

# The Rouge Forum News

Working Papers, Critical Analysis, and Grassroots News

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Connecting Reason to Power

[www.rougeforum.org](http://www.rougeforum.org)

## Table of Contents

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From the editor	p. 3
Announcements: Actions, RF Conference, RF News, #16	p. 6
A Rouge Forum Broadside: Yes, We Told Them So	p. 8
<b>Featured Articles</b>	
US Patriotism as Viewed from a Short Distance	
E. Wayne Ross	p. 12
Poetry: Gina Stiens	p. 16
Barefoot at the Front Gate	
Mary Barrett, Maria Hornung, Amber Kelly, Katy Sutton	p.17
<b>On War and Militarism</b>	
Dissidence and Institutionalized Oppression	
Travis Barrett	p. 29
Militarization and Zero Tolerance	
Matthew Archibald	p. 40
Poetry: Colin Ross	p. 54
A Rouge Forum Broadside: Got War?	p. 55
<b>On Schooling and Curriculum</b>	
Rescue Education from the Ruling Class	
Rich Gibson	p. 56
To Do Democracy	
Adam Renner, Nancye McCrary, and Doug Selwyn	p. 60
Exploring Socialization through Education	
Delana Hill	p. 76
Editorial: Paul Moore	p. 81

## FROM THE EDITOR

In its more than decade of existence, the Rouge Forum has attempted to contribute to the conversation on social justice within national organizations, in union halls, in K-12 schools, in colleges/universities, at work places, and in community organizations. It has attempted to bring a reasoned analysis to contemporary issues using an historical lens, a sense of *the total*, and, often, pedagogical strategies. It has produced an appreciable amount of scholarship among its members—sometimes award winning scholarship—and has among its membership winners of academic freedom awards.

Undoubtedly, the Rouge Forum has become a relevant voice for social justice, particularly related to education. We hope to amplify that voice and continue to develop its relevance in the days to come. Recent events, tethered to their historical predecessors, indicate there is little time to dither.

One of the best things about the Rouge Forum, particularly those who have been able to take part in conferences and joint actions, is the sense of community. My partner and I remarked a few years ago at the conference in Detroit that we felt like we were *home*. We were among comrades who, while we didn't agree on everything, seemed to have a congruent idea that things need to change and a relatively common idea of what that might look like. We could at least outline the picture.

Times together, such as these, assure us we are not crazy—that another world is not only necessary, but possible. Our work is continuing to figure out how we support one another, how we can have a voice in our particular locations, and how we craft and apply a vision of what is more just, more human, and right. Community. Voice. Vision. Connect reason to power, as Rich would say. Go.

And in that *going*, we need sustenance for the journey—sustenance in the form of community and consciousness (ever-deepening, ever-evolving), but also hope. The hope I/we suggest is not naïve hope. It is hope grounded in struggle, connected to others. It is hope that is participatory. It becomes the essence of who we are. It is a politics of prefiguration that suggests if we want democracy and we want justice, then our actions, to the extent possible, will need to bear these out. It is to understand the journey/struggle not as precise, but as punctuations of imperfections, of hypocrisies that bring us back to the start, such that we can begin again.

This idea of the politics of prefiguration is espoused by a thoughtful theorist on hope: Rebecca Solnit. Her text, *Hope in the Dark*, pushed me to find hope in the struggle—in fact, catapulting me into that struggle. Solnit has enlivened that sense again in her recent essay in TomDispatch: [http://www.tomdispatch.com/post/175168/tomgram: rebecca solnit, writing history in the streets/](http://www.tomdispatch.com/post/175168/tomgram:_rebecca_solnit_writing_history_in_the_streets/), entitled *Learning how to Count to 350*. Re-citing a history of action in the streets and reasons to hope (in the face of all the reasons to despair), Solnit suggests, "To survive the coming era, we need to re-imagine what constitutes wealth and well-being and what constitutes poverty." Considering the dismal performance of communism in the 20<sup>th</sup> century (often more totalitarian and capitalist than liberatory) and the fact that global capitalism was brought to its knees last year, she suggests we've got work to do to (re)imagine the world.

And, we—that is, people of conscience—must *occupy* that void. Else, something else will. The steel-toed rhythm can be heard goose-stepping just inside the ear's horizon. I submit we'll need to step into that space sooner than later.

I'll see you at the barricades.

We'll have to resist what is more than likely coming next—find a voice, speak truth to power, take to the streets, take over a building. *Escalate*. Extending Rich's metaphor from earlier work, we lambs look good to the wolves who regroup in the penthouses of their nearby woods (whose fuel is nearly spent) and in the corporate board rooms overlooking ever-drying creeks (more parts pollution than potable). They're finished *buying* what we have, as how much more cheaply can our labor power be had? Now, they plan to just take it (see: <http://cohort11.americanobserver.net/latoyaegwuekwe/multimediafinal.html>).

And, they will use a god to convince you they are right. They *will* call on *him*, attempting to scheme us into doing the same (a little deposit of flesh now, and your children's flesh, for an eternity of made-up bed time stories, "Now I lay me down to sleep....").

I'll keep my soul, whatever is left of it, thank you very much.

I'm looking, instead, for what Solnit calls a moment of creation—moments for which democracy, social justice, creativity, freedom, take one step forward.

Solnit is good at flipping the script, looking at the underside of the paper and seeing the scribbling of possibility. What she submits is an alternative read to the corporate media prophets (or is that *profits?*). We would do well to listen. Hers is not a naïve re-rendering or postmodern apologetics. My take is that Solnit's proposition is grounded in the real. The alteration takes into account the work that *is* being done, often diminished by our popular discourse and corporate media. This alternative understanding helps us realize that others are struggling, voices are shouting, a history of resistance leads us to this moment of possibility.

Revolutionary praxis remains our guide: the simultaneity and dialectic of self change and the changing of society.

We should understand what it's going to take for that moment of creation. Those moments: when we realize the politics of divide and conquer have gotten the best of us (color/class/gender/sexuality-coded inequalities); when we realize that we that we are killing others (bought and paid for bombs with our signature on them), killing babies, mothers, difference with our own babies barely able to know differently in capital's schools (the militarization of schools); when we realize that our knowledge has been regulated by corporate interests to keep us docile and ignorant (high-stakes testing) in order to prepare us for jobs we will more than likely hate (alienation) so we will seek pleasure in (fetishize) commodities, that is, things, and our social relations will be mediated by reality TV and video games.

Try Wendell Berry's recent poem on for size at your upcoming holiday celebration to bring the above into sharp relief: <http://everydayliturgy.com/blogs/thomas/questionnaire-by-wendell-berry>. You may not be invited back (which may or may not be a bad thing...)

When we recognize these issues as material reality, a moment will emerge. A moment (*consciousness* grounded in the real) that must lead to another moment (*courage* to change) in which we will need to figure out how to live differently (protest, resistance, occupation, freedom schools, sustainable living, new solidarities). Moments in which we own our labor power: the free development of each creates the conditions for the free development of all, since we will all recognize our interdependence and the strength of our difference.

More than likely, these moments will blur--because the barricades will not only be in the streets, but they will be in our work places, in our schools, in our churches, in our homes, in our community centers. Consciousness will merge with courage will merge with consciousness will merge with a more materialist understanding of reality, which will lead to how we can re-imagine wealth, well-being and poverty in the coming era.

We must. The wolves are hungry.

But, the lambs are plentiful. And, we will realize that we far outnumber the wolves when conscious because we will see *and do* differently.

When we see differently, we won't be divided so easily. When we see differently, we won't abide by mystical explanations of injustice; we will see it for what it is. When we see differently, we'll stop looking at the deadness of the center and instead explore the possibility at the periphery. When we see differently we won't believe the mythology of national holidays intended to white-wash history and to, more importantly, mark the beginning of a new holiday season of debt and guilt built by the capitalists. Just look on the rez. How did Thanksgiving work out for those who welcomed the newcomers? Can we call it what it is, please: a celebration of genocide. And, we are still killing them (see the December, 2009, *Harper's Magazine* article about life on the modern reservation). Christmas could use an *RF News* issue all its own...

When we see differently, we will note the possibility of solidarity born in moments of creation where we understand richness as fullness (of life and community), in the bread broken amidst laughter AND tears, in the totality discovered, in one more sunrise.

The Rouge Forum seeks this fullness.

Struggle. We must. Eyes open. Spirit fully engaged. Hands ready for the work.

See you at the barricades...

...On the way to the barricades, might I recommend a choral reading of this quarter's *Rouge Forum News*? Our 15<sup>th</sup> issue has another exciting line-up of essays, which are broken up by other provocative reading: poems by Gina Stiens and Colin Ross, Rouge Forum broadsides, an editorial from Paul Moore, and art from Bryan Reinholdt. I'd recommend making posters of it. And T-shirts.

We have two **featured essays** in this issue, one from Wayne Ross, which takes up the issue of patriotism, the other, a timely piece from Mary Barrett, Maria Hornung, Amber Kelly, and Katy Sutton, which looks at the possibility of medicine as a human right.

In our section on **war and militarism**, Travis Barrett reports on three aspects of institutionalized oppression, and what we might do about it, and Matt Archibald analyzes zero-tolerance, neoliberal ideology, and the growing militarism of our society.

In our **schooling and curriculum** section, Rich Gibson sets us straight on the way to analyze/critique the current takeover of US schooling by the elite; Nancye McCrary, Doug Selwyn, and I chronicle various approaches we've taken at our universities to promote democracy; and Delana Hill applies Paulo Freire and dialogical action directly to her classroom.

As always, we look forward to your feedback, either directly ([arenner@bellarmine.edu](mailto:arenner@bellarmine.edu)) or at our blog: [www.therougeforum.blogspot.com](http://www.therougeforum.blogspot.com).

*Adam Renner*  
*Louisville, KY*

## RF Announcements: Protest, Conference, Websites, and Call for Papers

### *Protest and Resistance*

We follow with interest the current actions in California. The Rouge Forum Steering Committee meets soon to determine how best the Rouge Forum might join organizers, students, and faculty in the ongoing struggle to save education for the public. Stay tuned for more details, but in the meantime, you can catch up and join some of their work here:

On October 24, 600-700 people from across California met to begin planning for future actions as a follow-up to the September 24 walkouts. You can find more about that meeting: <http://www.savecapubliceducation.org/>.

As a result of that meeting, a volunteer coordinating committee convened. To join the Coordinating Committee listserve — [oct24coord@lists.berkeley.edu](mailto:oct24coord@lists.berkeley.edu) — please contact [oct24list@gmail.com](mailto:oct24list@gmail.com) if you would like to be added to the email list.

The October 24 Coordinating Committee has decided on a march on Sacramento in March. To endorse this call and to receive more information contact [march4strikeanddayofaction@gmail.com](mailto:march4strikeanddayofaction@gmail.com) and check out [www.march4ed.wordpress.com](http://www.march4ed.wordpress.com), as well as, [www.defendcapubliceducation.wordpress.com](http://www.defendcapubliceducation.wordpress.com) which has the official call for a March 4 action.)

### *Rouge Forum Conference*

Soon the Rouge Forum Steering Committee will finalize the dates, theme and call for papers/proposals for this year's Rouge Forum Conference. In the meantime, mark off the first week of August. The exact dates will follow. This is going to be a great back-to-school conference/retreat/institute in a beautiful setting. Stay tuned. See [www.rougeforumconference.org](http://www.rougeforumconference.org) for info on past conferences.

### *Important websites to check, regularly:*

The Rouge Forum Website: [www.rougeforum.org](http://www.rougeforum.org)

The Rouge Forum blog: [www.therougeforum.blogspot.com](http://www.therougeforum.blogspot.com)

Follow Rich Gibson's blog at [www.richgibson.com/blog](http://www.richgibson.com/blog).

Follow Wayne Ross's blog, *Where the blog has no name*, at <http://blogs.ubc.ca/ross/>

And, check out the new journal, *Critical Education*: [www.criticaleducation.org](http://www.criticaleducation.org).

*Rouge Forum News*, Issue 16—Call for papers—Deadline: April 1

The *Rouge Forum News* is an outlet for working papers, critical analysis, and grassroots news. Issue 16 feature articles will be focused on experiences with, pictures of, research regarding, and stories on PROTEST and RESISTANCE. Given the upcoming march in California on March 4, 2010 and the occupation of businesses (Republic Window) and schools (the New School in NY and several in the California system) over the last year plus, we invite your essays, poetry, photos and art that surrounds the theme of protest and resistance.

Along with these feature articles, we invite, as usual, other essays that treat the links between runaway capital, the rabid and rapid standardization of curriculum, the co-optation of our unions, the militarization of our youth, and the creep of irrationalism in our schools:

Review a book, talk about what lessons have worked in your school lately, play with theory, critique theory, give us some highlights on your research, write a poem, etc.

We are interested in work from academics, parents, teachers, and students: teachers at all levels, students in ANY grade, parents of children of any age.

We publish material from k-12 students, parents, teachers, academics, and community people struggling for equality and democracy in schools --- writing (intended to inform/educate, or stories from your classroom, etc.), art, cartoons, photos, poetry.

You can submit material for the *RF News* via email (text attachment, if possible) to Adam Renner at [arenner@bellarmine.edu](mailto:arenner@bellarmine.edu). PLEASE SUBMIT BY APRIL1, 2010.

## Yes, We Told Them So: War, School, and the Demagogue

### *A Rouge Forum Broadside Fall 2009*

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It is probably not all that helpful to announce that we told you so, but....Yes, we told many people so.

The core issue of our time is the rapid rise of color-coded inequality and the emergence of world war met by the potential of a mass, class-conscious resistance.

These are not "public" schools we see. They are capitalist schools in a society where capitalism trumped whatever vestiges of democracy existed a decade ago. They are segregated schools as the last domino was felled by the Supreme Court in July, 2007. That's not merely the result of bad people doing bad things, exploiting others (though they surely are bad people) but also the consequence of a social system dependant on exploitation---meaning inequality.

The education agenda is a war agenda. It is a capitalism in crisis agenda, a Regimented National Curriculum agenda, mostly to promote nationalism.

Such a curriculum necessarily sets up anti-working class and racist high-stakes tests. Both teacher unions, the NEA and AFT, helped design both the national curriculum and the high-stakes exams. They are in no position to stop the next step. The professional organization, from NCTE to AHA to NCSS and all in between, proved more than impotent; they too collaborated.

Those tests necessarily and logically lead to merit pay which already exists in the deep divide in, say, Detroit and suburb pay and benefits.

Militarization of schooling is part of the war agenda. National service=war agenda.

To some degree, privatization and charters are part of the war agenda. Privatization serves some sectors of elites, and others not. Why fully abandon a huge, tax supported, funnel for war, ignorance, and inequality; missions for capitalism and their unwitting, ever so nice, missionaries?

Restoring hope is part of the agenda, but it is false hope. The future is war, inequality, unemployment, horrible options for youth and it will not change without a mass social movement for equality. War means work; why many people enlist and proof that our choice is community or barbarism.

All of these interconnected attacks on life and reason have already happened, all over the western world.

Merely opposing any one of these factors, like merit pay, but not the rest just reinforces the entire project. As we see, NEA now dishonestly speaks out about merit pay, but NEA backed the regimented curricula and high stakes exams, sharply attacked people like Susan Ohanian who spoke against them, and dumped the students who suffered most from them.

Too late for NEA which is merely trying to keep the rubes sending dues money, but there is now nothing much NEA can do. Only direct action strikes, boycotts, etc., can halt the drive to the factors described above.

NEA has done nothing at all to prepare for that, and is not likely to do so. The union leaders are completely corrupt and their structures don't unite people. They divide people: city from suburb, students from teachers, teachers from other public workers and private employees---as easily seen in the California Teachers Association's effort to pass off a tax on poor and working people just months ago, a project that cost dues-payers millions of dollars and failed miserably, convincing the public, again, that educators want to pick their pockets.

What would be helpful is to wonder about the analytical and critical mistake that led to all that support for Obama, a demagogue.

Several things led to the hysteria around Obama.

1. A misunderstanding of capitalist democracy which is now sheer capitalism and little democracy. There was no significant difference between the Bush/Obama/McCain or even Clinton policies. Obama has betrayed, if we take his consistency as a betrayal, his liberal supporters who, for what have to be psychological reasons, still support his personification of the reign of capital which has, among other things, failed in every important arena of human life. (See 30000 additional troops requested for Afghanistan.)

2. A misunderstanding of the gravity of the current situation vis-a-vis the war of empires. The US is in rapid decline in relationship to Russia, China and even Europe and Japan---economically and militarily-- and the US has lost any ability to promote itself as a moral nation, internally and externally. This puts extraordinary pressure on elites who need soldiers, Boeing workers, prison guards, and teachers too.

3. A misreading of the real internal crisis inside the US; the rapid rise of segregation and inequality--which has not, yet, led to civil rebellions. But everything is in place to lay the ground for those uprisings, except a left which can make sense of why things are as they are, and what to do. Lost wars. Collapsed economies. Immoral leaders caught with dozens of hands in a thousand cookie jars, war without reason pulling 1.5 million people into direct action---and the wreckage of their lives. All that, and more, should mean massive resistance. But that has not happened? Why not? No draft. No left. Spectacles. Divide and Rule. Carrot and stick. The education system. The same ways tyrants always ruled.

4. The continuing appeal of racism and nationalism. One need only look at the continuation of residential segregation in most of America's major cities; the segregation of children of color, generally, into lower-tracked curricula; the percentage of Black and Brown men in prison, the Black unemployment rate vis-à-vis their fellow white workers; and the assault on immigrants from the Global South.

5. Acceptance of the division of labor inside academia which means, for example, historians talk to historians and write books while literacy people talk to literacy people and write books, and few academics seriously organize anything at all, as the state of the campuses illustrate now.

(And, there is an open willingness of the overwhelming majority of faculty to abandon their academic freedom in favor of standards). As well, the university commons continue to be sold off to corporate interests, students become customers, and faculty become tradable entities focused more on chasing after grants than focusing on their craft. This means historians, as in AHA, don't pay much attention to teaching while too many education personnel don't know much history.

6. A general public so mindless about history and social processes (class war) that it can rightly be called hysterical, potentially dangerous. Steeped in spectacles and consumerism for more than a decade, so vacant about their location in the world that Chalmers Johnson says they cannot connect cause and effect (as with the endless wars, but in regard to NCLB's schooling as well). Fickle to the core, they howled for Bush, abandoned him when things went wrong, then another bunch howled for Obama, and now we see a new crowd howling about health care--all leaping for thousands of forms of selfishness that keeps the war of all on all that is the system of capital alive and well.

Not recognizing the historical moment, rejecting the real whole of the situation, capitalism in decay everywhere, shatters analytical and strategic capability, meaning many people cannot tell left from right, muddle along looking for someone else to save us when no one but the collective Us is going to save us.

Those who are not angry and seething a bit these days may not be witnessing the ravages of war, hunger, unemployment, and unreason itself. The education agenda is a war agenda. The war agenda requires an education agenda: 49 million kids in school; many draft eligible.

Yup. We told them so. Big deal. Those who have not made a big mistake in life can be absolved. We are all lambs among wolves. But we do not have to be lambs among wolves if we recognize, and act on, the role of class consciousness. Good luck to us, every one. Join Us!

## US Patriotism as Viewed from a (Short) Distance

E. Wayne Ross

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*In November, 2008, in Houston, TX, I participated in symposium titled “The Future of Patriotism”, which was cosponsored by the College and University Faculty Assembly of National Council for the Social Studies and the International Assembly of NCSS. The session included a wide variety of perspectives on patriotism, with talks by Suzanne A. Gullege (U of North Carolina), Rodney Reeves (Florida State U), Masato Ogawa (Indiana U), Joel Westheimer (U of Ottawa), James Leming (Saginaw State U) and me. I found the panelists comments and the discussion that followed quite rich and illuminating. My comments on the panel follow.*

For the last five years I’ve lived in Vancouver, British Columbia. I don’t have any intention of moving back to the United States, but even though my spouse and son have always been Canadian citizens (my son is a dual citizen), I have yet to apply for permanent residency. I’m up there working away thanks to NAFTA, an example of free trade in human capital.

When I’m asked about my status in Canada it is always by Americans. Canadians never inquire about such things. “Have you become a Canadian citizen yet?” my compatriots ask. And my answer is usually along the lines of “I’m already a citizen of one country and I’m not so sure about how that’s working out, so why would I want to join up with another one?”

Indeed, the worst thing about living in Canada, besides the wild fluctuations in the Loonie, is that I ordinarily have to endure two national anthems at Vancouver Canuck hockey games.

“Are you proud to be an American?” I’d have to respond to that question pretty much the same way the late, great social critic and comedian Bill Hicks (<http://www.billhicks.com>) did: Uh, I don’t know, I didn’t have a lot to do with it. My parents fucked there, that’s about all” (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W27wBf7Jw34>). Okay, that’s a vulgar and flip response, but it does make point that being a patriot is, for most people, an allegiance based upon an accident of birth.

Patriotism can be parsed in different ways, but in the US it basically comes down to love of country and often a willingness to sacrifice for it. Ritualized performances—such as pledging allegiance to the US flag, singing the “Star Spangled Banner,” voting in elections, jingoistic holidays, buying Chevrolet Trucks, symbols like the yellow ribbon and linguistic tropes like “Support Our Troops,”—are aimed at promoting “love of country.” Indeed, American patriotism results from a hegemonic branding campaign aimed creating a population who see their interests as one and the same as the state. And I’m reminded of this every time I watch the overwrought patriotic displays presented prior to every NASCAR race (and I watch these races weekly as I am from Charlotte, North Carolina).

When asked, “do you love your country?” The first response needs to be another question: “What do you mean by country?” Here I’ll cast my lot with the Noam Chomsky who in response to this question said:

Now if you mean by ‘the country’ the government, I don’t think you can be proud of it. And I don’t think you could ever be proud of it. You couldn’t be proud of any government. It’s not

our government...States are violent institutions. States are violent to the extent that they are powerful, that's roughly accurate." [1]

Marx and Engles were also deeply critical of the state describing it as "nothing but an instrument of oppression of one class by another—no less so in a democratic republic than in a monarchy." [2] In the US, government policies that are driven by the interests of the capitalist class have created staggering levels of inequality in education, the economy, health care, and pursuit of justice. [3] Recent events have clearly illustrated the stranglehold Wall Street has on the federal government, and this most certainly did not change on November 4. Indeed, the US government is for all intents and purposes an "executive committee of the rich." [4]

### **Alternatives to Patriotism American-style—Examples from North of the Border**

Patriotism can be conceived as simply a commitment to a community—as opposed to one's narrow individual interests, which opens the door for us to express affinity with communities other than country/government/state. George Orwell limits his definition of patriotism to acts that are defensive. Patriotism, he wrote is "...devotion to a particular place and a particular way of life, which one believes to be the best in the world but has no wish to force on other people."

I believe Orwell's definition works in reference to Canada. Canadians generally have much greater faith in government than Americans. The Canadian state is much kinder and gentler than the American state. But it has engaged in its share violent acts as part of the British Empire and in its own name. Racist, discriminatory laws targeted Chinese and South Asian immigrants; the indigenous peoples of Canada have been subjected to literal and cultural genocide; and there is the current war in Afghanistan to name a few examples. But patriotism in Canada is not the issue that it is in the US. What is at issue north of the border is the question of what it means to be Canadian. What it means to be American is not a question that is often considered because the dominant strain of "American patriotism" fixes that idea.

Yes, Canadians are proud of the symbols such as the Maple Leaf (and/or the Fleur de Lis). And Remembrance Day is still, more than anything else, a commemoration of the Armistice. While America patriotism is prepackaged and given the hard sell, Canadians seem to always be engaging the question of what it means to be Canadian.

Here are some examples.

Canadian identity is closely tied to the state institutions such as official bilingualism, the Canadian Multiculturalism Act (1985) and the Canada Health Act.

Canadians jealously guard their health care system and are proud of its basis in a utilitarian ethic where the metric of the system's success its contribution to the care of all persons. Initiatives aimed at enhancing private health insurance and for-profit health care delivery systems are considered by many as "un-Canadian." In health care debates, the conflict between corporate profits and the literal well-being of the populous is clearly established. Indeed, Tommy Douglas—who as Premier of Saskatchewan (1944-1961) led the first socialist government in North America and introduced universal public healthcare to Canada—was voted "The Greatest Canadian" (<http://www.cbc.ca/greatest>) of all time in a nationally televised contest organized by the CBC. [5]

A second example is Canadian Multiculturalism Act, which recognizes and promotes the understanding that multiculturalism is a fundamental characteristic of the Canadian identity and that it provides an invaluable resource in the shaping of what Canada is and will be. Canadian multiculturalism is most certainly contested terrain, but that is the point. The cultural pluralism of Canada is not merely about allowing groups to maintain their cultural identities within a dominant culture. But, the cultural diversity itself defines, in part, what it means to be Canadian.

And thirdly there is phenomenon in Canadian politics that is completely unfathomable in the US context: Bloc Québécois. The BQ is a left-wing, ideologically driven, regionally based political party whose primary aim in the creation of a sovereign nation of Quebec. The party is, of course, orientated towards Quebec and it's not surprising that there is little or no support for the party outside the province. While its impossible to imagine a party with these characteristics having legitimacy on the national scene in the US, the Bloc Québécois was Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition in the Canadian Parliament from 1993-1997.

I believe these are examples of what Joel Westheimer has called democratic patriotism and they contrast sharply with the shallow and authoritarian patriotisms that fix what it means to be an American and define absolutely what it means to be "A Patriotic American." [6]

While folks like Westheimer and others are making valiant efforts to reclaim American patriotism as democratic. I don't believe that patriotism is a salvageable concept, particularly in the US context. The mainstream of American patriotism today—the product of that hegemonic branding campaign aimed creating a population who see their interests as one and the same as the state—is a betrayal of the revolutionary ideals that birthed United States: the emancipation of the common person; the creation of participatory democracy; a voluntary federation of local communal institutions, perpetually re-created from below. [7] I think Guy Debord's thoughts on revolution are relevant here:

"Revolution is not 'showing' life to people, but making them live. A revolutionary organization must always remember that its objective is not getting its adherents to listen to convincing talks by expert leaders, but getting them to speak for themselves, in order to achieve, or at least strive toward, an equal degree of participation." [8]

Promoting a commitment to a community—as opposed to one's narrow individual interests—is crucial project, but I believe that the nature of that community and the actions taken to express one's commitment to a community are choices that individuals must make for themselves with no expectation that an accident of birth defines what your community or commitments are.

## Notes

[1] Chomsky, N. (1992). *Manufacturing Consent: Noam Chomsky and the Media* [DVD].

[2] Engles, F. (1891). Postscript to Karl Marx, *The Civil War in France*. (<http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1871/civil-war-france/postscript.htm>)

[3] Ross, E. W. (2006). Introduction: Racism and antiracism in schools. In E. W. Ross (Ed.), *Race, Ethnicity, and Education* (Volume 4, pp. xiii-xxvi). Westport, CT: Praeger. ([http://www.ewayneross.net/Writing/New\\_Books.html](http://www.ewayneross.net/Writing/New_Books.html))

- [4] Gibson, R. (2005). The search for what should be, within what is, by critical educators. *Journal of Critical Educational Policy Studies*, 3(1). (<http://www.jceps.com/?pageID=article&articleID=43>)
- [5] <http://www.cbc.ca/greatest/>><http://www.cbc.ca/greatest/>
- [6] Westheimer, J. (Ed.) (2007). *Pledging allegiance: The politics of patriotism in American schools*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- [7] Lynd, S. (1968). *Intellectual origins of American radicalism*. New York: Pantheon.
- [8] Debord, G. (1981). For a revolutionary judgement of art. In K. Knabb (Ed.), *The situationist anthology* (pp. 310-314). Berkeley, CA: Bureau of Public Secrets. (<http://www.bopsecrets.org/SI/breathless.htm>)

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**Voices Whisper**  
**Gina Stiens**

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Voices whisper  
Stories told  
Echoes felt  
Injustice prevails  
Hatred perpetuated  
Sadness consumes  
Body aches  
Tears fall  
Deeply connected  
Shallow critiques  
Too emotional  
So serious  
Humanity lost  
Emotion drives  
Disconnect destroyed  
Action results  
Ignorance silenced  
Change happens  
Our liberation

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## **Barefoot at the Front Gate: Bearing Witness in Jamaica** **Mary Barrett, Mary Hornung, Amber Kelly, Katy Sutton**

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Waving hands and smiling faces greeted us every morning. Dusty bare feet fidgeted anxiously, waiting for the gates that separated our world from theirs to open. As soon as the divide between us was no longer blocked they reached out earnestly and willed us inside. We played cricket in the hot afternoon sun and took walks from one gate to the other. The faceless statistics and distant historical accounts we had studied for months prior suddenly had life, had names. But the differences between their lives here in Jamaica and our lives back home in the United States seemed overwhelming. Children running around barefoot, workers spending more than half of their weekly earnings in transportation to and from work, a school building sitting empty from lack of funding. It was easy to see the disparities, but harder to understand their causes. As we waited for the gates to open each morning, we realized that to truly “open the gates” we must first find out why there are gates to begin with.

The following analysis and critique is written through the lens of four physical therapy students from Bellarmine University. In May, 2008 we traveled with four physical therapists, an education professor, a social worker, and five other students to Montego Bay, Jamaica as part of a critical service-learning experience. Over the course of ten days we worked with West Haven Children’s Home (WH), a privately run facility for mentally and physically disabled children. West Haven is understaffed and underfunded. About half of the children currently receive physical therapy; however, a physical therapist only visits one day a week. Four part-time PT aids attend to the children’s mobility needs, but much more intervention would be beneficial for them. Beyond our physical work at WH, we also engaged in critical analysis and reflection of the experience.

*“Human rights violations are not accidents; they are not random in distribution or effect. Rights violations are, rather, symptoms of deeper pathologies of power and are linked intimately to the social conditions that so often determine who will suffer abuse and who will be shielded from harm.”*

-Dr. Paul Farmer, *Pathologies of Power*<sup>1</sup>

Globalization has connected human rights with economics and international politics now more than ever. In a world where 385 million people live on less than \$1/day and nearly 30,000 children die each day due to poverty,<sup>2</sup> healthcare cannot be viewed as a separate entity, immune from socioeconomic and political influences. Therefore, our preparation included analyzing the social, economic, political and historical factors that influence Jamaica. This understanding relates our experiences to the larger picture of systemic oppression and addresses our role as care providers both as products of and active participants in the global system. We cannot frame our approach strictly through the lens of physical therapy if our efforts are to be sustainable. The Jamaica experience was an attempt to take what we understood theoretically and make concrete connections to the community.

### **UNDERSTANDING THE RELATIONSHIP OF GLOBAL NORTH AND GLOBAL SOUTH**

The world is interconnected now more than ever through an emerging global marketplace and technological advancements. However, interconnected is not synonymous with united, as

capitalistic decisions have fragmented societies and developed a system where the rich continually get richer and the poor continually get poorer. The terms global north and global south refer to a more recent classification system which replaces first, second, and third world terminology. Generally, the Global North consists of wealthy industrialized countries typically in North America and Western Europe. The Global South consists of less developed countries primarily in Latin America, South Asia, the Middle East, Africa, and the Pacific Region. The Global North consists of only 20 percent of the world population, yet it controls 80 percent of the world's wealth.<sup>3</sup> This paper begins with a discussion of globalization and the current economic landscape because it is shown that there is a correlation between the rapid market integration of the past three decades and the growing unequal distribution of many non-communicable diseases and injuries.<sup>4</sup> Globalization is "a process of greater integration within the world economy through movements of goods and services, capital, technology and (to a lesser extent) labour, which lead increasingly to economic decisions being influenced by global conditions."<sup>5</sup> Contemporary globalization is influenced by many political and economic forces and driven by a capitalistic embrace of 'free' markets and global integration.<sup>4</sup> The current system relies on developing new markets, exploiting cheap labor, and utilizing never-ending resources to decrease costs and increase profit.

The U.S. is currently in a period of neoliberalism, referring to national and international economic policies that have become widespread over the past 25 years or so. Neoliberalism, in theory, is essentially about making trade between nations easier. The goal of this approach, similar to capitalistic ideals, is to allow the free market to balance itself via the pressures of market demands. In essence, let the invisible hand do its magic. However, for those committed to radical social change, this attitude brings much more scepticism. In reality, neoliberalism calls for corporate domination of social affairs with minimal accountability and the government is largely maintained to better serve corporate interest. The main points include ruling the market, cutting public expenditure for social services, deregulation, privatization, and eliminating the concept of "community." These policies have blurred the lines of responsibility and decreased the autonomy of independent nations. The effects of neoliberalism are apparent as countries are unable to meet the needs of the poor majority. When almost half the world, which is over three billion people, live on less than \$2.50 a day,<sup>6</sup> it's hard to imagine that in 2000, the top 25 healthcare executives received \$201.1 million in annual compensation with \$1.1 billion in stock options.<sup>1</sup>

Globalization has impacted health systems and the social determinants of health (SDH) in ways that are detrimental to health equity. The three main mechanisms of economic globalization that have deeply impacted people's lives and therefore health outcomes are expansion of trade, internationalization of production, and deregulation of financial markets.<sup>7,8</sup> Employing a human rights paradigm to health requires an analysis and critique of globalization and how it has disproportionately affected the health and health outcomes of poor people in both our local communities and around the world.<sup>9</sup> Woodward and colleagues highlight five key factors that link globalization and SDH, three direct and two indirect by way of the national economy. The direct effects include impacts on health systems, health policies, and population exposure to certain disease or marketing. The indirect effects include effects operating through the national economy on the health sector, such as the effects of trade liberalization and financial flows on the availability of resources for public expenditure on health; and on population risks, particularly the effects on nutrition and living conditions resulting from impacts on household income.<sup>10</sup>

Farmer argues, “what happens to the poor people is never divorced from the actions of the powerful.”<sup>1</sup> When we see the poverty that exists both locally and globally, it is easy to recognize that certain populations, particularly those in the Global South, are disadvantaged. However, this approach makes it critical to see our advantage as relative to their disadvantage. A public opinion survey held in Louisville, KY showed that there is a discrepancy between what public health experts want people to understand and what the public actually believes about health and health outcomes. Many people view health and health disparities through the lens of a “right choices” model which implies that individuals’ health outcomes are determined by their own choices and actions without consideration of external factors or social determinants of health.<sup>11</sup> This limited view implies that it’s up to the individual to avoid the pitfalls of life instead of questioning why there are pitfalls to be avoided in the first place. Human rights violations are usually symptoms and signs of deeper pathologies of power and so this critical assessment questions the bare roots of such injustice.

### **The Downward Spiral: A Perspective of Jamaica**

Slave trade in Jamaica started shortly after the arrival of Christopher Columbus in the late 15th century. Then, in 1655, the English took control of the island. Sugar plantations, fueled by an active slave trade, led to capitalistic production and advanced the development of European economies. After a series of slave rebellions, emancipation finally came in 1835. This was followed by a time of high unemployment for Jamaicans and most of the land was still owned by Europeans which left the freed slaves dependent on their former owners. Over 100 years later, Jamaica gained political independence from Britain on August 6, 1962. Jamaica needed time to develop and did not have the economic strength to compete with other countries. This left them in a situation where they could not finance a developmental program for themselves.<sup>12, 26</sup>

In 1973, a hike in oil prices pushed Jamaica further into financial need. The private banking system denied Jamaican Prime Minister Michael Manley’s request for money, forcing him to look to the International Monetary Fund (IMF). The IMF was set up after WWII to serve the short-term trading interests of the winning allies. Their goal is to reduce inflation by balancing a nation's loan repayments and imports with its export earnings. The IMF focuses on bringing in capital and has no interest in developing self-sustaining countries. The US controls just over 17.5% of IMF votes due to their size in the world economy. The US and Western Europe control 80% combined. So, taking a loan from the IMF intimately links a country’s economy to the international policy of the US and other first-world countries.<sup>12</sup>

In 1977, PM Manley signed their first loan agreement with the IMF for \$75 million.<sup>12</sup> This event initiated a downward spiral for Jamaica because the loan came with more than just a high interest rate. The World Bank and IMF apply a neoliberal economic ideology to preconditions prior to receiving the money. For example, countries are prescribed cutbacks for governmental spending, the role of the state is minimized, and various trade and labour standards are reduced or removed in order to attract foreign investors. These adjustments also include increased interest rates and currency devaluation among other things.<sup>13</sup> To illustrate one aspect of this in Jamaica, the exchange rate in 1978 was \$1.00 USD to \$1.05 JMD. Thirty years later, the exchange rate we experienced was \$1.00 USD to \$75.00 JMD.<sup>14</sup>

The impact of these adjustments on poorer countries can be devastating. With so many nations being forced into the global marketplace before they are economically and socially stable and

ready, the situation resembles a large-scale price war between the Global North and South. John Madeley states, “Competition between companies involved in manufacturing in developing countries is often ruthless. We are seeing what Korten described as ‘a race to the bottom.’ With each passing day it becomes more difficult to obtain contracts from one of the mega-retailers without hiring child labor, cheating workers on overtime pay, imposing merciless quotas, and operating unsafe practices.”<sup>15</sup>

While individuals and companies in poorer countries continue to fight for survival, the imbalance of trade continues to expand the gap between rich and poor.<sup>16</sup> In 2006, the world’s billionaires (just over 497 people or approximately 0.000008% of the world’s population), were worth \$3.5 trillion (over 7% of world GDP). In the same world, 1.8 million children die each year as a result of diarrhoea.<sup>6</sup> An understanding of the relationship between the global north and south continues to show that these are connected issues. For Jamaica and other undeveloped countries, the mechanism of debt enacted through neoliberal economic policy ensures that such disparities continue to grow each time a new agreement is signed.

### **Jamaica’s External Debt**

1970s: \$800 million

1980s: \$4 billion

Current: \$9.6 billion

As of December 2007, Jamaica owes \$9.6 billion in external debt to the IMF, the World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB) along with other international lending agencies and yet the meaningful development that these loans have “promised” has yet to manifest.<sup>14</sup> The rich continue to get richer and the poor continue to get poorer. Jamaica is not currently receiving any new money from the IMF, but they are held to the regulations imposed from their previous loans. In 2001, Jamaica was paying 52 cents on every dollar of income to pay off interest on the debt and as debt rises, the capacity to produce and export diminishes.<sup>12</sup>

### **Standing On the Other Side of the Street**

Faye Harrison describes Jamaica as on a development path that is “debt-constrained, export-led, and free trade-based,”<sup>17</sup> which is just the Jamaica we saw. From KFCs on the corner to cash exchange in the US dollar it is impossible to spend any time on the island without seeing globalization’s influence. But the true impact of that influence is not always apparent on first glance. What impact do the aisles of imported food at the grocery store have on the domestic economy? Why is the only public beach space in Montego Bay a small strip next to the airport?

As First World citizens, we are led to believe that opportunities for success are equal and available for everyone if they just work hard enough. Yet, that is not always reality when one realizes what the playing field actually looks like. Standing on the other side of the street from the resorts shows a different perspective. For the average Jamaican, the field often resembles a steep mountain more than a level plain. In the market-driven world, there are winners and there are losers. A closer look at Jamaica reveals that the real “winners” are the foreign investors and the small number of Jamaican business elites, whose wealth increases in concentration every year, while the vast majority of the country struggles in poverty.

Our attempt to understand the social, economic, political, and historical setting in Jamaica is crucial to our analysis and approach. We must recognize our individual lens and socialization to make conscious interpretation that is, as Farmer terms, “geographically broad and historically deep.”<sup>1</sup> Through this knowledge it is possible to see our connection with the people and to the current situation in Jamaica so we do not focus solely on West Haven. How do we draw a true connection between our lives and the lives of the disenfranchised and ultimately work toward true sustainable change?

## **IS HEALTH A BASIC HUMAN RIGHT: HEALTH CARE IN THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY**

### **Market-Based Medicine: Health as a Commodity**

The current process of health care delivery revolves around a market-driven system dominated by private corporations who make a profit off of all aspects of health. From pharmaceutical sales to insurance plans, health has become a commodity in today’s society, largely available only to those who can afford it. Those in positions of power are the developers of health policy, excluding input from the very people who are directly affected by these decisions. The consequences of this type of health delivery system become even more ominous in developing nations such as Jamaica where health disparities are further compounded by other social and economic hardships. In the face of such disparity, the principle of health as a human right comes into serious question.

### **Jamaican Health Care: The Realities of Providing Affordable Care to All**

The Ministry of Health and Environmental Control is the major governing body of health care on the island. Health care reform has become a matter of major national importance in recent decades, as rising costs and a lack of health care providers have created widespread shortages and a lack of access for many of Jamaica’s citizens. The National Health Fund was established in 2001 as a funding source, and in 2008 The Jamaican Free Health Care Policy established free public health care for all citizens. This eliminates user fees at public health facilities and provides free services such as diagnostic testing, hospitalizations, prescription drugs, immunizations, and other primary care services.<sup>18,19</sup>

On the surface, free health care in Jamaica looks like an outstanding achievement, an important recognition of health as a basic human right. However, the realities of high external debt, rising economic inflation, and an increase in overseas imports have all contributed to the lack of available funding for Jamaican health care. Jamaica has the 4<sup>th</sup> highest Debt-to-GDP ratio in the world, making financing public industries such as health care increasingly difficult.<sup>20</sup> The government currently allocates only 4.5% of the GDP on healthcare spending, significantly lower than the minimum of 6% recommended by the Jamaican Medical Association and more than 5 times less than the United States.<sup>19</sup> With only one private insurance company on the island that provides individual and group plans, many Jamaicans rely on the public health system as their sole means of health care. Since expanding free health care services in April 2008, more than 422,000 people have utilized these services. This amounts to a loss of JA \$450 million (US \$6.5 million) due to the elimination of user fees.<sup>21</sup> This elimination has certainly helped many who could not otherwise afford services, as more than 350,000 Jamaicans live on only \$2 a day or less.<sup>22</sup> However, with understaffed facilities struggling to meet the rising demand for services at already over-crowded public facilities, the result has been long waiting times for patients and a lack of some services such as diagnostic testing and prescription drugs due to lack of funds.<sup>23</sup>

Despite extensive health care reform in recent years, the fact of the matter remains that Jamaica cannot currently meet the health needs of its people. Even though health has been identified as a basic human right by the Ministry of Health, the current situation in Jamaica raises fundamental questions regarding how to make that principle a reality in today's market-driven world. Where does Jamaica fit in the global picture? Can a country such as Jamaica, which is heavily dominated by international influences, create effective change if other countries and international organizations do not implement similar changes? What does a system that values health as a human right look like?

### **Health as a Human Right: An International Struggle**

As exemplified in Jamaica, health policy is not the only influential factor in access to adequate care. The struggle for health care is inextricably linked to the struggle for all human rights including economic, political and civil. So how can a focus on health contribute to this struggle? Historically, human rights laws have focused primarily on civil and political liberties in the form of changes to legal documents. However, a focus on health shows that even when policy is changed and legal battles are won the economic disparities in place are more influential in determining quality of life. Jamaica's policy can claim to provide free health care for all, but global forces have crippled the economy to a point that even legislative changes are only minimally successful. Passing more human rights legislation is not sufficient. We must work to develop a new paradigm and approach to combat suffering.

For many professionals in the health care field, much if not all of one's daily focus is placed on providing quality care to each patient. But how often is it taken into consideration that one is able to provide such high quality care because so many others in the world are without access to any? In a world where a rich minority controls a poor majority, who is to be responsible for telling the story of those who are not benefiting from a market-based system? Individuals in the health profession are often granted special access to impoverished countries becoming first hand witnesses to these injustices. As students of a first world university, we have the ability to study and critically assess the inequities we have witnessed. However, the work must continue beyond identifying the struggles of others and translate into action by connecting realities of the Global North and South.

How is the transition from analysis to action made? How do we fix it? When talking about social change this is often the response. Well-intentioned individuals want a manual on how to get from point A to point B. The reality of the path is not however a straight shot because the causal factors are so complex, of both local and global origin. We would be doing the people at West Haven an injustice if we only assessed what we saw at the children's home and failed to take into consideration the broader social, political and economic factors. Through a physical therapy lens, we could see changes to implement such as wheelchair modifications, bracing for spasticity, increased stretching time, and other varied treatment interventions. But how does one fit an orthotic for someone without shoes? How can a child be stretched regularly when a PT is only available a few hours a week and expected to manage 50 children? How can the nurses and caregivers take on even *more* responsibilities when they themselves are exhausted and spend half their wages on transportation alone? A focus on solely local factors would enable us to miss the bigger power structures at hand and therefore limit our role in helping them work for change.

A system that values health care as a human right does not only ask whether existing rules have been violated; rather it asks what the effect is on the population. This type of approach lessens the chance for disconnect between policy and reality, between those making the laws and those being exploited by them. Health care providers cannot stand on the sidelines claiming that access or economic issues are not in their scope of practice. Perhaps the most influential factor in determining quality of care is in fact these exact issues. Education is key to relating health care with human rights work. This model goes beyond intervention based approaches to individual treatment. The preparation of students in a health care profession is often so rigid that any discussion of human rights is either not addressed or set aside for one class. This lack of emphasis leads students to a “just get through it” attitude because passing the boards is not dependent on social and ethical issues. The current educational system is setting the stage for complacency regarding human rights in practice by making it acceptable to only spend “left over” time dealing with these issues. We acknowledge the fact that there are accreditation standards to be met; however what is the greater social cost of such a streamlined, focused education? And has this ever been truly challenged?

### **MEDICAL ETHICS AND HUMAN RIGHTS: BEYOND HIPPOCRATES AND ETHICS 101**

When most people think of ethics, their minds tend to draw towards the philosophical origins of the term. However it can have many other implications when put into context in the medical profession. Ethics is the basis of professional codes that dictate how we practice. Ethics can guide our lives and give us options for the difficult choices that arise both personally and professionally. These codes are important, especially in the medical field as we deal with people on a very intimate level. But how are these codes defined and who decides what is important enough to be included? Once the codes are defined who insures that they are enforced?

### **Health and Human Rights Development in the Modern World**

While medical ethics can be traced to as far back as Hippocrates and Ancient Greece, the modern medical ethics movement has its roots following the end of World War II with the inception of the United Nations (UN) and the World Health Organization (WHO). As outlined in Article 25, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights identifies health as a basic right affordable to all people.<sup>24</sup>

Developed at the famous Geneva Convention in 1948, the Declaration set the precedent for the inclusion of health in international human rights discussions. With over 300 available translations, the Declaration is effectively the most “universal” document in the world. Several other international documents addressing specific human rights-related issues have been adopted since 1948 and today the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights has branched into special committees and subcommittees for the purposes of monitoring and developing policies for a variety of human rights causes.

Together with the UN, the WHO has become the leading authority on international health and human rights issues. But even with an increase in international conferences and “experts” appointed to lead steering committees, disparities and injustices in health care continue nearly unabated. In short, these international organizations have done a great deal at identifying health disparities, but little to effectively address them.

# HANGING UP THE WHITE COAT: REDEFINING OUR ROLE AS HEALERS IN A GLOBAL SOCIETY

## Trends to Address Suffering - Charity, Development, and Social Justice

In Farmer's *Pathologies of Power*, he identifies three trends in which one can address suffering: charity, development and social justice. The ultimate goal is a *social justice* approach where conditions of the poor are viewed as a result of structural factors that are human-made. This trend sees the structure itself, not the individuals within it, as deeply flawed and acknowledges that what happens to the poor is always connected to the actions of powerful.<sup>1</sup> In our travels to Jamaica we attempt to work in light of a social justice approach and empower instead of impose upon the people with whom we work.

## Medicine as Social Justice

Through this paper, we have addressed social, political, economic, and historical issues related to Jamaica, and attempted to contextualize our experience and role as physical therapists in the global society. We then related this information to our approach regarding health as a human right and redefining medical ethics to include the global community. Will we base our practice on selling "products" to "consumers" or providing care to patients? Medicine, especially for the poor and underprivileged does not fit into a market-based economy. The actions of a true "healer" are informed and enhanced by the lived experiences of the oppressed.

The role of health care professionals in the struggle for human rights is critically needed at this point in history. As Farmer states, "No other profession is accorded greater and more intimate access to the lives of the sick and suffering. With this great privilege comes responsibility."<sup>1</sup> In working to combat inequities of the world, one must develop, as liberation theology terms it, a "preferential option for the poor." With this approach the needs of those who have been socially and economically oppressed are placed ahead of the privileged that have benefited from our current globalized economy.

To develop a preferential option for the poor we intend to follow an observe, judge, act method.<sup>1</sup> The *observe* part of the equation requires analysis and identification of disparities in health care. Also developing personal and intimate relationships with the suffering will be essential to this process. *Judging* indicates gaining an understanding of the social structures that cause injustice and also engaging in critical dialogue with others in the healthcare field. The last piece of the puzzle is where we are now; to *act* on our observations and judgments. This involves much more than merely reporting our findings. In theory it is simple; we heal the sick. But as there are many other social and economic disparities at work that influence the well being of the suffering, we need to shift our interventions from a purely medical perspective to one of global healers working on behalf of those in need.

Indeed, it is imperative that we become advocates not just for our own individual patients, but for all people. How does a "treat others as you want to be treated" philosophy work for the invisible millions who never get the chance to be "treated" in the first place? Who will advocate on behalf of these people? We must move beyond arguing the "right thing to do" in hypothetical situations and begin to look at the true impact of our actions. In that same light, we can no longer see our *inaction* as harmless and neutral. As Brazilian philosopher and social activist Paulo Freire states, "Washing one's hands of the conflict between the powerful and the powerless means to side with the powerful, not to be neutral." There are no neat and clean rules telling one

how to go about changing the world. It's the process and approach that has to change; we must constantly analyze and critique our own actions and work in order to further develop a path for change. Once we see ourselves as implicated in a system of oppression, we can then begin to work with the oppressed to bring about change.

## **STRETCHING AND SOCIAL JUSTICE: PHYSICAL THERAPY'S ROLE IN REWRITING THE NARRATIVE OF GLOBAL NORTH AND SOUTH**

Given the current economically driven society, market forces determine access to care as witnessed time and again throughout the world. A world in which "success" is measured in terms of GDP, number of billionaires, or volume of stock exchange, health care becomes an economic commodity. A market-based medical model such as this places the poor and underprivileged at the mercy of the almighty dollar, setting the stage for exploitation and inequality.<sup>1</sup> This observation leads us to ask the question, is health a fundamental human right or an economic commodity where those in power determine who will live and who will die? If we agree that health care is a basic human right, then we must attempt to view this system from the perspective of those who suffer unjust privation.

As physical therapists and students at West Haven, it was easy to see physical therapy-related changes that we would implement (i.e. positioning, stretching, wheelchair modifications). However it is much more difficult to take a step back and think about the context of what we were witnessing, and to see the situation from the view of the children, the workers, and the people of Jamaica. Why is it that so many Jamaicans cannot find jobs, and how does this pertain to myself and other external forces?

When one witnesses suffering it is easy to become overwhelmed, to feel helpless, and to let the situation immobilize you. Frustration can set in when we realize that our actions over a week or two of work will likely not have any long-term effects. What happens at West Haven when we leave? As future physical therapists, we are called to "address the health needs of society."<sup>25</sup> Yes, we can stretch the children, but the effects last no more than a day. Sporadic intervention is not sustainable. There must be a vision in order to direct our short term actions so that we do not get lost in individual achievements and failures. Understanding and knowledge give us a context in which we can better understand what we see and then how we choose to act.

The situation at West Haven and in all of Jamaica is closely tied with global economic policy. We understand that there is no quick fix, but are hopeful for change and willing to work in light of this. We are working on developing a partnership with a group of health care professionals from Colorado who have also traveled to WH. We have additionally made contact and met with the physiotherapy department at Cornwall Regional Public Hospital in Montego Bay, and plan on continuing to develop this relationship with our university. It is still unclear where our path will lead in the future, but we will continue the cycle of reflection and action to better develop our praxis, knowing that it will be imperfect but engaging in the struggle nonetheless.

Often when one thinks of Jamaica he or she envisions white sandy beaches, the crystal clear blue-green ocean, and the laid back, "no worries" society. This is the Jamaica that is portrayed to us as potential tourists – the resort side of Jamaica. However, on deeper analysis, the reality of life for the people there is much different. We were able to leave the gates of WH at the end of

the day and return to our air-conditioned hotel rooms. We do not have to live with the consequences of inadequate health care or rely almost entirely on the benevolence of strangers in order to have our basic needs met. As future physical therapists, we understand that our role as healers in the global world encompasses more than just the daily interactions we have with our own patients. The children at WH cannot be left only to become another case report or class presentation. In our efforts to improve their physical well-being we must always stop and ask why they need our intervention in the first place. Otherwise any impact we have made in Jamaica is left outside the gates of West Haven when we leave.

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# Dissidence and Institutionalized Oppression: A Counter-hegemonic Response

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Social and political systems are centered on power. “Lukes (1974) has argued that, in the world of social relationships, power is exercised in conflict over goals, decisions, strategies, and position. Power is more than mere capacity, which, when exercised, affects the behavior of others; it is also the capacity exercised at the cost of the other’s capacity to act” (Heaney, 2000, p.103). This perhaps explains why Jimi Hendrix once said, “when the power of love overcomes the love of power, the world will know peace.” The world is not in a state of peace. But if the love of power, and its subsequent possession are the reasons we don’t know peace, then we can question; who is so in love with this form of power, who has power, and to what ends is power used?

It is through socially constructed systems a small fraction of the world’s population possesses the vast majority of power in our world. I believe that despite the great possibilities for humankind to live in a much more egalitarian manner, the powerful, through greed and indifference, continue to become more powerful, to own more property and capital, all at the expense of humanity, nature, and the planet. Furthermore I believe the powerful have successfully created, cultivated, and perfected these socially constructed systems of control in order to limit our access to critical knowledge. They seek to continually subjugate everyone and everything to their will and prevent the liberation of peoples’ bodies and minds.

In this article, I describe a few of the institutions and their historical characteristics that I believe play a large role in the subjugation of people. I demonstrate how our government has protected these institutions and subsequently has protected the ruling class. I then discuss the importance of dissidence as the path to liberation. Citing examples of dissident individuals across a spectrum of social institutions I celebrate their revolutionary works, which have sought to bring about equality and social justice in the world, emphasizing the need for collective participation in the struggle for the liberation of all people.

## **Oppression by the Ruling Class**

Our government has always catered to the interests of the ruling class, the capitalists, and the mega-rich or, the “corporatocracy.” It has done this through the historic corporate welfare manifested in government subsidies to the railroads, manufacturers, and ship owners of the past, and through the billion dollar bailouts to the corporations of today. The government has also catered to those who hold power through educational policies. The nationalist approach to history, attacks on bilingual and multi-cultural education, the emphasis on standards-based education, banking, and substandard educational opportunities provided to minorities and poor people all make evident the educational system’s bias towards the elite.

What, then, are the desired “products” of an educational system biased towards the ruling elite? As Donaldo Macedo states “Schools play an important role in cultural reproduction, where collective experiences function in the interest of the dominant ruling elites rather than in the interest of the oppressed groups that are the object of the policies of cultural reproduction” (Zinn, Macedo, 2005, p. 16). In the forward to Angela Valenzuela’s *Subtractive Schooling* Christine Sleeter furthers this idea, “schools are an instrument of the maintenance of colonial

relationships in that they constitute an arm of the state through which belief systems and cultural relationships are taught” (Valenzuela, 1999, p. xvii). In the Introduction to Paulo Freire’s *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Richard Shaull also puts forth, “There is no such thing as a neutral educational process. Education . . . functions as an instrument that is used to facilitate the integration of the younger generation into the logic of the present system and bring about conformity to it . . .” (Freire, 1970, p.34). John Taylor Gatto similarly asserts, “Intellectual training is not the purpose of state schooling - obedience and subordination are” (1995, p.?).

As stated above, we have cultural reproduction, obedience, conformity and subordination in schools, but to what ends? Roberto Bahruth answers this question: “The ideal products of schooling, then, consist of conforming consumer-debtors who will, rather than resisting their own exploitation, enthusiastically participate in their own entrapment by digging themselves a hole of debt by buying into consumer logic” (Bahruth, 2008, p. 296). Joe Kincheloe similarly contests, “Schools become the ideological vehicles for multinational corporate interests and are largely successful in creating voracious consumers whose designer identities will help usher in the global citizen-as-consumer” (Macedo, 2006, p. xv). Thus, government controlled education seeks to create and reproduce a citizenry of people that are complacent with being exploited for their labor, consumption, and their lives (in the case of the military) by the ruling class. More than complacent, it seems, but eager.

Henry Giroux posits, “The ascendancy of neoliberal corporate culture into every aspect of American life both consolidates economic power in the hands of the few and aggressively attempts to break the power of unions, decouple income from productivity, subordinate the needs of the society to the market, and deem public services and goods an unconscionable luxury” (2008, p. 112). In the introduction to Noam Chomsky’s *Profit Over People*, Robert W. McChesney observes, “The neoliberal system therefore has an important and necessary byproduct—a depoliticized citizenry marked by apathy and cynicism” (Chomsky, 1999, p.10).

Perhaps to those who have “confuse[d] freedom with the maintenance of the status quo; so that if *conscientização* threatens to place that status quo in question, it thereby seems to constitute a threat to freedom itself” (Freire, 1970, p.36). Why else would well-intentioned individuals participate in a system that is by design oppressive? The authoritarian manner in which the status quo conducts itself, in all social realms, “lead[s] to apathy, excessive obedience, uncritical conformity, lack of resistance against authoritarian discourse, self-abnegation, and fear of freedom” (Freire, 2005, p.73). This may have led Thomas Heaney to liken “the exercise of power [to] the skill of the surgeon, the knife best inserted in a person whose mind and senses have been dulled” (2000, p.103). Well-intentioned individuals would not participate in oppressive systems, unless, of course, they were the beneficiaries of those systems. Therefore, we may postulate that the general population, teachers included, is unaware of their own oppression and, subsequently, their involvement in reproducing oppressive systems and classrooms. Heaney continues, “Power is effective and most secure when it becomes so much a part of the background that it is unobserved and internalized” (2000, p.103).

At present we have a deadly mix of capitalist driven, historically, linguistically, culturally, politically, and pedagogically skewed education that creates a jingoistic population incapable of critically examining the existing structures of power. As Joe Kincheloe laments, “The post-industrial, or informationist, model of society is constructing a cybernetic citizenry driven by the

logic of production, consumption, distribution, and the imperialist project of transnational capitalism” (Macedo, 2006, p. xv). This leaves us with

a vicious cycle, because the people who are the victims of the system don’t have the resources or the wherewithal to rebel against the system . . . So it’s representative of the larger problem in the society, which is true not only of education but also of the economy, and that is that the people who are the greatest victims . . . are the people who have the least resources to rebel (Zinn, 2005, p.59).

All of these forces are working together: neoconservatism, neoliberalism, capitalism, greed, and corporate culture. The power divisions run along the lines of race, sex, and class. They are integrated, embedded—and therefore invisible to most—into our social institutions: government, education, etc. Astonishingly, the ruling class has been so successful in their indoctrination of people as their subjects that the oppressed peoples themselves—even many of those who consider themselves to be radical—have taken over the role of indoctrinating the next generation, protecting the ruling party, and re-creating the status quo.

Although the United States is the primary culprit, this is rapidly becoming a global problem. As Helena Norberg-Hodge has witnessed through her experiences throughout the world, “over the last decades, diverse cultures from Alaska to Australia have been overrun by the industrial monoculture. Today’s conquistadors are ‘development,’ advertising, the media, and tourism” (1991, p.3).

### **History as a System of Control**

History protects the established order by presenting carefully selected “facts” which paint a picture of the ruling class as benevolent, humane, democracy loving citizens, just like you and me. The problem with the facts presented, although they make it easy to be a proud, flag-waving American, is that only a portion of the story is told.

Howard Zinn explains,

As soon as you do history you are confronted with the fact that you are selecting out of an infinite amount of data a certain amount of data, certain pieces of data, to include. And you make that selection according to your point of view, so that every historian and every work of history has a point of view. So doing history is all a matter of selection and deciding what is important; and you decide what is important, really, on the basis of your present concerns (Zinn, Macedo, 2005, p. 71).

In *A People’s History of the United States, 1492-present*, Howard Zinn problematizes the one-sided education most of us have received about Columbus. He does this by looking at the work of distinguished Harvard historian Samuel Eliot Morison. In Morison’s popular book *Christopher Columbus: Mariner*, written in 1954, he tells about the enslavement and killings of Native Americans. Morison writes, “the cruel policy initiated by Columbus and pursued by his successors resulted in complete genocide,” to which Zinn replies, “That is on one page, buried halfway into the telling of a grand romance. In the book’s last paragraph, Morison sums up his view of Columbus”:

He had his faults and his defects, but they were largely the defects of the qualities that made him great—his indomitable will, his superb faith in God and his mission as the Christ-bearer to lands beyond the seas, his stubborn persistence despite neglect, poverty and discouragement. But there was no flaw, no dark side to the most outstanding and essential of all his qualities—his seamanship (Zinn, 2005, p.7-8).

Are we to surmise his superior seamanship trumps the fact that the policy he initiated resulted in complete genocide?

Zinn points out the problem with history recounted as such. “To state the facts, however, and then to bury them in a mass of other information is to say to the reader with a certain infectious calm: yes, mass murder took place, but it’s not that important—it should weigh very little in our final judgments; it should affect very little what we do in the world” (Zinn, 2005, p.8).

More recently we can look to examples during the anti-slavery movement and the civil rights movement. In the book *Literacies of Power: What Americans are Not Allowed to Know*, Donald Macedo (2006) criticizes E.D. Hirsch’s *Cultural Literacy: What Every American Needs To Know* and points out some key historical omissions worth citing at length:

*What every American needs to know:*

Government of the people, by the people, and for the people. Words from the Gettysburg Address of Abraham Lincoln, often quoted as the definition of Democracy.

*What Americans are not allowed to know:*

These words were not meant for African-Americans, since Abraham Lincoln also declared: “I will say, then, that I am not, nor ever have been in favor of bringing about in any way the social and political equality of the white and black races. . . . I as much as any other man am in favor of having the superior position assigned to the white race.”

*What every American needs to know:*

“Give me liberty or give me death”—words from a speech by Patrick Henry urging the American colonies to revolt against England. Henry spoke only a few weeks before the Revolutionary War began, he said: “Gentleman may cry peace, peace, but there is no peace. The war is actually begun. The next gale that sweeps from the North will ring to our ears the clash of resounding arms. Our brethren are already in the field . . . Is life so dear, or peace so sweet, as to be purchased at the price of chains and slavery? Forbid it, Almighty God! I know not what course others may take, but for me, give me liberty or give me death”

*What Americans are not allowed to know:*

Patrick Henry’s words were never meant for African Slaves or American Indians. African Americans and American Indians continued throughout the history of the United States to experience subjugation, leading Malcolm X to pronounce in 1964

the following: “No, I’m not an American. I’m one of 22 million black people who are the victims of Americanism . . . One of the . . . Victims of Democracy, nothing but disguised hypocrisy. So, I’m not standing here speaking to you as an American, or a patriot, or a flag-saluter, or a flag-waver—no, not I! I’m speaking as a victim of this American system. And I see America through the eyes of the victim. I don’t see any American Dream; I see an American nightmare” (pp. 70-71).

Most historians and historical texts have misrepresented, or not represented at all, diverse peoples across a spectrum of political ideologies, ethnicities, religions, classes, etc. But one group has suffered exclusion from history more than any other: women. “The very invisibility of women, the over-looking of women, is a sign of their submerged status” (Zinn, 2005, p. 103). Women who belong to ethnic, social, or class groups that enjoy relative comfort in their dominant positions are still subjugated by men. For women who belong to minority groups or are poor, they suffer exponentially.

When referring to the civil rights movement and labor movements Howard Zinn points out, “in the 1960s it wasn’t Kennedy and Johnson who were the leaders and initiators of the movement for race equality, it was black people” (Zinn, Macedo, 2005, p.194). “If you were in the south during the civil rights movement, you could see that the government wasn’t doing anything about racial segregation” (Zinn, Macedo, 2005, p. 83). Likewise, it wasn’t men or the government that started the feminist movement or that fought for women’s rights, it was women. Zinn drives home this point:

It hasn’t been Congress or the President or the Supreme Court who has initiated acts to remedy racial inequality or economic injustice, or to do something about the government going to war. It’s always taken the actions of citizens and actions of civil disobedience to bring these issues to national attention and finally force the President, Congress, and the Supreme Court to begin to move” (Zinn, Macedo, 2005, p. 132).

Yet overwhelmingly, the great advances in our freedoms and justices are attributed to the leaders of the times, not those who shed blood, sweat and tears for their rights. Should Native Americans honor any history celebrating Columbus and the spirit of westward expansion, knowing the results were the destruction of their culture and way of life? Should African Americans celebrate Abraham Lincoln knowing that he was in favor of slavery? Perhaps should is the wrong question. Instead, let’s ask why *would* the victims of the ruling classes celebrate their own oppressors?

Of course the exploitation of ‘human resources’ and hoarding of power by the powerful and the ruling class and their historically skewed representations are not limited to subjects concerning Native Americans, the Revolutionary War, or struggles for rights. “The long-term interest of the American governments, from the end of the Revolutionary War to the present day, has been the expansion of national power, first on the continent, then into the Caribbean and the Pacific, and, since the Second World War, everywhere on the globe” (Zinn, Macedo, 2005, p. 158).

At this point it is crucial to examine what Zinn refers to as “national power.” It would be a serious mistake to interpret Zinn’s statement as referring to our nation’s collective, shared power. Zinn is referring to the power the ruling class controls and which throughout history has been seeking to expand:

It wasn’t “we the people” who established the constitution; it was fifty-five white, prosperous men who established the Constitution. And there were people left out of it, people ignored by it, and the Constitution was not set up in order to benefit all of the people as one classless group but to benefit the upper classes of that time, to benefit the bondholders and the slaveholders and the land speculators and the manufacturers (Zinn, Macedo, 2005, p. 77-8).

The interests in their expanding sources of power have nothing to do with the welfare or the benefit of the poor, the middle-class, minorities, immigrants; in other words, the vast majority of people.

### **Language Policy as a System of Control**

“American monolingualism is part and parcel of an assimilationist ideology that decimated the American indigenous languages as well as the many languages brought to this shore by various waves of Immigrants” (Macedo, Dendrinis & Gounari, 2003, p.23). Language and culture are inextricably intertwined. Thus, the loss of one’s language constitutes the loss of one’s culture, and as a result, the loss of one’s self. Assimilation represents conformity and obedience to the dominant culture, language, and values.

Despite the absence of an English only clause in the constitution, the overriding English only ideology in the United States—coupled with legislation at the state level to eliminate languages other than English from the public sphere—have effectively eliminated, or made minimal, the presence or use of languages other than English in public discourse. James Crawford (1997b) lists the following as motivations for the English only ideology:

- Citizens who want to preserve our common language and avoid ethnic strife
- Bigots seeking to roll back civil rights advances for language-minority groups
- Conservatives hoping to impose a sense of national unity and civic responsibility
- Liberals who fear that bilingual education and bilingual voting discourage assimilation
- Nativists trying to fan animosity toward immigrants and build support for tighter quotas
- Euro-ethnics who resent "unfair advantages" enjoyed by Hispanics and Asians today
- Politicians attempting to exploit a national mood of isolationism and xenophobia
- Racists who equate multiculturalism and ethnic separatism
- Americans who feel threatened by diversity, among other unsettling changes (1997b).

Early attempts at parting people with their language occurred in the United States during World War I and World War II. This was primarily an attempt to suppress the German language during wartime (Macedo, Dendrinis & Gounari, 2003). These attempts were met with little success.

Years later we have the bilingual education act of 1968. Stemming from the civil rights movements, advocates of multiculturalism and bilingualism were successful in securing the

rights to bilingual education and received substantial support from the federal government. From 1968-1978 the federal support for bilingual education enjoyed healthy growth (San Miguel, 2004).

In the early 1980s opposition to bilingual education effectively halted its growth. Although there had always been opposition to bilingual education, prior to the 80s the opposition lacked organization. Under the Reagan administration and with the support and collaboration of “a few specific federal agencies, Republican officeholders, and special interest groups, especially English-only organizations” the opposition was successful in organizing and subsequently halting the growth of bilingual education (San Miguel, 2004, p.70).

More recently we have seen several specific attacks on bilingual education at the state level. Proposition 227 in California, also known as “English for the Children”, rejected bilingual education and moved to an English-only model (Crawford, 1997a). “Voters in Arizona soon followed California’s lead and mandated English-only instruction in their public schools. In 2001-2002, several additional states introduced anti-bilingual or English-only initiatives in their legislative sessions: Colorado, Massachusetts, New York, Oklahoma, Oregon, and Iowa” (San Miguel, 2004, p.82). It is interesting to note that many of these cases have been largely due to the efforts of Ron Unz, a wealthy businessman from California.

Language policy in the United States and within our public schools has increasingly sought to sever non-native English speakers not only from their language, but from their culture as well. “Rather than building on students’ cultural and linguistic knowledge and heritage to create biculturally and bilingually competent youth, schools subtract these identifications from them to their social and academic detriment (Valenzuela, 1999, p.25). This is done despite the overwhelming linguistic evidence that students who are proficient in their first language and culture will be more successful in learning a second language and culture (Cummins, 1984; Hernandez-Chavez, 1988; Montano-Harmon, 1991; Lindholm and Aclan 1993; Merino et. al. 1993). Supporters of the English-only movements’ blatant disregard of sound educational research on the benefits of bilingual education leads me to believe that some of these English-only advocates, in fact, *want* marginalized, non-English speaking minorities to fail.

### **Educational Policy as a System of Control**

Along with History and language, the standardization of curriculum and state and national assessments across all content areas have further served to rob our students of their ability to think critically. High stakes testing and teacher accountability have ensured that teachers will not focus on individual student needs, rather they will focus on teaching to the test. Effectively, No Child Left Behind has crippled teachers and reduced them to mere technicians in the classroom. Indeed, as Paulo Freire states in the forward to Donaldo Macedo’s *Literacies of Power*, “The educational pragmatism embraces a technical training without political analysis, because such analyses upset the smoothness of educational technicism. Simply put, we are witnessing the assertion of an educational technicism that urges us not to burden students with political thoughts and to leave them alone so that they can best focus on their technical training” (Macedo, 2006, p. x).

Would be good teachers resort to, and mediocre teachers just stick to, “banking” de-contextualized, fragmented bits of information into the heads of their bored, uninterested, unstimulated students for fear of losing their jobs if students don’t perform well on End of Course exams, or state or national assessments. Joe Kincheloe bemoans, “As schools, for example, fragment knowledge and deny contextual understanding, students find their ability to make connections between school information, their lived worlds, and social, cultural, and institutional relations of power and privilege more and more difficult” (Macedo, 2006, p. xi). Students’ intelligence, therefore, is schooled into submission as to not question the political nature of their subordinate positions.

Macedo points out that “courses that deal with issues of race relations, ethics, and ideology are almost absent from the teacher-preparation curricula. This serious omission is, by its very nature, ideological and constitutes the foundation for what [he] calls the pedagogy of big lies.” He continues, “It is ideological to the degree that [teachers] have invested in a system that rewards them for reproducing and not questioning dominant mechanisms designed to produce power asymmetries along the lines of race, gender, class, culture, and ethnicity” (2006, p.12).

### **Conclusion**

So what do we do? We say Hell No! In the academy we have scholars who have been saying Hell No! for a long time. Noam Chomsky, Howard Zinn, Paulo Freire, Peter McLaren, Donaldo Macedo, Bell Hooks, Henry Giroux, Maxine Greene, Joe Kincheloe, Shirley Steinberg, Beverly Tatum, Angela Valenzuela, Rudolfo Chávez Chávez, the list goes on. Yes we read and we study and we commit ourselves to becoming ontologically clear.

Zinn warns, however, that intellectual dissidence is not sufficient:

Well, the chief problem is that if intellectuals who do have a radical vision of this society, and who even present that vision in the educational system in their teaching through the books they assign or what they say in their lectures, are not at the same time involved in the world outside, in the real social struggles that go on—if the classroom remains a sealed, intellectual entity—then they are teaching their students that this classroom radicalism is sufficient. They’re teaching their students to be content with being intellectually dissident and then, maybe, to become teachers who will perpetuate the role of the intellectual dissident but without venturing into the world outside (2005, p.64).

In schools we have classroom teachers that say Hell No! everyday. Teachers like Herbert Kohl and his idea of “creative maladjustment” and John Taylor Gatto who, when questioned how he spent so long in a public school system he despised, replied, “I became an active saboteur, in small ways and large” (Kohl, 1994; Gatto, 1993, p.5). In so doing, battling the dominant paradigm, educators can be uniquely successful in derailing the cultural reproduction, obedience, and subordination sought by the educational status quo, the government, and the ruling elite.

We look to the arts as they are an invaluable source of inspiration and can be so instrumental in reaching young people. Whether it is poetry or hip-hop, painting or graffiti, we look to the arts

and we allow students to express themselves with and through art. Writers, poets, painters, actors/actresses, etc. have historically been some of the most dissident members of our society.

An example is Jeffrey Haynes (aka Mr. Lif), a hip-hop artist from Boston. In the song *Live From the Plantation* he criticizes the ruling class and the systems of control they have put in place. “We all are being murdered by a similar process, whether you work at the candy store or slave at the office, the purpose of our life is just to serve the economy, they misinform our minds to paint a picture of harmony, but if you listen then you know that shits out of tune, cuz the function of our life is just to work and consume” (2002). Similarly, In *The Eyes Have It*, the Dilated Peoples sing, “I heard those that don't speak up inherit the worst, I heard the rich get the treasures and the right to write history, I heard the poor get buried in dirt” (2006).

Some artists have had to resort to extreme measures to avoid compromising their message. Immortal Technique (Felipe Coronel), for example, resorted to selling albums out of the trunk of his car in Brooklyn to avoid compromising his radical message. He reminds teachers “the mind of a child is where the revolution begins” (2005). In addition, Banksy, notoriously known for his politically motivated art, resorted to graffiti to give his art exposure. He warns us that in many cases the ruling class has stolen the integrity of art. “The art we look at is made by only a select few. A small group create, promote, purchase, exhibit and decide the success of art. Only a few hundred people in the world have any real say. When you go to an Art gallery you are simply a tourist looking at the trophy cabinet of a few millionaires” (2005, p.144).

Using counter-hegemonic art and music are extremely effective in educating for ontological clarity and equality. What these artists rap about, write about, and create art about echoes much of what is written by many of the aforementioned authors and scholars. However, hip-hop and other mediums of art may resonate more deeply with some of those who aren't a part of academia, especially with younger students who are already “plugged-in” to various alternative media, pop-culture, and technology.

Perhaps some can't, or are unwilling, to see the value in using music lyrics, raps, and popular culture for educational purposes. However, it can't be denied that these artists made observations about their lived realities and struggled to make a meaningful, progressive message. Yet, the educational status quo is not likely to acknowledge this work, as it does not conform to “standard English,” the rules of grammar, or represent dominant values. The hegemony of the English language works alongside the aforementioned systems of control to rob people of their voices and non-status quo perspectives, as we can see in the arts.

So we must commit to dissidence, dissidence towards a system that has been rigged. Towards a system that is set up to ensure that some succeed, but that most fail. In her critique on western feminism, Shefali Milczarek-Desai explains Chela Sandoval's idea of a “differential consciousness refer[ring] to the ability to read the current situation of power [and] to self consciously [choose] and [adopt] the ideological form that is best suited to push against its configurations” (2002, p.132). By incorporating the ideas and philosophies of the aforementioned scholars, teachers and artists, and by utilizing Sandoval's “differential consciousness” those who become dissident members of society will be better prepared to identify and fight against the oppressive forces that seek to subjugate and exploit our students, and ourselves.

Jiddu Krishnamurti once said, “It is no measure of health to be well-adjusted to a profoundly sick society.” To be well-adjusted in our society is to submit, conform, and to obey a powerful system that marginalizes, exploits, and destroys. Peter McLaren (2009) has insisted on an “extreme response” to the imperialistic, transnational corporatocracy that corrupts our schools, co-opts our minds, poisons our society, and destroys our planet. He says that, on the one hand, you can be liberal, and on the other hand, you can be a progressive liberal. Yet a progressive liberal is still a liberal, and all liberals operate within the guidelines of the system enacted by the status quo. The “extreme response” he speaks of is that of a radical. The response of a liberal or even of a progressive liberal will not do. His assertion that we need to be committed to radical ideas and a revolutionary praxis leaves no room for quasi-radicals, only those who are devoted radicals have the ability to heal our “profoundly sick society.”

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# Militarization and Zero-Tolerance Or: How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Prison-Industrial Complex

Matthew G. Archibald

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## Zero-Tolerance: An Introduction

The footage from the camera is grainy, the images bleak. We zoom in on a building sitting on the horizon, Apache helicopters hovering above. The windows in this building do not open. Swipe cards, with emergency procedures printed on back, are needed to enter and exit. Surveillance cameras line the hallways and monitor the grounds. On the sidewalk outside the main entrance, an officer wrestles with, and eventually subdues, a teenager. What is this building, a school or a prison?

Inside are padded “time-out” rooms where adults place children, sometimes with the help of one or two other adults. Physical restraints, euphemistically called “therapeutic holds,” are employed when the youth become “threats to themselves or others.” These holds aren’t always effective and an adult was once driven to give a dead-leg to a 14 year old who would not stop biting, kicking and spitting on him. One day, he thinks, we will see this young man’s photo in the paper for murdering someone. The camera’s footage is reviewed to determine if a sexual assault was perpetrated in the cafeteria. Perhaps there is footage of the dead-leg? Without warning, the loudspeaker emits a piercing tone, and a voice monotonously recites the Pledge of Allegiance. Afterwards, it is announced that military recruiters will be in the career center today. Wait, this *is* a school!

Students at this school are taken away in handcuffs after they commit assault, or when warrants for their arrest are served. Students are called out of class to meet with probation officers (P.O.s) and give urine samples for drug tests. School Resource Officers (S.R.O.s) conduct random pocket and shoe checks, write tickets for tobacco, lighters, paraphernalia, confiscate prescription medicine, and deliver admonishments for clothing or accessories that advertise gang affiliation or drug culture. Teachers communicate with P.O.s. about student behavior. An S.R.O. once tasered a student.

Students are required to turn out their pockets, take off their shoes, show the contents of their backpacks and, in some cases, are “wanded” by a metal detector before entering the building. Some students come to class reeking of marijuana, or slurring their words. Once, a drug dog, while performing a sweep of a classroom, was instructed to jump up on the desks to showcase its exceptional training.

In this school, a teacher (who was once stabbed in the back with a broken pencil by a kindergartner), got punched in the eye, and had to defend himself from the following blows. Misdemeanor charges for “disrupting the educational environment” are filed against students when they verbally assault teachers. Sometimes parents attempt to sue teachers.

Students can get suspended or expelled from this school for a variety of reasons: fighting, sexual harassment, writing bomb threats in the school bathroom, having knives, brass knuckles, taser guns, paintball guns or tear gas in backpacks or lockers; being high or drunk, or having drugs or alcohol at school. Students can also be suspended or expelled for having these items in their cars. They can even be expelled for having excessive absences!

Does this sound like fiction, like something from the movies? As terrible as it may seem, in my short career as a teacher, it has been my reality. And the sad thing is that this did not all happen at just one school, one bad example, in a bad neighborhood that can be shut down or reformed. I have witnessed or experienced all of these scenarios at several schools and, as I will demonstrate in this paper, these types of schools are becoming the norm.

Schools, like so many other facets of our society, are becoming increasingly militarized and repressive. It seems that society is waging war on young people, and schools are looking less and less like those of our childhood and more and more like prisons or boot camps. According to Henry Giroux (2003b), they have become “spaces of containment and control” (p.59) instead of zones of transformation and empowerment. The reason for this disturbing transformation is complex, related to a variety of political and sociological phenomena which must be critically analyzed if we are to reverse it.

Many factors have contributed to the militarization of our schools: the military-industrial complex and its powerful influence on U.S. culture and media; the expansion of the Junior Reserve Officer’s Training Corps (JROTC ) and the intensification of military recruitment in schools (Berlowitz & Long, 2003); the increase of public schools opened as or made into military academies; the Troops to Teachers program which places military personnel in public schools as teachers; the tragic events at Columbine, and other schools, as well as the September 11 terror attacks and the subsequent “war on terror.” Even No Child Left Behind (NCLB) has significantly influenced the militarization of schools with its Neoliberal push for competition and privatization. NCLB’s Section 9528 even “puts a school district at risk of losing NCLB funding if it doesn’t give military recruiters home contact information for secondary school students” (Jehlen & Winans, 2005, cited in Saltman & Gabbard, 2008, p. 221). All of these programs and events have played a significant role in militarizing our schools as well as our culture.

In addition, I believe that the increased militarization of U.S. schools has been facilitated by zero-tolerance discipline policies and the tendency towards using the justice system to handle problem behaviors. This trend has been influenced by the prison-industrial complex, the pathological big business of incarcerating people, and the Neoliberal rationales which drive such ideologies. Hopefully, by drawing attention to these inhumane and anti-pedagogical trends, we, as dedicated, caring, intellectual “agents of change,” can help to stop the trend towards militarization and prison-like schools. It will, however, require much more than windows that open and it will require all of our best efforts.

### **Militarization or Militarism?**

I would like to clarify what I mean by *militarism* and differentiate it from *militarization*. David Frantz (2001) says that, “Militarism implies or sanctions the use of violent force,” and that, as an extension, “War, as a tool of foreign policy, is considered an acceptable, if not inevitable means for solving international and domestic disputes” (p.105). *Militarism* relates to the glorification of war and military might as ends in and of themselves. *Militarization*, on the other hand, can be described as “the degree to which a society’s institutions, policies, behaviors, thought and values are devoted to military power and shaped by war” (Kohn, 2009, p. 182) or “the process by which war and national security become consuming anxieties” and shape “broad areas of national life” (Sherry, 1995, cited in Kohn, 2009, p. 182). *Militarization* used to occur in the run up to war,

with propaganda and troop preparation serving to ready the nation for conflict. Now, however, it has become a permanent state, defining U.S. culture.

The history of violence and *militarism* in the United States dates back to its very establishment and some critics, like John Taylor Gatto (2003), argue that our schools' *raison d'être* is based on the militaristic Prussian empire's model of social control. In order to fully understand the current situation in U.S. schools, I think that it is important to consider this history and these viewpoints. However, for the purposes of this paper, I would like to only briefly re-visit some of the events of the last century that have had an impact on the increased *militarization* of our schools.

### **Militarization: A Brief History**

Richard H. Kohn (2009) offers a detailed look into the rise of *militarization* in the United States in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century up through the current War on Terror and states that "American politics from the late 1940s through the 1980s were shaped as much by the Cold War as any other single factor" (p.190). He also analyzes both Hollywood's role in creating John Wayne as the "symbolic, mythical American hero" during this time, and popular culture's role in reinforcing images of the United States at war. This trend continues today, and one certainly needn't look far to see similar depictions. From recent films such as "The Hurt Locker" which heroize soldiers in Iraq, to ubiquitous advertisements that urge us to "Win the war on (insert noun here)," one would be hard-pressed to deny the influence of the military on U.S. media and popular culture.

Kohn (2009) quotes Paul Koistinen (1989): "Once military spending began to escalate rapidly, ...the nation simply lacked the policies, the institutional structures, the traditions, and the experience for controlling its war machine. The voice of the armed services would grow, the military's influence would become pervasive throughout society.... Once that occurred, America would become a warfare state" (p.192) just as President Dwight D. Eisenhower had warned in his 1961 Farewell Address to the Nation and as evidenced in the subsequent Korean and Vietnam wars, as well as multiple military "interventions" that occurred elsewhere worldwide.

In the late 1980s, with the end of the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet Union, the emphasis on war in American life seemed to temporarily subside. 'The Red Menace' had been defeated (or at least hamstrung). No longer would we have to suffer through movies of Sylvester Stallone's struggles against the Soviets, whether in the boxing ring as Rocky Balboa, or in the mountains of Afghanistan as John Rambo, a.k.a. John Wayne on steroids! The percentage of national wealth spent on the military temporarily subsided (Kohn, 2009, p.193) and the threat of Mutually Assured Destruction (M.A.D.) seemed to go away.

However, in an unfortunate reversal of that trend, the 1990s saw the furthering of the Neoconservative agenda put in place during the Regan years (Buras, 2008). This culminated in the formation of the Project for the New American Century, an influential neoconservative think tank whose members would eventually hold key cabinet positions in the Bush administration and whose Statement of Principles includes the following: "We need to increase defense spending significantly if we are to carry out our global responsibilities today and modernize our armed forces for the future" (Statement of Principles, 1997). By the end of the 1990s, before the terrorist attacks on 9/11/01, and despite the absence of any challenge from any other nation for global

economic supremacy, “U.S. defense expenditures surpassed those of the next ten countries combined, seven of which were American allies” (Kohn 2009, p. 193).

Saltman (2003) argues that prior to the horrific events of 9/11, “a high level of comfort with rising militarism in all areas of U.S. life, particularly schooling, set the stage for the radically militarized reactions” to the terror attacks which include the “institutionalization of permanent war, the suspension of civil liberties, and an active hostility of the state and mass media toward attempts at addressing the underlying conditions that gave rise to an unprecedented attack on U.S. Soil” (p. 1). In the wake of 9/11, merely suggesting that Arab grievances with the U.S. might be legitimate or should be addressed was enough for one to be labeled unpatriotic, or worse: a terrorist sympathizer.

Furthermore, “The ease with which security measures for monitoring persons in the U.S. were implemented after September 11, and their reinforcement by passage of the Patriot Act, suggests that a strong link between the military and civilian society has always been a principal root of this country” (Aguirre, Jr. & Johnson, 2005, p. 151). In a society so comfortable with militarization, in which war is an integral part of the national psyche, it is no wonder that the government, media and citizens of the U.S. were so quick to declare a war on terror: not on a nation, but on a method of fighting! This led many skeptics, though horrified by the 9/11 attacks, to question the nation’s response. Could this new “war” lead to irreversible changes in the United States’ character? Richard H. Kohn (2009, p. 182) answers:

The problem is not simply whether the war on terrorism threatens to militarize the United States. Over the last seventy years-decades of depression, World War, Cold War, and international primacy-the United States has already experienced a degree of militarization heretofore unknown in American history. The larger question is whether the war on terrorism will blur militarization into militarism, in which American institutions, practices, values, thinking, and behaviors assume the ideals and ethos of the military in response to the challenge- whether the very character of the American people changes.....

It seems apparent that the decades-long trend towards militarization in US society and its institutions has led to widespread militarism in its people and in all aspects of society. One need only to look at citizens’ violent reactions to President Obama’s proposed healthcare reforms: showing up at protests armed with AR-15 assault rifles (Packing Iron, 2009), biting off the fingers of opposing protesters (Man Bites Finger, 2009) and dressing in historical militia costumes for Tea Party rallies (Strietfeld, 2009) to see that these violent knee-jerk reactions are not the products of a critical democracy. They are symptoms of societal militarism.

Gone are the days of the staged violence of Nikolai Volkoff and the Iron Sheik vs. The U.S. Express. In 1985, at the preliminary WrestleMania, in a match that surely raised the ire of thousands of patriots, the Russian and Iranian villains defeated the Americans for the WWF World tag-team title. The Americans, however, who used to enter the ring to Bruce Springsteen’s “Born in the U.S.A.,” would avenge their defeat and regain the title less than three months later. Ironically, the victory for the American “wrestlers” came just months before the release of Rocky IV, in which the iconic Rocky Balboa would defeat the robotic Soviet, Ivan Drago, to emphatically

punctuate victory for the U.S. propaganda machine ([www.Rocky.com](http://www.Rocky.com)). Now, in the new millennium, the gloves have truly come off and the violence is real. Bloodthirsty hoards clamor to watch the gruesome spectacle of Ultimate Fighting or Mixed Martial Arts. The simulation of violence no longer a substitute for the real thing, the broadcast images of the carnage and wreckage of war too distant, the modern plebian wants modern gladiators to spill each other's blood on the television. Since pornography and violence excite the same areas of the brain (Stacy, 1988), it comes as no surprise that some porn websites are even offering free membership to GIs in exchange for their photos of the mutilated casualties of war (Hartman, 2005).

Bloodlust and the pervasiveness of war and militarism in U.S. life are not reserved solely to the barbaric cage fights of MMA. American football, which displaced baseball in the 1960s as the nation's most popular team sport, "with its violence, hierarchy, specialization, and similarity to battle" (Kohn, 2009, p. 192) captivates millions. This, alongside various "fantasy" leagues, serves to distract a large portion of the population from the real problems and important issues that they are facing and offers a sterile and un-troubling pastime while war rages on outside.

If the parallels between the Roman Empire and its citizens' fascination with the violent games of the gladiators and the U.S. empire's own versions are not evident to you, consider this:

When, on the freshly mopped deck of the carrier *USS Abraham Lincoln*, the U.S. warrior president emerged in a snug-fitting flight suit from an S-3B Viking aircraft, tautened groin-accentuating straps slung salaciously between his legs, and glistening helmet clasped snugly against a proud chest (a brazenly hypocritical move considering his military records reveal that he stopped flying during his final eighteen months of National Guard duty in 1972 and 1973 and was not observed by his commanders at his Texas unit for a year), his trademark swagger and petulant grin were greeted by patriotic cheers from the throngs of wild-eyed officers and sailors (McLaren & Jaramillo, 2007, p.164).

Much as the "morbidly cruel and boorish" (Fox, 2006, p. 576) Claudius fought a whale trapped in the harbor at Ostia in order to appeal to the masses, Bush's attempt to look like an "alpha male stud" (McLaren & Jaramillo, 2007) in his stage-managed Persian Gulf appearance points to the inextricability of militarism in the U.S.'s collective conscience and will forever serve as a potent and offensive reminder of our glorification of war.

### **Zero-Tolerance and the Prison-Industrial Complex**

Ironically the invasion of Iraq was sold to the American public as a quick and easy fix to an undemocratic regime. Domestically the recent trend toward both privatizing and insinuating neoliberal values into the U.S. public education system has become a quick and easy fix for low test scores and underperformance. Neoliberal terms such as 'regimentation,' 'discipline,' and 'commitment,' are introduced into school practice to enforce a corporate identity in students that rewards competition and success. From the Neoliberal perspective, schools and students underachieve because they lack the drive to compete for success. The attempt, for example to introduce "merit pay" or "combat pay" for teachers in public schools is a Neoliberal tool for transitioning teaching and learning practices into a

market-driven mindset (Furillo, 2005; Gledhill, 2005 as cited by Aguirre, Jr. & Johnson, p. 149).

Henry Giroux (2003b) argues that as the United States relies more heavily on its “militarizing functions and the criminal justice system,” it become more “hollowed out” and the state’s emphasis shifts away from providing social services for the welfare of its citizens and towards managing and controlling its population. He writes that, “As the state is downsized and basic social services dry up, containment policies become the principal means to discipline youth and restrict their ability to think critically and engage in oppositional practices” (p.61). These containment policies are facilitated by a nation-wide turn to zero-tolerance rules in schools, which, according to the United States Department of Education have been implemented by around 90% of school systems nationwide (Zernike, 2001, cited in Giroux 2003b, p.60).

I would argue that our schools’, especially rural, poor, and inner-city schools, increased reliance on zero-tolerance policies and emphasis on control and discipline is symptomatic of the rise in domestic militarization and the primacy of Neoliberal policies which have also served to drive the rise of the prison-industrial complex. As Aguirre Jr. & Johnson (2005) remind us, “The connection between militarization and Neoliberalism is not a recent phenomenon. The U.S. military has long been a trailblazer for U.S. Neoliberal policies in the world system” (p.148). These Neoliberal rationalities are not only evident in the U.S. school system’s emphasis on choice, competition, markets, and standardized testing, but also in the zero-tolerance policies which help to feed the prison-industrial complex.

Zero-tolerance policies reflect state and local laws that were passed in the 1990s, such as the federal Gun-Free Schools Act of 1994, and were originally used against kids who brought guns to schools. Now, they have been broadened to include a wide range of behavior. Zero-tolerance policies have helped to turn our nation’s youth into a “generation of suspects” (Giroux, 2003b) as they now apply to all students K-12, including those with emotional problems and disabilities. Much like NCLB, another “one-size-fits-all” approach to handling school problems, these policies are flawed, as illustrated by the following examples:

....two Virginia fifth-graders who allegedly put soap in their teacher’s drinking water were charged with a felony (Goodman, 2000:8). A 12 year-old boy in Louisiana who was diagnosed with a hyperactive disorder was suspended for two days after telling his friends in a food line, “I’m gonna get you” if they ate all the potatoes! The police then charged the boy with making “terroristic threats” and he was incarcerated for two weeks while awaiting trial...There is also the equally revealing example of a student brought up on a drug charge because he gave another youth two lemon cough drops (Jackson, 2000, as cited by Giroux, 2003b, p.61).

From an 8 year-old being suspended for pointing a chicken finger at a teacher and saying “pow,” to a drill team member being suspended for having wooden parade rifles in her car, or a six year-old facing a 45 day suspension for bringing a camping utensil to school (Urbina, 2009, p. 1) the list goes on and defies comprehension.

While nobody questions the need to keep our schools safe, especially in light of the Columbine and Virginia Tech shootings, we, as teachers, parents, students and community members need to question these “one-size-fits-all” policies which are leading to dramatic increases in suspensions and expulsions. According to Brownstein (2009), between 1974 and 2006, the rate at which U.S. students were suspended and expelled rose from 3.7% to 7.1%. Perhaps even more troubling are the numbers presented by the U.S. Department of Education which estimate that in the 2005-6 school year 100,000 students were expelled and 3,300,000 students were suspended at least once. This represents an 8% increase in suspensions and a 15% increase in expulsions since the 2001-2 school year (p. 2). Perhaps such a dramatic increase can be attributed to zero-tolerance policies being applied to behaviors such as truancy and tardiness, or even the vaguely defined crimes of “disrespect” or “insubordination.” In Baltimore, about 12% of the city’s student enrollment, roughly 10,000, students “were suspended during the 2006-7 school year, mostly for disruption and insubordination, according to a report by the Open Society Institute-Baltimore” (Urbina, 2009, p. 2).

Evidence shows that zero-tolerance policies help to reinforce racial inequalities. *The New York Times* has reported “that black students in public schools across the country are far more likely than whites to be suspended or expelled, and far less likely to be in gifted or advanced placement classes” (Lewin, 2000) and, according to USA Today, “in 1998, the first year national expulsion figures were gathered, 31% of kids expelled were black, but blacks made up only 17% of the students in public schools” (Elias, 2000). According to the U.S. Department of Education’s Office of Civil Rights, “African-American students are suspended at nearly three times the rate and expelled at 3.5 times the rate of white students” and Latino students are “twice as likely to be expelled as their white peers” (Brownstein, 2009, p. 4). This should not come as a surprise to anyone who is familiar with the demographics in U.S. prisons where “Over 70 percent of prisoners...are from non-European racial and ethnic backgrounds...” (Leistyna, 2001, p. 104).

To help illustrate this point, Leistyna (2001) quotes Loic Wacquant’s (2002) *Deadly Symbiosis: Rethinking Race and Imprisonment in Twenty-first-century America*:

The rate of incarceration for African Americans has soared to levels unknown in any other society and is higher now than the total incarceration rate in the Soviet Union at the zenith of the Gulag and in South Africa at the height of the anti-apartheid struggle. As of mid-1999, close to 800,000 black men were in custody in federal penitentiaries, state prisons, and county jails....On any given day, upwards of one third of African-American men in their twenties find themselves behind bars, on probation, or on parole. And, at the core of the formerly industrialized cities of the North, this proportion often exceeds two-thirds (p. 104).

Given this, it comes as no surprise that, the prison business in the United States is larger than Major League Baseball, with an estimated worth of \$37.8 billion a year, and “employs more than 413,000 people, having more than doubled in the last twenty years” (Calvi, 2001, as cited in Giroux, 2003a, p.557).

According to Parenti (2001), the criminalization of social issues, which began with President Johnson’s Omnibus Crime and Safe Streets Act of 1968, entered a second phase with Ronald Regan’s war on drugs and the privatization of the prison industry in the 1980s, and moved into a

third phase during the passing of a number of anticrime bills during the Clinton administration, including the Anti-terrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act, has become such a part of everyday culture that it now serves as the common referent that includes everything “from governing prisons and regulating urban culture to running schools” (from Giroux, 2003a, p.557). As the prison-industrial complex gained strength, between 1985 and 2000, prison populations and budgets exploded and by the year 2000 the United States was “spending \$35,000 a year to confine a prisoner in a maximum security cell. [In addition,] we are building over a hundred new prison cells a day” (Marable, 2000, cited in Giroux, 2003a, p.558).

Instead of committing themselves to providing a decent education to poor children, the previous four administrations (it remains to be seen if the Obama administration will continue to follow in these footsteps) have offered them the increased potential of being incarcerated, buttressed by the fact that the U.S. is the only industrialized country that sentences minors to death and spends “three times more on each incarcerated citizen than on each public school pupil” (Wokusch, 2002, p.1). Instead of guaranteeing our nation’s youth food, shelter and decent healthcare, the government has continued to serve them up heaping portions of standardized tests. Instead of providing our nation’s poor children with early childhood education, day care and safe, engaging public spheres, we continue to offer them a “commercialized culture in which consumerism is the only obligation of citizenship” (Giroux, 2003b, p. 60) where the rich are offered large tax breaks and dissent is labeled unpatriotic.

The explosion of the prison population in the last twenty years coupled with the Neoliberal practices of outsourcing, sub-contracting and privatizing have provided fertile ground for the move towards privatizing prisons. Featherstone (2000) states that prisoners being held in private facilities make up the fastest growing segment of the jail and prison population in the U.S. even though only 7% of prisons are privately run. It is worth noting that these prisons not only have a bad track record around human rights and providing decent services; they are also opposed by corrections guards’ unions. Furthermore, it is particularly disturbing “that corporations should be making profits from policies that are not in the public interest- such as excessive prison sentences and the incarceration of nonviolent offenders” (Featherstone, 2000, p. 78).

Giroux (2003a) notes that “an increasing number of states, including California and New York, are now spending more on prison construction than on higher education, and the impact on minorities of color has been devastating” and on an even more frightening note, “many states are hiring more prison guards than teachers”(p.558). Paul Street (2001) found that in the 1990s, more blacks went to prison just for drug offenses than graduated from the state’s universities with undergraduate, master’s and doctoral degrees combined. Ironically, in California the average prison guard earns \$10,000 more than the average public school teacher (Giroux, 2003a, p.559).

Far too few connections are being made between what is going on in the criminal justice system and in our nation’s public schools. To illustrate this point in his analysis of the subject, Giroux (2003a) quotes Manning Marable’s (2002) claim that “One of the central battle grounds in the twenty-first century will be the effort to halt the dismantling of public education and public institutions in general for the expansion of [the] prison industrial complex” (p.560).

As school districts around the country adopt zero-tolerance policies, they prevent educators and administrators from exercising critical judgment and deliberating over incidents on a case by case basis. Also, “Young people are quickly realizing that schools have more in common with military boot camps and prisons than they do with other institutions in American society” (Giroux, 2003a, p. 562). Given this realization that discipline and training have replaced education, it is no surprise that dropout rates are increasing (Barton, 2005). In a 2006 study, Gary Sweeten of Arizona State University states that, “a first-time arrest during high school nearly doubles the odds of a student dropping out, and a court appearance nearly quadruples those odds” (Brownstein, 2009, p. 3). As compassion and understanding for students are replaced with inflexibility and intolerance, “schools become more militarized and appear as adjuncts, if not conduits, to the penal system” (Giroux, 2003a, p.561).

In addition to the assertions made by Giroux and others, I would argue that zero-tolerance policies also have become a way for schools to get rid of students who compromise Annual Yearly Progress (AYP) testing benchmarks. As schools come under increased pressure from the federal government to meet NCLB testing standards, and as educators are increasingly occupied with teaching to these tests, it becomes a quick and easy way to remove problem students. It is easier for teachers and administrators to punish students than to listen to them, work with their families, communities, religious organizations and social service agencies. Once expelled for a zero-tolerance violation, the student becomes someone else’s problem.

In light of what is going on in our nation’s schools, it is interesting that some parents were so worried that President Obama was “trying to indoctrinate their children with socialist ideals” (McKinley & Dillon, 2009) instead of problematizing the fact that the President specifically mentioned the brands X-Box, iPhone, Google, Twitter and Facebook in his speech at a Virginia high school, highlighting the blurred lines between corporations and schools (Obama, 2009). These parents are seemingly unconcerned that the schools that their students attend increasingly resemble prisons and are increasingly being privatized. These same parents are also seemingly unconcerned by Secretary of Education, and former CEO of Chicago Public Schools, Arne Duncan’s authoritarian and antipedagogical “shush”-ing of the students before his introductory remarks, or the fact that, despite having a graduation rate of only 50 percent (compared to the national average of 70 percent), Chicago has the nation’s largest Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps (JROTC) (Kroll, 2009). These parents might be concerned to know that the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation has “poured more than \$45 million into school reform in Chicago, and not one dollar of it went to improve a traditional public school,” but instead has been used for upper-middle class charter schools and “private school operators, many of whom were Catholic school entrepreneurs” (Schmidt, 2005, p. 261). Are these concerned parents aware that Chicago’s Renaissance 2010 plan will include closing 60 public schools and opening 100 smaller schools, two-thirds of which will be charters, which will be run by private organizations and staffed by nonunion teachers (Lipman, 2005, cited in Hursh, 2008, p.40)?

If these parents had protested against the President’s Neoliberal agenda or the Secretary of Education’s track record as a champion for the affluent, it would have at least made sense. However, the fact that these parents are troubled by the President giving a speech to schoolchildren emphasizing individual responsibility (a Neoliberal value!), yet decry his “socialist ideals” is a crystal-clear example of our nation’s susceptibility to what Donald Macedo (2006) calls “literacy for stupidification” or “the pedagogy of big lies.”

While the United States ranks first in military technology, military exports, defense expenditures and the number of millionaires and billionaires, it is ranked 18<sup>th</sup> in the gap between rich and poor children, 12<sup>th</sup> in the percent of children in poverty, 17<sup>th</sup> in the efforts to lift children out of poverty, and 23<sup>rd</sup> in infant mortality (Children's Defense Fund, 2002). Furthermore, the military weaponry which is endlessly developed for our "security and safety" is one of the U.S.'s top exports with "\$37.8 billion in arms sales (up \$12.4 billion from 2007)" which constitutes "68.4 percent of the global arms market in 2008" (Englehart, 2009). Again, instead of protesting these hypocritical injustices, and crimes towards their children, some parents, completely fooled by the bait and switch, kept their children home from school on the day the President gave his speech; indeed, entire school districts caved to the pressure exerted by a vocal minority and did not broadcast the address at all (McGraw, 2009).

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

So what are we as educators and citizens to do in response to the trends towards, and consequences of, militarization in public schools? Will we continue to accept the status quo? Will we continue to throw disruptive students out of our classes and out of our schools? Should we continue to let law enforcement handle our discipline problems? Will we continue to abide by "one-size-fits-all" policies for behavior and curricula? Will we continue to allow our prisons to grow and to accept the (ir)rationalities of NCLB? Will we continue to stand aside and accept the environmental degradation and aggressive wars of imperialism resultant of our obedient adherence to Neoliberal capitalism? Enough evidence exists to prove that these policies are detrimental to children, society and the world; therefore we must view ourselves as duty-bound to resist them. I believe that Henry Giroux (2001) is correct when he asserts that "intellectuals and other cultural workers bear an enormous responsibility to oppose Neoliberalism by bringing democratic political culture back to life" (p.5). Certainly by going along with the flow, we ourselves become complicit in these injustices. The challenge is daunting, because, as Peter McLaren (2005) points out, "These days it is far from fashionable to be a radical educator" (p.30).

As Frieman (1998) "cultural workers" we want to answer Michael Apple's (2008) question, "Can schooling can lead to a more just society?" with a resounding "Yes!" In the face of so many challenges, we must be resolute in our commitment to be critical educators and not just "well behaved servants of empire." At the same time, we must be aware, as Apple reminds us, that "engaging in political/ educational action in and through schools is risky" for two reasons. First, because it can lead to the arrogance in believing that what we believe is right. Apple advises that "political commitment must be countered by humility and an equal commitment to listen carefully to criticism." Humility is something that right-wing talking heads seem to have in short supply, but that we as critical educators must work for, in order to avoid becoming equally rigid and intellectually stagnant. For example, even though I am still waiting to hear a convincing argument as to why an overgrown carceral system is beneficial to us, I am open to the possibility that it is!

The second risk for educators is that, "acting on one's deeply held ethical, political, and educational commitments to building an education that responds to all of us, one that embodies a vision of the common good that says that it needs constant criticism and revision to keep it alive, can be threatening to people with power" (Apple, 2008, p. 254). "One-size-fits-all" policies are good for those in power, because they rob us of our individuality and our ability to think critically and deliberate democratically and force us to behave in prescribed ways.

There is increasing evidence that there are much more effective means to dealing with discipline at schools than through policies of suspension and expulsion. Urbina (2009) reports that federal studies by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Department of Justice show that the rate of school-related homicides and nonfatal violence has decreased for most of the past decade. This, he concludes, “is less a result of zero-tolerance policies than of other programs like peer mediation, student support groups and adult mentorship, as well as an overall decrease in all forms of crime” (p.2).

Brownstein (2009) also notes that the trend towards moving away from zero-tolerance policies is catching on and “more than 9,000 schools across the country are trying to curb the pushout problem by implementing Positive Behavior Supports (PBS), an evidence-based, data driven approach proven to reduce disciplinary incidents, increase a school’s sense of safety, improve attendance rates and support improved academic outcomes. Implementing PBS improves school climate and helps keep students and teachers in safe and productive classrooms” (p.5). While I am skeptical of evidence-based and data-driven approaches for their philosophical links to Neoliberalism, these sorts of ideas are what we need to consider in order to move away from policies which are pushing kids out of schools and into the prison-industrial complex. In the Rockford (IL) School District, administrators aiming to “refocus the student discipline away from punishment and toward rehabilitation” passed a discipline code that divides infractions into six levels, requiring letters of apology or parent student conferences for those less serious (Walker, 2009). Other effective strategies could include, but are not limited to: behavior contracts and community service, such Native American ideas as circle justice, or balanced and restorative justice and what Lilia Bartolome (1994) refers to as “a humanizing pedagogy.” Of course this means more work for schools and communities, but isn’t keeping people out of prison worth it?

By working together, we can continue to have safe and supportive schools where class time is spent working towards new realities instead of on ineffective discipline and reproducing hegemony. We must re-align our educational objectives with John Dewey’s by “advocating the goal of world peace and internationalism in contrast to the militarist appeal for national security and patriotic allegiance” (Howlett, 1976, p. 49). We must continue to work to create an education for the global good and, as Tannock (2005) recommends, we must “thoroughly examine the ideological basis of what constitutes meaningful work...the powerful draws of militarism, patriotism, technology fetishism, or hegemonic masculinism that frequently help to motivate military enlistment” and “we must think about how we can work with youth to make changes in the U.S. military and in the U.S. private sector that would enable all of us to live more ‘meaningful’ lives” (p. 177). In the end, radical changes in the U.S. military and business world will be needed if we want to stop the cultural and structural forces that keep us all in the thrall of empire, violence and war. Moving away from zero-tolerance policies, as one of many changes in the educational system, will constitute a step in this direction.

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## War Born

Colin Ross

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Peaceful lands in delicate hands  
Stolen harshly by fear and war  
no place to store, these wretched dreams of death  
Amidst a swirling den of smoke and screaming  
On the battlefield  
Birthed by bitter mother war  
Sanity teeters on a pencil thin line  
Shown ways of evil  
Tranquil turned dark  
Will it ever end?  
This eternal rain of blood  
Mud on the plate of innocence  
Minds deflate bullets penetrate all things carnal  
The dust settles rehabilitation begins  
But all that is good comes to an end  
Once more we fall into the realm of inhumane  
Tear stained cheeks gashed red in vain  
Will I ever escape?  
Brothers I have fallen with before  
Must I walk with you again?

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## Got War?

*A Rouge Forum Broadside—An eight year old classic*

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### Got War?

Sure, we got plenty of them. Wars on every continent but two, and those two send combatants everywhere. War in Nepal, Colombia, Venezuela, Peru, Iraq, Sub-Saharan Africa, Israel, Palestine, Chiapas, Afghanistan, Chechnya, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Korea, Philippines, Burma, Argentina. We got lots of wars. We got cold wars, hot wars, low intensity wars, drug wars, wars on civil liberties, genocidal wars, secret wars, open wars, indeed we got a US budget over \$400 billion for war. Got war? You bought it.

### Got Capitalism?

Capitalism won! This is as good as it gets! Capitalism means perpetual war, just as the U.S. national leadership promises to the citizenry. Endless war, forever and ever, amen, always within the context of an international war of the rich on the poor, with every government everywhere serving as a weapon of elites. The Masters are always at war on the slaves, and they call that peace and make laws to preserve the peace. When they want slaves to make war on another Master, that is democracy and justice.

### Want More?

Capitalism as a social system demands a relentless search for cheaper labor, markets, a war on the earth and its people for raw materials, the destruction of reason through divide and conquer tactics like nationalism, racism, sexism, all to guarantee the greatest profits—for a very few. The only way out of perpetual war is to strike war's source, a system set to work by fear and greed: Capitalism. Want more war? Stick with capitalism. It is 100 % guaranteed. No money back.

The trappings of capital are always on sale: spectacles like the Super Bowl, segregated schools and their high-stakes tests, Nike logos, casinos. Sell your soul with patriotic consumer debt on a SUV. Sell your life—to a military recruiter. The more you like capital, the better a slave you will be. If you work hard, someday you might make it all the way up to foreman, captain, or house slave. Well, probably not. Sell your neighbor, sell your kids. Open a for-profit jail. Buy capitalism, racism, nationalism, sexism. Buy war. Get your brass coffin and grave sites early. There is going to be a rush. Open 24 hours.

### Money Can Buy Almost Anything!

#### **But not everything.**

No matter what, for most people work sucks. Those who have jobs face a meaningless future pushing buttons at McBoss. Bosses must drive work faster, use technology not to improve life but to lay people off. Employers must try to strip the creative minds of workers and replace them with the boss's mind, to maximize profits. Inequality grows, as it must. On every job, every day, people resist. Most people know the bosses and their government tell lies all the time, especially when they go to war. Despite the main message of capital, "Screw Everyone Else!" we take care of our neighbors, family and friends. And while the Masters hate the earth and destroy it for profits, we witness heroes sitting high in trees, risking their lives. Love, work, knowledge, community, harmony with nature; that capital cannot buy. United working people, students, soldiers, can win the world that capital cannot create. It might cost us our credit cards—and a massive change of mind—a new world born in the ashes of the old.

What to do? Fight back, on the job and off. Organize. Shut down the schools. Start Freedom Schools. Close the workplaces. Stop soldiering. Without us, nothing moves. Strike, think, strike again.

## Rescue Education from the Ruling Class

Rich Gibson

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Early in the fall of 2009, more than 40 education workers and community activists met in Fresno to discuss our current context, the state of resistance in schools, and what it is that we should do next. Following that meeting, even more cutbacks rained down on California schools, causing over 20,000 layoffs throughout the state. Class sizes boomed again while many school workers took wage cuts.

Union mis-leaders focused on foisting still more concessions on their members, riddled their newspapers with methods to adjust to the collapse and calls for more lobbying.

Early into Fall semester, students throughout California and around the country began to march, seize buildings, shut down administrative meetings, strike, and get arrested in opposition to the gutting of education, frequently connecting the cuts to the U.S.' role in endless war. As tradition seems to dictate, Berkeley was in the forefront of the opposition, taking the lead in November demonstrations and a call for a March 4 state-wide school strike.

It looks as though the schooling at least some of the children born around 1990 did not take sufficiently to make them accept the idea of endless warfare as normal.

A new email list ([epata@interversity.org](mailto:epata@interversity.org)) created by the Fresno group largely ignored this refreshing rise of resistance, centered talk on yet more analyses of standardized tests, letters to editors of corporate presses, lobbying, and urging the school union leaders to take action.

The easy focus on electoral work, lobbying, unionism, and "democracy" is troubling, as it the call to "Save Public Education."

"Democracy" is a new religion. Urging people into the electoral world is like urging people into church, or selling fake vaccine.

Those who cling to the myth of democracy and set aside the role of capitalism now mistake dreams for reality. The burden of proof should be on those who think "democracy" somehow exists as a key form of US government, but that is unlikely to change anyone's mind.

Al Szymanski outlined the basic functions of the capitalist state's democracy three decades ago. This is a reminder:

1. To guarantee the accumulation of capital and profit maximization and make it legitimate.
2. Preserve, form, and temper, capitalist class rule.
3. Raise money to fund the state.
4. Guarantee and regulate the labor force.
5. Facilitate commerce.
6. Ensure buying power in the economy.
7. Directly and indirectly subsidize private corporations.
8. State sanction of self-regulation of corporations.

## 9. Advance the overseas interests of corporations.

Democracy does not dominate capital. Democracy submits, atomizes voters to individuals huddled in ballot booths asking capital's favorite question: What about Me?

Today, we witness a fully merged corporate state. The government is openly an executive committee and armed weapon of the rich.

These are not democracy's schools. They are capitalist schools.

Schools in capitalist America were never the Public's schools. Rather, those schools have always been segregated by class and race. Really, there are perhaps five or six discrete tax-funded school systems in the US ranging from some in Detroit preparing kids for prisons, some in Compton as pre-Walmart academies, some in Chicago as social worker prep, others in Lajolla readying youth for law and medicine, and some seeking to feed children to the military. Ruling class kids, like those of the Bush family or the Obama's, go to privates.

The capitalist government's project in capital's schools is: 1) regimented curricula promoting nationalism; 2) racist and anti-working class high stakes exams to limit knowledge and divide people using a false form of science; 3) the logical next step from high stakes exams to merit pay (attacking some of the last people in the US with predictable wages and health benefits); 4) militarization in some areas; 5) national service to siphon off middle class opposition to a potential draft; 6) some privatization (but not only privatization) and 7) the relentless promotion of fear in order to create useful, dutiful, obedient people willing to make war on other poor people in defense of the rich in their homelands.

All of these elements reflect the dual role of capitalist schooling as important markets for profiteering, sometimes contradicted by the real need for social control. At other times those factors meld into one.

The education agenda is a war agenda. It's a class war agenda.

Rather than "Defend Public Education," we should "Rescue Education from the Ruling Class," or "Defend Education for the Public."

The core issue of our times is the promise of perpetual war coupled with booming color-coded inequality met by the potential of mass class-conscious resistance. Our project should aim at connecting reason, radical analysis, to power rooted in our own ability to take collective action.

That would mean, rather than begging or bribing politicians, we should be organizing direct actions on campuses (to shut them down or organize test boycotts, and open Freedom Schools), in the military (stand down troops! recruiters off the campus!), in communities (no service cuts, tax the rich and starve the political class), and on the job (emerging control of the work places by the workers).

The unions very structure (the corrupt union bosses aside) and their commitment to defend capitalism (not a single major labor leader in the US believes that workers and bosses have

contradictory interests) means that the unions divide people more than unite them. Why rely mainly on these Quisling institutions to do for us what we surely must do for ourselves?

I was at the Fresno meeting, missing ten minutes at most. I did not agree to a focus on propping up the unions (sure, we must have some toes in the unions, but most toes out) nor relying on politicians. I see no reason to mimic the tactics of union hacks in electoral politics, reliance on the courts, counting on the good will of those who bear us no good will at all. I think that's a serious error, but not a dishonest one. Old beliefs die hard.

What I do remember from Fresno is an agreement to focus attention on Susan Ohanian's web site and to establish this list (extending on Susan Harman's initiative). We discussed test boycotts, freedom schooling, and other forms that people have learned to resist. We also talked about the Bacca bill, adding that the Obama's RATT money will probably trample any legislative attempt to turn aside the old NCLB's goals.

Time is not unlimited. The grinding down of life in the US, and the likely expansion of the empire's wars, will mean a much more restrictive environment ahead unless real resistance, that can sustain itself and is not dependant on the grace of politicians or union hacks, rises soon.

People will fight back as they are more and more positioned in ways such that they must fight back to live. At issue is whether or not they will make sense of why they must fight and take on the system of capital itself, coupled with necessary reforms, or if they will just deepen oppression in new ways by only fighting education cuts, and ignoring war, for example. Without the north star of a grasp of capitalism which addresses the whole of the problem, any movement will remain directionless and easily divided.

We can see that now as teachers who willfully administered the child abuse that is high-stakes exams begin to organize and fight, not the tests, but layoffs. That disconnect has to be troublesome.

There are hints of real action against our decaying positions.

On campuses, students are demonstrating even where they have not demonstrated much before (as at San Diego State), they are seizing buildings (UCSC where they issued a statement saying that "winning a reform in a university could be like winning a reading room in a prison" or UCLA where 14 were arrested protesting a \$2500 fee hike) and in Illinois where grad students went on strike and won a contract --by direct action.

In the military, troops are learning (often too late) that their officers send them on stupid missions, that they have no strategic goals other than to forge regional control over things like oil and pipelines, and that their main goal is to not get shot. The military has abandoned emphasis on Democracy or WMD's or war to end war as none of that sells, meaning the military has no moral grounds, key in warfare.

Ford workers recently rejected a sellout UAW contract, resistance that should have happened thirty years ago when it was clear that concessions do not save jobs but, like giving blood to sharks, only make bosses want more. Still, the NO vote was overwhelming, embarrassing to the

traitorous UAW leadership. Nevertheless, the rejection of the UAW leadership is a signal of change.

Riverside, CA, teachers organized in mid-November and shot down their own sellout contract.

It is right to rebel. We should do it ourselves, as we are what we do, and support others who fight back too. It is wrong to exploit others. An injury to one only goes before an injury to all. We need to fight racism, nationalism, and sexism and do all we can to demolish them, before they are used to demolish us. That's a starting point to revive an ethic of a new social movement to, not just reason with people, but fight to transcend the system of capital.

Of course, justice demands organization rooted in the trust that is made possible through close personal ties built over time. I think that's part of what we are working on now.

For expansions on the Education Agenda as a War Agenda:  
[http://richgibson.com/edagenda\\_waragenda.html](http://richgibson.com/edagenda_waragenda.html)

On the nature of the US unions: <http://richgibson.com/USUnionism.html>

Good luck to us, every one.

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## To do democracy: Overcoming alienation and forming more progressive mental conceptions that remake our world

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Given rapidly increasing economic, environmental, political, and socio-cultural changes in what might be called a New Global Era, we examine the possibilities and challenges of democracy-in-action through education. We focus on empowering students to embrace justice and realize democracy-in-action by discussing civic-minded pedagogies and modeling student-centered techniques. Our primary aim is to engender discourse on teaching and learning social justice through student-centered pedagogical approaches that empower students through dialogic interaction and experiential learning in order to stimulate critical reflection.

Recently, Christine Sleeter (2008) argued, “Teachers who are committed to democratic teaching are faced with two tasks: negotiating increasingly undemocratic systems in order to find space for democratic teaching, and critically examining what democracy is, including gaps between its ideals and actual practice.” We agree. As the educational terrain, mirroring other social institutions like media, government et al, tips toward what Sleeter terms “corporatocracy,” and away from democracy, we maintain there are few other locations beside schools and its resident workers and students, which have the power to tip the balance in the other direction. Well, it is at least one of the few *non-violent* and more constructive and hopeful options we have.

And, frankly, there is little time to waste. Our work here occurs at two levels. At one level we are dealing with teacher education. What are the democratic experiences and possibilities that we need to promote that will ensure a teacher force poised to reenact such experiences and possibilities in their own classrooms? The K-12 classroom, particularly the social studies classroom, is the second, but no less important, level of focus.

While we certainly treat these issues, practically, we position them against a theoretical backdrop in order to bring the whole picture into sharper relief. Along with our multi-level consideration of teacher education and K-12 classroom, we also frame the struggle for democratic teachers and teaching with the notion of (1) alienation and (2) the formation of more progressive mental conceptions of the world. Marx and Marxian theorists (such as Ira Gollobin, Patrick Shannon, Rich Gibson, Wayne Ross, Glenn Rikowski, Barry Padgett, etc.) speak at length about both of these issues. They guide our understanding.

In other work Adam, along with Milton Brown (2006), offer their construction of the “hopeful curriculum,” which is anchored by a belief that the perpetuation and proliferation of social injustice is foundationalized by a breakdown of community. That is, as we focus more on the individual and less on the collective, more on getting ahead than getting together, we travel an inexorable path toward chaos and conflict.

Alienation is the extent to which our community is broken down. It is the condition in which we find ourselves dislocated from self, society, and the environment mentally, emotionally, and/or physically. Barry Padgett (2007) divides alienation in the contemporary society into four parts:

(1) The relation of the employee to the product of labor; (2) The relation of the employee to the activity of production; (3) Because the worker is separated from the product of labor and the labor process itself, the worker is separated from humanity; and (4) Individual employees are estranged from every other worker. A few examples that bridge the gap to schooling and the lives of students and teachers might help.

Given alienating forces in our lives as students, we experience existential dislocation by the very nature of more utilitarian forms of education, by the promotion of the economic purposes for getting an education, by competition for perceived scarce economic resources through testing, by competing against classmates for grades and scholarships, by surveillance technologies that inform students that someone is always watching, by vying for entrée into 'good' schools, and by the yolk of student loan debt.

Likewise, as workers/teachers, we are alienated by the constant threat of job/benefit loss; the distancing of us from our students by artificial and scripted curricula; as well as mediating discussion technologies like LiveText, Blackboard, etc.; and the distancing of us from colleagues by the mechanism of merit pay.

Finally, we experience alienation as citizens. We see this trend in the amplification of nationalism, in the relatively banal choices of our theatrical federal elections for which we choose the one who may oppress us the least, in the rather unconscious drive to consume—whether we need the products or not and/or whether or not we might go into debt purchasing them, and in the disconnection from the natural world as we continue to live out of sync with the rhythm of our planet.

Patrick Shannon (2000), providing a specific school example, puts it this way:

Alienation is the process of separation between people and some quality assumed to be related to them in natural circumstances. This process can be consciously recognized (subjective alienation) or be beyond the control of the individual (objective alienation). If you begin with the assumption that reading, teaching and learning are human processes, which are natural qualities of teachers and students, then, the rationalization of reading instruction requires both types of alienation. The script's standardization of teachers' actions requires that the totality of teaching someone to read is "divided, fixated and synchronized," objectively separating teachers from teaching reading. The definition of learning as test scores separates students from the totality of their learning. Reducing teachers and students to factors in the scripted system of test score production requires that they lose, at least officially, emotional, cultural, and social attachments to the process of teaching and learning and to each other. Such detachments demand a subjective separation of teachers from teaching and students from learning. This does not mean that alienated teachers are uncaring or that alienated students lack engagement. Rather it means that the nature of that engagement is subsumed under the process of rationalization and the possibilities of teaching and learning are artificially directed and severely restricted.

In other words, if we do not arrive at a renewed consciousness about the nature of reality, then our very existence is up for grabs. We are easy fodder for the alienating forces. Our search for truth will be short-circuited or replaced with other's truth. Our search for meaning and self-actualization will be reconfigured to suit the profit motives of capitalists, convinced by corporate schools and media to pursue a path of least resistance.

Teacher education must help our students come to better grips with the alienating forces in their lives. Students often live at the vortex of the student-worker-citizen identity. Thus, they may most easily be poised to notice and come to grips with a more liberating way to learn, teach, and live. However, this will take a deepened consciousness in order that more progressive mental conceptions of the world might emerge. In the *German Ideology*, Marx submits,

The class which has the means of material production at its disposal has control at the same time over the means of mental production, so that thereby, generally speaking, the ideas of those who lack the means of mental production are subject to it. The ruling ideas are nothing more than the ideal of the dominant material relationships, the dominant material relationships grasped as ideas.

In place of mystical explanations or postmodernist apologies for injustice, we must widen the possibilities toward an apprehension of material reality and reason. Rather than 'natural' conceptions of difference and the presumed fear that ensues about the 'other', we must consider instead how difference is socially constructed and see, historically, how manufactured difference has been used to divide and conquer. Additionally, we must interrupt the distortion of reality offered by the ruling class and their corporate media, which produces meaning based on consumption (profit for the media shareholders) or spectacle (so-called reality TV that distracts citizens from true material reality). As a consequence, we may have a chance to conceive of more hopeful possibilities for transformation and liberation from the present crisis.

Of course, what prompts this alienating tendency and more restrictive/dogmatic mental conceptions of the world is capitalism. Coming to grips with this reality is a necessity to ultimately overcome alienation, to deepen our consciousness, and to finally work toward community and democracy. We must find our connections to others. We must come to more constructive conceptions of reality and truth. Else, we will live other people's truths. And, we will complicate any possibility for community and democracy.

We will need to act decisively and with conviction. Therefore, our interest is in *doing* democracy. This is sort of an anarchist position; one that promotes the notion of pre-figuration. That is, if we want peace, justice, democracy, then we will have to live (that is, teach) peacefully, justly, and democratically. In the examples to follow—the Teaching and Learning Studio at the University of Kentucky, the international service learning work at Bellarmine University, and the more critically-literate research approach at Plattsburgh State University—we explain how we have taken to this democracy work in our present locations. We talk about them in light of the two levels we want to address: teacher education and K-12 schools. And, we consider to what extent they reduce alienation and foster more fluid and agency-inducing mental conceptions of the world. To these ends, we allow the following questions to drive our examination: How do we overcome alienation? What analytical tools are necessary? What school experiences are critical? And, what are the signs of real hope (i.e., how will we identify the turning points and what will

we be prepared to do when we notice them)?

### **Fostering democracy**

In her research on teaching for democracy, Sleeter (2008) points out one of the many contradictions happening in the classrooms of teachers she taught, observed, and interviewed. In the case of Nancy, who was to spend a class introducing a unit on ancient Greece by covering the five forms of government, her former student was caught between the place of teaching *democratically* and teaching *about democracy*:

There is a profound irony in what happened during those 45 minutes. The textbook and content standards Nancy was to follow teaches that the U.S. is based on democracy, and that U.S.-style democracy is the world's best form of government. But despite that message as well as Nancy's commitment to participatory democracy, she was told to follow directions from others over what to teach, transmitting content to students they would be able to reproduce on tests. In other words, the context of teaching had become distinctly un-democratic, an irony that was not lost on her. Further, neither the standards nor the textbook offered extensive analytical tools for examining power and decision-making as it *actually* functions, particularly connections between political processes and the economic structure.

Sympathetic to Nancy's plight and Sleeter's frustration, we offer the following possibilities from our locations of local control, spaces we have carved out either programmatically, pedagogically, or personally. They are, at best, imperfect and, almost certainly, works in progress. They are a testament, however, to what is actually happening; what is possible when we commit to undoing the impacts of alienation and helping form more progressive mental conceptions of the world.

### ***Dialogues of respect: The Teaching and Learning Studio at the University of Kentucky***

There are major distinctions between teaching students to think for themselves and teaching them to achieve high scores on standardized tests; between improving existing systems of education and rethinking the foundations of those systems; and, as has been suggested, between the rhetoric of *better education for all* and the realities of public education in a pluralist participatory democracy. Indeed, there is no other form of government that so thrives on citizens thinking for themselves. Standardization of thought, knowledge, or performance has never served our form of democracy as it serves authoritarian, totalitarian or fascist societies. Yet, standardization is regularly touted as a viable prescription for improving *education for all* in the United States. Were we to learn from history, our own as well as that of other nations, we would surely know better. Were we to pay attention to our own history of public education, our rich legacy of educational researchers, scholars, and experienced teachers, we would know that standardizing educational outcomes is an authoritarian paradigm that cannot be conflated with participatory democracy.

Recall Maria Montessori (1912)—grounded in medical science, deeply religious, and herself a victim of the Italian Fascism of Mussolini (1922-1943)—suggested we should prepare teachers by cultivating the spirit “rather than toward mechanism” (p. 25). Likewise, John Dewey (1929) insisted that teachers respond to the natural interests of the child rather than weakening intellectual curiosity or suppressing initiative through prescribed subject matter. In 1932,

George Counts argued that teachers should reach for power in determining what and how children learn in our public schools. He spoke of teachers representing “the common and abiding interests of the people, not the interests of the moment or of any special class.” Counts believed that teachers would not “act as selfishly or bungle as badly as have the... politicians, the financiers, the industrialists” (p. 45). In sum, standardization has been threatened or imposed on public education in the United States for much of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and continues as a dominant force throughout this first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

In teacher education, it seems our choices are clear, teach teachers to employ standards and teach children to achieve high scores on standardized tests in service of the goals of politicians and corporate interests or educate teachers toward “the common and abiding interests of the people (Counts, 1932, p. 45).” The latter liberates learners from serving corporate or political whims and supports democratic ideals. Educating toward common and abiding interests of the citizenry is also consonant with widely accepted epistemological views that revolve around knowing as a matter of constructing meaning in concert with others.

Although a widely accepted epistemological foundation for research and practice in democratic education, social construction of knowledge is rarely implemented in learning environments that fully support integration, interaction, and collaboration. More often, both teacher education and P-12 schools attempt to employ such liberating student-centered pedagogies in contexts designed for the confines of teacher-centered instruction. Similarly, in elementary teacher education, we often emphasize the benefits of collaborative learning, interdisciplinary approaches, and integrated curriculum, while teaching separate content-based methods courses in language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies.

Although this one-course/one-instructor model has dominated education, particularly at the postsecondary level, it originates from theoretical perspectives that no longer reflect what we know about teaching and learning. For instance, traditional *stand & deliver* instruction is based on assumptions that teachers possess essential knowledge and can deliver it both verbally and textually with the expectation that students will be able to remember, understand, and articulate it as delivered. This one course/one instructor model requires limited space, students produce no artifacts or products unless those are done elsewhere, and students rarely, if ever, collaborate. In this instructional model, most interactions involve single instructors and one or more students. Students’ interpretations and ideas are judged against the instructor’s perspective. Literally, all construction of knowledge occurs, individually. The ongoing learning process is obscured because most students’ products are rarely seen by anyone other than one instructor, resulting in a sort of curricular alienation noted in the introduction. In teacher education, course products, such as papers, lesson plans, unit plans, behavior charts, and presentation materials are assigned by one instructor, evaluated by the same instructor, and rarely subjected to public critique or formative feedback, except when coinciding with field experiences.

As an alternative, the University of Kentucky Teaching and Learning Studio (UKTLS) is designed to align *what* we teach pre-service teachers with *how* we teach them. It is a more democratic approach to teacher education and more consonant with social constructivist epistemologies. It is designed to be a collaborative learning environment where teacher education students more often work together to design, develop, and evaluate instruction with an

emphasis on interdisciplinary connections. In the UKTLS model, students employ critical thinking and reflective application of educational research in the design of authentic P-5 learning experiences in Literacy, Social Education, and STEM disciplines. It is an effort to reach beyond the confines of the traditional one-teacher/one-class model to provide students with opportunities to interact with and learn from their peers, as well as multiple faculty members, practicing teachers, clinical staff, and doctoral students. It is based on the belief that teacher preparation should employ the most effective instructional approaches, facilitate learning communities in socially just and democratic ways, and emphasize both human and disciplinary connections. It is designed as an environment where theoretical and practical discussions among faculty take place openly and students are invited to participate when appropriate. Within the studio, faculty teaching responsibilities are collaborative and integrated such that instructors are individually responsible for the pedagogical content in their areas of expertise, while also co-teaching seminars on content integration, learning technologies, and applications of theory and research. As one student remarked, "I like the ability to hear and experience different views of theory and their applications from a wide array of professors."

As the program develops, there is evidence of promising outcomes, particularly in relation to building collaborative teaching and learning communities. The extent to which students are doing so is evidenced in the ways they talk about their experiences in the UKTLS. For example one student said, "We collaborate a lot; we work in groups a lot; we are like what are you doing for this assignment, and okay that makes sense.... I depend on them [peers] a lot." Additionally, in the former model undergraduate students were rarely seen in the department when not attending classes or voicing concerns. At present, students in the UKTLS spend most of their day in the department, meet in inquiry learning groups over lunch and discuss pedagogical content informally, as well as during formal class meetings. One student commented that it was nice to see faculty collaborating during weekly meetings in the studio space. Another voiced satisfaction that studio faculty had to do as much or more work than students. Of course, faculty had always worked quite hard but much of their effort was not visible to the students. Whether or not this is relevant for other programs of study, in teacher preparation it seems especially important for students to see ongoing collaboration among their instructors. Indeed when asked to reflect on their experiences in the teaching and learning studio, students often comment on the ways they depended on each other. One said, "It made me open my mind and think I don't have to be set in this one way. It's just a lot different and I feel more confident that I can be creative." Another spoke of her personal development in the program as follows.

That's something that I've learned this semester too. I'm never going to know everything. I've learned that I'm just going to have to not be backward about it and shy and go I need to know this, I need help with this. It's okay. You learn as you go. ...this has made me be just a little more relaxed and laid back and go with the flow. And you need to be that way as a teacher.

A phenomenon that has occurred during both faculty planning meetings and in the integrated sessions is faculty disagreement or divergent perspectives, particularly related to issues of theoretical stance, research methodology, and content appropriateness for elementary learners. For instance, a science education professor objected to a social studies faculty suggesting that religion might be appropriate to discuss with young children. Following the objection, the science faculty provided evidence of his own experiences teaching elementary students, describing a case

in which a student made an inappropriate comment about religion and parents complained about his teaching. The social studies faculty countered with an argument that social education, particularly history, might be difficult to teach without including some discussion of religion. In this case, pre-service teachers observed faculty disagreeing, supporting arguments with real-world evidence, understanding opposing viewpoints, yet maintaining individual perspectives. As one student wrote, "It was nice in the afternoon classes that there'd be two professors from completely different classes [disciplines] that would come together. Really neat [because] you've got completely different viewpoints." In the more traditional model, students may have experienced divergent perspectives without being privy to important discourse among faculty. In that case, students would have observed opposing views and been left with little to stimulate deeper thinking about the issue. In that case, what would have been missed is what Greene (1995) calls the in-between or dialogic space that she argues is necessary for an *ideal education*. In a real sense, the UKTLS may be replacing dualisms of public and private, self and others, what is and what ought to be with dialogue aimed at understanding differing perspectives. Such dialogic space can exist externally in conversations among learners or internally between new insights and pre-existing understandings thereby achieving more expanded mental conceptions of the world. According to Freire (1970) dialogic interaction involves, among other things, critical thinking, a sense of equity that consists of both self-efficacy and humility, and mutual trust. As faculty model critical thinking, mutual respect, and equity, students relax and respond with comments like the following: "You don't hold anything back. You're not shy to answer questions or give your opinion, and so that was awesome."

Educating new and practicing teachers to be knowledgeable leaders in the art and science of learning is far more complex than training them to follow prescribed instruction and standardized assessment. It requires teaching them to think critically and reflectively about their practice, to know their students, to assess students' needs, and to respond to cultural and learning differences. As a social process that is enhanced by interaction and dialogue (Hatano & Inagaki, 1993; Jonassen, 1999; Vygotsky, 1978), learning can be constrained by educational settings that have institutionalized positivistic pedagogies to effect didactic instruction (Ruf & Badr Goetz, 2002). In teacher education, restricting interaction among learners may limit the very understandings that are necessary for teaching and learning in novel, varied, or unexpected situations so common in the real world of public education. The UKTLS provides a platform to prepare new teacher candidates to address the needs of diverse learners and provide them with skills necessary for full participation as citizens of our democracy. Rather than focusing on political whims and continually changing standards and assessments, teachers are taught to ask questions, to be critical consumers of packaged instruction, to build among themselves a community of practice, and to be reflective about the education of their own students. So, while managing the impositions of high-stakes testing or other corporate models, the aim is to prepare teachers to teach well, to inspire in their students to hope for a better world, and insure they possess the skills and efficacy to work for "the common and abiding interests of the people (Counts, 1932, p. 45)."

### ***International service learning: Education for liberation or domination?***

Service learning has enjoyed a nice run in the academy and in K-12 education, especially in the social studies, providing a critical and reflective enhancement over traditional community service projects. But, like its predecessor, service learning is losing some of its critical edge. In many spaces, it has become little more than check-in-the-box-sign-off-on-the-sheet service projects in

which students engage the community through traditional ‘server’ / ‘served’ roles, providing charitable work for those ‘in need’.

To that end, Adam (2002, 2005) crafted a theoretical frame for service learning that considers the formation of a caring solidarity between ‘server’ and ‘served’, merging individualistic notions of care with structural considerations of social justice. This caring solidarity, seeks to (1) overcome boundaries, (2) promote transparent and transformative dialog, (3) build trusting, reciprocal relations, (4) seek long term effects, (5) bridge the gap between the structural/theoretical and the individual/practical toward more critical consciousness, and (6) democratize server/served roles. These emergent notions provided the backdrop against which a partnership with Jamaican schools and social service agencies began in 1998. And, that work continues to evolve.<sup>1</sup>

As part of this evolution, Adam teaches an international service learning course at Bellarmine University with colleague, Sonya Burton, and his partner, Gina Stiens (who started this work with Adam in 1998). Titling their interdisciplinary course, “Education for Liberation or Domination?” the three of them explore the possibilities of a more critical education experience, which will help form a more authentic partnership with their Jamaican partners. The class, in fact, explores the complexities of power relationships, such as those between the teacher/student and the global north/south. Questions that are examined closely include: What is education? Why do we need it? Who benefits from education? And, what would a truly solidaristic and liberatory relationship look like?

The class pursues a social justice agenda that is foundationalized in community and recognizes that their lives are intimately intertwined with the lives and conditions of the Jamaican partners. While a good deal of theory contextualizes the course experience, one example of the theoretical framework may suffice to illustrate the path they hope to follow.

Paul Farmer (2004), a medical doctor and an anthropologist, conceives of work with the disenfranchised/marginalized/oppressed as falling into one of three categories: charity, development, or social justice. In terms of charity, Farmer suggests that the ‘server’ operates *on* the ‘served’ using a deficit model--‘they’ are intrinsically inferior. This approach presupposes there will always be those who have and those who have not. Freire (1970) asserts, similarly, “In order to have the continued opportunity to express their ‘generosity,’ the oppressors must perpetuate injustice as well.” In other work with Matt Masucci (2000), Adam calls this an *evangelistic* approach to service in which the ‘server’ essentially *serves one’s self*. Even more provocatively, perhaps, Galeano suggests, ‘Charity consoles but does not question. ‘When I give food to the poor, they call me a saint,’ Brazilian bishop Helder Camara said. ‘And when I ask why they have no food, they call me a communist.’ Unlike solidarity, which is horizontal and takes place between equals, charity is top down, humiliating those who receive it and never challenging the implicit power relations. In the best of cases, there will be justice someday, high in heaven. Here on earth, charity doesn’t worry injustice, it just tries to hide it.”

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<sup>1</sup> For some background on the history of the developing partnership in Jamaica, see “A decade of work in the Global South: Social service or social change?” at

[http://www.richgibson.com/rouge\\_forum/2008/decadework.htm](http://www.richgibson.com/rouge_forum/2008/decadework.htm), by Gina Stiens and Adam Renner, and the Bellarmine University website: <http://bellarmine.edu/service/jamaica/index.asp>.

In terms of development, this approach implies that ‘they’ too can share ‘our’ standard of living (while ignoring, of course, that *our standard depends on their substandard*). This approach tends to blame the victim—that is, it places the problem with the poor themselves, rather than on the structure that forces them to live a particular way: *the growth of poverty is dependent on the growth of wealth*. Masucci and Adam call this a *missionary* approach to service for which ‘servers’ *serve perceived needs*.

Lastly, in terms of social justice, work begins from a premise that *the world is deeply flawed*. ‘Servers’ believe that the condition of the poor is not only unacceptable, it is the result of structural violence that is human made, perhaps self-made. Relative to this notion, Fr. Juan Segundo offers, “The world that is satisfying to us is the same world that is utterly devastating to them.” Thus, we are all implicated in the creation or maintenance of structural violence so a posture of penitence and indignation is critical. This sort of approach implies not a working *for*, but a working *with*—a humble, more contextual, more connected approach.

Ultimately, then, they seek something more just, more democratic, what Staughton Lynd (2008) likens to “accompaniment.” Accompaniment often involves the pairing of the relative privileged with the relative oppressed in a Freirean sort of “dialogical action.” In this action, the theoretical knowledge of the relative privileged (of the system and how to navigate it) is connected with the lived experience of the relative oppressed. Though service-learning is fraught with problematics and, in its most cynical analysis, is exploitative, the intention in the more than ten years of this work has been to join the work of others, leveraging their privilege for the benefit of others toward some liberatory goal. Lynd says it this way: “The idea of working side by side with another [is] a common journey. The idea is that when a university-trained person undertakes to walk beside someone rich in experience but lacking formal skills, each contributes something vital to the process. Accompaniment presupposes, not uncritical deference, but equality.” It is at once mutual aid and revolutionary practice. While the work remains far from the liberatory goal and only touches the fringes of a transformative sort of practice, they consistently witness this struggle from as emic a perspective as possible and continually hone their analytical capabilities toward more critical action in the future. To this end, Lynd considers the length of this journey, “Sometimes all you can do for another person is stand in the rain with him/her . . . I feel the need for a trade. I feel the natural way to relate to others is by unselfconsciously offering a service of unquestioned usefulness.” So, sometimes we wait for the sunshine, and act the best we can while it’s raining.

Course experiences include multiple performative assessments which include group preparation of lessons to be taught at the Jamaican school. In fact, this work, as detailed below, has better involved the teachers at the Jamaican school such that all partners co-construct the lessons. The course also contains a large participatory element which evaluates students on their engagement of the theoretical components early in the semester as well as their engagement with the Jamaican partners. Finally, students are also assessed on their reflective capabilities, demonstrating, praxistically, how they have woven the theoretical and practical pieces of the experience together.

By way of wrapping up this section, let’s consider what has happened practically in terms of these student reflections on the trip, the responses of the partners in Jamaica, and in the K-12 classrooms of some of the students who have completed this work.

Prompted by the theoretical examinations, the experience in Jamaica, and a collection of poetry selected by Gina, students offered the following, which are representative of student responses. One student reflected, "I can honestly say that this course was a liberating experience for me...I want to own my life and my work and that is where this experience has taken me. Education for liberation is about owning yourself and your experience. Thank you all for making this a democratic class and allowing, even pushing us to own the experience in Jamaica." Another commented, "I really have been searching inside myself to figure out who I am since we've returned. While I have not come to a conclusion, I hope that I never completely do. I hope that I continually grow, change, and question who I really am... Challenging myself to become more knowledgeable, to use critical literacy in the classroom, and to start taking action for the community is what evolved from this trip." And another asserted, "I have many more questions now, after returning and reflecting. And for me, that is an extremely uncomfortable position to be in. I enjoy having answers and solutions. And the issues we were exposed to in Jamaica are far too complex to be able to have finite answers. The overwhelming nature of the work is daunting but the rewards of dialogue and understanding are far greater than I ever imagined."

From the Jamaican side, tremendous strides were made toward a more horizontal, democratic partnership in 2009 at a community dinner, hosted by the Bellarmine team. Wanting to simply break bread and talk about their lives as teachers, the staff of the school along with a few prominent Jamaicans were invited to dinner to discuss one generative theme: education, particularly the purposes of education. The Jamaican partners generated an impressive and provocative list of reasons, topped by (1) to prepare individuals to enter the society and wider world; (2) to gain knowledge about emotional, social, and spiritual selves; (3) to acquire good financial sense; and (4) to learn skills, not just for occupation, but also ones that help us to live in families, work in communities, and operate within the government. (Talk about progressive mental conceptions of the world!) The teacher candidates making the trip learned much from their Jamaican peers. As well, the Jamaican partners finally felt enough confidence to begin directing Bellarmine as they made preparations for a 2010 visit. The Jamaican partners suggested that Bellarmine begin to build plans around the Jamaican curriculum, such that the lessons brought might merge with what they already teach. This way, they can model instruction for each other and "grasp the most valued things," as Mrs. Althea Kaye, a teacher at the Jamaican school suggests.

Finally, these experiences in Jamaica have impacted the teacher candidates in terms of their own pedagogy in K-12 schools. Modeling much of what they learned in the course and in Jamaica, students have implemented a much more intentional critical literacy approach in the social studies classes at their student teaching placements. Their cooperating teachers and university supervisors have been most impressed by their immense and concentrated efforts to prepare and enact a more democratic curricula in schools, even as inexperienced teachers. Because of their experience with a more constructive and democratic approach to pedagogy in at least one university class and because of their willingness to grapple with alienating forces and form more critical mental conceptions of the world, they have been able to translate this into more progressive pedagogical possibilities in K-12 schools.

***Researching our lives: Toward a more critical literacy***

Related to alienation driven by the hidden curriculum, Freire and Macedo (1987) note

Curriculum in the broadest sense involves not only the programmatic contents of the school system, but also the scheduling, discipline, and day-to-day tasks required from students in schools. In this curriculum, then, there is a quality that is hidden and that gradually incites rebelliousness on the part of children and adolescents. Their defiance corresponds to the aggressive elements in the curriculum that work against the students and their interests (p. 121).

Our most essential task is to recover those elements in the curriculum that help young people to develop the skills they need to become effective learners, and citizens. If we do our work successfully our students will be able to identify and shape good questions about issues, problems, and concerns they have, to gather information about those questions from relevant sources, to critically analyze the information gathered, and to act on what they have found. They will be able to critically evaluate information and claims that others are making, and to recognize the flaws, inaccuracies, and inconsistencies in them. How else do we prepare our students to become responsible and involved citizens if we do not help them to gain and to practice the skills they need to make a difference?

A story might suffice.

When Somali teenagers were in the news in the spring of 2009 for hijacking a US ship and holding the captain, there was virtually no coverage on the context in which the event was taking place. No mention of Somalia's history, of the colonization and piracy that has been going on for a very long time, no mention of the dumping of nuclear and other hazardous waste off the waters of the country once the government virtually disappeared, no mention of the over fishing of those same waters by countries from around the world, and no mention of the fact that these young men were viewed by their communities as a volunteer coast guard, acting in the absence of a functioning government to protect the resources of the country.

So, Doug introduced his students to articles that presented some context, some background information about these young people who were/are approximately the same age as his university students, and the account gave some historical background. All well and good, and the students were all over it. It was not evident, though, they were any more thoughtfully "all over it" as they had been all under it before the additional articles. They trusted the articles introduced because they basically trusted the teacher, and assumed he wouldn't lie to them. That's not good enough, and we should work to do better. How can we help our students to approach the world with a critical and skeptical eye that leads them to look for context, evidence, and a deeper understanding of issues rather than to blindly accept the analysis of someone else? If we simply replace "their" information (texts and the canon) with "our" information, we are not doing much of value, because we are just preparing them to mindlessly follow the next sales pitch, the next snake oil salesman who tries to sell them a bridge, or a war....

While it may be true that many of our students have been trained away from their own questions and interests and critical thinking, it's not our intention to curse the damage that has been done. Instead, we have to teach them how to function differently. Our focus is on identifying what we do want for our students, and how we will help them find their way to their power and strength, so they won't get fooled again, and again, and again, to quote Mr. Townsend.

So, we want to talk a bit about some research Doug has been doing about what goes into an effective research task in the classroom, and then provide a couple of examples, to get us talking about how we might do this well.

Doug interviewed researchers and classroom teachers to find out how they approach their own questions and concerns. He wanted to find out how they pose questions and pursue them in hopes that it might help to suggest how we can do this work in our classrooms. Those interviewed were clear that each researcher has to work in ways that suit him or her. None were willing to provide a fool proof recipe that would apply to everyone. Having said that, there was considerable overlap about what they had to say, and those areas of agreement are listed below. While the nature of the list may seem simplistic, or obvious, we can't say that we see it happening in many classrooms, on either coast, at university or in public schools.

So, here are some basic elements of an approach to conducting research that might guide us as we consider assignments in our classrooms. These elements certainly guarantee nothing, but they improve the odds of students succeeding in gaining the skills and some content knowledge they can take with them as they move out into K-12 classrooms. Again, with another brief apology for the modesty of these points, here they are:

- Do something that matters.
- Know that behind the headlines there are the real stories, of the real people and the work that has been done. Often history looks at what is dramatic, violent, what makes good pictures, what captures the moment. But behind those moments were the bedrock stories that more accurately communicate about who we are and how we got here. It takes time to do research. If there is an interest in surfacing the voices not commonly heard, it requires other sources, other ways of accessing information than what is commonly available, or commonly used. How you communicate is intricately linked to what you want to communicate and to whom. What is the purpose and what are your skills and interests, and what do you want to have happen as a result of your work?
- Having a well formed question that you keep revisiting, with a “what do I know now, what do I need to know and how can I find out,” runs the process.
- A crucial set of questions centers on asking how do we know about others, how do we tell our stories and how do we learn to hear the stories of others? How do we stand in the shoes of others and understand their lives and their questions? What does it mean to understand something, to know about it beyond a surface level?
- We have to be clear about our intentions, and know that our worldviews and beliefs shape how we approach our work. This is not a problem, but it is something we have to be aware of if we are to truly ask our questions and pursue them.
- Pursuing questions means moving past artificial boundaries, and going where we need to go to answer the questions.

In pursuing his research, Doug brought the following assumptions:

- Schools are currently organized around the needs of the adults, or more properly the systems and governing agencies of our local, state, and national governments. These systems are less interested in individuals or in justice than they are in being able to say, with some confidence that the schools they are administering are functioning well, and that they are able to continue feeding off the fat of the land.

- Many children in our classes are marginalized in many ways throughout their school careers. What they learn in our schools is that they are not really part of American history, and that their future is really destined to be on the margins of society. They don't matter, and the schools are not really for them. They will not go to college, they will not be leaders, and they will not be a part of history.
- Students are strongly encouraged to learn to do what they are told. They learn not to question teachers, texts, tests, or the essential history they are taught. They are not to do anything that will slow down the train.
- Students learn that their own interests, experiences, culture, family, questions, and ways of knowing have no place in school. They are more likely to cause problems, and their task is to learn how to perform according to school culture.
- The primary purpose of schools is to socialize students so that they can enter into the current society in the least disruptive way possible. The largest percentage of students are trained to serve in menial positions, to be ruled and managed by the few.

We also assume that the above list, as cynical as it is, is the antithesis of what education should be, and a negation of what we hope to advocate for through the social studies. We want the following for our students, for all students:

- That they feel loved, honored, capable, and included in what we do at school, in how we are as a learning community, and in what we study.
- That they become aware of themselves as learners in their current context. They learn about who they are, where they come from, how they view the world, and to appreciate that others view the world according to their own contexts. One is not better than the other, nor is it worse.
- That they learn how to learn. They learn how to question, to read critically, to reason, to argue and debate, to listen to others, and to come to their own understandings based on evidence, on experience, and on information. They learn to identify and challenge their own assumptions and the assumptions made by others, to engage in the kind of revisionist scholarship that leads them to revisit and move past what they've been taught, in search of the deepest understanding they can come to.
- That they learn to live in a way that brings honor and justice to themselves and others.

The subtext attached to this set of assumptions and practices is that those who are most likely to succeed are those most like those in power, for whom the system is designed to work. And, in fact test scores around the country bear this out. Those who are most likely to succeed on standardized tests share some or all of the following characteristics: They are white, they are from families whose home culture is similar to that of school culture; the primary language spoken at home is English; their family income places them in what we might call the middle class; and their parents, especially their mothers, are educated. These are primary predictors of success, and none of them have anything to do with what goes on at school. The dice are loaded, and that's no accident.

### **Overcoming alienation and prefiguring more progressive mental conceptions of the world: Doing democracy**

So, how do we unload the dice? We finish the discussion here by reconsidering the questions we posed at the outset:

How do we overcome alienation? Examples provided show how the UKTLS connects faculty and students in a dialogical space and connects students to the curriculum as they conceive of it with their professors. As well, the international service learning experience connects students with their world, helping form a more global consciousness.

What analytical tools are necessary? At Plattsburgh State University, they are undertaking an evolved approach to research, which intimately connects the students with that which they research. Similarly, at Bellarmine, through intensive theoretical study and an international experience that pushes students out of their comfort zone, they work with partners on a joint educational experience across broad chasms of race, class, and nation.

What school experiences are critical? Learning that how we see our world and how we investigate it matters is an important consideration at Plattsburgh State. Likewise, at UK, students witness the formation of curriculum so that they may understand the process that will be necessary in their future schools. Moreover, it is hoped that the process learned here may lead to such co-development of curriculum with the future students of these teacher candidates.

And, what are the signs of real hope? From the reflective comments of the students at UK, we can see that they are learning the value of such a studio model. At Bellarmine, these are seen in at least a couple of ways. As was mentioned, the teacher candidates who have made the trip abroad have been using more progressive pedagogies in their student teaching placements. For example, one candidate, following the lesson suggestion of *Rethinking Schools* had the courage to put Columbus on trial with her 5<sup>th</sup> grade social studies students during the week of Columbus Day. Most veteran teachers won't even touch this. Also, a majority of the students who made the last service trip to Jamaica continue to meet on a twice-monthly basis to break bread and discuss not only plans for next year, but more local work that can be taken up immediately.

These examples, of course, provide only a sample of what is possible. We hope that they provide some roadmap toward possible consideration in other's classrooms. We have witnessed the reduction of the alienating tendencies often found in education and have begun to see the budding of a more critical consciousness that we continue to nurture.

### **Conclusion: A pedagogical exercise**

By way of conclusion, we offer an exercise of which we have each used elements. We offer it as a possibility for teacher education or the social studies classroom in the K-12 context and in the spirit of Rich Gibson's exercise: *Why have school?* We begin with Nel Noddings' question: "Why do we feed hungry children in schools?"

Small groups of participants, say 6 in each group, meet to answer Noddings' question. Procedurally, participants practice dialogical inquiry by using guidelines which promote active listening, a chance for all to speak, and a possibility for a second chance to speak if one changes their perspectives as they listen to each other.

Answer Noddings' question by going around the circle, each answering the question and back around with the option to pass or add to/change their original answer.

Following the reporting of each group's answers to this first question, these additional questions should also be answered in small groups: What does it mean to be an educated community? What should be the principles of public education? (Provide the top 3 principles) Who should decide? And, how shall we teach it?

Report to the whole group after each question.

These questions get at the aims of public education, power issues, and pedagogy. They cause our students to reflect on their own educative experiences while conceptualizing more progressive possibilities. They connect students to each other; to others living in their community, both local and global; and to the curriculum. And, depending upon the agenda of the class (grade levels of the students here might range from middle school to university), responses and results can be collected for multiple purposes: guidelines for classroom community, a proposal for curriculum redevelopment, a premise for a larger community conversation, a school board agenda item, the foundation for an undergraduate research project, the premise for a dissertation...<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> For those standards-minded teachers or those forced to provide connections to such, this sort of exercise relates to NCSS thematic strands: Individual Development and Identity; Individuals, Groups, and Institutions; Power, Authority, and Governance; and Civic Ideals and Practices. As well, for faculty such as Nancye and Adam, this exercise connects with the state of Kentucky Academic Expectations in the following areas: 2.14 Students understand the democratic principles of justice, equality, responsibility, and freedom and apply them to real-life situations; 2.16 Students observe, analyze, and interpret human behaviors, social groupings, and institutions to better understand people and the relationships among individuals and among groups; and 2.20 Students understand, analyze, and interpret historical events, conditions, trends, and issues to develop historical perspective.

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# Exploring Socialization through Education: Creating Democratic Classrooms for Revolutionary Action

Delana Hill

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Life requires human beings to take action to and on society and, likewise, life forms the human being in the process of taking action. Revolutionary action, according to Paulo Freire (1970), is achieved when oppressed people work in conjunction with leaders in an effort to transform the dominant structures in society. Freire names four components of dialogical action that are necessary for this revolutionary move: cooperation, unity for liberation, organization, and cultural synthesis. Each of these dialogical components is necessary in order to usher forth a transformation that will bring about lasting social change and redistribute equalities within the global society.

Unarguably, education is a socializing experience. Socialization can take many forms. According to Renner (2009), “Modern individuals are socialized through four main mechanisms – school, church, media, family/neighborhood” (p. 61). Renner also articulates that school is the optimal pathway for re-socialization: an “excellent location (probably the most hopeful one) for deconstruction, critique, and/or resistance” (p. 61).

While education may be a powerful pathway toward amelioration, it may be equally destructive. Current pedagogical practices dehumanize students by turning them into objects. The classroom becomes a banking model in which “we teachers, the experts, deposit information, dole out directions and advice, and ask them (students) to respond on our terms” (McDermott, 1999, p. 2). These kinds of classroom practices leave students unable to critically examine the world as intellectual, capable human beings and ultimately track them straight into a relatively oppressed class within society.

Creating a classroom environment that can fight against the dehumanization and begin to prepare students to become revolutionary leaders (change-making subjects) in our society is a challenging process. This creation comes under scrutiny in contemporary society where prescriptive models of education dominate American classrooms. The contents of this paper will focus on the first component of dialogical action, cooperation, and its role in creating a democratic classroom, one pathway for the (re)socialization of revolutionary leaders.

## **A Critical Pedagogy, Democracy in the Classroom**

Many education theories may be used to support democratic pedagogical practices. Writings from Vygotsky, Dewey, Piaget, Lewin, Freire, Shor, and many others may be translated to support democracy in the classroom. O'Connor (1999) suggests, “Grounding classroom experiences in models of human growth provides teachers with some clear guidelines for organizing lessons and managing classroom interactions” (p. 47). The following section will set up an eclectic philosophy of a democratic classroom by drawing on many of the theorists listed above to provide an example of what a democratic pedagogy would translate into in terms of building curriculum, establishing community through dialogic exchange, student engagement, classroom arrangement, teacher-student relationship, and literacy practices.

### ***Lighting a fire, Not Filling a Pail: Building Curriculum that Excites Students***

Ira Shor (1992) calls his theory of education, “critical-democratic pedagogy for self and social change” (p. 15). In implementing this theory, teachers can inspire students who are “critical citizens who can think, challenge, take risks, and believe that their actions can make a difference in the larger society” (Shor, 1992, p. 16).

William Butler Yeats wrote, “Education is not the filling of a pail, but the lighting of a fire” (as cited in Petrash, 2002, p. 23). When lighting the fire, teachers should kindle the excitement that students have for life and use the energy to drive learning. For this reason, curriculum in the classroom should begin with teacher questioning and be built “upward from student responses” (Shor, 1999, p. 28). Teaching and learning should be a reciprocal process between student and teacher, where success as a community is the goal. When describing this relationship, Piaget wrote “the aim of intellectual training is to form the intelligence rather than stock the memory” (p. 12). In the democratic classroom teachers need to employ a cooperative relationship with students in order to instill into them a sound intellectual process for becoming proactive members of society. Freire (1970) also supports this idea and writes, “Teachers and students (leadership and people), co-intent on reality, are both Subjects not only in the tasks of unveiling that reality, and thereby coming to know it critically, but in the task of re-creating that knowledge” (p.69). Furthermore, teacher and student should cooperate to negotiate the classroom curriculum so that, together, “they attain the knowledge of reality through common reflection and action, they discover themselves as its permanent re-creators” (p. 69).

### ***Creating a Community of Individuals through Dialogic Exchange***

In order to generate a close bond with students, teachers need to work very hard to create a positive classroom environment through gaining knowledge of student’s backgrounds, abilities, and interests. When this is accomplished, a classroom can become a safe, community environment where students can trust one another and take risks. In the classroom, teachers are often the revolutionary leader and need to be aware of the authority that they may unconsciously assert over students, avoiding the crippling of intelligence and/or self-esteem. Teachers need to become aware of this authority and understand that in order to create change, unity must be achieved via teacher and student cooperation in the daily classroom practices.

The revolution is made neither by the leaders for the people, nor by the people for the leaders, but by both acting together in unshakeable solidarity. This solidarity is born only when the leaders witness to it by their humble, loving, and courageous encounter with the people (Freire, 1970, p. 129).

Creating a unified community of empowered individuals is the first step towards this revolutionary, cooperative effort to transform society.

One method that teachers can employ in the classroom to build community and lay the foundation for cooperation in the classroom is through the use of classroom meetings. Class meetings should occur frequently throughout the day. In class meeting time both the students and the teacher sit in a circle on the floor where all members of the community may be seen to indicate equity in the community. During the class meeting, students and the teacher will share about themselves. Also, instructional conversations will occur in class meeting style to allow students to verbalize learning and share insights with the community. Ira Shor states that “the

rules for talking are a key mechanism for empowering or disempowering students” (p. 14). Freire (1970) would support this as he holds, “dialogue, as essential communication, must underlie any cooperation” (p.168). Class meeting discussions where every student has an equal opportunity to listen and speak must be a key component of all democratic classrooms both in creating community and empowering students.

### ***Participatory Approach***

Learning should be interactive. As previously discussed, contemporary education in which desks are in rows and children memorize and forget factoids through rote drills and mundane worksheets, will not create citizens that will be active problem solvers in this world. Piaget, Vgotsky, and Dewey all agreed that engaging children was the key in learning. Piaget related action to knowing, “to know an object is to act upon it and transform it.... To know is therefore to assimilate reality into structures of transformation and these are the structures that intelligence constructs as a direct extension of our actions” (Shor, 1992, p.17). Likewise, Dewey pointed out that “there is no defect in traditional education greater than its failure to secure the active cooperation of the pupil in the purposes involved in his studying” (p. 18). According to Shor (1999), both of these theorists derived their theories from the cognitivist Lev Vgotsky.

Vygotsky proposed relative to activity theory and zone of proximal development that “such zones exists when a less developed individual or student interacts with a more advanced person or teacher, allowing the student to achieve things not possible when acting on his or her own” (p. 12). All three of these theorists agree that participation is the cornerstone of learning and that experiential learning is ideal for inspiring students to become participants in a democracy. Freire (1970) warns that even though it may be important for teachers to aid students in understanding, teachers as revolutionary leaders “do not own the people and have no right to steer the people blindly towards their salvation. In a dialogical theory of action, Subjects meet in cooperation in order to transform the world” (p. 167-168). In all, children should be moving and manipulating real-world objects and connecting learning to their actions. The process must be negotiated, cooperative, and most importantly, student-led. In doing so, as Vygotsky proposed, both students and teachers will become more developed by pulling each other forward through zones of development (Shor, 1999).

### ***Classroom Arrangement, Freeing Students***

In a classroom, the environment that is created by the teacher will have a direct affect on the (re)socialization of the students. The physical classroom arrangement can free or restrict students depending on the messages sent by the décor or the manner in which space and materials are utilized. Contemporary pedagogical practices tend to dominate students and socialize them to be followers of the societal norm. Desks are in rows and students compete in the classroom for the top spot and the teacher’s attention. Lessons are standards-based and instruction is aimed at teaching content so that students can pass standardized tests. This type of instruction dominates students and socializes them to be acceptors and followers instead of democratic change agents. bell hooks gives hope for educators who want to create democratic classrooms in an educational system that is designed to dominate. When speaking of designing a classroom hooks (2003) says, “In this space where they offered alternative ways of thinking, a student can engage in the insurrection of subjugated knowledge. Hence it was possible to learn liberating ideas in a context that was established to socialize us to accept domination, to accept

one's place within race, sex, hierarchy" (p. 2). When designing a classroom, a teacher should consider whether or not the environment frees or restricts students.

### ***Teacher-Student Relationship, Respect as the Centerpiece***

"Between teacher and student love makes recognition possible; it offers a place where the intersection of academic striving meets the overall striving to be psychologically whole" (hooks, 2003, p. 136). In a learning community it is important for each individual to feel respected and valued so that they can feel safe to take intellectual risks in the classroom. Each morning, teachers should greet their students at the door with a hug or a handshake to affirm their value in the classroom. hooks speaks of the value of loving relationships in the classroom by writing when "basic principles of love form the basis of teacher-pupil interaction the mutual pursuit of knowledge creates the conditions for optimal learning" (p. 131).

Piaget also wrote on the value of a reciprocal relationship between teacher and student to build respect and a "cooperative and student centered pedagogy" (Shor, 1992, p.12). Building a caring, reciprocal, relationship with students in your classroom is the first step to preparing them to be participants in a democratic curriculum. This kind of relationship is sometimes challenging for teachers to build in contemporary settings where students often enter classrooms socialized as participating objects in the classroom that are used to being educated. Once an open, comfortable connection has been established, students may begin to become cooperative agents willing to take risks and use their voices in order to launch a democratic community in the classroom.

### ***Literacy in the Classroom: Creating a Critical Citizen through Critical Literacy***

The largest flaw of traditional education in the United States is that, typically, curriculum is biased, presenting a Eurocentric view of the world while ignoring the voices of all other people. Education today systematically aids in the oppression of individuals by denying them a voice. Curriculum that presents only one truth to students denies them the opportunity to examine multiple perspectives which enables the forces of oppression in society. Typically, classrooms are filled with students from diverse backgrounds: ethnically, religiously, and socio-economically. The curriculum in a democratic classroom must reflect both the backgrounds of the students in the classroom and those backgrounds which are not always represented in the typical American classroom. Furthermore, participants in the classroom should be challenged to examine every classroom material with a critical lens. Exploring multiple perspectives, each others' reactions to the material and the sources from which the material was derived are all important elements of critical literacy. Learning may often begin with a question and then, through discovering what children know and exploring multiple perspectives, children will be allowed to construct their own ideas of what is truth. All texts, pictures, and opinions presented in the classroom should be subject to scrutiny. Children should understand that all information comes from a source and that all sources are biased in one way or another. Being able to critically examine a source and decipher the bias that exists within that source is the greatest gift that any teacher can give students because it will enable them to find their own voice in society. Adrienne Rich (1979) writes, "language is power and those who suffer from injustice most are the least able to articulate their suffering" (p. 67).

Renner and Brown (2006) write, "Where students are challenged to reflect critically upon themselves in relation to both the material they examine and the experiences they construct and participate in, they inexorably produce moments of creation and collective action that are at once

resistive and transformational” (p.12). Utilizing critical literacy, as described above, is one way to empower students to find their voice in society. Shor (1999) argues, “The claim of critical literacy is that no pedagogy is neutral, no learning process is value-free, no curriculum avoids ideology and power relations. To teach is to encourage human beings to develop in one direction or another” (p.22). Education is a socializing agent. Graduating students into a democratic society without empowering them to use their voices to critically examine power and bring forth change is the flaw of traditional education. Classrooms should be a place where students are encouraged to examine the world with a critical lens, becoming a critical citizen through the use of critical literacy.

## Conclusion

In an interview with *Omni*, Paulo Freire (1990) described his dream for society as one in which the hopes and dreams of the majority were no longer silent: “I have searched for an education that stands for liberty and against the exploitation of the popular classes, the perversity of the social structures, the silence imposed on the poor – always aided by an authoritarian education” (p.94). Education that gives students a voice is an education that empowers students to change the world through revolutionary action. The ways in which a person is socialized undoubtedly affects their reaction and actions to/on society. As a future educator, I hope that I may create a democratic classroom so that I may liberate my students to become revolutionary leaders in society and create ways of social change throughout the world. Cooperation in dialogic action is the first step in this process. Equity, justice, and community will be key values stressed to my students. If these goals are accomplished, I am certain that both my future students and I will develop intellectually and be able to utilize our intellect to critically examine the world and become proactive citizens that can bring forth social change.

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## EDITORIAL

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Anthony Smith has died nearly a week after being shot.

Anthony was a young man of 17-years and a student at Miami's Booker T. Washington High School. He played football and would have been a senior this year if not for the gunshots that killed him. The fatal bullet penetrated his chest and collapsed his lungs.

The beginning of the end for Anthony was a birthday celebration. It was uncharacteristic of him but he went to the big party staged in the Overtown section of the city over the July 4th weekend. The party went strong into the early morning until it was sprayed with assault weapons fire. Anthony was one of twelve people hit.

It happened just a stone's throw from where nine young people were shot in January. In both mass shootings two of the wounded did not make it. A few days before Anthony Smith died, Michelle Coleman succumbed to three bullet wounds. She was 21-years-old and a nursing student at Florida A&M University and a graduate of Miami Central High School. Michelle was pregnant when she died.

Miami Carol City High is a school very much like Anthony's Booker T. Washington and Michelle's Central High. Once you've been there for 26-years it is little surprising as you pull out of the faculty parking lot on a Friday to see the utility poles and the fences surrounding the school plastered with posters. The sight is a not uncommon form of the street marketing of rap.

And in the rap game Carol City High has some standing. William Roberts is a 1986 graduate of the school. He is now internationally known by his stage name Rick Ross or as "The Big Boss". His choice of show business personas is an homage to the drug trafficker some say introduced crack cocaine to the United States, Freeway Ricky Ross from Los Angeles. For the video *All I Really Want* from his latest recording, *Deeper Than Rap*, he made a pilgrimage to Medellin, Colombia. According to a *New York Times* story, "In footage from the trip, available on YouTube, he stands outside the house where Pablo Escobar was killed, sunglasses off, soaking in history."

Sometime after Rick Ross' *Port of Miami* and after *Trilla* and before *Deeper Than Rap* the posters advertising an aspiring young rapper who calls himself Eady appeared around Carol City High. In the posters at a distance it is clear Eady is a young man with long dreadlocks and that he has created a work he calls *Dope Pusher*. And from a distance he appears to be starring out from the poster holding a book in his hands. Upon moving closer the book is rather two fists full of cash. For the passerby who equates money with goodness and success, Eady hovers over as a saint.

You can listen to Eady's *Dope Pusher* on the Internet web site:

<http://24hourhiphop.com/music/Eady+-+Dope+Pusher/621/>

The street marketing of Eady's product around Carol City High and elsewhere is done by Big Bank Music Productions. The fledgling local record company's philosophy is expressed on their web site. They say, "There are two types of hard core rappers among mankind. You have your mainstream rapper, who appears to be rigid and tough at all times, never smiles. He's always

spitting heavy rhymes about his struggle as a child or how many innocent individuals that he or she may have killed or done bodily harm to. This "24-hour Thug" is usually a phony, who lives in Beverly Hills, attended private school, and believes that spotlighting hardship and poverty is a marketing strategy for his music career. On the other hand you have your boyish, rapper that was a statistic of a not so pleasant neighborhood, and grew up against all possible odds, but finds a resource to tap into their musical talent and shares their inner most secrets through music and introduces their story of how you can take a bad situation and turn it into a good situation. This spark of hope is none other than Southern rapper EADY. EADY has come to breathe "fresh air" into the current rap game.

And Eady describes himself thus, "As a rapper from the ghetto, I don't want to highlight my struggles and upbringing like other rappers, instead I want to rap about working towards the future and showing communities around the world that if you work hard at something, good things will come to you. I am the voice of the hood. I am here to inspire."

Sumner Redstone recently paid a visit to Miami. He was just across the causeway from Booker T. Washington High at Jungle Island. He came as the featured speaker at the scholarship fundraiser for the Rabbi Alexander S. Gross Hebrew Academy. It was the school's 60th anniversary dinner celebration. Tickets were \$136.00 per person. The private school's annual tuition is quite steep, from \$8,000 for the early childhood program up to \$16,000 for the high school, and so nearly half their 600 students are helped with financial aid.

Redstone is 85-years-old and a multi-billionaire but still working. He is the executive chairman or CEO of the Viacom Corporation. Viacom is a media giant and the company owns both Black Entertainment Television (B.E.T.) and Music Television (MTV).

Redstone's B.E.T. and MTV networks have not deemed Eady's *Dope Pusher* worthy of airtime yet. But the young self-described "voice of the hood" has not given up on that possibility because he knows the story of Carol City High's William Roberts b.k.a. Rick Ross.

Eady has tweaked the title of his seminal work. He now calls it *The Pusher*. Eady and many young African-American men know that you can rap about and glorify the drug trade and the accompanying gun play and mayhem and violent massacres and birthday parties sprayed with assault weapons fire. And if you do it at just the right pitch and in the right tenor. And if you aim it at the young people like Anthony Smith late of Booker T. Washington High and Michelle Coleman late of Florida A&M University and away from the young people at Rabbi Alexander S. Gross Hebrew Academy. Then Sumner Redstone will push your rhymes like weight on his B.E.T. and his MTV and make you the new Big Boss.

R.I.P Anthony Smith, you were a fine young man who deserved a better United States to grow up in. R.I.P. Michelle Coleman, in a better nation we would have known you as a nurse and mother and gotten to hold your baby in our arms. You were our son and our daughter and we failed you. All of us grown folks who sit and watch you die one after another failed you. But we pledge to both of you that this time we will find the courage to straighten our backs up and go after and stop those people who profit, who make huge fortunes, who count the blood money after your deaths.

**Postscript:**

This postscript to the shooting of twelve people and the deaths of Anthony Smith and Michelle Coleman in the Overtown section of Miami at a party over the July 4th weekend. The party was a birthday celebration for Lawrence Smith and the Miami-Dade Public Housing Authority has now served Smith's 49-year-old mother, Juliette McClain with an eviction order. Ms. McClain has until this coming Friday to vacate her Overtown duplex.

A petition drive by McClain's neighbors to save her place in the home was rejected by the Public Housing Authority. Their spokesperson, Jeffrey Gorley, said "We have a zero tolerance policy in public housing. If you violate the law or your lease, you could be evicted."

No arrests have been made in the shootings and the two murders as of yet. Sumner Redstone and the board of directors of the Viacom Corporation are still at large.

*Paul A. Moore*

*Teacher*

*Miami Carol City High School*

# THEY SAY CUT BACK...

militarization=war = Regulated curricula=high stakes exams = racism = nationalism = privatization = merit pay



# WE SAY FIGHT BACK!

Strike the schools, hold teach-ins, or  
organize to learn why things  
are as they are

