message that we internalize whether we consciously reflect

on it or not. The distraction that Benjamin spoke about seems to have multiplied and been amplified exponentially.

*What you see*

According to Rolf Tiedemann (1999) Benjamin's notion of the phantasmagoria "is the whole capitalist production process" and seems to be "merely another term for what Marx called commodity fetishism" (p. 938). Tiedemann (1999) also notes that dialectic images are at the center of Benjamin's *Arcades Project*, but he admits that they "never achieved any terminological consistency" (p. 942), but it seems that dialectical images are not a given, but must be deciphered and/or constructed by the historical materialist. By looking at the discarded commodities of the most recent past, Benjamin hoped one might "recognize today's life, today's form, in the life and in the apparently secondary, lost forms of that epoch" (Benjamin 1940a/1999, p. 458). As such, he intended that the "'creatural' [would] speak for itself" (1927/1994, p. 313). In doing so Benjamin was attempting to "carry over the principle of montage into history" by "assembl[ing] large-scale constructions out of the smallest and most precisely components" (1940a/1999, p. 461). His *Arcades Project* was a huge compilation of quotes and images, notes and commentary, and though we may never know exactly how he was going to piece them together, it appears that he intended the assemblage to somewhat speak for itself. He wrote:

Method of this project: literary montage. I needn't say anything. Merely show. I shall purloin no valuables, appropriate no ingenious formulations. But the rags, the refuse—these I will not inventory but allow, in the only way possible, to come into their own: by making use of them. (p. 460)

It would seem that if he is not going to provide any "formulations," that the assemblage itself (the constellation) must also say something to the reader. Buck-Morss (1989/1999) calls this a "dialectics of seeing" and describes it thusly, "Corsets, feather dusters, red and green

colored combs, old photographs . . .—these battered historical survivors from the dawn of industrial culture that appeared together in the dying arcades . . . were the philosophical ideas, as a constellation of concrete, historical referents” (p. 4). In the educative notion described earlier as “reading the world,” these cultural commodities are the “texts” that are to be read (much as popular culture to some forms of critical pedagogy). Buck-Morss describes Benjamin’s “dialectics of seeing” as one that relies “on the interpretive power of images that makes conceptual points concretely, with reference to the world outside the text” (p. 6). Benjamin (1940a/1999) describes his *Arcades Project*, “To be specific, I pursue the origin of the forms and mutations of the Paris arcades from their beginning to their decline, and I locate this origin in the economic facts” (p. 462).

*Is what you get*

I would now like to look more closely at the notion of images and how they might be used in the curriculum as constellations of referents to both orient and disorient students. In “One-Way Street,” an early piece written from 1923 to 1926 and published two years later, Benjamin (1928/2000) wrote that “only images in the mind vitalize the will. The mere word, by contrast, at most inflames it, to leave it smouldering, blasted. There is no intact will without exact pictorial imagination. No imagination without innervation” (p. 466). In that piece he creates a myriad of images and fragments pieced together and Buck-Morss (1989/1999) argues that this is Benjamin’s attempt to redeem allegorical practice in the actual material world. She explains, “In Benjamin’s modernist fragments, images of the city and of commodities function similarly [to Baroque allegorical practices]” (p. 18). Therefore, the image cannot be thought of as simply a still photograph or pictorial representation (presented through words or other media), but must be understood as figurative language as

well. Images certainly are representations and ones that appeal to the visual senses, but to the other senses as well. In the literary tradition, which is where Benjamin is partly located, images mean more than just word pictures. They are also part of figurative language, including metaphors and allegories, and themes, and hence often have an internal working that needs to be decoded. For my purposes images will be used to represent curricular topics, be they events, people, or other content. Certainly, this generation of students live in a very visual culture, and it may be that it is not only that “images vitalize the will” but images are the (only?) things to which today’s students respond.

As I have been talking about mapping, I do sometimes envision traditional maps of geographic territory but those that can be merged or juxtaposed with other maps such as historical maps to show urban growth or “progress,” or merged with census data to display economic distribution in the community. However, I am also imagining more intellectual maps that represent educational journeys, and those landscapes are not necessarily geographic. Regarding the former, I imagine geographical maps will be aligned with those projects that involve community engagement. As for the latter, these maps are creative representations of the journey they’ve taken as a class and include both class-constructed maps and individual ones, mapping out their lives, their journeys, their self-formation as occurring in the representational space of the curriculum. Images of events from history and other curricular content are placed in the same field of representation (a map) as their lives. Among the myriad of images and events that a class will “see” (study) they are to form constellations of those images as historical referents both on the scale of society but also their individual lives. Again, the technology of today make the possibilities infinite as maps can have links to all sorts of creative expression.



Returning to the work of Alison Jones, she (1999) writes, “Embedded in discourses on radical pedagogical dialogue is the ubiquitous and useful metaphor of *space*. Talk of margin, center, inclusion, exclusion, mapping, positioning, location, territory, space, gap, border, and boundary marks the terrain” (emphasis in original, p. 306). As I have already noted, such spatial metaphors are not only in the discourse of critical pedagogy, but in numerous academic fields. Nonetheless, she believes that despite the efforts of critical pedagogues to “redraw the map of modernism so as to shift in power from the privileged and the powerful . . . to those groups struggling” (p. 306; Aronowitz and Giroux 1991, p. 115), she asserts that by invoking such spatial metaphors, “critical educators unwittingly reassert a conceptualization of power that in effect repositions white men in the center” and the other on the margins. (1999, p. 306). Furthermore she says,

The modernist project of mapping the world, rendering it visible and understood, that is, accessible—is an expression of a Western desire for coherence, authorization, and control, and in my view can also be seen as central to white desire for racial harmony and dialogue.” (p. 311)

It seems clear that mapping, cognitive or literal, is based on a desire for coherence and perhaps control. However, I would like to think this control often has more to do with controlling one’s ability to navigate versus controlling the objects in the map. The former is the functional utility of a map, and yet, the historical record regarding control of the objects of the map, to manipulate, alter, remove, or annihilate is indisputable. That is, the maps utility as a tool for imperialism and the domination of nature could be seen as evidence as the first step toward manipulation and (re)positioning. However, it isn’t a step that necessarily follows and I do not see it as one “central to white desire of racial harmony and dialogue.” Nonetheless, the work of Jones, and others (e.g. Ellsworth 1989/1994; 1997; Lather 1996; 1998; 2007), reminds us that even in the most democratic forms of “remapping,” there will

be irrevocable and even irreconcilable differences. Furthermore, too often access, the right to map, the right to see, and to hear is all too often presumed, and the desire to bring the marginalized closer to the center does seem to reinforce the power dynamics of the center and margin.

*Of starry skies and cloudless climes*

Constellations, as already discussed, are images we create to give shape and form to objects within our field of vision and those shapes and images can be used to orient us beneath the night's sky. As such, the objects and events of school are much like a star field, and indeed, to many students the isolated and fragmentary nature of their presentation often makes them appear less organized as bits of data scattered rather haphazardly. If one looks into the night sky (when far enough away from city lights), and simply sees a plethora of tiny white lights with no sense of organizational meaning or connectedness, then the stars appear as a sea of random lights. Just as we build shapes—and in distant days, stories—to match those shapes to organize an otherwise jumbled assembly of stars, so too must education connect constellations (and allow students to connect constellations) to the objects in their view to give them organization and meaning. Although as a class there may be some events that are so huge and important that their constellation is something the class produces as a whole, there will also be smaller individual constellations of self-formation that students will connect images and events in their own lives. Perhaps these will include some of the “stars” in the objects of constellations decided upon by the class and curriculum, but other more personal objects may be included as well. Some stars—events, images, people, etc.—in the constellations of students will not be seen by others. Still, as a class, and as matter of

orientation, there will be some constellations that the whole class can refer to, and additionally, they can construct the constellation themselves.

The ancients' relationship to the stars meant more than just organization to help navigate earthly movement. That organization was also in the form of stories that were intimately related to their cosmology and their relationship to the gods, the earth, and each other. In this sense, they not only helped people navigate the earth on a geographic landscape, but also the social landscape. Because these constellations were bound up in their stories and myths that were part of the collective memory, they also acted as orienting agents for social behavior. Similarly, I hope the constellations a class builds out of historical events studied, act as images and stories that help them navigate their social behavior. As such, these historical objects and events become part of our collective memory and therefore historical referents, which form constellations by which we as a class, and individuals, navigate our lives. As I have said before, it may not be so much the "facts" of historical content that is so important, but *how* we teach those facts, those events, and what themes, allegories, or questions frame that inquiry may be more important. This is, in part, what I mean by *constellations*: the way we organize material to give it meaning beyond its content as a fact or piece of data. I am calling for a classroom that is both critical and aesthetic in the construction of such constellations.

### *The road less-traveled*

For the most part, what has been presented in this dissertation has argued that schools and society in general *misorient* students, a point I will make stronger in the conclusion. Additionally I have argued for a certain historical understanding that for me is a necessary part of being truly oriented in the world. Although "truly" seems to imply a fairly well

sealed bond of correspondence between the individual's perception of their spatial environment and the way it actually is. I do not believe any such perception exists. I do, however, believe there are degrees of correspondence. However, it seems clear that the scale and symbolism of maps, (and the elapsed time and representation of history), and the positionality (point of view) of the mapmaker and the historian, all contribute to distortions. This is not a fact to be swept under the rug, apologized for, or denounced. Recognizing the acts of interpretation and of distortion is important to begin consciously being critical and aesthetic in that act. Returning to the notion of historical understanding, history is the topography of the social landscape. However, because of scale and other cartographic tools and the analogous equivalencies, we can make "accurate maps" that enable people to navigate with some order of autonomy. Which is not to say people are not navigating themselves all the time. They are. But it also seems that so many people are following some rather mainstream highways and interstates that thus far, in my opinion, have only contributed to tragic and morally irreprehensible conditions. Thus, the rest of this chapter attempts to chart out some ways teachers and students can build alternative maps of navigation, and perhaps even disrupt the way certain spaces of travel are progressing.

Complaining that education involves a "myriad of ways" of keeping "students and teachers on track" and "in place" (p. 325), Block (1998) recalls Foucault's panopticon to say that the curriculum "promotes incarceration by visibility" (p. 327). As such, "We are always to be found by our position on the well-traveled, well-lit and heavily marked path which is the curriculum. We are defined—we define ourselves—by that position" (Block 1998, p. 327). Block's point is well taken, especially with the time constraints that are placed on teachers and the numbers of student they are given. In order to cover the most ground with

the most students, it often becomes necessary to stick to the main roads. Standardized testing probably only ensures more of that as we can assume most of the questions on the test (for the sake of uniformity) will also come from those main roads like so many historic markers on the sides of our highways. In contrast, Block argues for a pedagogy “that reveals how students already use their knowledge in schools, rather than to instruct them how to follow those paths of knowledge already laid down” (p. 335). Too, such a pedagogy teaches students “how to question and [does] not teach how not to answer, how to search for their own answers and not to respond to the questions of others” (p. 335). And to do so, he believes that “education ought to be an experience of dislocation in which the sense of lostness is given impetus and validation” (p. 336).

*But now I'm found*

For Block, a pedagogy that encourages dislocation focuses curriculum on the “production of identity” (1998, p. 335) as students find themselves. He quotes Thoreau to describe the completeness of the sense of being lost he hopes to achieve:

not till we are completely lost or turned around—for a man [sic] needs only to be turned around once with his eyes shut in this world [or looking up at the trees] to be lost—do we appreciate the vastness and strangeness of nature. [. . .] In fact, not till we are lost do we begin to realize where we are, and the infinite extent of our relations. (cited in Block 1998, p. 332)

Block believes that such a sense of lostness “is the experience of decenteredness and the perpetual realization of identity in relations” (p. 336). Recognizing this means that transformations of identity become possible in a process of internal reflection after a dislocation of previous associations of center, or in my terms, previous constellations of orientation. By relocating the self amid the annihilation of previous subject-centeredness,

Block says, curriculum can be seen as “an engagement with the experience of lostness [so] that the opportunity of being found may occur” (p. 336).

Block describes this sense of lostness in a few ways, the first of which is to “abandon the notion of home so that we may know our home everywhere. Home functions as the controlling center from which emanate prescribed paths” (p. 328). Hence, Block wants students to get off the prescribed paths and the normal directions of travel and to feel at home everywhere. This description resonates with part of Baudelaire’s description of the “perfect *flâneur*.” He writes, “To be away from home and yet to feel oneself everywhere at home” (Baudelaire 1863/1964, p. 9). Though I agree with Block, I must admit the sense of entitlement of such a statement is part of the problem Alison Jones’ research illuminates: that we have the right to travel anywhere and feel at home. There are some places, both in the world and in the curriculum, that not only will students not “feel at home” but perhaps they shouldn’t, particularly if it is the home of someone else. Regardless, I take his point to mean that by losing our home base, or in my language, losing the conventional constellations by which we normally orient ourselves, we are then free to follow new paths (Block) or create new constellations (me). Block actually wants to abandon the notion of the path which is “created by the exercise of power which defines it and the traveler who treads upon it” and as such, it “determines direction, supervises the view, and is responsible for controlling thought and action” (p. 330). Benjamin also wrote of straying from the normal paths:

Comparison of other people’s attempts to the undertaking of a sea voyage in which the ships are drawn off course by the magnetic North Pole. Discover this North Pole. What for others are deviations are, for me, the data which determine my course. (1940a/1999, p. 58)

This is not a metaphor that Benjamin develops but the sailing references is used a few times in *The Arcades Project*. Regardless, it is clear that Benjamin wants to get “off the beaten path” of history.

Finally Block (1998) advocates a form of “curriculum as affichiste” or “intellectual vagabondage” (p. 330). Noting the works of Picasso, Braque, and the work of the surrealists and Dadaists, he suggests that these artists drew on subjects and materials of their daily lives and worlds, and that “these artists acted as collectors or commentators rather than as individual generators of meaning” and he thinks students should construct knowledge similarly. Taking a statement by Vardenoe and Gopnik about this kind of art, Block says this describes his ideas about curriculum:

It can continue to bring us glad tidings by taking us on extraordinary journeys to familiar places, but only on its own eccentric terms. The deal is that you have to go without a map, and you can only get there on foot. (cited in Block 1998, p. 339)

I’m not quite willing to abandon maps altogether although I agree that students should be able to create their own maps and not solely rely on historical ones. However, cartography has always used old maps to update or create new ones, and for the side of mapmaking that appeals to correspondence, this may be necessary, but I am also interested in how new maps can be created and old maps redrawn, and furthermore, maps of the future laid.

Much of the preceding material has stressed explanatory knowledge, critical representations of content, and perhaps has given more attention to mapping the public sphere. However, to complement this, and not to be neglected by it, I would like to describe another side to such cartography that offers attention and expression to the personal sphere, and uses creative, artistic, playful, and performative activities in and about those landscapes. Even if only metaphorically, I still think it is imperative that educators create an atmosphere

that enables disorientation that doesn't make the students feel vulnerable, afraid, or otherwise anxious about being lost. That is, teachers have to create a classroom atmosphere that allows students to wander freely, even to the point of becoming lost (but that the student feels a certain level of safety). To me, this seems incumbent on establishing some level of trust, both between teacher and student, and among students. Even in a "standard" educational setting, teachers cannot remove all risks from the classroom, and even along the most well traveled roads, a guide cannot guarantee the safety of all travelers. However, in both cases preparations and precautions can be taken to attempt to preserve the safety of students and at times, their comfort. In order to ease some of the anxiety of becoming lost, I would suggest that teachers encourage an element of play. This has already been discussed as elements of both Burbules' and Schor's notion of the dialogic classroom. And there certainly was a ludic nature to the SI's *dérive*.

*You can't get there from here*

In the early days of the SI, they were particularly interested in the concept of urbanism and the construction and perception of public space. Two years before the SI had formed, Guy Debord wrote the "Introduction to a Critique of Urban Geography." In this essay he called for a psychogeography that was intended to study the effects place had on people, on both their emotions and behaviors. He also called for "a renovated cartography" and the production of psychogeographical maps and the "alterations" of existing maps. The *dérive* would become a method of such research, and Debord went to great lengths to separate it from the strolls of the Surrealists. To be sure, this practice has a genealogy that goes back before the Surrealists' strolls and Baudelaire's *flâneur*, and was practiced under different names and forms in different cities around Europe. Although it was often in the



process of being refined, Debord continued to give the *dérive* distinctive characteristics, which usually were in its relation to psychogeography. Maps played a key role in the SI's experiments with psychogeography and the *dérive*. Literally meaning "drifting," the *dérive* was defined as "a mode of experimental behavior linked to the conditions of urban society: a technique of transient passage through varied ambiances" (Knabb, 1981, p. 45).

Psychogeography was the study of those ambiances but also in their differences and discontinuities. While maps often produce the point of view that everything fits together, the SI's maps also wanted to show places of fragmentation, difference, and obstacles.

On the one hand, the psychogeographer was to record the subjective experiences of his or her travels, which could be done singularly but was best done in groups of two or three, and sometimes simultaneously with other groups in other parts of the city. On the other hand, The Situationists claimed psychogeography "does not contradict the materialist perspective of the conditioning of life and thought by objective nature" (Knabb 1981, p. 5). As such, psychogeography attended to both the public and private spheres, and moreover, the relationship between the two, particularly how the material conditions of the public sphere affected the movement, behavior, and feelings of individuals. The SI wrote,

the primarily urban character of the *dérive*, in its element in the great industrially transformed cities—those centers of possibilities and meanings—could be expressed in Marx's phrase: "Men can see nothing around them that is not their own image; everything speaks to them of themselves. Their very landscape is alive." (Knabb 1981, p. 51)

The notion that their very landscape is alive seems to refer to a level of consciousness, that is, a way of seeing—*reading*—the world. Sadie Plant (1992) describes Psychogeography as "intended to cultivate an awareness of the ways in which everyday life is presently conditioned and controlled [and] the ways in which this manipulation can be exposed and

subverted . . .” (p. 58). To this effect they made their own maps of Paris, recording more subjective experiences, often as narratives as part of larger critiques of urbanism and social control.

Within my metaphor, I am suggesting that students also embark on *dérives* through the curriculum and that the purpose of psychogeography’s study of the city hold some analogous possibilities of application to curriculum. On the most banal level, students produce a subjective account, both visual and textual, of their curricular environment. A slightly more radical aspiration is to “cultivate an awareness” of the ways in which the students’ everyday experience is “conditioned and controlled” by the curriculum. A fully Situationists’ ambition would be to “cultivate an awareness” of how the spaces of everyday life (including their schools) are “conditioned and controlled” by the spectacle, which necessarily entails a historical critique of materialism and consciousness. Another less theoretical, but no less important application of psychogeography is for teachers to consider the psychogeographical environments of their classrooms. In an article called “Situationist Space” Tom McDonough (2002/2004) addresses the *dérive* in detail. He writes, “for the situationists the subject’s freedom of movement is restricted by the instrumentalized image of the city propagated under the reign of capital” (p. 243). I am arguing that the movement of many public classrooms—including any attempts to get off the main roads—are similarly restricted by the reign of capital in its manifestations in the cultural economy of schools. This economy is one that is heavily influenced by the textbook, standards, and testing industries as well as being generally guided by the market influences of preparing students to enter the global economy.

*The naked city*

In 1957 Debord published a map called *The Naked City*. The image is an icon among Situationist fans and is made up of nineteen sections of Paris cut up and arranged with directional arrows linking some and not others. The original map Debord reassembled (*détourned*) was called the *Plan de Paris*, and according to McDonough (2002/2004) it was one of the most popular maps of Paris. He writes that the *Plan de Paris*

exists in a timeless present; this timelessness is imagined spatially in the map's (illusory) total revelation of its object. Users of the map see the entire city laid out before their eyes; however, such an omnipresent view is seen from nowhere. (p. 246)

Many if not most maps, cognitive or literal, present a representation that occurs from a more or less impossible point of view. Indeed, if one could see the landscape as such, the map wouldn't be necessary. Furthermore, maps often create a homogeneity that doesn't really exist as it conceals differences and conflict that are present. Although this parallel is not perfect, as I don't think the SI quite developed their maps this way, I believe it is close enough to warrant the inclusion: just as Benjamin's historical object, once "blasted" out of historical continuity could not then be reinserted into the continuum because it didn't fit with that vision of the world, Debord wanted to show that there are parts of the city that are riddled with conflict and once these differences and disparities are revealed, these sections can no longer be fit into the homogenizing structure of the map.

McDonough (2002/2004) distinguishes between the *dérive* and the *flânerie* noting their similarities and differences. Regarding the latter, he writes, "for the situationists, however, the *dérive* was distinguished from the *flânerie* primarily by its critical attitude toward the hegemonic scopic regime of modernity" (p. 257). Furthermore, the *flâneur* was principled on the gaze of the "man of the crowd:" the voyeur, whereas as McDonough points out, the *dérive* is for the walker, and a person who participates in the construction and/or

altercation of public space, not simply viewing it, but this was an active intervention. Debord wrote, “We must develop an intervention directed by the complicated factors of two great components in perpetual interaction: the material settings of life [place] and the behaviors that it incites and that overturn it” (Debord 1957/2004, p. 44). McDonough describes the *dérive* as a “tactic in the classic military sense” and then quoting Michel De Certeau writes,

“it must play on and with a terrain imposed on it and organized by the law of a foreign power. It does not have the means to *keep to itself*, at a distance, in a position of withdrawal, foresight and self-collection: it is a maneuver ‘within the enemy’s field of vision,’ as von Bulow put it, and within enemy territory.” (emphasis in original; De Certeau cited in McDonough 2002/2004, p. 259)

As McDonough explains,

despite the spectacle’s hegemonic power, the production of the city [of the social space] could not be fully instrumentalized. Contrary to the projections of spectacular society, which posited the city as a natural timeless form. . . The *dérive* as a practice of the city reappropriated public space from the realm of myth, restoring it to its fullness, its richness, and its history. (2002/2004, p. 261)

Again, I am concerned with how this can be transposed into curriculum and as such, just as the Situationists were regulated to their movement by the streets of Paris, so is a teacher somewhat regulated by the standard course of study. But just as the SI attempted to take part in the construction and altercation of public spaces, so can students and teachers reconstruct the standard course of study.

During the Situationists’ vagabond perambulations in the city, often the intention was to disorient themselves to the point of getting lost. Sometimes the SI used the term “*dépaysement*,” which McDonough (2002/2004) says literally means “the condition of being ‘taken out of one’s element’” (p. 264), and he also associates with as “a characteristic of the ludic sphere” (p. 257). According to Debord (1958/1981), the *dérive* involves the “playful constructive behavior” (p. 50) intended to disrupt the homogeneity of the city. In a sort of

phenomenological bracketing, getting lost supposedly allowed drifting without the predispositions and/or expectations of knowing where they were. This lostness offered at least two possibilities. One, was stumbling into completely new territory and two, stumbling into known territory but experiencing it differently. However, this lostness was not always meant to occur as “subordination to randomness” (as the surrealists strolls often were), but expressed “complete *insubordination* to habitual influences” (Debord 1955/1981, p. 7). In the city these habitual influences might be street designs meant to direct traffic, tourist routes, or other architecturally directed behavior.

Similar to the way Block describes “getting lost” in the curriculum, I am suggesting students embark on *dérives* through the landscapes of their curriculum as well as literal places such as their schools and communities. Perhaps student *dérives* can be used as methods of studying specific places as well as curricular content as students produce both cartographic representations of their journeys as well as narratives of the experiences. Both maps and narratives were integral to the *dérive* and psychogeography and serve as a tool and effort to “read the world.” One of the purposes of psychogeographic activity is to read and record the landscape of everyday life. As such, the maps were narrative accounts of travel, partly told through images and maps, but also through texts and discourse. McDonough (2002/2004) it thusly, “the key principle of the psychogeographic map: its figuration as narrative rather than as a tool of ‘universal knowledge’” (p. 243). Sometimes “the users of these maps were asked to choose a directionality and to overcome obstacles, although there was no ‘proper’ reading. The reading chosen was a performance of one among many possibilities” (p. 243). Another, more ‘destructive’ purpose is to make sure that “distinctions and differences are not eradicated” as “they are only hidden in the homogenous space of the

[map],” and Debord and the SI wanted to “bring these distinctions and differences out into the open” (McDonough 2002/2004, p. 249). Through tactics that might be likened to guerilla theater, they tried to bring such differences to the forefront of public consciousness. In this way the *dérive* is a creative, playful and performative act that set out to “organize movements metaphorically around psychogeographical hubs” (p. 246). Debord (1958/1981) writes,

The ecological analysis of the absolute or relative character of fissures in the urban network, of the role of microclimates, of the distinct, self-contained character of administrative districts, and above all of the dominating action centers of attraction, must be utilized and completed by psychgeographical methods. (p. 50)

And to be sure, their *dérives* were overtly performative as they attempted to construct situations or to recreate public spaces.

#### *The performance of everyday life*

In his book, *The Radical in Performance: Between Brecht and Baudrillard*, Baz Kershaw (1999) explores “performance beyond theater as a more fruitful domain for radicalism than performance in theater” (p. 16). The theater for Kershaw, as others suggested before him, is bankrupt of any political activism, reproducing dominant ideologies and becoming more of a “disciplinary system” that reinforces commodification and consumerism, and otherwise a form of “spatial indoctrination that aims to embed normative social values in the behaviour of its participants” (pp. 31-32). I see schools similarly as a “disciplinary system” that “embeds normative values” that I have already named as destructive. To counter that, I have been trying to think of how curriculum can move education beyond schools, and I think the models of cultural journalism, community mapping, and action research provide examples for such.

As stated before, this chapter appeals to the performative and artistic side of pedagogy, and much like cognitive mapping, this is something that is already present and

already occurring in daily life. People are always in the act of interpreting, which many argue is fundamentally aesthetic. Again, by being more deliberate and conscious about it, students and teachers can enhance that process. I also believe this is relatable to the performative aspect of curriculum Giroux and Shannon (1997) describe in their notion of “Pedagogy as Performative Practice.” Such practice stresses not only the notion of educators as public intellectuals and education as a process of cultural production, but also recognizing how interpretation transforms through the very act of interpretation. They write, “Performative interpretation suggests that how we understand and come to know ourselves and others cannot be separated from how we represent and imagine ourselves” (p. 7). But I am also interested in how the tools of drama and arts integration can enhance learning. The research on drama and education is huge, and the work of Betty Jane Wagner is exemplary. Her 1998 book, *Educational Drama & Language Arts*, shows both research that supports the integration of educational drama and some various examples of application. She writes,

The goal of educational drama is to create an experience through which students may come to understand human interactions, empathize with other people, and internalize alternative points of view. It is particularly effective in making a historical event come alive for students. (p. 5)

As I have already stated, curriculum as complicated conversation means more than classroom discourse, particularly open-ended discussion. Some dialogue is scripted just like a play and too, the conventions and tools of drama, literary writing, and the arts in general should be employed to enhance classroom dialogue. Madeleine Grumet describes the benefits of this thusly:

Because art produces things that other people can see, hear, and feel, it brings about evidence of an individual’s thought into social and cultural spaces where other people can pay attention to it, argue with it, and care about it. (2004, p. 58)

Furthermore, she adds, “and the arts, mixing material with fantasy, hope with memory, form with possibility, and individuality with community, are powerful processes of making meaning” (p. 59). Additionally, artistic license involves imaging other possibilities than they way things “really are,” as much as that can be determined.

As mentioned before, Grumet uses a spatial metaphor when she describes arts integration as creating a “third space” (2004, p. 65), which represents to her “a new space that invites students’ interpretations and resymbolization of the disciplines” and she describes it as “an unmarked field” that will can become “blended space, or new knowledge” as the students “display the sense that the students make of what they study” (p. 66). Aesthetic integration not only provides more motivation for student investment in the curriculum, but, especially through the use of performance theory, it offers varies strategies that we can complicate the conversations that are the curriculum of our classrooms. Surely classroom relations cannot reconcile oppression that exists in society, but teachers and students can resist reproducing those injustices, both unconsciously and deliberately. I believe performance and arts integration can be powerful tools in addressing those injustices, perhaps creating empathy and moving students toward reconciliation where needed. It also seems to offer the imaginative possibilities of *something different*. It is clear that one of the differences the Situationists strove to highlight in the paucity of everyday life was the differences between the way things are and the way things could be.

### *Rehearsal of revolution*

Ira Shor (Shor and Freire 1987) also discusses the possibilities that come from dramatic and artistic integration, and his comments are worth quoting at length:

The creative disruption of passive education is an aesthetic moment as well as a political one, because it asks the students to reperceive their prior understandings and



to practice new perceptions as creative learners with the teacher. Maybe we can consider ourselves dramatists when we rewrite the routine the classroom script as it is a curriculum. The classroom is a stage for performance as much as it is a moment of education. The classroom is not only a stage and a performance, and only a format for inquiry, but is also a place that has visual and auditory dimensions. We see and hear many things there. (p. 116)

The goal of this project is to discover and chart these third spaces, renaming territories in a language that is a critical and aesthetic renaming and remaking of the world. The use of Augusto Boal's (1974/2004) *Theatre of the Oppressed* provides numerous exercises, methods, and strategies that I believe are applicable to classroom drama. His work is particularly poignant as his goal is to turn the "spectator" into a "spect-actor" which denotes a more participatory role than that of the passive spectator. These terms are analogous to Freire's passive learner and active agent in meaning making.

Boal (1974/2004) describes his "poetics of the oppressed" as different from theater that seeks "catharsis" but the instead, "critical consciousness" (p. 122). Boal's form of theatre attempts to dissolve the separations between the actors/actresses and the audience of receivers, but strives to integrate the two. Spect-actors do not feel for the protagonist; they become the protagonist. He writes that the main objective is to change spectators from their "passive beings . . . into subjects, into actors, transformers of the dramatic action" (p. 122). Boal finds much of his inspiration from Brecht (and Freire) and he concludes, "'Spectator' is a bad word. The spectator is less than a man [sic] and it is necessary to humanize him, to restore him to his capacity of action in all its fullness" (p. 155). Through the techniques that Boal describes, he believes that "Dramatic action throws light upon real action," and as such, "perhaps the theater is not revolutionary in itself; but have no doubts, it is a rehearsal of revolution" (p. 155).

Returning to Kershaw's (1999) book, he writes that while most approaches to history are concerned with how it is written (particularly by "experts"), he wants to look at how it is performed (particularly by "anybody at anytime"). This requires shifting focus "from history to memory, and from historical research through documents to processes for recalling past events" (p. 162). He looks at various examples of reminiscence theatre, and though the differences he draws are beyond the scope of this dissertation, his conclusion is worth noting. "By engaging audiences in the creation of 'unofficial knowledge' about the past, the techniques of reminiscence performance, at their best, encouraged participation in the development of reflexive autonomy, producing a performative aesthetics that sometimes created a source of radicalism" (p. 182). Similarly, I am hoping that what I have described herein encourages students to take a more active role in the construction and performance of history. This performance might well extend beyond the schools in both the sense that students go to their local communities for historical research, but also that what gets produced changes as it is being interpreted, re-presented, and re-produced. Furthermore, situated education as described herein seems to make some of the first steps beyond the classroom. By situating education in the space of local communities, and by listening to people and places, students take part in the production of a conversation that extends learning beyond the classroom as new understandings of history, of the world and our place in it. This conversation is carried out into the world as it informs the way students act in that world.

## CHAPTER 7

### CONCLUSION:

#### WHAT A LONG STRANGE TRIP IT'S BEEN

I shall be telling this with a sigh  
Somewhere ages and ages hence:  
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—  
I took the one less traveled by,  
And that has made all the difference.

Robert Frost, "The Road Not Taken"

*Two roads diverged in a yellow wood*

Thematically, this project has been about the road less traveled as an alternative, rebuke, or an reconstruction of old highways and "worn paths" that lead to the same destinations. My conclusion has two parts. I begin by turning to some of Benjamin's earliest work when he was writing about school reform, and then I will offer some form of synthesis to the dissertation. At the age of twenty-three and while he was still heavily working with other students in Berlin toward school reform, Benjamin (1915/2000) writes, "The perversion of the creative spirit into the vocational spirit, which we see at work everywhere, has taken possession of the universities as a whole and has isolated [the students] from the nonofficial, creative life of the mind" (pp. 41-42). A vocational spirit certainly predominates contemporary American education in both colleges and high schools. "Accountability" has its roots in factory business models and standardized testing is founded upon production-oriented number crunching that necessarily promotes a favoritism of the privileged—but remain veiled as meritocracy—penalizing the less productive schools and teachers. Furthermore, for tragically ignominious reasons, in the wealthiest nation in the world, many of our public schools are dilapidated and desperate for money. Thus, schools

quite understandably accept money from nearly any source willing to give it, and now more than ever, this often includes corporations, who have already been producing textbooks and tests for some time now. Unfortunately these funds often have strings attached that involve anything from marketing research to product promotions, and from exclusive sales deals to free advertising. This, obviously, means that to various degrees, business is affecting curriculum. This alone is nothing new as businesses have been telling schools “what we’re looking for in an employee” for years, but this has importance as it relates the situation of education to the system as a whole. Profit is the motive for business, not a communally oriented department; good (productive and cheap) workers are the goals of business, not critical, autonomous thinkers. And even without such direct involvement, the education system must be regarded as part of the entire system of late or global capitalism, which is based on scarcity and competition, and not necessarily equal competition. The very method of tallying numerical test scores and rankings creates a competing hierarchy in which individual achievement is inherently valued over communal cooperation. This is not to say that teachers can’t create space for communal cooperation within the system, as this happens all the time with good teachers. However, the natural inclinations of the system are those that lead to competition and not compassion. I see all such conditions as a destructive misorientation of students on the part of schools, conditioning them to their competitive, business-minded motivations.

The vocational spirit also looms over the conscious associations with schooling in general. There seems to be a ubiquitous agreement that education is valued for what it does occupationally for the student, i.e. to get a good job. And from the very earliest of ages, one of the first questions posed to a child is, What do you want to be when you grow up? And throughout the school process, in various manifestations, vocational tracking is the norm, even if it is as simple as separating those who will go on to college and those who will not. This is not to suggest that specific vocational training has no value or place in the schools. Nor does it imply that every student should go on to college, but when a vocational spirit is

coupled with a dominant ideology in the U.S. that values material wealth and status, the resulting ethos is frequently antithetical to an education committed to building community through cooperation. As for competition, good jobs and good colleges (and the money to go to college) are scarce, so to secure these exigencies, students must necessarily compete with one another and they do so entering the classroom from disparate and unequal levels of competency, privilege, and social status.

Furthermore, it is doubtful the system could ever support equal achievement from everyone even if such were possible. However, it isn't possible because of material and social inequalities that occur on the level of the whole system, in our society and culture, and those inequalities take the form of bodies and minds that enter our schools everyday as individual children. The vocational spirit is not to blame for this, as it is woven into the whole system along with a multitude of other threads of influence, but schools are facilitating the pattern and, consciously or not, are weaving this spirit into the fabrics of the emerging society. This relationship shouldn't be seen as overly deterministic. But the most damaging of all is that this competitive ethos of the vocational spirit defeats solidarity and cooperation among the students as well as the concerted effort of striving toward everyone's individual achievement. All of which is analogous to the negative sides of misorientation. Guided by the star of the vocational spirit, the Polaris of materialism, this misorients students into a self-centered race against each other.

#### *A form of communal activity*

First, the individual should not be made synonymous with the personal, and it must be understood that it is possible to have individual achievement without personal gain, and that the former can coexist with communal cooperation while the latter cannot. Benjamin (1915/2000) writes, "By directing students toward the professions, it must necessarily fail to understand direct creativity as a form of communal activity" (p. 42). "Communal activity," "the creative spirit" and the "eros of creativity" are all phrases Benjamin uses as an alternative to the vocational spirit and each has to do with student activity as it relates to a

communal process. If educational achievement is not measured materially or valued by the vocational spirit, not measured by class rankings and test scores, and not measured in employable skills and attitudes; if educational achievement is not equated with financial success, material acquisitions, or social prestige; if knowledge is not commodified, and when its value isn't measured in economic profitability or exchange value; what then does it look like? In "The Life of Students" he includes a clip from a speech he had given at a reform movement that is worth quoting at length:

There is a very simple and reliable criterion by which to test the spiritual value of a community. It is to ask: Does it allow all of an individual's efforts to be expressed? Is the whole human being committed to it and indispensable to it? Or is the community as superfluous to each individual as he is to it? (p. 42)

Asking ourselves these rather straightforward questions about both our society and classrooms leave us with some fairly straightforward answers, casting a less than pleasant light on our value system. It would seem that some people are considered indispensable. This is this commitment has been called for by Freire and other critical pedagogues. Indeed, one of the greatest challenges of critical pedagogies is that it requires a commitment on the part of the students to address and discuss the *relationships among people* (among each other) that will necessarily involve intense power dynamics (differences) and the various emotions that go with those (i.e., anger, shame, etc.), especially when talking about reconciliation and moral responsibility. But instead of engaging students in those complicated and sometimes contentious conversation, teachers dangle the vocational carrot before students, often unwittingly reinforcing the value in personal material gain. Benjamin continues,

It is so easy to pose these questions, and so easy to answer them with reference to contemporary types of social community. And the answer is decisive. Everyone who achieves strives for totality, and the value of his achievement lies in that totality—that is, in the fact that the whole, undivided nature of a human being should be expressed in his achievement. But when determined by our society, as we see it today, achievement does not express a totality; it is completely fragmented and derivative. It is not uncommon for the community to be the site where a joint and covert struggle is

waged against higher ambitions and more personal goals, but where a more profoundly individual development is obscured. (p. 39)

It is clear in this passage that this individual achievement culminates its expression in the totality of “the whole, undivided nature of a human being.” Individual achievement can only be reached when it is part and parcel of a communal totality and individual achievement is then measured as it contributes to the community and not on personal ambition. Whereas personal ambition asks as a student to be the best he or she can be, individual achievement based on community asks students to consider how to be the best *we* can be, as a community, and this certainly entails students’ individual and variable accomplishments. It is unnecessary to assume such communal connection would result in homogenous placidity, or otherwise ruin the spirit of innovation and entrepreneurial enterprise, or even competition, which may still hold some value. Nor does it mean students would not find and focus on specific vocations, but those vocational choices would be made for very different reasons than those that occur under the logic of the vocational spirit. Instead, educational achievement is driven as knowledge and creativity, as a form of “communal activity” that values everyone’s participation.

*All you need is love*

It is clear that when Benjamin asks if every individual is “indispensable” to the community, especially the educational community, he doesn’t mean that every student finds an occupational niche. This is the validation of the vocational spirit, but again, doing away with this spirit in no way means students will no longer care or consider what type of occupation they want to pursue. Moreover, this is not to say that authentic vocational endeavors are wholly precluded by the vocational spirit as heretofore described. It is not whether or not the current system produces students who are good at their vocations. At times it certainly does. The question is whether or not these vocations are used to achieve a greatness for a larger community rather than personal ambitions and microcommunities. What then is the logic of the community?

In this early piece Benjamin (1915/2000) provides a straightforward answer: love.

He writes,

But where office and profession are the ideas that govern student life, there can be no true learning. There can no longer be any devotion to a form of knowledge that, it is feared, might lead them astray from the path of bourgeois security. There can be neither devotion to learning nor the dedication of life to a younger generation. Yet the vocation of teaching—albeit in forms that are quite different from those current today—is an imperative for any authentic learning. Such a hazardous self-dedication to learning and youth must manifest itself in the student as the ability to love, and it must be the source of his [sic] creativity. . . . He should be an active producer, philosopher, and teacher all in one, and all these things should be part of his deepest and most essential nature. (p. 42)

In this passage Benjamin is not suggesting that the only vocation worth striving for is to be a teacher, but that students, as students, should also be teachers to themselves, other students, the teacher, and even the community (as they are also learners). Critical pedagogy has often invoked the idea that students also become teachers. Nonetheless, education becomes a process of communal reciprocity because it is rooted in love, not in competition. Hence, this is the source of creativity, and thus the purpose of knowledge production becomes ‘creativity as a form of communal activity.’ And finally, love will give us the better answers to the questions he poses, “Does it [society and/or schools] allow all of an individual’s efforts to be expressed? Is the whole human being committed to it and indispensable to it? Or is the community as superfluous to each individual as he is to it?” (p. 39). If a human is loved, then that person becomes indispensable.

Furthermore, the “whole human being” means much more than vocational aptitude. It involves the wholeness of our experiences as social, political, economic, spiritual, psychological, cultural, and otherwise human essences. For example, the separation of church and state has unnecessarily categorized some of humanity’s most important questions as immaterial or beyond consideration. The separation of church and state should not be taken to mean religion should not be discussed in a public school, but simply that the school



does not advocate or promote one religion over others, which still happens all the time. For Benjamin, the answer is the study of philosophy.

The community of creative human beings elevates every field of study to the universal through the form of philosophy. . . This philosophy, in turn, should concern itself not with limited technical philosophical matters but with the great metaphysical questions of Plato and Spinoza, the Romantics and Nietzsche. . . This would prevent the degeneration of study into the heaping up of information. (Benjamin 1915/2000, pp. 42-43)

Lines of inquiry begun by philosophical questions almost necessarily raise whole sets of considerations that usually cross over disciplinary lines as well as relate to real life experiences, especially if the students themselves raise the questions. Such weighty inquiry should not be reserved only for the ‘advanced’ students. Simply because a student may not read at a certain level does not mean that student is incapable of considering and needing to work out profoundly philosophical questions. And again, it isn’t that the school or teacher is to provide the students with the answers to these lines of inquiry, but students are allowed to develop their own critical search for answers and do so within a community. I would also add that not only philosophy, but also religion and myth should also be studied, but not studies as historical truths or data, but as the allegorical and figurative stories and accounts that give meaning to those truths or individual bits of data. Narratives and allegories remain open to multiple interpretations but are also able to express thematic congruence as well. Moreover, the acts of performing or expressing the answers individual students find in their inquiry have to co-exist ‘on the same stage,’ as it were, with different answers held by different students, and as their ideas are represented along side others, they are reverberated among the other ideas presented and then bounced back to them for reconsideration and reflection from new angles, that of their classmates. The classroom goal of this inquiry is not to render an all agreed upon answer, but to explore answers and find spaces where different answers and multiple perspectives can coexist and be expressed in a communal activity that addresses the whole experience of being human.

*This is my story*

Though I have described misorientation as largely negative, I should add there are some potentially positive elements to misorientation. However, I have tried to attribute most of the positive qualities of being lost to disorientation. As opposed to disorientation, which for me denotes “*dépaysement*,” which the reader might recall refers to “being taken out of one’s element” (McDonough 2002/2004, p. 264). Misorientation might mean students are navigating themselves quite well, but their cognitive map and direction might be on the path to destruction. Nonetheless, misorientation can also be positive. For example, it allows for people to be wrong and learn from failure or from following. It can also provide a vision of the future that would still be considered undetermined. That is, students might follow certain paths of action, and then determine where those paths and actions are leading and decide to turn around. Furthermore, it can be instructive at playing up the distinctions between various paths, directions, and actions. As such, misorienting students could be used to emphasize the differences of various paths one might follow and thereby lead to more critical decision making. I have tried to address both the positive and negatives of disorientation, and yet, it appears evident that I have been more interested in orienting students by situating curriculum in the places of their daily lives with the hopes of enabling them to better navigate those spaces.

Orienteering is a sport conceived by a Swedish Scout Leader and is defined as “a cross-country race in which participants use a highly detailed map and a compass to navigate their way between checkpoints along an unfamiliar course,” a definition shared by the Boy Scouts and Webster. Checkpoints, sometimes called controls, are analogous to the given curricular destinations described above, to the stars of the constellations, or the objects of

content in the form of images. Some of these images will be shared; some will come from the personal histories of students or their own individual projects. Within this analogy education is a process of mapping and navigating (running) the landscapes of the curriculum and the world itself (the course). Unlike orienteering I would avoid any comparisons to a race, particularly against each other, and stress more of a cooperative journey. Competition in schools today more often rewards those “who gets there first” and fails to allow students to imagine a more cooperative attitude in “we can all get there together.” Also, the dogma in outdoor recreation is to discourage individuals from bushwhacking across the landscape when there are designated trails in order to protect the environment from unnecessary destruction. However, in terms of education, I have already said I believe students should embark into uncharted territory, discover new ground, or otherwise get off the beaten path.

For me, the idea of new territory has at least two meanings. One is simply new to the students. For example, they may discover new authors, histories, facts, or discourses that they didn’t know existed. But a second meaning is that these new spaces represent the terrains of possibilities in terms of human relations, and earthly relations too. Indeed, this dissertation explored curricula that not only provide students with the skills to accurately map and competently navigate their social and curricular landscapes, but also to imagine and discover new territories instead of going over the same old ground, the same old paths and highways that lead to the same status quo, the same destinations of history. The educative goal is to not only to provide students with some autonomy as travelers, but also instill a sense of cooperation and mutual respect for other travelers as well as challenge students to discover, chart, and create new spaces of economy and community, democracy and ecological symbiosis. That is, regarding the latter, I hope to instill a sense of respect,

appreciation, passion, and dedication to preserve these landscapes (both curricular, social, and earthly). I have also described curriculum as not simply the course to be traversed, but also the conversations that occur while traveling, as students make sense of the landscape and of their individual experiences along the journey. Furthermore, I've argued that such conversations *take place* in many forms and a good teacher will diversify the media and forms of those conversations.

I have discussed curriculum as “complicated conversations” students have while traversing curricular landscapes that are situated in the students’ localities (in place). I have described a spatial curriculum theory that addresses the experiences, politics, representations, and experiments of place. Such a spatial curriculum theory attempts to educate students regarding the history, economics, politics, and socio-cultural aspects of a given place, including their everyday lives in that environment. I have also emphasized personal inquiries regarding identity and place as well as investigating how power and ideology are exercised in various places. Such a spatial curriculum theory attempts to connect the local to the global, or a regional community to the national and/or international, and engages students to understand and challenge spatial relations that are oppressive, unjust, or destructive as well embracing more positive relations. It is therefore concerned with issues of social justice as it strives to both reveal the oppressive and injurious conditions of various places as it also attempts to reclaim those spaces into more egalitarian and liberating places, which necessarily involves not only critique, but also intervention, and potentially, transformation. Representations of space encourages students to critically (and creatively) evaluate and represent specific places as it also asks students to consider how specific spaces are socially constructed, for example, through ritual, juridical practices, via architecture, etc.

Experiences of place involve a more sensuous listening and feeling the particularities of environmental and human ecologies. Experiments of place refer to the exercises and activities that are meant to challenge and intervene in spaces of destructively normative behavior such as the *dérive*. Experiments with place also ask students to be creative with space, including their classroom, but also in their communities.

*This is my songline*

The introductions to my chapters move from autobiography to world history to scientific data and I began (deliberately) with an autobiographical snippet of my own because I have claimed that situated pedagogy must begin with the students lived experiences. Obviously the subject was chosen to match the thematic structure of the dissertation as well. In the next chapter I followed that with a second autobiographical sketch, and again, it served to introduce the subject of the chapter: dialogue. It also began to indicate a larger goal of creating a “third idiom” from two different languages (both in the story regarding the language barriers I was facing as well as Shor’s notion of beginning with the dialogue of students and slowly adding in the academy’s language). I began the next two chapters with extremely superficial histories that were intentionally repetitive. The latter was only a hint at the repetitiveness that Simon, Rosenberg, and Eppert (2000) include in their notion of “remembrance/pedagogy.” Furthermore, the superficiality of the histories might remind the reader that the spaces between each of those events are infinite in terms of student inquiry. The introduction to chapter five was mostly astronomical data that had more metaphorical value than the science. Then I ended with another autobiographical story of travel. Not only did each of these anecdotes introduce a theme covered in that chapter and the dissertation as a whole, they also provided a narrative structure, though not necessarily continuity. While I

can't claim that they embody an exemplary model of my ideas, I do hope that these seemingly incongruent or unrelated texts became connected through the act of inquiry and study, and through figurative images and experience.

Finally, I've suggested that arts integration—from poetry to performance—can enhance the conversations students have as they traverse the curricular landscapes. That such integration will not only add beauty, sensation, and perhaps empathy, but also allows students to creatively build collective memories. I will now end with what I think embodies the drive of this entire project. In his book, *Songlines*, Bruce Chatwin (1987) describes the Australian Aboriginals' "songlines" which are an intricate series of songs which were musical narratives that identified and described particular features of the land and how they were formed. These songs are not only used for navigational purposes (instead of any map these people will travel great distances over landscapes never seen and are able to navigate these expanses without getting lost). These ageless songs also serve as historical accounts of places and tribes as they also are a form of communication among tribes in which the same tunes are inherited from generation to generation with an infinite number of verses that might occur in dozens of tribal languages. In fact, they travel great distances to swap songs and dances with other villages. This not only evokes more than one consideration in performance theory, but it also lends itself to my exploration of history and narrative, and otherwise having students compose and perform similar songlines, or historical narratives about the curricular landscapes they have traversed, their personal verses contributing to a larger unified story. History, in this sense, is viewed less as an object of study, but as the formative part of a narrative describing ourselves to ourselves, of how we came to be, and it is

something to be performed among students as we both map and traverse the landscapes together creating our own songlines, and our own meaning.

## REFERENCES

- Adorno, T. (1951/1999). *Minimi moralia: Reflections from a damaged life*. (E. F. N. Jephcott, Trans.). New York: Suhrkamp Verlag.
- Apple, M. W. (1979/2004). *Ideology and curriculum: Third edition*. New York: Routledge Falmer.
- Applebee, A. R. (1996). *Curriculum as conversation: Transforming traditions of teaching and learning*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Aronowitz, S. & Giroux, H. (1991). *Postmodern education: Politics, culture and social criticism*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.
- Baptist, K. W. (2002). The garden as a metaphor for curriculum. *Teacher education quarterly*, 45(4), 19-37.
- Basso, K. (1996). *Wisdom sits in places: Landscapes and language among the western Apache*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico.
- Baudelaire, C. (1863/1964). The painter of modern life. In J. Mayne (Ed. & Trans.), *The painter of modern life and other essays* (pp. 1-40). London: Phaidon Press.
- Baudrillard, J. (1981/1997). *Simulacra and simulation*. (S. F. Glasser, Trans.). Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
- Benjamin, W. (1915/2000). The life of students. In M. Bullock & M. W. Jennings (Eds.), *Walter Benjamin: Selected writings: Volume 1, 1913-1926* (pp. 37-47). Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.
- Benjamin, W. (1925/2003). *The origin of German tragic drama*. (J. Osborne, Trans.). New York: Verso.
- Benjamin, W. (1926/1986). *Moscow diary*. (G. Smith, Ed.), (R. Sieburth, Trans.). Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Benjamin, W. (1927/1994). To Martin Buber. In G. Scholem and T. W. Adorno (Eds.), *The correspondence of Walter Benjamin*. (M.R. Jacobson and E.M. Jacobson, Trans.). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Benjamin, W. (1928/2000). One-way street. Experience. In M. Bullock & M. W. Jennings (Eds.), *Walter Benjamin: Selected writings: Volume 1, 1913-1926* (pp. 444-488). Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.



Benjamin, W. (1931/1999). The destructive character. In M. W. Jennings, H. Eiland, & G. Smith (Eds.), *Walter Benjamin: Selected writings: Volume 2, 1927-1934* (pp. 541-542). Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.

Benjamin, W. (1932a/1999). Excavation and memory. In M. W. Jennings, H. Eiland, & G. Smith (Eds.), *Walter Benjamin: Selected writings: Volume 2, 1927-1934* (pp. 576). Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.

Benjamin, W. (1932b/1999). A Berlin chronicle. In M. W. Jennings, H. Eiland, & G. Smith (Eds.), *Walter Benjamin: Selected writings: Volume 2, 1927-1934* (pp. 595-637). Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.

Benjamin, W. (1933/1999). Experience and Poverty. In M. W. Jennings, H. Eiland, & G. Smith (Eds.), *Walter Benjamin: Selected writings: Volume 2, 1927-1934* (pp. 731-736). Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.

Benjamin, W. (1934/1999). The author as producer. In M. W. Jennings, H. Eiland, & G. Smith (Eds.), *Walter Benjamin: Selected writings: Volume 2, 1927-1934* (pp. 768-782). Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.

Benjamin, W. (1936/2002). The storyteller: Observations on the works of Nikolai Leskov. In H. Eiland, & M. W. Jennings (Eds.), *Walter Benjamin: Selected writings: Volume 3, 1935-1938* (pp.143-166). Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.

Benjamin, W. (1937/2002). Eduard Fuchs, collector and historian. In H. Eiland, & M. W. Jennings (Eds.), *Walter Benjamin: Selected writings: Volume 3, 1935-1938* (pp. 260-302). Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.

Benjamin, W. (1940a/1999). *The arcades project* (R. Tiedemann, Ed.), (H. Eiland & K. McLaughlin, Trans.). Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press. (Original work published 1972).

Benjamin, W. (1940b/2003). On the concept of history. In H. Eiland & M. W. Jennings (Eds.), *Walter Benjamin: Selected writings: Volume 4, 1938-1940* (pp. 389-400). Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.

Benjamin, W. (1940c/2003). Paralipomena to “on the concept of history.” In H. Eiland & M. W. Jennings (Eds.), *Walter Benjamin: Selected writings: Volume 4, 1938-1940* (pp. 401-411). Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.

Benjamin, W. (1940d/2003). On some motifs in Baudelaire. In H. Eiland & M. W. Jennings (Eds.), *Walter Benjamin: Selected writings: Volume 4, 1938-1940* (pp. 313-355). Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.

- Best, S. (1994). The commodification of reality and the reality of commodification: Baudrillard, Debord, and postmodern theory. In D. Kellner (Ed.), *Baudrillard: A critical reader*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Best, S. (1995). *The politics of historical vision: Marx, Foucault, Habermas*. New York: The Guilford Press.
- Best, S. & Kellner, D. (2001). *The postmodern adventure: Science, technology, and cultural studies at the third millennium*. New York: The Guilford Press.
- Block, A. (1998). Curriculum as affichiste: Popular culture and identity. In William Pinar (Ed.) *Curriculum: Toward new identities* (pp. 325-342). New York: Garland.
- Boal, A. (1974/2004). *Theatre of the oppressed*. (C. A. McBride & M. L. McBride, Trans.) New York: Theatre Communications Group.
- Bowers, C. (1991). Some questions about the anachronistic elements in the Giroux-McLaren theory of a critical pedagogy. *Curriculum Inquiry*, 21(2), 239-252.
- Bowers, C. (1993). *Against the grain: Critical essays on education, modernity, and the recovery of the ecological imperative*. New York: Teacher College Press.
- Britzman, D. (2000). If the story cannot end: Deferred action, ambivalence, and difficult knowledge. In R. I. Simon, S. Rosenberg, & C. Eppert (Eds.), *Between hope and despair: Pedagogy and the remembrance of historical trauma* (pp. 27-58). New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.
- Brown, M. & Lippincott, J. (2003). Learning spaces: More than meets the eye. *EDUCAUSE Quarterly*, 2(1).
- Buck-Morss, S. (1989/1999). *The dialectics of seeing: Walter Benjamin and the arcades project*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.
- Bullock, M. & Jennings, W. M. (1996). Chronology, 1892-1926. In M. Bullock, & W. M. Jennings (Eds.), *Walter Benjamin: Selected writings: Volume 1, 1913-1926* (pp. 490-515). Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.
- Burbules, N. C. (1993). *Dialogue in teaching: Theory and practice*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Burbules, N. (2000). The limits of dialogue as a critical pedagogy. In P. P. Trifonas (Ed.), *Revolutionary pedagogies: Cultural politics, instituting education, and the discourse of theory* (pp. 251-273). New York: Routledge.
- Calvino, I. (1974). *Invisible cities*. (W. Weaver, Trans.). New York: Harcourt Brace & Company.

Chatwin, B. (1987). *The Songlines*. New York: Penguin Books.

Chilcoat, G. W., & Ligon, J. A. (1994). Developing democratic citizens: The Mississippi freedom schools as a model for social studies instruction. *Theory and Research in Social Education*, XXII, 128-175.

Community Mapping Resource Guide. (n.d.). *Raise your voice: Community mapping resource guide*. Retrieved April 30, 2007, from <http://actionforchange.org/mapping/>

Counts, G. S. (1932/1978). *Dare the school build a new social order?* Carbondale, CO: Southern Illinois University Press.

David Rumsey Historical Map Collection (2003). Retrieved April 30, 2007, from <http://www.davidrumsey.com/>

Debord, G. (1955/1981). Theory of the dérive. In K. Knabb (Ed. & Trans.), *Situationist International anthology*. (pp. 50-54). Berkely: Bureau of Public Secrets.

Debord, G. (1956/1981). Introduction to a critique of urban geography. In K. Knabb (Ed. & Trans.), *Situationist International anthology*. (pp. 5-8). Berkely: Bureau of Public Secrets.

Debord, G. (1957/2004). Report on the construction of situations and on the terms of organization and action of the International Situationist tendency. In T. McDonough (Ed. & Trans.), *Guy Debord and the Situationist International: Texts and documents* (pp. 29-50). Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.

Debord, G. (1967/1998). *The society of the spectacle*. (D. Nicholson-Smith, Trans.). New York: Zone Books.

Debord, G. (1988/1998). *Comments on the society of the spectacle*. (M. Imrie, Trans.). London: Verso.

Debord, G. & Wolman, G. Methods of détournement. In K. Knabb (Ed. & Trans.), *Situationist International anthology*. (pp. 8-14). Berkely: Bureau of Public Secrets.

Dewey, J. (1938/1997). *Experience & education*. New York: Touchstone.

Dewey, J. (1916/1997). *Democracy and education: An introduction to the philosophy of education*. New York: The Free Press.

Diamond, J. (1999). *Guns, germs, and steel: The fates of human societies*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company.

Downs, R. M. & Stea, D. (1977). *Maps in minds: Reflections on cognitive mapping*. New York: Harper & Row Publishers.

Edwards, E. & Usher, Robin. (Eds.) (2003). *Space, curriculum, and learning*. Greenwich, CT: Information Age.

Edwards, R., Cervero, R., Clarke, J., Morgan-Klein, B., Usher, R., & Wilson, A. (2002, May). *Cartographical imaginations: Spatiality, adult education and lifelong learning*. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Adult Education Research Conference. Raleigh, NC.

Ellis, J. (2002). The importance of attending to children and place. *International Journal of Educational Policy, Research and Practice*. 3(3), 69-88.

Ellis, J. (2004). Researching children's place and space. *Journal of Curriculum Theorizing*. 20(1), 83-99.

Ellsworth, E. (1989/1994). Why doesn't this feel empowering? Working through the repressive myths of critical pedagogy. In L. Stone (Ed.), *The education feminism reader* (pp. 300-327). New York: Routledge.

Ellsworth, E. (1997). *Teaching positions: Difference, pedagogy, and the power of address*. New York: Teachers College Press.

Ellsworth, E. (2005). *Places of learning: Media, architecture, pedagogy*. New York: RoutledgeFalmer.

English, K. Z. & Feaster, L. S. (2003). *Community geography: GIS in action*. Redlands, CA: ESRI Press.

Expanding the Futures of Youth. (n.d.). *Our mission*. Retrieved April 30, 2007, from <http://hopeworks.org/mission.html>

Freire, P. (1970/1999). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. New York: Continuum.

Gadamer, H. G. (1980). *Dialogue and dialectic: Eight hermeneutical studies on Plato*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Gadamer, H. G. (1982). *Truth and method*. New York: Crossroad.

Griswold Jr., C. L. (2002) Happiness and Cypher's choice: Is ignorance bliss? In W. Irwin (Ed.), *The Matrix and philosophy: Welcome to the Desert of the Real*. Chicago: Open Court.

Grossberg, L. (2005). *Caught in the crossfire: Kids, politics, and America's future*. Boulder, CO: Paradigm Publishers.

Grumet, M. R. (1988). *Bitter milk: Women and teaching*. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press.

Grumet, M. R. (2004). No one learns alone. In N. Rabkin & R. Redmond (Eds.), *Putting the arts in the picture: Reframing education in the 21<sup>st</sup> century* (pp. 49-80). Chicago: Columbia College Chicago.

Giroux, H. A. (1992). *Border crossings: Cultural workers and the politics of education*. New York: Routledge.

Giroux, H. A. (1994). Living dangerously: Identity politics and the new cultural racism. In H. A. Giroux & P. McLaren (Eds.), *Between borders: Pedagogy and the politics of cultural studies* (pp. 29-55). New York: Routledge.

Giroux, H. A. (1996). Hollywood, race, and the demonization of youth: The “kids” are not “alright.” *Educational Researcher*, 25(2), 31-35.

Giroux, H. A. & Shannon, P. (1997). Cultural studies and pedagogy as performative practice: Toward an introduction. In H. A. Giroux & P. Shannon (Eds.), *Education and cultural studies: Toward a performative practice* (pp. 1-9). New York: Routledge.

Giroux, H. A. (2000). *Impure acts: The practical politics of cultural studies*. New York: Routledge.

Greene, M. (1995). *Releasing the imagination: Essays on the education, the arts, and social change*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Greene, M. (1997). Metaphors and multiples: Representation, the arts, and history. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 78( 5), 387-408.

Green Apple Map. (n.d.). *Introduction*. Retrieved on May 1, 2007, from <http://greenapplemap.org/page/intro>

Gruenewald, D. (2003a). The best of both worlds: A critical pedagogy of place. *Educational Researcher*. 32(4), 3-12.

Gruenewald, D. (2003b). Foundations of place: A multi-disciplinary framework for place-conscious education. *American Educational Research Journal*. 40(3), 619-654.

Grumet, M. R. (1995). The curriculum: What are the basics and are we teaching them? In J. L. Kinchenloe S. R. Steinberg (Eds.), *Thirteen questions: Reframing education's conversation* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.) (pp. 15-21). New York: Peter Lang Publishing, Inc.

Grumet, M. R. (2004). No one learns alone. In N. Rabkin & R. Redmond (Eds.), *Putting the arts in the picture: Reframing education in the 21<sup>st</sup> century* (pp. 49-80). Chicago: Columbia College.

Hammer, R. & McLaren, P. The spectacularization of subjectivity: Media knowledges, global citizenry, and the new world order. *Polygraph*, 5, pp. 46-66.

- Harvey, D. (1985). *Consciousness and the urban experience*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Harvey, D. (1990). *The condition of postmodernity*. Malden, MA: Blackwell.
- Harvey, D. (1996). *Justice, nature, and the geography of difference*. Malden, MA: Blackwell.
- Hemingway, E. (1929/1957). *A farewell to arms*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons.
- Hesse, Hermann. (1919/1985). *Demian*. London: Panther Books
- Hooks, B. (1989). *Talking back: Thinking feminist, thinking black*. Boston, MA: South End Press.
- Huizinga, J. (1950). *Homo ludens: A study of the play element in culture*. Boston: Beacon Press.
- Hutchison, D. (2004). *A natural history of place in education*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Jameson, F. (1981/1982). *The political unconscious: Narrative as a socially symbolic act*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- Jameson, F. (1984/2001). Postmodernism, or the cultural logic of late capitalism. In M. Hardt & K. Weeks (Eds.), *The Jameson reader* (pp. 188-232). Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers.
- Jameson, F. (1988/2001). Cognitive mapping. In M. Hardt & K. Weeks (Eds.), *The Jameson reader* (pp. 277-287). Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers.
- Jameson, F. (1991/1997). *Postmodernism: Or, the cultural logic of late capitalism*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Jappe, A. (1993/1999). *Guy Debord*. (D. Nicholson-Smith, Trans.). Los Angeles: University of California Press.
- Jay, M. (1973/1996). *The dialectical imagination: A history of the Frankfurt School and the Institute of Social Research, 1923-1950*. Berkeley and Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press.
- Johnson, N. B. (1982). School spaces and architecture: The social and cultural landscape of educational environments. *Journal of American Culture* 5(4). 79-88.
- Jones, A. (1999). The limits of cross-cultural dialogue: Pedagogy, desire, and absolution in the classroom. *Educational Theory*, 49(1), 299-316.

Kershaw, B. (1999). *The radical in performance: Between Brecht and Baudrillard*. New York: Routledge.

Khayati, M. (1966/1981). Captive words: Preface to a Situationist dictionary. In K. Knabb (Ed. & Trans.), *Situationist International anthology* (pp. 170-175). Berkely: Bureau of Public Secrets.

Kilbourne, J. (1999). *Can't buy my love: How advertising changes the way we think and feel*. New York: Simon & Schuster.

Kincheloe, J. & Pinar, W. (Eds.) (1991). *Curriculum as social psychoanalysis: The significance of place*. Alabany, NY: State University of New York Press.

Kincheloe, J. L., & Steinberg, S. R. (1995). The more questions we ask, the more questions we ask. In J. L. Kincheloe & S. R. Steinberg (Eds.), *Thirteen questions: Reframing education's conversation* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.) (pp. 1-11). New York: Peter Lang Publishing, Inc.

Klein, N. (2000/2002). *No logo*. New York: Picador.

Kliebard, H. M. (1975). Metaphorical roots of curriculum design. *Teachers College Record*, 74(3), 403-404.

Kliebard, H. M. (1975). Metaphorical roots of curriculum design. In W. Pinar (Ed.), *Curriculum theorizing: The Reconceptualist* (pp. 84-85). Berkeley: McCutchan Publishing Corporation.

Kliebard, H. M. (1982). Curriculum theory as metaphor. *Theory into practice*, 21(1), 11-17.

Kliebard, H. M. (1995). *The struggle for the American curriculum: 1893-1958*. New York: Routledge.

Knabb, K. (1981). *Situationist International anthology*. Berkely: Bureau of Public Secrets.

Knowles, A. K. (Ed.). (2002). *Past time, past place: GIS for history*. Redlands, CA: ESRI Press.

Lasn, K. (1999). *Culture jam: The uncooling of America*. New York: William Morrow and Company.

Lather, P. (1996). Troubling clarity: The politics of accessible language. *Harvard Educational Review*, (66) 3, 525-545.

Lather, P. (1998). Critical pedagogy and its complicities: A pedagogy of stuck places. *Educational theory*, 48(4), 487-497.

- Lather, P. (2007). *Getting Lost: Feminist efforts toward a double(d) science*. New York: State University of New York Press.
- Leach, M. (1992). Can we talk? A response to Burbules and Rice. *Harvard educational review*, 62(2), 257-263.
- Lefebvre, H. (1947/1991). *The critique of everyday life: Volume I*. (J. Moore, Trans.) London: Verso.
- Lefebvre, H. (1970/2003). *The urban revolution*. (Robert Bononno, Trans.). Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Lefebvre, H. (1974/2002). *The production of space*. (Donald-Nicholson-Smith, Trans.). Oxford: Blackwell.
- Lefebvre, H. (1976). Reflections on the politics of space. *Antipode*, 8, 30-37.
- Loewen, J. W. (1995). *Lies my teacher told me: Everything your American history textbook got wrong*. New York: Simon & Schuster.
- Lukacs, G. (1922/1997). *History and class consciousness: Studies in Marxist dialectics*. (R. Livingstone Trans.) Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Lynch, K. (1960). *The image of the city*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.
- Macedo, D. (1994). *Literacies of power: What Americans are not allowed to know*. Boulder: Westview Press.
- Malone, L., Palmer, A. M., & Voigt, C. L. (2003). *Teacher's guide: Community geography: GIS in action*. Redlands, CA: ESRI Press.
- MapCruzin-Free GIS Maps, Resources and Tools (n.d.). *Tools and resources for re-imagining our relationship with each other and the earth*. Retrieved April 30, 2007, from <http://www.mapcruzin.com/>
- Marcus, G. (1989/1990). *Lipstick traces: A secret history of the twentieth century*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Massey, D. (1994). *Space, place, and gender*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Massey, D. (1995). *Spatial divisions of labor: Social structures and the geography of production*. New York: Routledge.
- McDonough, T. (2002/2004). Situationist space. in T. McDonough (Ed.) *Guy Debord and the Situationist International*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.



McLaren, P. (1988). Schooling the postmodern body: Critical pedagogy and the politics of education. *Social Text* 19 & 20 (1-2): 153-185.

McLaren, P. & Giroux, H. (1990). Critical pedagogy and rural education: A challenge from Poland. *Peabody Journal of Education*, 67(4), 154-165.

McLaren, P. (1994). *Life in schools: An introduction to critical pedagogy in the foundations of education*. [2nd edition] New York: Longman.

McLaren, P. (1995). *Critical pedagogy and the predatory culture: Oppositional politics in a postmodern era*. New York: Routledge.

National Research Council. (2006). *Learning to think spatially*. Washington D.C.: The National Academies Press.

Nodddings, N. (2002). *Starting at home: Caring and social policy*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Oblinger, D. (Ed.) (2006). Learning spaces. *EDUCAUSE*. Available: [www.educause.edu/learningspaces](http://www.educause.edu/learningspaces).

Parenti, M. (1999). *History as mystery*. San Francisco: City Lights Books.

Pinar, W. F. (Ed.). (1975). *Curriculum theorizing: The reconceptualist*. Berkeley: McCutchan Publishing Corporation.

Pinar, W. F. (1991). Curriculum as social psychoanalysis: On the significance of place. In J. Kincheloe & W. F. Pinar (Eds.), *Curriculum as social psychoanalysis: Essays on the significance of place* (pp. 167-186). Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

Pinar, W. F. (2004). *What is curriculum theory?* Mahwah, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc.

Pinar, W. F. & Grumet, M. R. (1976). *Toward a poor curriculum*. Dubuque, IA: Kendall/Hunt.

Pinar, W. F., Reynolds, W. M., Slattery, P., & Taubman, P. M. (1995). *Understanding curriculum: An introduction to the study of historical and contemporary curriculum discourses*. New York: Lang Publishing, Inc.

Plant, S. (1992). *The most radical gesture: The situationist international in a postmodern age*. London: Routledge.

Pratt, M. L. (1992). *Imperial eyes: Travel writing and transculturation*. New York: Routledge.

- Raphael, R. (2002). *A people's history of the American revolution: How common people shaped the fight for independence*. New York: Perennial.
- Schor, J. (1992). *The overworked American: The unexpected decline of leisure*. New York: Basic Books.
- Schor, J. (2004). *Born to buy: The commercialized child and the new consumer culture*. New York: Scribner.
- Shields, R. (1999). *Lefebvre, love & struggle: Spatial dialectics*. New York: Routledge.
- Shor, I. & Freire, P. (1987). *A pedagogy for the liberation: Dialogues on transforming education*. Westport, CT: Bergin & Garvey.
- Simon, R. I. (1992). *Teaching against the grain: Texts for a pedagogy of possibility*. New York: Bergin & Garvey.
- Simon, R. I. (1994). Forms of insurgency in the production of popular memories: The Columbus quincentenary and the pedagogy of counter-commemoration. In H. A. Giroux & P. McLaren (Eds.), *Between borders: Pedagogy and the politics of cultural studies* (pp. 128-142). New York: Routledge.
- Simon, R. I. (2000). The paradoxical practice of *zakhor*: Memories of “what has never been my fault or my deed.” In R. I. Simon, S. Rosenberg, & C. Eppert (Eds.), *Between hope and despair: Pedagogy and the remembrance of historical trauma* (pp. 9-26). New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.
- Simon, R. I., Rosenberg, S., & Eppert, C. (2000). *Between hope and despair: Pedagogy and the remembrance of historical trauma*. New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.
- Slattery, P. (1995). *Curriculum development in the postmodern era*. New York: Garland.
- Soja, E. (1989). *Postmodern geographies: The reassertion of space in critical social theory*. London: Verso.
- Soja, Ed. (1996). *Thirdspace*. Malden, MA: Blackwell.
- Stanley, W. (1992). *Curriculum for utopia: Social reconstruction and critical pedagogy in the postmodern era*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.
- Stanley, W. B. & Nelson, J. L. (1994). The foundations of social education in historical context. In R. A. Martusewicz & W. M. Reynolds (Eds.), *Inside/out: Contemporary critical perspectives in education* (pp. 265-284). New York: St. Martin's Press.
- Stephanson, A. (1989) Regarding postmodernism—A conversation with Frederic Jameson. In D. Kellner (Ed.), *Postmodernism/Jameson/critique*. Washington D.C.: Mouton Press.

Steele, C. M. (1995). Stereotype threat and the intellectual test performance of African Americans. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*. 69(5), 797-811.

The Situationist International. (1966). On the poverty of student life: Considered in its economic, political, political, psychological, sexual and especially intellectual aspects, with a modest proposal for its remedy. In K. Knabb (Ed. & Trans.), *Situationist International anthology*. (pp. 319-337). Berkely: Bureau of Public Secrets.

Tiedemann, R. (1984). Historical materialism or political messianism? An interpretation of the theses 'On the concept of history.' *The Philosophical Forum* XV, 1-2, 71-104.

Tiedemann, R. (1999). Dialectics at a standstill: Approaches to the *passagen-werk*. In R. Tiedemann (Ed.), *The arcades project: Walter Benjamin* (pp. 929-945). Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.

Wagner, B. (1998). *Educational drama & language arts*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Willinsky, J. (1998). *Learning to divide the world: Education at empire's end*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Wittgenstein, L. (1958). *Philosophical investigations* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). New York: Macmillan.

Wittgenstein, L. (1961). *Tractatus logico-philosophicus*. New York: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Wright, R. G. (1997). *Selling words: Free speech in a commercial culture*. New York: New York University Press.

Zinn, H. (1984 /2003). *The twentieth century*. New York: Perennial.

Zinn, H. (1980/1995). *A people's history of the United States 1942-present: Revised and updated edition*. New York: HarperPerennial.