

## Entrevista Peter McLaren

**1- In the 1970s you introduced important changes in reproductivist theories, discussing the reduction of the school to a mere reproducer of capital. Could you mention the discussion of that time?**

It is important to note that, in 1968, I was a naïve nineteen year-old, and traveling from my native Toronto, by bus and by hitchhiking, to the United States to join those who were protesting the Vietnam War. During that time, I met Timothy Leary at a concert (an ex-Harvard professor who was advocating taking LSD and 'dropping out' of society to live in communes far away from the repression of everyday city life, only to become an international fugitive and later an FBI informant). I also met Allen Ginsberg, the poet, who became famous for his anti-establishment poem, HOWL, and who encouraged me to become a writer; and during this trip I met some of the Black Panthers in Oakland, California, who introduced me to the ideas and writings of Malcolm X, and I henceforth I became a great admirer of both Malcolm X and Martin Luther King. I was in the United States the year that both Martin Luther King and Robert Kennedy were assassinated. After returning back to my native Canada, I graduated from Toronto Teachers College (which no longer exists) and became a public school teacher for five years and published a diary of my experiences teaching in a neighborhood of Toronto that was home to working-class Canadians and a large number of immigrants from the West Indies. The neighborhood was known for its high incidence of violent crime. In 1980, I published a diary of my experiences teaching in that community, *Cries from the Corridor*, and soon afterwards regretted publishing the book, which was the number seven best-selling book in Canada at the time. I regretted publishing the diary because it did not contain any theoretical analysis and thus the book led people to believe that immigrants were congenitally violent. Fortunately, years later, I was able to include my diary in a much more theoretical analysis of schooling which was published under the title, *Life in Schools*. While finishing up my work as a doctoral student at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, University of Toronto, in 1984, Henry Giroux, to whom I had mailed a copy of *Cries from the Corridor* a few years earlier, encouraged me to apply for a professorship where he was working, at

Miami University of Ohio. I got the job, thanks to Henry's support, and moved to the U.S. in 1985. Henry had been working on a response to the Marxist work of Samuel Bowles and Herbert Gintis, specifically their important book, *Schooling in Capitalist America*. I was working on the topic of rituals and resistance. Henry's work was at the forefront of what came to be known as Resistance Theory. Henry's work was an important intervention for a number of reasons: Liberal and 'progressive' educators who opposed the conservative education agenda in whole or in part were conspicuously silent about the ways in which capitalist schooling was creating social relations that reproduced essentially the repressive nature of U.S. society. They had no alternatives to challenge the repressive nature of U.S. society—nothing that could point to the creation of a non exploitative, nonracist and gender-egalitarian society. Giroux's work was the first to provide important alternatives to this culture of silence (to use one of Paulo Freire's terms'). Henry believed Bowles and Gintis did not seriously address possibilities for resisting class oppression. Henry had written *Ideology, Culture and the Process of Schooling* (1981) which argued that Bowles and Gintis' *Schooling in Capitalist America* (1976), focused too much on the way that schools serve as sorting and tracking institutions that reproduce the hierarchical division of labor in capitalist society and failed to account for the ways students and teachers actively resist this process. Giroux did acknowledge that making class a central category of analysis was important, but he also pointed out in important ways that students did not always remain passive in the face of oppression, but actively resisted forces and relations of oppression, and asymmetrical relations of power and privilege. Giroux emphasized ways in which capitalist reproduction has transformative possibilities, and that opportunities do exist for students to resist the forces and relations of domination and oppression through counter-hegemonic practices and activities. Giroux argued for "a dialectical conception of ideology that strips it of its narrow definition as simply false consciousness" and that "provides an analysis of how schools sustain and produce ideologies as well as how individuals and groups in concrete relationships negotiate, resist, or accept them." Giroux had also already written the landmark, *Theory and Resistance in Education* prior to my moving to the U.S. The work of Antonio Gramsci, Paulo Freire and Paul Willis became key points of reference for us during those days of working together. We specifically wanted to understand how forms of resistance can be both transformative but also lead dangerously to their opposite—making it more difficult for students to succeed in society. For Giroux, this meant teachers needed to understand the language, modes of experience, and cultural forms of the students with whom they work. He also understood that these experiences and cultural forms must be historically situated and politically analyzed in connection with wider economic and social determinants. My work

at that time was focused on rituals of resistance, in which I argued that we need more than ritualized forms of resistance in schools but also class forms of resistance but that class formations were also lived symbolically; cultural mediation was not enough since symbolic power must be transformed into political power or else it simply ends up reinforcing dominant social, cultural and economic relationships. It was during this time that my book, *Schooling as a Ritual Performance* was published. It was an important period of my life working with Giroux. He went to work at Pennsylvania State University and I was recruited by the University of California, Los Angeles.

While at UCLA I deepened my engagement with Gramsci and Marx as well as the Frankfurt school theorists, as I became more and more convinced that we need to change the social relations of production while at the same time remaining attentive to cultural and symbolic strategies if we were to create any real justice for humanity. In 1985, Giroux and Donaldo Macedo arranged for me to meet Paulo Freire at a conference in Chicago and Paulo and I became good friends. My first international conference was in Cuba, in 1987, at Paulo's invitation. The trip to Cuba led me to an abiding interest in the life and ideas of Ernesto 'Che' Guevara. At that time there were not many Marxists working in the field of education in the U.S. and my work began, over the next few years, to follow a Marxist humanist trajectory, during which time I endeavored to remain attentive to both cultural and class considerations, giving strategic priority to that of class, heavily on Marx's value form of labor as a starting point. considerations, giving strategic priority to that of class, drawing heavily on Marx's value form of labor as a starting point. This direction led me to co-found Instituto McLaren de Pedagogia Critica in Mexico with Sergio Quirox Miranda, who founded the Partido Comunista de México. Drawing heavily on Marx's value form of labor as a starting point.

Sergio was an admirer of Paulo Freire, and a well-respected professor at Centro Universitario de Tijuana. Sergio had learned about me after I was named "the most dangerous professor" at UCLA and that a right-wing organization had offered to pay 100 dollars to students who would agree to secretly audiotape my lectures, and fifty dollars to students who would make notes about my lectures and hand them over to the university administration. When my name was put at the top of the list, there was a lot of media publicity and while I received only scant support in the US, I received strong support from teachers in Mexico. So Instituto McLaren was officially launched at the Centro Universitario de Tijuana and later it became an independent organization that operated first out of Mexicali and later Ensenada in the Baja Peninsula, where it remains to this day. In 2005 I was also invited by the government of Venezuela to help in the education sector

of the Bolivarian revolution, and I accepted this assignment with enthusiasm. Much of my interest in Marx began during conversations with British Marxists, Mike Cole, Glenn Rikowski and Dave Hill. Meeting Peter Hudis of the International Marxist Humanist Organization was also a fortuitous event. But the most eventual moment in this journey was discovering the work of Mexican theologian, Jose Porfirio Miranda.

**2- Your time as an anthropologist in a Catholic school in Toronto, Canada, populated mostly by Italian and Azorean students, is mentioned as a key moment for your change of perspective and in particular for your postulation of rituals as modes of perception and understanding that act on the surface and in the deep grammar of school culture. Could you recount that experience?**

Your adept use of the term "deep grammar" resonates with my exploration of ritual as a tangible, embodied phenomenon that operates beneath the surface of everyday perception. My aim in my ethnographic work in the school located in a mostly Azorean neighborhood in Toronto was to discern whether a nuanced analysis of ritual could enhance educators' understanding of resistance dynamics within their classrooms. In my conceptualization, a ritual unfolds as a symbolic practice distinguished by gestures—expressions of rhythmic activities that constitute dynamic symbolic acts—and postures, symbolizing a symbolic pause in action. Gesture, I see as inherently formative, and that intertwines with daily actions, oscillating between spontaneity and formality. Ritualization, a transformative process, involves embodying symbols, symbol clusters, metaphors, and fundamental paradigms through what I perceive as formative bodily gestures. Operating as enacted forms of meaning, rituals empower social actors to articulate, negotiate, and express their phenomenological existence within social, cultural, moral, and political dimensions. Contrary to perceiving rituals as ethereal entities detached from daily life intricacies, positioned atop the cultural landscape, rituals are inherently political. They are part of what anthropologist Victor Turner called social dramas. They cannot be grasped in isolation from biographical and historical contexts, entrenched in various mediation traditions (clan, gender, home environment, classroom, peer group culture). Woven into both private and institutional realms, rituals become integral components of socially conditioned, historically acquired, and biologically constituted rhythms and metaphors of human agency. As carriers of culturally and politically coded meanings, rituals are never neutral; instead, they contextually channel meaning, seldom escaping the historical burden of entrenched oppression, particularly for those who are marginalized under capitalism. My focus on rituals as resistance led me to investigate the gross disparity between students' behavior on the streetcorner and in the

school and classroom. Each student body bore a narrative of subjugation, etched layer upon layer in living tissue. Symbols of oppression permeated student bodies, laden with significance, interwoven in muscles, imprinted in tendons, and encapsulated in the intricate framework of bones and sinews. Student resistance emerged as a determined stand against internalized repression and external oppression, a battle to resist the obliteration of their distinctive "style" rooted in street corner culture and behavior, and an endeavor to reclaim the independent rhythms and gestures of the streets and playgrounds. When delving into resistance as a ritualistic mode, it becomes crucial to highlight the disparities in the acquisition of cultural knowledge. Street-corner knowledge was visceral, was a form of bodily knowledge--of the enfleshment of our thoughts, our emotions and our antagonistic agency-- connected to the informal street-corner culture's rhythms and gestures. This knowledge diverged from classroom knowledge, characterized by the clinical assimilation of often disjointed cognitive facts that were often technocratic, bureaucratic and management-related—to keep the students behaving in certain ways. Participation in rituals of resistance involved employing street-corner symbols or combinations thereof to counteract the dull uniformity of classroom instruction. The monotonous predictability fostered by the sameness and rigidity of classroom instructional forms was consistently disrupted by embodied symbols and gestures, honed into oppositional tools in the crucible of dead time and boredom within the school environment. Even as we acknowledge that hegemony envelops the body and molds one's will, one's agency, through a complex network of symbols influenced by capitalist power dynamics and privileges, it remains the case that counter-hegemonic forms of oppositional agency still persist in the process of domination or what Freire refers to as 'oppression'. This agency disrupts the all-encompassing nature of structured, entrenched oppression, creating opportunities for emancipation within liminal spaces. Resistance occurs in liminal space of the "not yet", in the subjunctive spaces of the "what if". However, the ritualization process within the specific Catholic School where I conducted my research, succeeded in forging a symbiotic relationship between being a good capitalist and being a good Catholic. I posited that the notion of resistance represents a significant theoretical advancement in understanding how educational institutions can perpetuate the prevailing social order through diverse cultural "acts" of both dominance and opposition. While much work remains to be done on rituals as forms of resistance, including their functional adaptation for marginalized groups and how oppositional groups encode their culture of resistance into a sustaining framework of symbolic meanings, my current focus has shifted to the study of fascism, and its variants such as how it is manifested in post-digital pedagogy. Digital technology has profound implications in the formation of fascist

modalities of identity formation, which is a big reason for why the world is in the mess that it is.

**3- In your critique of orthodox reproductiveism, you consider ritual as a political fact, and the school as a contradictory cultural space. Is this so?**

Certainly, rituals possess the capacity to create conflicting cultural domains with inherent political implications, certainly in the case of how different symbols can be differentially interpreted, given the context of their 'activation'. Currently, my interest is in understanding how rituals, marked by the repetition of symbols and embodied metaphors, ideologically both captivate and capture our minds, particularly in a political context. My primary focus is to investigate this phenomenon within the framework of fascism. Post-digital fascism, to be specific. Post-digital fascism emerges as a movement originating in the digital realm, subsequently adopted and rebranded by populist authoritarian nationalist leaders. These leaders exhibit exceptional prowess in strategically permeating society with toxic ideologies, such as racism, white supremacy, and illiberal systems of understanding. They promote post-truth narratives that substitute intersubjective truths with instrumental reasoning and technocratic rationality, utilizing various online forums, platforms, communities, and websites. Their expertise extends to critiquing the political establishment, expressing concerns about immigration, economic insecurities, and growing wealth inequality. In the United States, their grievances extend to the perceived dilution of national identity as Anglo-American Christian citizens and the perceived decline of America's greatness due to globalism. In the context of open societies navigating the digitally mediated currents of our digital condition, characterized by web 2.0 and social media, these dynamics involve highly interactive and participatory cultures. These platforms host networked masses susceptible to digital hate cultures, trending hashtags on Twitter facilitating message transfer across platforms, and the use of fake profiles, automated bots, and flawed algorithms. Structural inequalities underpinning the industry contribute to perceptual manipulation by far-right social actors within the interactive realm of social media. Maik Fielitz and Holger Marcks shed light on a highly fluid and ambivalent variant of digital fascism, drawing parallels between the networked masses and Marx's proletariat, albeit digitized. This variant carries the potential for widespread influence and impact within the intricate social structures of our digital world. I am concerned about how digital media position young people within certain subject positions. The emergence of novel realms of perception crafted by innovative strains of post-digital rebellion results in the entombment of oppositional actions and activities informed by critical consciousness in Freire's sense, relegating them to the rag-and-bone

shop of forgotten history, the ossuary of a mythological past. These post-digital narratives of extinction are cautioning against the alleged replacement of white European citizens by immigrants. Virtual networks are adeptly configured to channel fears, mirroring a form of 'new tribalism.' How these messages are ritualized through the daily lives of everyday consumers of digital media is the aspect that intrigues me. Because the subjectivities of young people especially are being creatively constituted by the recursive generation and reception of these narratives which are pre-constituted in an ideological matrix that reiterates similar patterns of signification symptomatic of racism, misogyny, homophobia, and fascism. Digital fascism is a kind of ideology-brought into-electronically imbricated images designed to have specific political effects and consequences.

**4- In the 1990s, you noted the influence of "postmodern strategies, such as Derridean grammatology and Foucaultian discourse analysis in dismantling the "certainty and transcendent" appeals to truth that characterize predominant tendencies of modernist discourse? How did all this impact on the school, on its perception by the community, in relation to the task of teachers?**

I don't think there was much impact on the school system or the perception of the school by the community. I don't think there were practical consequences of that debate in the 1990s. But when Trump came to power with his notion of "fake news" and "alternative facts" there was an explosion of analyses about living in a post-truth world. And the coronavirus also had an impact in how truth was perceived as a result of the arguments over the use of the vaccine (did it contain a secret computer chip) and the conspiracy theories about a secret cabal consisting of members of the Democratic Party who were, according to the QAnon cult, flaying the faces of children, drinking their blood and cannibalizing them during Satanic rituals. Those that were not killed were sex trafficked. According to the conspiracy theory, Donald Trump was going to arrest this secret cult and execute them in public on television. They are still waiting, of course. Foucault and Wittgenstein and other philosophers became popular again during this time. But such arguments over truth did not affect schools except in the important arena of the teaching of history. That debate resurfaced again recently through the demands made by the MAGA (Make America Great Again) far-right who demand that the horrors of slavery not be taught. Slavery and racism as historical events must be taught in ways that do not make white students uncomfortable. Teaching the history of slavery or the genocide of the indigenous population in ways that "divide Americans" is, in the view of the MAGA Republicans, tantamount to racism. Thus, to teach about racism in historically accurate way renders you susceptible of being labelled a racist! And you will likely be fired. Parents

have the right to mount a lawsuit against any teacher who brings discomfort to their children around issues of race, gender and sexuality. Parents and school boards are rejecting diversity training, and LGBTQQIP2SAA (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning, intersex, pansexual, two-spirit [2S], androgynous and asexual) pronouns and rights. Michael A. Peters uses the metaphor of the virus to describe the current intertwining dynamics of viral information and viral media and how they forge a unique connection, drawing parallels between the behavior of information in digital networks and its role as a messaging system in genomic biology. In the realm of social digital networks, viral media blurs the distinction between information and knowledge, operating without regard for truth. This phenomenon becomes an optimal conduit for the proliferation of hype, exaggeration, falsehoods, lies, and gossip, emblematic of the post-truth era. He also notes that, unlike knowledge, which necessitates conditions of belief, truth, and justification, information lacks such prerequisites. Misinformation and disinformation emerge as fundamental categories within this landscape. According to Peters, the post-truth condition introduces a divergence between evidence and truth, mirroring similarities between the spread of fake news in social media "echo chambers" and the evolution and transmission of infectious diseases. The coronavirus pandemic certainly had as much an effect on theory as the return of Michel Foucault. In today's digital landscape, news on platforms like Facebook often outperforms real news, with deliberately disseminated false stories and conspiracies exacerbating social-psychopathic skepticism. This skepticism casts doubt on institutions, particularly the government, potentially causing significant harm to the public realm. I appreciate these reflections by Mike Peters. My take on this is somewhat different. Toxicity, in this era defined by Trump's influence, has evolved from the post-truth proclamations of postmodernists in the 1980s to the current exploitation of epistemological "relativism" by those associated with the "far-right." These actors now dominate not only traditional paleoconservative media outlets like Fox News (a rightwing television station that dominates in viewership), but also proliferate on emerging social media platforms rooted in fear-mongering, racism, and white nationalism. The Trump administration has weaponized truth relativism and judgmental relativism, exemplified by Kellyanne Conway's infamous "alternative facts" and Trump's dismissive use of "fake news" to discredit critical journalism. In the absence of an ideal orator-citizen like Cicero, critical educators must counter the gaslighting rhetoric of Trumpland with a historical materialist rebuttal that draws on the insights of Hegel and Marx. One effective approach I use is to engage with the Marxist perspective of Paula Allman, who identifies different levels of truth: meta-transhistorical truths, transhistorical truths subject to revision, truths specific to a particular social formation, and



conjuncturally specific truths valid within specific contextual processes. Although crafting a critique of political economy with a sound byte-friendly negative dialectics presents challenges, educators can play a crucial role in countering disinformation. Acknowledging the inherent subjectivity and theory-laden nature of epistemological viewpoints, I diverge from postmodernists by dismissing the idea that altering beliefs alone can reshape the objective world. I also emphasize a distinction between epistemological subjectivity and ontological subjectivity, asserting the existence of an objective world irrespective of individual perspectives. Despite diverse lived experiences shaped by geopolitical, ethnic, and socio-cultural backgrounds, the shared laws of physics establish a common material reality, although our understanding of these laws remains subject to revision. In the face of the ever-changing "regime of truth," these days, it is crucial for individuals to consistently question standards for assessing truth. No single individual or group holds the authority to dictate objective value or meaning to others. Instead, an ongoing global or communal conversation is essential, necessitating a continuous negotiation of perspectives. My focus centers on the "revolutionary intellectual," contributing to a counter-public sphere and advocating for a socialist alternative to capitalism through a philosophy of praxis. While acknowledging that individuals inhabiting the world differently may access only partial truths of human history, I affirm that the world is fundamentally knowable. However, knowledge is inherently partial and relational, situated in historical contexts. This perspective leads me to explore truth within the framework of understanding how knowledge is created, constituted, and produced during the process of self and social formation (bildungsprozess). I emphasize that the world is knowable, but our knowledge of it will always be partial and relational. Immersed in "fields of knowing," our engagement is historically situated. This situated nature of knowledge prompts me to approach the question of truth in the context of understanding how knowledge comes to be recognized as knowledge. Together with like-minded individuals, I advocate for reclaiming philosophy from anti-foundationalists, presupposing the idea that individuals can be educated. A philosophical resurgence, particularly through engagement with the Frankfurt School, is essential. Along with critical theorist William Reitz, I echo Herbert Marcuse's call to prioritize the exploration of political linguistics, aesthetics, epistemology, and the history of philosophy to enrich the critical praxis of our collective practical and public life. Despite the logical appeal of this approach, it encounters resistance from today's Trump supporters, who resist delving into the realms of logic, viewing it as conceding ground to social justice advocates and climate scientists. The preference of Trump supporters for the comfort of digital platforms is duly noted. Relying solely on abstract logic as the ultimate arbiter of truth is recognized to have drawbacks. As argued by William Reitz, divorcing

truths of logic from physical facts or social history obscures genuine connections between language and the world. The arbitrary determination of first principles is cautioned against, as constructing an argument using deductive logic or an artificial syntactical calculus does not guarantee its cogency or soundness; a critical faculty is indispensable. Thus, the question of truth is framed as more pedagogical than syntactical, emphasizing that education is fundamentally about shaping minds and requires warranted premises. Liberation theology, with its preferential option for the poor and suffering, offers in my view a more ethical imperative. In this context, critical pedagogy becomes necessary for fostering a mindset that goes beyond mere syntactical correctness and engages with the ethical considerations inherent in the pursuit of truth.

As Reitz reminds us, in a world where 99 percent of the population experiences acute and profound suffering,

determining these foundational premises doesn't demand rocket science.

As I have argued over recent years, liberation theology, with its preferential option for the poor and suffering,

provides one important way forward for critical pedagogy.

**5- At the same time you were introducing concepts such as postmodernism and multiculturalism in your analysis of pedagogy. Could you tell us about your current position on this?**

In my view, postmodernity positions us within the tension produced by modernist and postmodernist attempts to resolve the living contradiction of being both the subject and object of meaning. We refer here to two distinct ways of ordering reality discussed by David Holt who describes these orderings as being reflected in the following questions: Does meaning generate life or does life generate meaning? The first question is posed within the discourse of modernity where it is assumed our lives should be lived out as an explanation of a meaning prior to life, a transcendental meaning that is codified in a conception of a metaphysical truth. The latter question reflects the advent of postmodernity and the shattering of the notion of truth based on metaphysical assumptions. To live life as if it generated meaning is to live within the contingency and uncertainty of the present, in which ethics, tradition, and agency are revealed to be social constructions or cultural fictions. Living within the tension created by these two questions generates further questions: Do we act in order to represent meaning or do we act for the sake of the possible effects of our actions? Does action create identity or does action follow from identity? While these questions have, over the centuries, occupied the projects of philosophers of various stripe, the postmodern condition has turned our

attention more boldly to the interface between such questions. To me, I want my students to engage the politics and ideologies which inform these questions as they begin to understand themselves as both a product and producer of meaning. My work has been to explore the dialectical tension between these two questions. From postmodernism I appreciated the breaking down of grand Eurocentric narratives to expose their patriarchal and epistemological certainties; but at the same time I was critical of postmodernism's focus on identity politics that disregarded questions of class and class struggle. To redress this absence, I began to refer to my exercise of postmodern critique that foregrounds issues of class as "critical postmodernism". I used the term employed by Teresa Ebert, "ludic postmodernism" to refer to postmodern critics who were anti-Marxist and who failed to consider class analysis in their work. Ebert also used the term, critical postmodernism. So I worked within the tension of the two questions cited above, and brought this tension with me in my overall preference for a historical materialist analysis. We do not want to collapse the question "How can we eliminate suffering?" into the question, "What Is suffering?" Zygmunt Bauman captures this tension when he writes: "It seems in the world of universal strangeness the stranger is no longer obsessed with the absoluteness of what ought to be; nor is he disturbed by the relativity of what is." So I will conclude by saying there are both utopian and dystopian currents to the postmodern condition and post-structuralist theorizing, as well as new forms of self-reflexivity and ideological colonization. As I mentioned earlier, in my use of adopting the term critical postmodernism stemmed from my observation that a considerable faction of self-proclaimed postmodernists critiqued modernity without addressing the crucial dimension of class. I called this "fashionable apostasy." Inspired by Teresa Ebert, a prominent Marxist scholar who used the term "critical postmodernism", I sought to distinguish this perspective the way Ebert did from her term "ludic postmodernism," a term she employed to encapsulate and critique those who were criticizing postmodernism as the spectacle, as theatrical state apparatuses, and the politics of representation—in other words, without addressing the class component. I used the phrase "the propaganda of desire" to characterize the classless critiques so prevalent among these artistic circles which I referred to as a pedagogy of "arousal effect," manifesting as a subtle form of micro-resistance housed within an esoteric repository of academic codes used by the academic elites. This clandestine enclave within culture allowed for an exploration of the mystified nature of culture and the unleashing of a politics of negation, with the ultimate goal of cultivating a well-tempered radical perspective where the alienation under capitalism was somewhat mitigated by the virtue of being endured by virtuous individuals. In other words, capitalism wasn't that bad, as long as you could maintain your virtue. In

essence, my critique involved a nuanced examination of the cultural avant-garde, wherein I mimicked their language while castigating their proclivity for self-censorship on matters of class. I questioned those who saw themselves as vanguards in cultural production, advocating for the pivotal role of culture in navigating historically specific contradictions related to identity and subjectivity—a facet integral to Marx's concept of the "rich totality of many determinations." During the 1990s and into the 2000s, my intellectual pursuits aimed to comprehend the apparent apathy of critics towards class considerations. While many were content with decrying the superficial aspects of modern life, my focus shifted towards rendering the subterranean workings of capital more apparent to educators. I argued for the ontological significance of the concept of praxis, challenging the prevailing domestication of critical pedagogy among those who chose to bleach out considerations of Marx's analysis of class. My concern was that even among those who proclaimed to be critical educators, we were ensnared in a phenomenology of sensation or seduction, prompting me to undertake an exploration of how praxis defines human beings in their totality—a concept expounded by Karel Kosik in his work on the dialectics of the concrete. Inspired by Kosik, I delved into the movements of the world's totality, contemplating how human beings uncover this totality, fostering a particular openness towards being. My inquiries probed the disjunction between intentions and actions, the disharmony between the necessity and freedom inherent in human actions shaped and created by historical forces. These questions continued to be the driving force behind my intellectual pursuits. The inquiry into whether we make history or are merely agents of historical forces remained central. I posited that active interference in the world was the key to understanding it, with revolutionary ethics emerging from the dialectic of objectification and resistance. I sought to convey to my students that economics transcends mere nomothetic implications—it embodies an ethic, a moral philosophy, distorted by the relentless pursuit of profit maximization. My intellectual trajectory also led me to the work of Raya Dunayevskaya, particularly her concept of absolute negativity—a negation emancipating itself from its object of critique. Drawing from Hegel's self-referential negation, modified by Marx, this form of negativity establishes a self-referential relation and is freed from external dependence. Marx appropriated this concept critically, outlining its role in the path to a communist society. However, important scholars like Peter Hudis, recognized the historical limitations of previous revolutions, wherein the objects they sought to negate persisted on different levels. I follow Hudis's work here for its explanatory ability. Hudis served as the secretary of Raya Dunayevskaya. Born in Russia, she left for the United States during her childhood. Her journey into historical significance unfolded as she assumed the role of Russian Secretary to Leon Trotsky during his exile in

Mexico from 1937 to 1938, a tumultuous period marked by the Moscow Trials and the Dewey Commission's inquiry into allegations against Trotsky. Trotsky, as we all know, spent his initial exile in the residence of Frida Kahlo. As World War II erupted, she diverged from Trotsky, opposing his defense of Russia as a "workers' state though degenerate." In her alternative perspective, she contended that the Hitler-Stalin Pact not only catalyzed the Second World War but also exposed Russia as a state-capitalist society. Her groundbreaking work, a meticulous and comprehensive analysis of Russia's initial three Five Year Plans, emerged from original sources and was published in the *New Internationalist* in December 1942, January 1943, and February 1943. This seminal study remains a valuable source for investigating the class nature of Russia and reevaluating Marxian theory. Widely cited in the global press and referenced in Arthur Koestler's "The Yogi and the Commissar" (1945), her research has left an indelible mark.

Additionally, her English translation of

"Teaching of Economics in the Soviet Union" from an elusive issue of

*Pod Znamenem Marxizma* (Under the Banner of Marxism), published in the *American Economic Review* in September 1944, triggered an international debate among theoreticians. The debate garnered attention on the front page of the *New York Times* in 1945.

Her exploration of Russian state-capitalism in 1941 forged an intellectual alliance with C.L.R. James (J.R. Johnson), the acclaimed author of "Black Jacobins," as they both arrived at a shared perspective on the matter. Here is how Hudis explains the negation of the negation. Communism, as the negation of capitalism, faced challenges, as it replaced private property with collective property without entirely overcoming the alienated notion of ownership. To truly pave the way for a new, positive society, we need a human praxis capable of transcending alienation, requiring a subjective praxis aligned with a philosophy of liberation. Marx, indebted to Hegel, appropriates the conceptual framework of the "negation of the negation" to elucidate the trajectory toward a novel societal order. In delineating communism as the antithesis of capitalism through the annulment of private property, Marx underscores its reliance on the object of critique, explicating its transformation of private ownership into collective ownership. However, communism, in Marx's analysis, does not transcend the alienated perception that ownership constitutes the paramount aspect of human existence under capitalism; rather, it affirms this notion on a different plane. While Marx advocates for the negation of private property, he contends that this negation must itself undergo negation to usher in a genuinely positive entity—a wholly new societal framework. As articulated by Dunayevskaya, Marx deems the surmounting of this 'transcendence,' characterized as absolute negativity by Hegel, as the

exclusive means to forge a truly humane world—characterized by "positive Humanism, beginning from itself." An examination of Marx reveals two key observations. Firstly, Marx does not censure Hegel's concept of absolute negativity for veiling reality; instead, he posits it as an expression of the tangible progression whereby the spurious optimism of the existing society is surmounted through the genesis of "positive humanism." Secondly, Marx underscores that the efficacy of revolution hinges on its continued dependence on the object of critique unless it culminates in the actualization of the "negation of the negation." Nevertheless, Marx does not engage in a facile extraction of the "negation of the negation" from Hegel, applying it directly to revolutionary politics. Recognizing the profundity of his intellectual endeavor, Marx abstains from a superficial appropriation, understanding that the "negation of the negation" is an integral component of Hegel's philosophical system. Marx acknowledges the impossibility of arbitrarily extracting specific concepts from Hegel. Instead, Marx advocates for the imperative task of reconstituting the entirety of Hegel's philosophy within a new paradigm, wherein the emancipatory essence implicit in the dialectic of absolute negativity can be rendered explicit and unrestrained. Process philosopher Ann Fairchild Pomeroy interprets this another way and I often use her example when trying to explain the negation of the negation to my students. In the exploration of the interplay between freedom and negation, it becomes evident that movement necessitates change, and change, in turn, requires negation. This fundamental truth, echoing through the philosophies of Heraclitus and Socrates, permeates existentialism and propels postmodernism. Whether aligned with substance metaphysics or not, the essence remains: negation is indispensable for change. The assertion that either something changes or change itself is all-encompassing underscores the formal nature of change, be it a pure form alteration or a shift in content. The idea that substance's power lies in the realization of its own being, thus embodying freedom, underscores the transformative potential inherent in negation. The catalyst for negation resides in human consciousness, where the presence of ideas empowers the act of negation and, consequently, alteration. The ability to contemplate formal reality freely, envision alternative possibilities, and manifest them in the physical realm exemplifies human freedom. Awareness, rooted in self-consciousness, becomes pivotal in navigating the bounds of material and ideal constraints. The analysis delves into the realm of labor, spotlighting capitalism's tragedy as the enslavement of the human idea. Labor power, synonymous with humanity's creative potential to alter the natural world, becomes commodified in a desperate act of selling creativity. This act underscores the urgent need for a revolution—a turning point and negation—in the face of such enslavement. Pomeroy is clear on this point. The first negation, epitomized by the Russian revolution, represents a

rejection of capitalist norms. However, the transformative potential of this negation gains direction and depth only through self-consciousness. The second negation emerges when the revolutionary comprehends the positive content of the initial rejection, embodying a profound understanding of the power of negativity. There is positivity in this negativity. The narrative pivots to the concept of self-determination "hearing itself speak," leading to a realization of the human essence as the source of negation. This awareness, coupled with the recognition of the absolute injustice inherent in the sale of labor power, paves the way for a revolutionary consciousness. The call for a revolution becomes not only a negation but a joyous, continual creative endeavor—a revolution in permanence. The ultimate goal is the realization of freedom as a self-conscious entity. True freedom transcends abstract rights bestowed by institutions; it is the profound understanding of one's creative potential and the responsibility it entails. This self-consciousness births a genuine social ethic, creating the possibility for a harmonious coexistence wherein the freedom of one is inseparable from the freedom of others. In conclusion, the power of negativity, as elucidated by Dunayevskaya, offers nuanced insights into Hegel, Marx, and the nature of revolution. It posits a vision where revolution becomes a joyous and perpetual act of creativity, steering humanity toward a new society founded on self-conscious freedom. I am impressed by the way Pomeroy explains moving from the 'I am not wage labor', to the 'I am not wage labor' realization. With the first negation, the emphasis is on the word, not while in the second negation, the emphasis is on the am, the realization of the positivity contained in the negativity. She explains it thus: In the realm of self-awareness, I morph into the utterance of negation. No longer confined to the proclamation of "I am not wage labor," she metamorphosizes into the affirmative declaration, "I am not wage labor." This transmutation reveals an awareness of the potency of negativity—an artistic equivalent to declaring, "I am the revolution" or, with even finer precision, "I am the revolutionary." This is what critical pedagogy tries to bring about in its creation of critical consciousness. Within this realm, I venture into the terrain of true class consciousness—an awareness that, as a denizen of the laboring class, I embody the very essence that propels capital's valorization, foretelling its unraveling. Beyond this prophetic unraveling lies the wellspring of creativity, destined to conjure forth a visionary tapestry of a new future. The positivity concealed within this negative revelation lies in my ability to utter the revolutionary "no"—an assertion that negation is not just a possibility but an inherent facet of my being. I am negativity, yet within this second negation I move beyond the false positivity of existing society and unleash a new creative positivity through the development of a positive humanism. Through this critical act of a second negation, the world undergoes metamorphosis, birthing anew. The negation of the negation expresses "the actual

movement” by which the false positivity of existing society is overcome through the creation of “positive humanism.” However, as Peter Hudis notes, Marx asserts that the efficacy of revolution is contingent upon its ability to progress beyond mere criticism and embrace the realization of the “negation of the negation.” He distinguishes his approach from a simplistic appropriation of this concept from Hegel for revolutionary purposes. Marx, as a rigorous thinker, refrains from engaging in a superficial adoption of ideas. He acknowledges the inherent interconnectedness of the “negation of the negation” within Hegel’s philosophical framework. Marx rejects the notion of selectively extracting concepts from Hegel arbitrarily. Such a practice, Hudis argues, is characteristic of ideologues and imitators. Instead, Marx emphasizes the imperative to reconstruct the entirety of Hegel’s philosophy within a new context. This new framework should unveil the implicitly emancipatory nature of the dialectic of absolute negativity, rendering it explicit and unshackled. The present academic discourse grapples with the prevailing skepticism surrounding the efficacy of labor or human praxis in achieving the transcendence of alienation, a sentiment exacerbated by the numerous aborted and unfinished revolutions of the past century. This skepticism, while particularly pronounced among postmodernists, extends beyond this intellectual enclave and permeates diverse ideological inclinations, both Marxist and non-Marxist. The overarching belief in our age of cynicism today, that human praxis has become incapable of transcending alienation, profoundly shapes contemporary thought, posing a formidable challenge to those who seek transformative avenues. Postmodernist perspectives further assert the inadequacy of labor or any revolutionary force to address the alienation dilemma. However, it is crucial to recognize that this perspective is not confined solely to postmodernist circles but resonates more broadly within contemporary intellectual discourse, even among proponents of critical pedagogy. Efforts to actualize absolute negativity as a new beginning, rather than repeating the mistakes of earlier eras, were impeded by the forces of colonization and imperialism. I still use this as a background of my critique, since my critical postmodernism was, essentially, a Marxist critique. Though a devout Catholic, I refrained from explicit discourse on where religion fit into all of this, and my interpretation of the eschaton, although I was hinting at my interest in liberation theology or revolutionary Catholicism in my work in later years. I am now beginning to write about this in more detail in some of my essays. Now as far as multiculturalism goes, there was a critique from Mexican scholars that I should use the word interculturality rather than multiculturalism. My exploration of multiculturalism dates back to the 1990s, and since then, the field has undergone significant developments. When I authored my book, “Critical Multiculturalism,” my perspective was shaped by my upbringing in a bi-cultural nation, Canada, where tensions



often existed between French and English speakers. A Mexican education professor, Alicia de Alba, challenged me for not incorporating the concept of interculturality, which, upon investigation, seemed closely aligned with my idea of 'critical multiculturalism.' In Canada, where the term evolved, multiculturalism appeared superior to the U.S. concept of the 'melting pot,' which I found to be a violent metaphor promoting assimilation and hierarchy preservation. I appreciated the criticism of my use of the term multiculturalism, but as I explained to Professor de Alba, my term critical multiculturalism was similar to her use of the term interculturality. I agree that interculturality is a better term. Multiculturalism, as I envisioned it, allowed diverse cultural groups to coexist independently, forming a harmonious mosaic or potentially leading to cultural segregation. Critical multiculturalism, akin to 'interculturalism, emphasized a dynamic exchange and respect for differences rather than a passive coexistence. It differed from other approaches, such as conservative multiculturalism that focused on economic gain and liberal multiculturalism emphasizing cultural differences or sameness. Critical multiculturalists, including myself, examined how racism operated across differences and challenged the notion of being 'colorblind.' Upon encountering the term 'interculturalism,' I recognized its similarity to my concept of 'critical multiculturalism.' As I traveled globally, I aimed to develop a perspective promoting global solidarity, transcending nationalism and transnationalism. My vision involved fostering a sense of solidarity among diverse communities while remaining critical of the nation-state concept. I advocated for alternative institutional forms and a socialist public sphere, challenging capitalist schooling and promoting responsible cultural work. My support for reciprocal dialogue among cultures aligns with interculturalism, emphasizing commonalities among cultural workers striving for a socialist alternative. I proposed transforming schools into cooperatives, challenging capitalist norms, and drawing inspiration from cooperative initiatives in Buenos Aires such as the IMPA factory. The focus of my work shifted from identity politics to the politics of identity, emphasizing what individuals can do to help others rather than emphasizing how people identify themselves. The shift means that critical educators must emphasize ethics over epistemology. How we care for people takes priority over how we define ourselves. An interculturalism grounded in an ethics of care prioritizes respecting differences and eventually becomes the way we define ourselves! While multiculturalism and critical multiculturalism (interculturalism) lack guarantees of success, transforming spaces of tension into spaces of reciprocal respect requires a profound commitment. The challenges ahead include redefining solidarities on a global level, addressing the re-territorialization of globalized identities, and navigating the complexities of post-digital transnational models of identity in our contemporary society.

**6- How valid are the theories that postulate, as in the case of Aníbal Quijano, that race is the universal classifier based on the colonial matrix of power. Neoliberalism permanently creates mechanisms of absorption and neutralization of the struggles against patriarchy, non-Western Latin American cultures and the demands of the youth. Do you think new categories are needed to understand the nature of neoliberalism/technocapitalism?**

In the myriad collections of scholarly contributions within the social sciences, luminaries such as Ramón Grosfoguel, Nelson Maldonado-Torres, Enrique Dussel, Walter Dignolo, and Aníbal Quijano stand as formidable architects of discourse surrounding the coloniality of being. Their profound insights cast a discerning light on the intricate interplay between epistemological genocide and economic exploitation—two potent forces deeply entwined with Eurocentric colonization and capitalism. Within this intersectionality lies the revelation of co-constitutive dynamics, leading to the systematic plundering of oppressed communities. These communities, relegated to the status of invented non-beings, witness the erosion of their alterity, liberty, and humanity. Enrique Dussel's historical trajectory underscores the reduction of indigenous peoples to mere instruments of free labor, enmeshed within a colonial tributary system historically entangled with European capital. At the heart of my academic inquiry lies the unraveling of the European ego's missionary ethos. Defined by the triad of discovery, conquest, and evangelization, this ethos assumes an ontological dimension encapsulated by the imperative "I conquer, therefore I am," in stark contrast to Descartes' renowned axiom, "I think, therefore I am." This exploration is fundamental to understanding its connection to William Robinson's conceptual framework, particularly regarding the transnational capitalist class and the transnational state apparatus. Navigating the complexities of racial capitalism, though challenging, stands as an imperative task. From the outset, I posit my alignment with the perspective that race, gender, and class constitute the bedrock of capitalist exploitation. Identity issues and social struggles, far from peripheral concerns, should be recognized as integral components of the broader class struggle. Aníbal Quijano's seminal work provides a compelling argument regarding the genesis of the modern concept of race, tracing its roots to European colonization in the Americas. Quijano contends that, before the conquest of the Americas, the European understanding of race revolved around familial notions of descent and blood. The transformative moment occurred with the exploitation of nature during the conquest, giving birth to the modern concept of race. This conceptualization intricately intertwined biological, structural, and hierarchical differences into the fabric of the division of labor, presenting them as inherently "natural." In Quijano's analysis, racial

dynamics in the colonial context are spotlighted. Imported Africans faced slavery, while Amerindians, to avert extinction, were freed from outright enslavement but relegated to serfdom. Even when Amerindians were acknowledged as humans, their humanity remained tenuous, subjecting them to subhuman treatment. The categorization into racial groups, such as "Whites" or "Europeans," is portrayed as an 18th-century construct originating from British colonial America. Furthermore, Quijano astutely links this colonial perspective to the dualistic mode of thinking accompanying modernity in Europe. The separation of body from spirit/soul, he argues, played a pivotal role in providing a scientific rationale for the concept of race. Simultaneously, this separation fostered an evolutionary perspective, placing non-European peoples along a continuum—from irrational to rational, primitive to modern, and, significantly, from "natural" to "human." Clearly, I am no expert on Quijano but greatly admire his extensive world system framework, his macro-historical sociological perspective, and his extraordinarily adept utilization of diverse methodologies spanning anthropology, history, sociology, economics, philosophy, politics, literature, linguistics, and the arts evoke my admiration. I am not in a position to evaluate his entire oeuvre, but I have appreciated reading his work and the assessment of others on his work, including some of the debates surrounding his ideas. There are numerous scholars in the U.S. who utilize his scholarship in their work. In some of my writings I have apprised myself of his important insights. My use of his work has been selective, and somewhat restrictive. But his work on the colonality of power certainly intersects with the various overlapping fields of critical pedagogy, for instance, that of decolonizing pedagogy. Years ago, I had aspired to do some research using a conceptual framework partially adapted from Quijano but my brief visits with the Rarámuri (or Tarahumara) in the highlands of the Sierra Madre Occidental and with the Purépecha in the northwestern region of Michoacán were too brief to glean any sustained analysis. In the town of Cheran, the Purépecha were occupied with setting up their armed roadblocks to keep out the cartels that were diversifying their products by stealing the trees from Purépecha lands. The Purépecha would have none of that and were busy creating their autodefensas, reading to use armed force to protect their lands. I see Quijano's historical contribution in his deliberate and sustained effort to shift our focus away from a Eurocentric gaze, a vital aspect within the realms of subaltern, postcolonial, and decolonial studies. This shift primarily concerns various regions across the globe and the lived experiences of their subjects, notably peasants, indigenous peoples, black communities, and women. Quijano's profound impact on critical race theory (which is under a sustained and merciless attack by Christopher Rufo, a far-right Republican operative and ally of the fascist Governor of Florida, Ron DeSantis) is embodied in his

revolutionary concept of the "coloniality of power" which has been taken up and utilized productively in the U.S academic scene. Quijano's intellectual offerings by far transcend the customary boundaries of racial discourse, especially here in the U.S., as he interweaves his insights into the vast tapestry of colonialism and the intricate web of global power structures. Quijano's theories unfurl the delicate interplay between race, colonialism, and modernity, enriching our comprehension with an exquisite nuance that is unmatched in a granular analysis of Modernity/Coloniality. The concept of "Modernity/Coloniality" was originally introduced by Quijano and subsequently elaborated upon brilliantly by Walter Mignolo. It underscores the inherent inseparability of the concepts of modernity and coloniality, presenting them as interconnected facets of the same phenomenon. Much like many postcolonial thinkers, decolonialists aim to highlight the intrinsic relationship between colonialism and the grand narratives of modernity, which has shaped much global historical understanding. In this perspective, modernity is perceived as an epistemological framework intricately linked to the European colonial project. Decolonialists seek to transcend what they perceive as an overly geographically deterministic approach in critiques of Eurocentrism, opting instead for an epistemic understanding of coloniality. Consequently, they argue that epistemic hegemony is not confined to specific locations, contending that a history of epistemic violence exists in every geographical context, including the Western world. Even critical analyses originating from the core regions of old empires cannot evade the logic of coloniality if the rhetoric of modernity perpetuates a colonial framework. You mentioned Quijano's concept of race. In Quijano's discerning gaze, as I understand it, race is not a mere biological or cultural taxonomy; it is a social construct meticulously forged in the crucible of colonization, a tool wielded for the imposition of dominance, often brutal and frequently lethal. The imposition of European hegemony in the Americas, as Quijano unveils, birthed a taxonomy of human differentiation rooted in perceived racial disparities, erecting hierarchies that, not surprisingly, favored the colonizers. This departure from traditional historiographical narratives accentuates the enduring influence of colonial legacies on contemporary society, stretching beyond the realms of economics and politics to permeate cultural and social spheres, even shaping the very essence of race itself. At the core of Quijano's theory lies the revelation that race and the capitalist world system share an inseparable bond. That is clearly the case. Capitalism, he contends, is entwined in a symbiotic relationship with coloniality, orchestrating a global economic stage where racial hierarchies assume the roles of both actors and audience. Quijano posits that capitalism thrives on the exploitation of racialized labor and the perpetuation of racial distinctions, urging a departure from simplistic views of race as a mere social or cultural construct. Quijano further accentuates

the pivotal role of Eurocentrism in sculpting the discourse on race. Eurocentrism emerges as a form of cultural domination, imposing European norms and values as a purportedly universal standard, resulting in the marginalization of non-European cultures and the brutal reinforcement of racial hierarchies. Delving into the intricate tapestry of coloniality and race, Quijano articulates a profound assertion: the pivotal triumph of 'race' lies in its adept reduction or flattening out of cultural, linguistic, and ethnic distinctions. In the colonial panorama of the Americas, the rich diversity of Yoruba, Igbo, and Ashanti, for instance, is summarily subsumed under the generic rubric of 'negros'; Purépecha, Tzeltal, and Zapotec metamorphose into mere 'indios'; while Spanish, Portuguese, and French slickly coalesce into the category of 'blancos'. Beneath this veneer of homogenization, Quijano unveils the underpinning mechanism: the creation of racialized patterns of labor distribution. In this scenario, 'blancos' are rewarded with salaries, 'indios' find themselves relegated to the perils of serfdom, and 'negros' are ensnared in the shackles of slavery. Since the inception of the colonization of America, Europeans correlated nonpaid or nonwage labor with races they deemed "inferior." The extensive genocide of the Indigenous people during early colonization emanated from their exploitation as expendable manual laborers. The eradication of this colonial practice did not transpire until the mid-sixteenth century. The serfdom experienced by American Indians differed from European feudal serfdom, lacking the presumed protection of a feudal lord and not necessarily involving the possession of land in lieu of wages. The racial classification of the population and the association of new racial identities with control over unpaid labor led to the perception that paid labor was a privilege exclusive to whites. This historical attitude persists globally, resulting in lower wages for "inferior races" in contemporary capitalist centers, an outcome inseparable from the global capitalist coloniality of power and its entrenched racist social classification. Quijano contends that this flattening of distinctions into broad racial categories catalyzes the emergence of a world economic order during the sixteenth century. White Western Europe has been nourished by this world economic order—by this singular power structure—for centuries. The conceptual architecture encapsulated in Quijano's notion of the coloniality of power grants us an understanding of race that surpasses traditional analyses. By embedding race within the grand narrative of colonialism and global power structures, Quijano provides a conceptual framework that invites a nuanced exploration of the enduring impact of historical racial legacies on contemporary society. He challenges us to reassess conventional notions of race and advocates for a comprehensive and critical examination of the intricate connections between race, colonialism, and modernity. I especially appreciate María Haydeé García-Bravo's luminous analysis of Quijano's oeuvre, deftly navigating the evolution of his

ideas. Initially critiquing what appeared as a neglect of class in Quijano's "Coloniality of Power; Eurocentrism, and Latin America", a closer scrutiny reveals his nuanced engagement with class dynamics. García-Bravo discerns three interconnected nodes in Quijano's tapestry, weaving a complex and dialectical causality pertaining to the concepts of social totality, Eurocentric epistemology, and the encapsulation of subjectivities. Quijano's first node, according to García-Bravo, underscores the racial codification of difference, tracing its lineage to the 'discovery' of America, an influence persisting in contemporary labor relations. García-Bravo examines Quijano's exploration of American alterity, unraveling the dehumanization that facilitates the naturalization of slavery and inhumane labor practices. Quijano's metaphorical lexicon, expressing interdefinability through concepts like interlinkage, coetaneity (quality or state of being), mesh of relations, and interdependence, reveals the interdisciplinary tapestry of his conceptual framework. García-Bravo traces the evolution of Quijano's ideas, illuminating key arguments and approaches, showcasing the interdisciplinary richness inherent in his methodological endeavors. In Quijano's discourse, metaphors and analogies persistently convey the interconnectedness of concepts, embracing the concepts of interlinkage, a web of relations, and interdependence. Quijano's conceptual framework and methodological outline exhibit interdisciplinary nuances, portraying a meticulous and penetrating engagement with these above themes. García-Bravo keenly observes Quijano's emphasis, influenced by José Carlos Mariátegui, on the unity of contradictory elements within a specific historical context—a perspective deeply rooted in Marx's dialectical vision. As García-Bravo puts it, Quijano perceives this unity as a historical knot where disparate temporal layers intersect, urging a profound understanding of history beneath ongoing processes. I join García-Bravo in acknowledging Quijano's resistance to postmodernism, a perspective that, in his view, undermines the notion of social totality, fragmenting both the social world and the social subject. To truly grasp Quijano's synthesis, one must delve not only into the experiences of the subaltern but also into the perspectives and behaviors of non-Western elites, ruling classes, and middle strata. This necessitates a scrutiny of imperial, ethnocentric, nationalist, and capitalist features, both preceding and following Western colonization. Quijano's theoretical framework, especially his portrayal of race as a mental construct reflecting the profound experience of colonial domination, compels careful consideration of its genealogy, codification, and historical transformations. While there is much to admire in Quijano's work, I agree here with Daniele Benzi that, from a macro-historical sociological standpoint, it becomes imperative to scrutinize the unambiguous emphasis placed by Quijano on race as the primary criterion for classifying the global population. While it may have wielded prominence in certain temporal and geographical contexts,

particularly in Latin America, Benzi notes that lingering inquiries arise concerning the intricate interplay of 'race' not solely with labor and gender dynamics, but also with diverse facets of social organization and politics rooted in collective identities such as 'ethnicity' (tribe, caste, kinship, lineage) and 'people-nation.' This exploration, Benzi affirms, extends beyond the confines of the European and Western narrative, encompassing phenomena of subjectivation and identity formation, wherein religion historically assumes a pivotal role. Such a nuanced examination proves pivotal in comprehending varied modalities of resistance against Western hegemony. Consequently, it proves beneficial to reassess the correlation between the Coloniality of Power and the distinct characteristics of 'internal colonialism' in Latin America. Benzi refers here to the work of González Casanova. Furthermore, Benzi notes that an additional criterion that has long served as a yardstick for delineating and categorizing human diversity, notably underpinning assertions of European superiority, involves the comparative evaluation of scientific and technological advancements across cultures and civilizations. The concept of 'machines as the measure of men' instigated a potent technology of power, particularly in the 19th century, and its intricate relationship with other forms of social classification, such as race, should not be underestimated. Which brings me to your question of techno-capitalism. Benzi's comments on "machines as the measure of men" has profound implications for the survival of civilizations as we know them. Techno-capitalism is here to stay. But it won't remain the same. It is not we, as researchers and insurgent intellectuals who will create the categories to help us better understand and replace neoliberalism, but it will be neoliberalism that will provide us with the categories. Recent studies have revealed that the global surge in neoliberalism, advocating for free-market capitalism, regressive taxation, and the reduction of social services, has led to a measurable inclination towards and endorsement of increased income inequality. Most people who have lived under the influence of neoliberalism prefer a system that has heightened income inequality, and this same trend has occurred beyond the industrialized nations. I wonder if this also applies to fascism: If you can live with fascism long enough, will the system teach you to prefer it to other systems. Was Margaret Thatcher correct in asserting, famously, that systems can change "souls."

[<https://www.fortinberrymurray.com/todays-research/have-neoliberal-policies-institutions-prompted-preference-for-greater-inequality>]. You mention techno-capitalism and alternative categories for understanding and moving beyond neoliberalism. Here, we must grapple not only with technocapitalism, but with the transformative societal shifts propelled by revolutionary technologies. A concerning reality, notes Michael Peters, is the reshaping of the human body, particularly cognitive functions, resulting from the

convergence of various technologies. Central to these transformations, according to Peters, are cognitive efficiency, bio-informationalism, surveillance capitalism facilitated by cogno-technologies, platform technologies, digital authoritarianism, and dataism. These elements coalesce in nano-bio-info-cogno (NBIC) technologies wielded by techno-political apparatuses such as our algorithmic educational institutions, once dedicated to disciplines like philosophy and literature. Cognitive capitalism, referred to as 'third capitalism' following mercantilism and industrial capitalism, has risen to prominence by examining socio-economic shifts brought about by Internet and Web 2.0 technologies. As Michael Peters cautions, these changes have not only shifted the mode of production but also redefined the nature of labor. Cognitive capitalism explores the intersection of capitalism and cognitive processes. A growing concern is the convergence known as technopolitics or technological convergence, signaling a paradigm shift encapsulated in 'nano-bio-info-cogno' technologies, set to drive scientific research, technological advancements, and knowledge-based economies. The concept of 'deep convergence,' representing a new technoscientific synergy, arises from enduring trends in 'bioinformational capitalism,' where information and genetic sciences merge in the emerging field of 'cognosciences,' particularly in education and research. Within this context, Peters notes that technopolitics systematically clarifies the complex political relationships between major technology corporations and the emergence of 'new digital publics.' It reveals that the prevailing paradigm places utmost importance on cognitive efficiency. In this paradigm, a closely interconnected set of concerns delineates a comprehensive map of political issues arising from the impacts of fifth-generation technologies on individuals, their physical and mental well-being, and public institutions. According to Peters, these concerns extend to the fundamental principles governing the distribution and ownership of data, information, and knowledge, with profound implications for the democratic fabric of society. These technological changes will either draw us deeper into the sphere of neoliberalism or steer us in a distinctly different direction, outlining the potential for a socialist future.

**7- Should Western epistemological traditions be discarded and replaced by non-Western epistemologies, or epistemologies that have been denied by capitalist colonization? What is the place of pedagogy in this respect?**

I believe with some urgency that we need to replace the Eurocentrist and white supremacist epistemic foundations of traditionalism—more specifically the current trend of traditionalism that can be seen in the philosophy of the dangerous ideologue, Steve Bannon, former advisor to Trump and popular podcaster, and can be witnessed in Italy, in



Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni's attraction to the writings of Tolkien but reading them through a fascist lens, and in the traditionalism seen in Hungary and Russia that is attracting many Republican Christian nationalists in the U.S. I suggest we look at Frantz Fanon as a way of moving forward on this urgent mission. Evola's contribution to the annals of history resembles a carefully concealed arsenal of bombs, with its inaugural explosion reverberating on September 1, 1939, as Germany's invasion of Poland marked the ominous inception of World War II. The impending detonation, poised to unfold with the advent of another Trump administration in 2024, casts a shadow over today's historical landscape. In the intricate web of Western epistemology a critical strand demands our close scrutiny: the specter of traditionalism. I am referring to the resurgence of traditionalism in numerous European countries and North America. In Italy, we see the revival of "Hobbit Camps" (attended today by Italy's Giorgia Meloni who is a Tolkien fanatic) that mix Tolkien's traditionalism with darker elements of fascism through the popular writings of Julius Evola. I am sure Tolkien must be turning over in his grave. The unease surrounding the embrace of "traditionalism" by imperialist nations is rooted in the tenuous history of societies trying to conform to antiquated norms. An illustrative instance lies in the impact of Tolkien's "The Hobbit" on the rise of Italian Fascism in the 1930s, intertwined with Julius Evola's shadowy, eugenics-infused traditionalist doctrine, where hobbits metamorphose into a symbolic force reinterpreting fascism while Theosophists scour for traces of the ancient "root race." From this ferment emerged the growing popularity of Julius Evola, a dark, occultist philosopher of fascism who even has a strong readership among the extreme far-right. His seminal work, "Revolt Against the Modern World," chronicles the decay of European civilization due to progress and urges a divergence away from industrialization and a celebration of mythical traditions from the past which Evola saw as a reclamation of racial and cultural purity through its spiritual racism directed primarily against Jews. As the Second World War unfolded, Italy veered from Evola's ideological purity and spiritual anti-semitism, embracing instead a "scientific" racism and celebration of progress, revealing modern fascism as an Evolian antichrist. Pushed to the margins, Evola's "Traditionalism" lay dormant, akin to Tolkien's ring of power, awaiting a resurgence. Today, Evola resurfaces as a formidable philosopher of fascism, as followers of his work draw inspiration from his embrace of Eastern philosophies and Western myths. Caution is imperative when societal restructuring mirrors archaic norms, as Evola's influence, laden with aristocratic and chauvinistic values, exerts a perilous allure, evident in the revival of traditionalist ideals among disenfranchised Italian youth and among U.S. youth spending most of their time on platforms celebrating his work and the philosophies of Hitler and Mussolini. Despite

lacking direct ties to traditionalism, Tolkien's works wielded disproportionate influence in Italy in the 1930s. Hobbit Camps during the fascist era brought together diverse individuals discussing Evola's radical program, emphasizing the revival of tradition. However, unintended consequences underscore the adaptability of cultural artifacts for ideological purposes in today's political landscapes. One must be vigilant of those yearning for a mythical Eden. The America First movement, spearheaded by far-right Republicans and led by Donald Trump, seeks a resurrection of traditional American values, but values excluding diversity. They want an America before the feminism and the Civil Rights Movement of Martin Luther King. The historical influence of "The Hobbit," viewed through Evola's lens, serves as a stark reminder of the perils in forsaking progressivism for traditionalism. Evola's legacy resonates in today's Eurofascism. Embraced by neo-reactionaries, Evola's ideas advocate upheaval for a new epoch, casting a dark shadow on democracy. His allure persists among fascists, garnering reverence in far-right political parties and even capturing the attention of figures like right-wing Catholic, Steve Bannon, who yearns for rituals binding humanity to eternity, presumably so that he can live forever as a king in 1950s America. Evola's adherence to aristocratic, chauvinistic, and hyper-masculinist values, coupled with his aversion to progress, played a significant role in influencing figures like Mussolini and Hitler. The danger today lies in the allure of returning to an idealized past, as seen in Evola's doctrine of "spiritual racism" and the subsequent resurgence of traditionalist ideals among disaffected youth in Italy, culminating in events like Hobbit Camps. While Tolkien's work was not inherently aligned with traditionalism, its unintended impact underscores the potential for cultural artifacts to be co-opted for ideological purposes. I am particularly critical of those individuals from Western imperialist countries who yearn to revisit the past, who cling to the alluring mirage of a mythical Eden that never truly graced European soil. Witness the America First movement in the U.S., a masquerade led by far-right Republicans, donning the guise of a nostalgic yearning for a bygone greatness. These far-right architects of a grand illusion seek resurrection in the dusty tomes of traditional American values, interwoven with exclusionary ideologies that spurn diversity and the equality of races and genders. The traditional American values and ideologies being celebrated exclude people of color, immigrants, and LGBTQQIP2SAA (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning, intersex, pansexual, two-spirit [2S], androgynous and asexual) communities. Evola's allure persists among active fascists, finding reverence in the ranks of Greece's far-right Golden Dawn party and catching the attention of armed militia movements throughout the U.S. In contrast to Evola's nostalgic glorification of a supposed master race and triumphalist narratives of fascism, a discerning historical perspective urges us to remain

vigilant in anticipation of impending challenges. The Washington Street Advocacy Group has uncovered a disturbing trend within the tech industry, revealing a growing affinity for various esoteric fascist ideologies. This concerning development poses a severe threat to the American republic, indicating a heightened risk of right-wing extremist violence and online propaganda during the upcoming 2024 election. In response, this group has dedicated itself to leveraging creative advocacy tactics, as well as its knowledge of art and philosophy, to raise awareness and counteract this peril.

Their heightened awareness began in the summer of 2022 when they delved into the world of non-fungible tokens (NFTs). Upon exploring the leading collections on the Ethereum blockchain, they discovered profound political, ideological, and philosophical content. Among these collections, the "Bored Ape Yacht Club" by Miami-Yuga Labs emerged as the most prominent and controversial. Currently under investigation by the government and facing consumer lawsuits, Yuga Labs exhibits a disturbing use of blatant racist symbols and references to racist memes, particularly targeting Black individuals.

Alarming allegations made by New York City artist Ryder Ripps prompted them to further investigate the connections between Bored Ape Yacht Club, Yuga Labs, and the cutting-edge realms of anti-Semitic, racist, misogynistic, and alt-right ideologies prevalent on platforms like 4chan and among radical technologists, including influential venture capital firms such as a16z. Uncovering ties between the founders of Bored Ape Yacht Club and a press outlet called Expat (linked to the Hungary-based "Terror House") revealed references to fascist philosopher Julius Evola's ideas about the "Kali Yuga" in the founder Manuel Marrero's writings.

Building on the research conducted by Ripps and other NFT enthusiasts, the Washington Street Advocacy Group utilized platforms like Twitter threads and "Twitter Spaces" to educate the crypto and NFT communities about Yuga Labs' extensive use of allusions and references to traditionalism, a strand of esoteric fascism reminiscent of Nazism. This ideology, which employs Eastern religion and Hinduism to justify the genocide of Jewish people, is rooted in the core concept that the Hindu cycle of time known as the "Kali Yuga" provides justification to discard all moral constraints on political behavior. Contrary to Yuga Labs' claims, the company's name appears to be a deliberate reference to the right-wing appropriation of this religious concept rather than an obscure allusion to a Gameboy game. These challenges, which today are propelled by a powerful racial animus, push the Angel of History forward like a powerful storm, not from Heaven but from a dark underworld, and, borrowing from Walter Benjamin's evocative imagery, ensnare the celestial being's wings with such force that unfolding them becomes impossible. Thus, the

angel is inexorably thrust into a future to which his gaze is averted, while the deaths of black people at the hands of racist whites, including white police officers, ascends skyward. This racism has become the tempestuous force shaping the turbulent trajectory of our collective journey in these times. But there is a counterforce challenging these storms of hate. What can we do to counter the infiltration of traditionalism in today's techno-fascist, post-digital universe? I propose that we look forward rather than backwards--that we follow Frantz Fanon in building a new humanism. What follows is a discussion of Fanon, using Peter Hudis's work on Fanon as a lodestar. As a preeminent theorist of race and racism in the previous century, Fanon's ideas have resurfaced amidst the contemporary landscape of escalating class polarization within capitalism, intricately woven with an ongoing assault against people of color and immigrants in the U.S. and Europe. Rooted in his lived experience as a Black man from Martinique deeply engaged in movements for African independence, Fanon's theories emanated from the zero point of his orientation. His approach sought not to prioritize his experience over others but to emphasize that understanding social phenomena must commence with the lived experience of the subject. Peter Hudis's insightful examination of Fanon's vision positions him within the Marxian tradition, a connection often overlooked. Fanon, engaging with Marx and Marxist theorists from the outset, emphasized the psychological aspect of racism, while recognizing the significance of social and economic realities. Notably, Fanon claimed that racism takes on a life of its own within capitalist relations, as he delved into the inner psychic life of racist oppression. For Fanon, moving forward in the debate over racism involves a careful consideration of how victims assert themselves against racial degradation. Overcoming racism, in his view, requires affirming and taking pride in socially-constructed attributes like 'blackness,' while challenging societal denigration. Fanon cautioned against prematurely embracing the 'universal' or becoming ensnared in one's particularity, rejecting liberal theories of recognition. His work emphasized the development of national consciousness as a pivotal step in the struggle for recognition, where the affirmation of pride and dignity forms the mental foundation for standing independently, establishing intersubjective connections, and demanding a transformation of human relations. Fanon's ultimate goal in anti-colonial and anti-racist struggles, according to Hudis, was the development of a "new humanism," a national consciousness devoid of nationalism that could contribute to an international dimension. In the realm of revolutionary thought, Fanon, akin to Marx, rejected the notion of a triumphant revolution orchestrated by a minority working class under the guidance of a "disciplined and centralized" vanguard party. Fanon argued that achieving what Marx referred to as 'universal human emancipation' requires embracing the particular—acknowledging and

taking pride in the socially constructed attributes of 'blackness' that society tends to degrade and vilify. To be recognized as a human being, one must confront the denial of recognition based on race, gender, or ethnicity. Hudis describes how Fanon emphasized the challenge of not hastily moving to the 'universal,' described as a 'world of mutual recognitions,' while neglecting the particular, such as pretending that society is now 'color-blind.' Simultaneously, one should avoid being ensnared in particularity, losing sight of the universal. Fanon believed this journey was a complex one, delving into it more profoundly than many other thinkers in the anti-colonial tradition. His insights on this matter were shaped by his critical engagement with Hegel's dialectical philosophy and the ideas of the negritude poets and philosophers of the African diaspora. This intellectual influence is evident not only in "Black Skin, White Masks" but also in "A Dying Colonialism" and "The Wretched of the Earth." Fanon's artistic endeavor was to craft a narrative for Africa's revolutions, a journey that avoided the pitfalls of its predecessors. "The Wretched of the Earth" unfolded as a masterpiece, its pivotal insight warning of the potential tragedy that could befall African revolutions if the quest for independence failed to blossom into a social revolution — a revolution that would, in Fanon's aesthetic lexicon, inaugurate "a new humanism." The Algerian movement, adopting the form of a national struggle, transcended racial confines, creating a blending of various ethnicities. Yet, he foresaw these struggles succumbing to the schemes of the national bourgeoisie unless swiftly transitioning to a social metamorphosis post-independence. This envisioned metamorphosis in Fanon's aesthetic contradicted both Western-style capitalism and the top-down Soviet industrialization model. He imagined a revolutionary tapestry where the masses would craft a decentralized society, denouncing the prevalent organizational form of "the single party" as a modern form of bourgeois dictatorship. In the dim light of failed and incomplete revolutions, Fanon's artistic essence asserts that successfully dismantling oppressive structures requires a creative transformation of the most intimate human relations. It begins with reshaping perceptions in a racially charged society, as articulated by Raya Dunayevskaya: "It is not the means of production that create the new type of humanity, but the new type of humanity that creates the new means of production." This important advice, Fanon beckons us to wield on our dangerous yet uncompromising journey towards societal transformation.

**8- The school is being confronted by the advance of the market in education. During the last decade, several Latin American countries have suffered a strong reduction of public education in support of private education. Teachers are blamed and there is a**

**huge campaign against state intervention in education. What do you think about this?**

There's no doubt in my mind that in the annals of history, the erosion of America's educational foundation under the weight of neoliberal policies is an unfolding saga of societal decay. The bedrock of our civilization, public education, finds itself under siege as we navigate the labyrinthine funding landscape shaped by local, state, and federal sources. Illuminating the resulting disparities becomes paramount, compelling a call for advocacy to ensure that every child, irrespective of circumstance, has unfettered access to a quality education.

Local funding, predominantly tethered to property taxes, emerges as a formidable player in public school revenue, erecting a stark barrier between affluent and economically disadvantaged regions. This inherent inequality perpetuates a cycle where students in wealthier enclaves enjoy superior educational resources, deepening societal cleavages. State governments, despite wielding considerable influence, grapple with formulaic approaches that struggle to address the unique needs of economically disadvantaged districts, fostering imbalances in educational opportunities.

Even federal funding, exemplified by programs like Title I, aims to bridge gaps by supporting schools catering to a high percentage of low-income students. However, persistent scrutiny questions the adequacy of these funds in tackling systemic issues. Non-governmental sources offer valuable but limited support, underscoring the imperative for comprehensive solutions to broader funding challenges.

The convoluted funding structure, highlighted by local initiatives such as bonds and levies, underscores the need for unwavering advocacy and policy reforms. Critical pedagogues must spearhead initiatives at both state and federal levels to overhaul funding mechanisms, eradicating disparities and fostering an equitable distribution of resources. The ultimate aspiration is a future where every student, regardless of geographical location or socioeconomic status, enjoys equal access to a high-quality education, nurturing a just and inclusive society.

**9- Systems such as vouchers, charter schools and home schooling, are presented by the right wing as alternatives to the school system. How do they relate to unschooling theories. Have they been successful in the US?**

Furthermore, the harsh reality is that racially isolated schools find themselves politically isolated, rendering them more vulnerable in battles for funding with state legislatures. The

urgency to transform schools must parallel a political and legal crusade against de facto school segregation and the reliance on local property taxes.

In the face of neoliberal, Eurocentric education, Ethnic Studies emerges as a potent antidote. Positioned within critical race studies, Ethnic Studies focuses on historically marginalized racialized groups in the United States: African Americans, Native Americans, Latinas/os, and Asian Americans. This encompassing field includes African American Studies, Native American Studies, Chicana and Latina Studies, and Asian American Studies, collectively falling under the umbrella term of Ethnic Studies.

The genesis of Ethnic Studies traces back to the Bay Area near San Francisco in 1968, stemming from the impactful Third World Liberation Front (TWLF) strike at San Francisco State University. Led by the Black Student Union (BSU) in collaboration with groups representing Native American, Latina, and Asian students, the TWLF strike expanded to UC Berkeley in 1969. The core demands of the students during this movement were threefold: increased access to higher education for students of color, heightened hiring of faculty from diverse backgrounds, and the establishment of Black Studies and, more broadly, Ethnic Studies programs and departments.

Following the TWLF strike, these demands reverberated across campuses nationwide, sparking a wave of activism leading to the establishment of numerous Ethnic Studies departments in colleges and universities. As critical pedagogues, it is imperative to recognize the roots of Ethnic Studies, born out of a commitment to inclusivity, representation, and an unwavering belief in the transformative power of education. We must persist in championing the importance of Ethnic Studies in our academic institutions, ensuring a curriculum reflective of the diverse histories and experiences of marginalized communities in the United States.

Recent legislation in California, mandating ethnic studies for high school diplomas, marks a positive step toward addressing systemic issues ingrained in the education system. Simultaneously, the backlash against critical race theory (CRT) reveals societal resistance to confronting racist history and systemic inequities. Efforts to stifle discussions on racism in schools hinder progress toward a more equitable democracy. If you teach about slavery, you, as a professor, risk being called a racist. Because you are making white students feel guilty, feel uncomfortable. Professors are pressured into "whitewashing" difficult topics.

A critical assessment of the capitalist education system is imperative, demanding reforms in funding structures, addressing disparities, and ensuring transparency. Embracing inclusive curricula, such as ethnic studies, and acknowledging systemic issues through frameworks like CRT, are vital for fostering a just and equitable educational landscape. The future of society hinges on collective resolve to confront and rectify these pressing issues

in education. Yet, a shadow looms as Donald Trump and his followers denounce courses that emphasize diversity and equity.

We've mentioned public schools open to all who live in certain districts, charter schools, community schools. What about Homeschooling? In a jarring turn of events, the United States is poised to potentially fund hate-filled ideologies through a contentious Ohio state bill. Homeschooling, traditionally an option for religious education, now reveals a dark underbelly that threatens to exploit taxpayer money to perpetuate extremist beliefs.

Katja and Logan Lawrence, notorious for promoting a neo-Nazi agenda through their Dissident Homeschool Network channel on Telegram, stand poised to benefit from thousands in taxpayer funds annually. The disconcerting irony lies in their hateful teachings potentially being subsidized by citizens who abhor their twisted ideologies.

The Ohio state bill, scheduled for implementation in 2025, introduces the Backpack Scholarship Program, ostensibly aimed at providing financial support for homeschooled and non-chartered private school students. However, the lack of oversight and accountability in the bill raises serious concerns about potential misuse of public money.

Katja Lawrence's commitment to a "positive, pro-White education" through the teachings of Adolf Hitler echoes dangerous sentiments that threaten to infiltrate young minds under the guise of homeschooling. The bill's vague language allows funds to be allocated for various educational purposes, exacerbating concerns about the potential misuse of public money.

The lax regulations surrounding homeschooling in Ohio, with minimal requirements for parents and a lack of standardized testing, create a void that could be exploited by those with malicious intentions. Questions about the morality of using taxpayer money to fund ideologies that breed hatred and division loom large, turning the Ohio state bill into a reflection of the values society is willing to tolerate.

It is time for society to stand united against the perversion of neoliberal education, ensuring that children are nurtured in an environment of tolerance, understanding, and unity, rather than one tainted by the poison of extremism. It's going to get much more difficult if Trump is elected. Consider that Christopher Rufo, an ally of Florida Governor Ron DeSantis and Donald Trump, has attacked critical pedagogy, accusing me and others of being Stalinists. I will quote from one of their screeds, at length so you will know exactly what we are up against:

"Appealing directly to figures such as Che Guevara and Vladimir Lenin, McLaren contended that the ultimate end of critical pedagogy was to use the power of identity politics in order to "gain control of the production of meaning" and to usher in a "democratic socialist society" that combined the identity-based "struggle over cultural meanings" with the



traditional Marxist “redistribution of material resources.” For McLaren and the critical pedagogists, this movement of decolonization was already gathering at the margins in the 1990s as the influence of Freire’s theories began to expand in academia and school administration. “Decolonized spaces are forming in the borderlands,” McLaren predicted a quarter century ago. “And these will affect the classrooms of the future.”

That future has already arrived. Public school districts across the country have begun to apply the principles of critical pedagogy in the classroom. The practice follows a recurring pattern: Teachers set an emotional anchor by framing the United States as an oppressive society, separate individual students into the categories of “oppressor” and “oppressed,” and direct the group toward prearranged political conclusions. As the diversity czar and activist teachers at Buffalo Public Schools recently explained, school districts that follow the “pedagogy of liberation” begin “preparing [students] at four years old,” train them to achieve “critical consciousness,” and transform them into “activists for antiracism.”

And just as it was for the revolutionaries in the Third World, the goal for Giroux, McLaren, and the second-generation critical pedagogists is always the same: dismantling the criminal justice system, disrupting the nuclear family, overthrowing the system of capitalism, and, in the words of Freire, turning the schools into “an extraordinary instrument to help build a new society and a new man.”

The critical pedagogists of today have combined that long-standing vision with the latest techniques of the social and behavioral sciences. Freire’s techniques have been adapted, merged, and combined with a range of other educational approaches, including critical social justice, critical ethnic studies, critical whiteness studies, culturally responsive teaching, anti-racist pedagogy, and social-emotional learning. The theoreticians divide the world into identity hierarchies; the teachers engage in the work of decolonization; the students become entries in sprawling databases; the bureaucracies process human data into social change.

“It’s important to recognize that now is the time to brush hard against the grain of teaching until the full range of revolutionary pedagogical options are made available in the public schools of the nation,” says the pedagogist McLaren. “Part of the task is ethical: to make liberation and the abolition of human suffering the goal of the educative enterprise itself. Part of the task is political: to create a democratic socialist society in which democracy will be called upon daily to live up to its promise.”

When Stalin toasted the artists of postrevolutionary Russia as “engineers of the human soul,” he was speaking metaphorically, imagining the day that artists could create new men with scientific precision. That time, the critical pedagogists believe, has now come. The cherished goal of liberation through education, emblazoned in the sky by Guevara and

implanted in the soul by Freire, might finally be within reach. After students are primed emotionally, categorized individually, and mobilized collectively, they can set about doing the work of revolution." Over the last four years, the charter schools across the nation, including those in California, have demonstrated "gradual and consistent" advancement, according to a report by a team of Stanford researchers. The findings reveal that students in almost 25% of charter schools now surpass their counterparts in public schools in reading, and, on average, are closing the gap in math achievement. The study highlights the effectiveness of charter schools in educating working class and minority students and those learning English as a second language. But that could be because they have taken away some of the best students from the public schools.

The history of US education is very tumultuous. In the warp and woof of the colonial era, education unfolded as a coveted privilege rather than an inherent entitlement. Horace Mann, the luminary 19th-century reformist, assumed a paramount role in the orchestration of the public school system. Initially, the landscape of educational institutions was confined to locales where the impetus for establishment emanated from residents or local ecclesiastical entities. Exclusive enclaves of learning tailored to upper-class boys, immersed in biblical and linguistic studies, characterized private schools. The Massachusetts law of 1642 marked the inaugural decree for compulsory education, with communities charged with the establishment of schools funded by Massachusetts, etched its place in history by birthing one of the earliest free public schools in 1645. Simultaneously, Quakers and the Dutch Reformed Church vested a premium on education, contributing to its nuanced evolution across diverse regions. The 17th century witnessed a prevailing preoccupation with Bible reading, particularly among Quakers and Dutch communities. However, it wasn't until 1642 that Massachusetts wielded its legislative arm to enforce compulsory schooling for all children. The New England Primer, hand in hand with the Bible, assumed a paramount role, imprinting reading, spelling, and religious verses through the sacred act of rote memorization. In the 1700s, the ruling class institutions of Yale, Princeton, and Columbia rose from the academic soil. Benjamin Franklin, helped to establish the University of Pennsylvania, another ruling class institution, with a discerning focus on secular higher education. Noah Webster, a linguistic luminary, stirred the linguistic pot, challenging the pervasive influence of the British language. Stalwart leaders such as Thomas Jefferson championed the cause of comprehensive education as the bedrock of a fortified democracy. Yet, amidst these noble aspirations, the specter of resistance to public education lingered, particularly concerning the education of slaves and the marginalized cohort of young girls. The early 1800s found the educational landscape grappling with formidable challenges. Private academies

catered to the privileged, while charity schools endeavored to address the educational lacunae of working class families. The tumultuous waves of the Industrial Revolution beckoned the clarion call for a public school system, a clarion call resoundingly embraced by the working class, who perceived education as the liberating elixir from economic subjugation of the ruling class elite. Advocates propounded the thesis that public education would be the crucible for cultivating a skilled workforce and fostering innovation. In the face of aristocratic opposition who wanted the working-class to remain subjugated, the tendrils of public education gained a tenacious grip. In this epoch, Massachusetts assumed a vanguard role in sculpting the contours of American education. Boston, with its emblematic Boston Latin School, hosted the inauguration of the first secondary school. Meanwhile, Harvard College, as the inaugural institution of higher education, stood as an intellectual beacon. In the mid-1800s, the indomitable Horace Mann embarked on a crusade, spearheading the common school movement and articulating the vision of free, compulsory education financed by the collective coffers of taxation. Mann spearheaded the establishment of statewide public-school systems, laying the bedrock for the nation's educational edifice. As any Marxist could tell you, the shadows of discrimination persisted within common schools, casting an inequitable pall over Irish immigrants, non-English-speaking immigrants, and African Americans. Who would dream that immigrants, today, in 2023, would face similar discrimination under a MAGA controlled Congress. The post-Civil War epoch saw expanded rights for African Americans, a charter that included unfettered access to education. The Freedman's Bureau, a benevolent harbinger, erected schools for black children during this pivotal juncture. Yet, in the aftermath of Reconstruction, the shears of austerity snipped education budgets in the South, particularly impacting black schools for generations. In distant regiond of the country, the latter part of the 1800s witnessed the efflorescence of public schools, despite the acerbic resistance to taxing the populace for the education of select progeny. Numerous cities, resolute in their vision, successfully implemented public school systems. In the nascent settlements of the Western frontier, education was consecrated as the cornerstone for community-building and the siren call for settlers. Government officials, in their sagacity, envisioned public schools as the crucible for civilizing the untamed Wild West, instilling the hallowed tenets of American values in the impressionable minds of pioneer children. Enter the McGuffey readers, of which I have some originals in my library, which were influential books that played an important role in educational history. Widely embraced in the 1800s, these standardized textbooks were not mere conduits for reading, writing, and spelling; they were conduits for propagating religious, patriotic, and moral values that wove the intricate fabric of the American ethos. For eight years I taught in a

building directly beside the McGuffey historic house museum on the campus of Miami University in Oxford, Ohio, United States. Built in 1833, it was the home of author and professor William Holmes McGuffey. To satiate the burgeoning demand, schools in the West emerged hastily, etching their existence in any available crevice. Women, equipped as educators in the refined crucible of the Northeast, embarked on journeys through rough terrain, traversing vast distances to impart knowledge to pioneer children. The indomitable Catharine Beecher, a torchbearer of women's rights, reshaped the narrative, elevating teaching into a revered profession for women. The Progressive Era, emerged as a transformative epoch. Reformers aspired to democratize education, eradicate the blight of child labor, and assimilate immigrant children into American culture. The Quincy Movement, opened up the era of child-centered education. A new breed of administrators, disciples of early evaluation methods, wielded IQ tests which favored the echelons of 'elite' society and perpetuated discrimination against minorities. Despite the cacophony of protests, IQ tests entrenched themselves in the bedrock of the American education system, imprinting their influence on assessments based teaching. such as the SAT. The Cold War era cast its shadow, intensifying criticism about progressive education, and focusing teaching on 'core' subjects. The vestiges of institutional racism persisted. Segregation, an insidious shadow, barred African American children from the hallowed halls of integrated schools. The landmark *Brown v. Board of Education* decision in 1954 unfurled its banner, making school segregation illegal. But the situation of inequality continued, even though, in the 1960s, beneath the stewardship of President Lyndon B. Johnson, legislative milestones occurred, including the Civil Rights Act of 1964, a clarion call addressing school integration, and the War on Poverty, spawning programs like Head Start, which helped bring special programs to working-class children. In 1965, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act allocated federal funds to school districts nestled in impoverished barrios. Simultaneously, the Higher Education Act emerged, a harbinger of grants and low-interest loans to bolster the chances for low-income students to try to get funding for college tuition. Following this was the National Teacher Corps, a bastion of educators poised to bring relief to working class barriers. The Higher Education Act, created an increase in enrollment in colleges. The imperative caveat embedded within this largesse stipulated that schools accepting students tethered to federal grants or loans must obey federal anti-discrimination laws, prompting many institutions to cease discriminatory admission policies and embrace the kaleidoscope of a diverse student body. The institutions simply wanted to get their hands of the money. Chicano and Latin American American students, grappling with the forces of discrimination, voiced their protest against restrictive language policies and the dearth of cultural representation in the curriculum. The late

1960s bore witness to Latinx students issuing their manifestos, demanding the appointment of Latinx teachers, the infusion of Latinx history into courses, and an overall metamorphosis in the landscape of course selection and treatment. There was a lot of activism among Chicano students. Activism, an indomitable force, coursed through the veins of school strikes and protests, etching its indelible mark on the narrative of school districts and unfurling avenues of opportunity for Chicano and Latinx students. The Bilingual Education Act, controversial from its embryonic inception, sought to ameliorate the plight of new immigrants by offering courses taught in Spanish, a gradual transition towards the lingua franca of English. Title IX, the constitutional scion of 1972, emerged as a transformative beacon, a harbinger of gender equality. An amendment to the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, Title IX wielded its sword, forbidding schools from discrimination based on sex. Textbooks, the silent pedagogues of societal norms, were mandated to shed the vestiges of gender stereotypes. In the 1970s, the Education for All Handicapped Children Act, rebaptized as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) in 1990, stood as a sentinel for the cause of disabled students. This legislative imprimatur mandated educational opportunities for the mentally and physically disabled, introducing the practice of "mainstreaming" as a bridge across the chasm of segregation. Controversies, a perennial companion, swirled around the inclusion of severely disabled students. Yet, in the crucible of legislative evolution, the law of 1975 laid the foundational bricks for momentous improvements in the treatment of disabled individuals in the United States. The epochal economic downturns of the 1970s were punctuated by a critical report, the magnum opus titled "A Nation at Risk" in 1983. This report, while debated for its alleged exaggerations, triggered seismic school reforms. A decade unfolded, marked by the lengthening of the school day and year, the elevation of graduation standards, an augmentation of homework, and the enhancement of standardized testing. Despite the decade of implementation, these reforms yielded but marginal improvements. According to data from the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), after a continuous rise since the 1970s, college enrollment began declining in 2010. Immediate college enrollment in high school has slowed in the past 20 years, following a 14-percentage point jump between 1980 and 2000. The U.S. experienced a college enrollment decline during the COVID-19 pandemic. Total college enrollment (graduate and undergraduate) fell 7% from spring 2019 to spring 2023. Undergraduate enrollment decreased by 8.9% during that same period. Enrollment at community colleges fell 19.5%. Graduate enrollment, however, has increased by 2.6%. I haven't taught in teacher education for about 15 years so I hope my answers to your previous questions have been adequate. For the past 15 years I have been teaching philosophy of education, Marxist humanism, liberation theology and I have

also been working all along in the field of political economy, and focusing on political events and post-digital fascism through a critical pedagogy lens. I am worried that digital technology has created the conditions of possibility for a permanent state of fascism worldwide through the way social media engages mostly young people. To answer your question, I don't think critical pedagogy by itself has affected significant change, except perhaps in certain states, such as California. In many of the southern states of the country you couldn't survive long teaching critical pedagogy, since parents have the right to sue you; and the revolutionary critical pedagogy that I have developed over the years which advocates for a socialist alternative to our current social universe of value production, would likely get you fired immediately. I think Ethnic Studies has a lot of critical pedagogy built into it, and perhaps through Ethnic Studies we can see a powerful movement taking place. Teachers read about critical pedagogy and many teachers claim to be teaching using Freirean approaches. But it hasn't in any big way become a unified movement. At Chapman, where I taught for 10 years, there was a Paulo Freire Democratic Project where we held conferences, gave out awards, gave seminars, and kept the work of Paulo Freire alive. That was why I came to Chapman, to serve as Director of that Project. But the university is as neoliberal as you could get. We were just a small group in a ruling class university. I found it a challenge. There are lots of young scholars who want to go beyond the work of old-timers like myself, in different universities around the country; they want to carve their own niche in the field and it is too early to see what will become of them. But I am in contact with a younger generation of educators that is doing excellent work and they are very good organizers. But they seem outnumbered by neo-Nazi and fascist youth organizations in their bullet proof vests and AR-15s. That is the dilemma here in the US, with so many guns, so many mass killings occurring all the time. I don't know how long this new generation of radical educators will be able to fight the assaults of right-wing politicians, many of whom are just completely crazy, who actually believe the mad QAnon conspiracy theories, and believe Democrats are drinking the blood of children each night, sequestered in their hideouts where they participate in Satanic rituals and conspire with Jewish billionaires who are planting microchips in Covid vaccines in order to control the minds of our youth, and encourage them to change their genders. If Trump gets elected more of these crackpots will be elected. My advice to my third generation Freireans and young comrades to come to California where the politics veers center-left. Right now I am involved in protesting the war in Ukraine and the Israel-Hamas war. I praxis and its importance in critical pedagogy, part 7 of

**10- What are the differences between the Critical Pedagogy of the 60's and the current ones, in times of advancing technocapitalism, the brutal concentration of income, the impact of changes on subjectivities, and the current reality? How does it impact on education?**

Among teachers, it is especially important to investigate the importance of praxis. As an activist and intellectual, Paulo Freire embraces the concept of praxis, encapsulating the dialectical interplay between consciousness and the world. Consciousness, a central element of praxis, is inseparable from it and is grounded, as Marx emphasized, in the material conditions of one's life—specifically, the social and economic milieu in which one exists. The discourse on the "production of consciousness," extensively explored in Marx and Engels's *The German Ideology*, transcends idealism, focusing on the material underpinnings of power in contrast to the idealistic tendencies of the Young Hegelians. Understanding the concept of the philosophy of praxis in critical pedagogy becomes paramount. But it is not an easy concept if you want to delve into a granular analysis of Marx, Hegel, Gramsci, Freire, and the Frankfurt School. In his influential work "The Philosophy of Praxis: Marx, Lukács, and the Frankfurt School," Andrew Feenberg adeptly navigates the intricate philosophical complexities inherent in discussions surrounding the philosophy of praxis. His work is helpful in navigating the complexities of this idea. By provocatively aligning Marx's assertion that "Philosophy can only be realized by the abolition of the proletariat" with Adorno's reflection that "Philosophy...lives on because the moment to realize it was missed," Feenberg elucidates the profound connection between philosophy and revolutionary praxis. The transformative potential of critical pedagogy, which I connect to Marx's notion of revolutionary praxis, and its further development in the works of Lukács and the Frankfurt School, finds expression in socialist endeavors, such as the Bolivarian experience in Venezuela under Hugo Chavez. Meeting Marta Harnecker and Michael Lebowitz in Venezuela provided insights into the philosophy of praxis, emphasizing the need for profound democracy from below, inclusive decision-making, and the central placement of human beings in the production and distribution processes. Lebowitz argues that limiting ownership to decision-makers perpetuates differential access to means of production, fostering social distortions. The displacement of capital by emphasizing human development and the "real wealth" of human beings becomes paramount in articulating socialist ideals. Lebowitz stresses as fundamental to this thought, the intricate relationship between human development and self-activity, encapsulating simultaneous change in circumstances and human agency. The central understanding conveyed here is that the "Production of People" is an inherently self-generative process. The Bolivarian Republic, in its challenge to capitalism, embarked

on an internal transformation by establishing communal power and fostering active popular involvement. This approach gave rise to the idea that revolution involves shaping an organic society or instituting a new social metabolic order. Hugo Chávez, drawing upon the analyses of Marx and Mészáros, and influenced by Lebowitz, introduced the concept of the "elementary triangle of socialism," encompassing (1) social ownership, (2) social production organized by workers, and (3) the fulfillment of communal needs. At the core of this ideology lies a commitment to substantive equality, aiming to eradicate various forms of inequality, including those related to race, gender, imperialism, and other oppressive structures. This quest for equality serves as the fundamental basis for dismantling a society characterized by disparities. Gramsci's utilization of terms like "philosophy of praxis" and "absolute historicism" can be traced in Hegelian Marxism and is evident in the works of Marx, Lukács, Korsch, Bloch, and the Frankfurt School. Peter Mayo's work is important in grasping the Gramscian link in critical pedagogy. Feenberg's work explores the notion of praxis across a wide spectrum of social theorists, including Lukács and Marcuse. For Feenberg, the "philosophy of praxis" refers to practical challenges manifested as cultural conflicts. These conflicts, manifested in the antinomies of subject/object and fact/value, necessitate social revolution to bring about a resolution, challenging traditional philosophy's treatment of them as mere abstract, theoretical antinomies. The philosophy of praxis posits that fundamental philosophical issues are, essentially, social contradictions presented in abstract form. Drawing from Lukács, we can describe this philosophy as cultural theory, interpreting antinomies as sublimated expressions of social contradictions. Aligned with Marx's assertion that "The philosophers have only interpreted the world; the point is to change it," the philosophy of praxis envisions societal transformation across nature and society, resolving the inherent contradictions. Lukács introduces the concept of "reification" as the reduction of human relations to relations between things which becomes a model for analyzing the limitations of rationality, termed "formalism." Reification is essentially a cultural phenomenon in capitalism that becomes a model for analyzing rationality's limitations. It is a good term to use with students when examining the conceptual roots of critical pedagogy. Lukács argues that metacritical desublimation in Marxism can resolve antinomies by elevating the proletariat, the "subject-object," above its reified condition through revolution. However, Feenberg questions the plausibility of this "metacritical" argument, highlighting its validity only under specific historical conditions. Marx's dismissal of modern science as alienated, promising a new science uniting humanity and nature, confronts the challenge of reconciling the antinomy of subject/object when both are considered natural beings. Feenberg's analysis of the philosophy of praxis, rooted in the works of Freire, Gramsci,



Marx, Lukács, and the Frankfurt School, offers a stimulating and probing guide to engaging the concept of praxis and to understanding the importance of developing a critical and dialectical perspective related to existing forms of societal rationalization under capitalism, including the development of a robust and rational critique of modernity. While proposing alternatives based on new foundations. The philosophy of praxis remains especially relevant in critical pedagogy, particularly in addressing the consequences of societal rationalization and offering pathways toward more emancipatory modes of experience and paths of socialist change. I believe that the US missed its opportunity when the socialist, Bernie Sanders, sought the party's presidential nomination in 2016 and 2020, coming second in both campaigns. With such an emphasis on Christian nationalism (which I consider a form of fascism), I believe we need a theological critique of the MAGA movement.

I haven't taught in teacher education for about 15 years so I hope my answers to your previous questions have been adequate. For the past 15 years I have been teaching philosophy of education, Marxist humanism, liberation theology and I have also been working all along in the field of political economy, and focusing on political events and post-digital fascism through a critical pedagogy lens. I am worried that digital technology has created the conditions of possibility for a permanent state of fascism worldwide through the way social media engages mostly young people. In many of the southern states of the country you couldn't survive long teaching critical pedagogy, and certainly not the revolutionary critical pedagogy that I have developed over the years which advocates for a socialist alternative to our current social universe of value production. I think Ethnic Studies has a lot of critical pedagogy built into it, and perhaps through Ethnic Studies we can see a powerful movement taking place. Teachers read about critical pedagogy and many teachers claim to be teaching using Freirean approaches. But it hasn't in any big way become a movement. At Chapman, where I taught for 10 years, there was a Paulo Freire Democratic Project where we held conferences, gave out awards, gave seminars, and kept the work of Paulo Freire alive. That was why I came to Chapman, to serve as Director of that Project. But the university itself was as neoliberal as you could get. We were just a small group. There are lots of young people who want to go beyond the work of old-timers like myself, who want to carve their niche in the field and it is too early to see what will become of them. I don't know how long they will last, especially if Trump gets elected.

Right now I am very involved in the war in Ukraine. I support Ukraine, and am very disappointed at those ultra-left groups in the U.S. who are against supporting Ukraine

simply because Ukraine is supported by the U.S, whom they consider the most dangerous imperialist hegemon.

I have written numerous essays about this. I do not support U.S. imperialism and I do not support Russian imperialism. Yes, it is an imperialist state capitalist regime. I do not support Zelensky's neoliberal/oligarchic policies, and I do not support Biden. But I support the people of Ukraine struggling for their sovereignty. I worked with Ukrainian philosophers for a number of years. If your readers are interested, they can check the website PesaAgora where I have written dozens of articles about world events and issues pertinent to our survival as a species.

The pervasive influence of post-digital fascism on our democratic foundations is deeply troubling, as the intricate socio-technical fabric of social media becomes a breeding ground for the normalization of once-unacceptable attitudes. The erosion of trust in the digital realm, coupled with the manipulation of emotions and information, creates an environment where toxic ideologies thrive, threatening the very core of our democratic principles. The insidious tactics employed, reminiscent of historical precedents such as the scapegoating that fueled the rise of the Nazi Party in the 1930s, underscore the urgency of addressing the looming threat. In this post-digital era, where the line between digital and real life blurs into each other, the growth of computing power and the ubiquity of internet-enabled devices are contributing to the naturalization of pervasive computing processes, making digitality inseparable from everyday life. The emergence of digital fascism, rebranded by populist leaders under the rubric of anti-communism, exploits social media to disseminate toxic ideologies that attack leftist organizations and groups such as Black Lives Matter. Far-right movements, fueled by social media's tools for global message dissemination, pose a significant challenge to democratic ideals. The term 'populism' encapsulates the moralistic imagination of politics, creating a dichotomy between a morally pure people and corrupt elites. The fluid and ambivalent variant of digital fascism thrives in the absence of a centralized political center, utilizing social media's architecture to spread hate, outrageous conspiracies, and racialized fear. The internet, once seen as a tool for global connectivity and information dissemination, becomes a battleground for the manipulation of narratives and the spread of divisive ideologies. The impact of storytelling, gaslighting, and metric manipulation of the masses through social media creates an echo chamber of fear, post-truth, and binary logic. The term 'palingenetic ultranationalism' champions the perceived endangered community seeking rebirth through extraordinary means, paving the way for extreme political measures and justifying exclusionary actions. Palingenetic ultranationalism, as

conceptualized by political theorist Roger Griffin, serves as the defining characteristic of "authentic fascism." Coined by Griffin in his 1991 work, "The Nature of Fascism," this term encapsulates a pivotal concept—that fascism can be delineated by what Griffin identifies as the fundamental myth at its core. This myth revolves around the imperative for a preliminary counter-revolution, paving the way for a subsequent "national rebirth" known as palingenesis. Griffin contends that the fusion of palingenesis and ultranationalism sets fascism apart from para-fascism and other authoritarian, nationalist doctrines. According to his framework, this amalgamation represents the indispensable "fascist minimum" without which true fascism cannot be recognized. Griffin characterizes fascism as a political ideology grounded in the "perverse mythic logic" of destruction, wherein adherents anticipate a subsequent political renewal following the envisioned destruction. Understanding and countering digital fascism require an analysis of emergent phenomena through the actions of its followers, urging a focus on the structures that drive fascist dynamics. Critical educators are called to find ways to dismantle the fascist ecosystem and transform the internet's role in facilitating digital fascism. What is driving fascism in the US is the myth known as the Great Replacement. The "great replacement" theory, in simple terms, suggests that immigration policies, particularly those impacting non-white immigrants, are part of a strategy to weaken or "replace" the political influence and culture of white populations in Western countries. We need to fight against this form of digital fascism which is tied to white supremacist groups, many of which are arming themselves and attacking non-white immigrants.

This includes holding social media providers accountable for content shared on their platforms, and challenging prevailing norms of internet freedom in the name of preventing the spread of digital terror. The imperative to safeguard the public domain forces us to confront the challenges posed by digital manipulators and advocates preaching in the tongues of digitalization. It prompts a reevaluation of fundamental tenets of free speech and expression, and which are challenging our identity as a liberal democracy. For those advocating a socialist alternative, the threat of post-digital fascism jeopardizes the essence of freedom. The use of information technologies by the transnational capitalist class has led to a pervasive surveillance apparatus, enabling military dominance and necessitating a revolutionary anti-fascist initiative. We strive to create a social universe divorced from value production and commodified wealth, while fostering communal interconnectedness while at the same time rejecting political totalitarianism. The troubling weaponization of technology into an ideological instrument of death demands strategies to counteract soft power fascism, preventing the endless quest for new targets of animosity through innovative forms of manipulation and gaslighting. In the digital age, where we unwittingly

relinquish our power, breaking free from the digital echo chamber becomes crucial. The erosion of trust in social media platforms poses a clandestine threat to the political health that defines our built environment, and concerted efforts are needed to reclaim control over our digital existence and protect the infrastructure for democracy. Owing to the intricate socio-technical fabric of social media, the normalization of once-unacceptable attitudes and expressions toward teachers can transpire through strategies akin to those deployed to foster anti-immigrant bias on the Mexico-United States border. These tactics involve generating ambient forms of anti-teacher bias through the sheer ubiquity of stories accumulated and cross-referenced on social media, fostering in-group victimization and out-group stereotypes.

Mike Pompeo, the former US Secretary of State under Donald Trump attributed the greatest threat to the United States to teachers and their unions, criticizing the content they teach as "filth" and lamenting their alleged shortcomings in math, reading, and writing. His attack on teachers coincides with a broader conservative campaign against inclusive curricula and a more extensive assault on public school students and staff.

Pompeo's critique aligns with a current wave of right-wing censorship efforts and attacks on public education. A recent analysis by PEN America revealed that, since July 2021, 138 school districts in 32 states have banned over 1,600 titles from classrooms and libraries. The majority of these banned books address LGBTQ+ themes, racism, sexual content, or activism. Additionally, Republican lawmakers in 42 states have introduced over 190 bills since January 2021, seeking to restrict discussions on gender, racial inequality, and other topics among educators and students. Some proposals include establishing "tip lines" for parents to report and discipline teachers. This wave of conservative measures has resulted in the enactment of nearly two dozen educational gag orders across more than a dozen states. Legislative gag orders refer to legislative efforts to control the way race, gender and sexuality are taught and they ban certain programs, policies and practices. Over the past few years, hundreds of bills aiming to suppress teaching about race in American history have been introduced in state and local governments. In April 2022, Governor Ron DeSantis of Florida endorsed the Individual Freedom Act, colloquially known as the "Stop WOKE Act," aimed at regulating how businesses and educational institutions address issues of race and gender. In response to this legislation and the prevailing political atmosphere, the sociology department at the University of Central Florida chose to cancel all courses related to race. Similarly, Florida Gulf Coast University decided to alter the name of its Center for Critical Race and Ethnic Studies, removing the term "critical." Meanwhile, at Florida State University, an instructor actively avoided student-generated questions concerning White privilege in class discussions.

In May 2021, a comparable state law in Oklahoma prompted administrators at Oklahoma City Community College to cancel a sociology class focusing on race and ethnicity. In Idaho, a law prohibiting abortion that took effect in August 2022 led the University of Idaho to issue guidelines restricting campus discussions on abortion and contraception. In South Dakota, an executive order in April 2022, forbidding the promotion of “divisive concepts” in K–12 educational content, compelled the state Department of Education to pressure public and private colleges, including tribal colleges, to no longer mandate that the South Dakota Indian studies course cultivate a "fundamental awareness" of "race and gender bias, stereotyping, assumptions, etc." Post-digital fascism merely amplifies these attacks on social justice educators or critical educators. Now each state is different but nearly half of the states have mounted similar attacks on the teaching of race from a critical standpoint claiming such teaching is "divisive"--that it is dividing Americans, turning them on each other. The real reason is that its autocrats want to shut down social justice education, and silence social justice teachers because some white students complain of discomfort in such classrooms, and white America doesn't want to come face-to-face with its complicity in the genocide of the First Nation peoples, it doesn't want to face the murder of Black people and the disgraceful history of racism throughout its history. It is because they believe in a natural social hierarchy with whites commanding the sacred heights. The climate for teaching critical pedagogy has never been worse. Perhaps in the 1950s it was worse. Our fascist government officials seek more centralized autocracy, militarism, forcible suppression of opposition, subordination of individual interests for the perceived good of the country. So clearly this country has moved backwards. And the hatred for teachers who teach critical pedagogy is at an all-time high. But we cannot back down. We cannot lose our courage to fight onwards. Retreating from the struggle is not an option. We must continue the struggle. But we are encountering a faceless enemy in digital fascism. It works by massaging our subconscious. The ideological legerdemain practiced by these craftsmen of algorithmic hate is skillful and mostly undetected. They manipulate emotions and foster surplus enjoyment, selectively exclude information, cluster social media content and groups algorithmically, and reshape mainstream news stories with sensationalist commentary that is designed to intensify xenophobia. Leveraging the commercial architecture of social media, these methods create imaginary others so reprehensible that social justice educators become legitimate targets of censure and violence. The emergence of the most toxic forms of digital fascism is a looming threat, necessitating swift action to counteract its development. The historical precedent of scapegoating, instrumental in building the Nazi Party in 1930s Germany, underscores the urgency. Notably, the contemporary landscape is fraught with social media's affordances, capable of devastating

individuals, groups, and even entire nations. To recount, the term 'post-digital,' borrowed from Maik Fielitz, delineates the blurred line between digital and real life. This condition, a consequence of the digital revolution, is characterized by the naturalization of pervasive computing processes, rendering digitality inseparable from everyday life. The growth in computing power, internet-enabled mobile devices, and the low barriers to internet culture contribute to this naturalization. The 'fluid and ambivalent variant of digital fascism' highlighted by Fielitz and Marcks, reveals a networked mass akin to digitized proletariats, holding the potential means to dismantle the digital foundations of fascism. The architecture of digitized "organizing without organizations" and social media platforms facilitates the relentless spread of hate, conspiracies, and racialized fear. Undoubtedly, the subtle influences of fascism are insinuating themselves into our structural consciousness, facilitated by a diverse range of digital manifestations warned of by Fielitz and Marcks. These malevolent forces now flourish within the internet's metaverse, demanding a robust defense against their grotesque post-digital forms and hate-fueled embodiments that have separated us from our proactive selves capable of independent decision-making. We find ourselves vulnerable to digital manipulators aggressively penetrating our collective unconscious, accompanied by advocates preaching the languages of digitalization. This compels us to protect the public domain, even if it means challenging some fundamental tenets of free speech and expression integral to our identity as a liberal democracy. For those advocating a socialist alternative to market-driven democracy, the imminent threat of post-digital fascism jeopardizes the very essence of freedom. Information technologies, harnessed by capital for cross-border mobility, have given rise to a pervasive surveillance apparatus of the national security state, granting the United States unparalleled military dominance. This necessitates the pursuit of a revolutionary anti-fascist initiative aimed at reshaping the world into one defined by unbridled mutual support and inherent selflessness. It envisions a social fabric able to produce humanizing social relations, respecting differences, and rejecting political totalitarianism, religious authoritarianism, social paternalism, familial patriarchy, ecocide and epistemicide in our interactions with nature and other communities. It is a vision where weapons no longer dictate our fate, where self-healing allows us to perceive others with clarity and compassion, immersed in the potentialities of a socialist future. Witnessing technology wielded in service to high-tech imperialism and as a tool to reshape global geopolitics demands more than an understanding of how the world's informational channels are commandeered by superpowers. It requires a concerted effort to break free from the digital echo chamber that transforms our lives into an endless quest for new targets of animosity through innovative forms of manipulation and gaslighting. In the

digital age, we have unwittingly relinquished our own power, allowing the internet to infiltrate the very fabric of our daily existence. In the mundane activities of our daily digital life, we find ourselves entangled in a complex web of online interactions that transcend geographic boundaries. Eva Frederick's (2019) exploration into the dark recesses of the internet reveals a chilling reality – online hate, treated as a living, evolving organism, infects our digital landscape. Physicist and complexity researcher Neil Johnson, leading a team at George Washington University, delves into the mathematical intricacies of this malevolent ecosystem, drawing connections between social platforms like Facebook and V Kontakte. The significance lies in the ability of users to form groups with like-minded individuals, creating echo chambers that amplify their shared views. The study unveils the intricate web of online hate ecosystems, akin to a continuous spectrum where various forms of hostility seamlessly bleed into one another. Researchers seek to comprehend how online platforms serve as bridges that unify haters across nations and cultures. The term 'superconnected flytrap' aptly captures the essence of this broad, ever-changing online hate community. A harrowing example emerges in the aftermath of the Parkland High School shooting in 2018, where media scrutiny on the shooter's connection to the Ku Klux Klan led to a spike in KKK Facebook groups linking to hate groups on other platforms. Neil Johnson describes this phenomenon as a 'decentralized KKK ideological organism,' illustrating how hate highways can effortlessly unite people across the globe with a shared brand of hatred. Eva Frederick paints a vivid picture of the KKK as an 'ideological organism' capable of adapting and thriving even when banned from one platform. The researchers' recommendation to banishing particularly active and hateful groups proves ineffective, as these groups merely find new havens, such as VK in the case of Facebook's crackdown on KKK groups. The proposed alternative strategies, including quietly removing small groups, random banning of users, and even the controversial introduction of anti-hate groups and fake users, underscore the complexity of combating this online scourge. In this digital era, we stand at the precipice of a profound realization – the power we wield in the virtual realm comes with unforeseen consequences. As our daily lives intertwine with the digital world, we must confront the formidable challenge of preserving our protagonistic agency in the face of a burgeoning online hate ecosystem that threatens the very foundations of education when it comes to creating the conditions of possibility for a revolutionary critical pedagogy, one that is greatly needed if we are to provide a counter hegemonic and decolonial alternative--a counterforce, a counter public sphere--that will help students decode and challenge those media platforms that are nothing more than educational coffins.

I would like to say more about supporting Ukraine. Currently elements of the Republican far-right, who dominate Congress, have shown their support for Hungary and its leader, Viktor Orbán. They praise his illiberal, authoritarian rule. They also have shown support for Putin's anti-LGBTQ stance, sparking some Christians to join the Russian Orthodox Church led by the odious war monger and homophobe, Patriarch Kirill. Conservative Americans are drawn to Putin's embrace of Traditionalism but it is unclear if they fully appreciate Traditionalism's occult roots. Putin's global politics is influenced by the visions of occultist mystics like Evola through his mentor, Alexander Dugin. As Tara Isabella Burton has noted, Alexander Dugin, known as "Putin's brain", or "Putin's Rasputin", has unabashedly aligned himself with a strain of overtly occult, reactionary Traditionalism. Traditionalism, while often inaccurately tracing its roots to a bygone era, can be loosely traced back to a network of reactionary artists and writers in and around Paris during the late 19th century. Comprising dandies, decadents, reactionary Catholics, surrealist Satanists, destitute aristocrats, and self-proclaimed title-holders, this circle defined itself through a deliberate alienation from and rejection of what it perceived as the pitfalls of liberal modernity, according to Burton. These included spiritual desiccation and the abandonment of hierarchical structures, often grounded in race and gender, which supposedly shaped the world order of a partially imagined, mythical past. Central to this circle was a fervent enthusiasm for the occult, blending genuine interest in magical arts with an avant-garde desire to shock conventional sensibilities. According to this group, a return to an older world—a world characterized by honor, order, authority, and an innate understanding of natural hierarchies—was the remedy the world needed. Influenced by key figures such as René Guénon and Julius Evola, foundational Traditionalists wove these intellectual currents into a somewhat cohesive narrative. They contended that the world had once been hierarchical and pure, but now existed in the "Kali Yuga" (loosely borrowed from Hinduism), an era of chaos and mediocrity. The natural order, where individuals acknowledged and respected their social functions, had been upended by the false promises of democracy. Guénon lamented, "Nobody any longer occupies the place that he should." Yet, a hidden truth, accessible to occult initiates and passed down to spiritually enlightened aristocrats capable of transcending their time, held the potential for a revival of past glory. Dugin openly embraces these Traditionalist leanings, having matured intellectually within the Yuzhinsky circle, a mix of Guénon enthusiasts, neo-Nazis, punks, and Satanists. One of his early publications was a Russian translation of Evola's "Pagan Imperialism." He criticizes political correctness and liberalism as heralds of the Kali Yuga and extols the Eurasian order as a "spiritual order that penetrates all levels of reality." For Dugin and other Traditionalists, the culture war is a cosmic battlefield—an ideological



jihad against a liberal order explicitly branded as demonic, according to Burton. Dugin's influence, along with that of Traditionalists, extends beyond Russia. In Hungary, far-right leader Gábor Vona consults with a Traditionalist spiritual adviser, Tibor Baranyi, and contributes to a publication of Evola's "Handbook for Right-Wing Youth." Greece's Golden Dawn party includes Evola on its reading list, and Traditionalism has underpinned far-right movements in the United States. Nina Kouprianova, the former wife of white nationalist Richard Spencer, has translated Dugin's work into English. Additionally, as documented by scholar Benjamin Teitelbaum in his 2020 book "War for Eternity," Stephen K. Bannon, a sometime adviser to Donald Trump, has frequently hinted at his interest in Traditionalist ideas. However, since at least the 19th century, reactionary movements have incorporated a potent spiritual element, seeking to re-enchant what they perceive as a detached modernity through the promise of esoteric wisdom and cleansing upheaval—an apocalyptic vision heralding a return to a more pristine state of existence. It is unclear whether Trump's vision has been influenced by Evola's writings. There are geopolitical reasons why I support Ukraine. As Dan La Botz and others have argued, the turbulent era of the mid-1920s marked the ominous rise of Joseph Stalin, orchestrating a counterrevolution that ultimately established dictatorial rule by 1929. Stalin's regime, characterized by harsh purges and the collectivization of agriculture, unfolded as a somber narrative of oppression and exploitation. The once-revered internationalism of the Russian Revolution waned with the ascent of the new Communist ruling class, replaced by a singular allegiance to the Soviet Union and its expansionist endeavors. Despite Stalin's alignment with Hitler in 1939 and subsequent actions straining Communist Party solidarity, unwavering support persisted in various forms. The post-World War II period saw the Soviet Union's Red Army 'liberating' Eastern European nations while simultaneously subjecting them to Soviet dominance, expanding the domain of the 'workers' homeland.' The Soviet Union and its Communist allies transformed into a perceived anti-capitalist, anti-imperialist alternative to capitalism. But the reality was that the Soviet Union was state capitalist (see the work of Raya Dunayevskaya). The original principles of international working-class solidarity yielded to a steadfast, cult-like loyalty to the Communist camp. Even as Stalin's atrocities and the USSR's imperialistic tendencies became apparent, supporters clung to their allegiance, giving rise to the first iteration of 'campism'. This ideological transformation transcended objections and realities, fostering a narrative where unwavering loyalty to the state eclipsed critique, and the Communist camp emerged as a bulwark against capitalism, despite significant internal contradictions. Maoism and Third Worldism were subsequent campist iterations providing an alternative to Western neoliberal capitalism. In the late 20th century, the foundations of contemporary

campism took root with the collapse of the Soviet Union. Confronted with the demise of the Soviet Communist camp, some turned to Third Worldist theory as an alternative, advocating support for the Global South in a struggle depicted as oppressed nations of color against the imperialistic powers of the wealthier white Global North. Campists advocated for a stark dichotomy, urging alignment with governments governing the proletarian-peasant world and emphasizing race and nationality. White capitalist powers, considered inherently imperialist, were contrasted with nations of color, seen as inherently anti-imperialist. This oversimplified perspective ignored internal class divisions. Rooted in Maoist or Third Worldist ideologies, many campists prioritized opposition to imperialism above all else. La Botz notes the problem lies in downplaying or entirely dismissing concerns about the political, economic, and social systems of so-called anti-imperialist nations, refusing to scrutinize their authoritarianism or acknowledge their asymmetrical relations of power and exploitation—in essence, their exploitation of workers. This campist logic, heavily influenced by Maoist principles, deemed US imperialism as the primary contradiction, overshadowing all other contradictions and leading to truncated discussions of democracy, economic reforms, or social justice within the so-called anti-imperialist nations. Critically, as La Botz points out, campists defended regimes like China, Russia, Syria, and Iran, overlooking the authoritarianism and capitalist structures within those regimes. The oversimplified narrative led to the misguided belief that any criticism of these nations aligned with US imperialism, neglecting the complexity of international relations to imperialism. I agree with La Botz and others who advocate for a non-binary outlook, a more nuanced approach to the withering of the state, grounded in a Marxist humanism. Recognizing that opposing one form of imperialism doesn't necessitate supporting another, he emphasizes that the complexities of conflicts in Syria and Nicaragua highlight how different forces with distinct motivations may be lumped together under an egregiously misguided anti-imperialist banner. Genuine anti-imperialism is rooted in internationalism, supporting movements for democracy, workers' rights, and social justice globally. It requires acknowledging the need to critique oppressive regimes within the broader struggle against imperialism, fostering a genuine commitment to liberation and solidarity. True anti-imperialism should begin with internationalism. This is why support for Ukraine has an urgency and importance. We need to be supporting movements of working people worldwide, and strengthening democratic social movements, labor movements, and socialist movements in various countries. The goal is to bring these movements together in one international movement for liberation. No, of course I do not support Zelensky's neoliberal, oligarchic government. Nor do I support U.S. imperialism. But I also do not support Russian imperialism, nor its authoritarian regime. I

support Ukraine's working people, especially those who are struggling for a socialist future as a sovereign nation. As a socialist internationalist, this is crucial. I see the return of Trump as the greatest danger to world peace. He is already wreaking havoc on the US political system. In recent speeches he has declared: "[w]e will demolish the Deep State, we will expel the warmongers from our government, we will drive out the globalists, we will cast out the Communists, Marxists, and Fascists, we will throw off the sick political class that hates our Country, we will rout the Fake News Media, we will evict Joe Biden from the White House, and we will FINISH THE JOB ONCE AND FOR ALL!" The former president has called his political opponents "vermin" and said immigration is "poisoning the blood" of the U.S., echoing the language of Hitler. Trump has also said; "The internal threat surpasses the external dangers in terms of its severity, peril, and malevolence. Our primary concern lies within our borders." As if he believed what others have said about him—that he is the Chosen One of God, he declared in a messianic tone: "I am your warrior, I am your justice." "For those who have been wronged and betrayed ... I am your retribution." When speaking about fascism, it's a good idea to remind yourself of an observation made by Federico Finchelstein about past fascist leaders: a classic technique of fascists is that they always deny what they are and ascribe their own features and totalitarian politics to their enemies. Trump likes to denounce fascists as a way of deflecting from his plans to humiliate and destroy his political enemies utterly. During an Independence Day event at the Mount Rushmore National Memorial in South Dakota a few years ago, Trump railed against the specter of a far-left fascism: 'In our schools, our newsrooms, even our corporate boardrooms, there is a new far-left fascism that demands absolute allegiance. If you do not speak its language, perform its rituals, recite its mantras and follow its commandments, then you will be censored, banished, blacklisted, persecuted and punished. It's not going to happen to us.' Here, Trump brings into stunning relief the 'contradiction between his words denouncing tyrannical invisible forces and his actual dictatorial leanings.' Finchelstein could not be more accurate when he writes that 'these are times of confusion when the racist right depicts itself as democratic while falsely presenting fascism as an ideology of the left.'

Yes, the political scene in the US is confusing, with some on the far-right claiming fascism is a far left doctrine while assuming the mantle of a fascist which the far-right interprets as simply an authoritarian populism which is needed to replace democracy, which they consider a weak-kneed and indecisive form of governing, overpopulated with sacerdotal creeds of liberal 'political correctness' which they now call "woke" ideology.

The U.S. is facing a crisis it has never faced before. Trump's evangelical base is massive. Their members surround him with constant praise and engage with him in ritual prayers. They want to turn the U.S. into an exclusive Christian nation. Additionally, they want to exclude any other faith-based organizations. To them, Trump is a messiah. As such, they seek to put democracy in chains, because they want to rule, to imprison and to punish, and even execute those who they believe to be against their very fundamentalist and in my estimation--warped--reading of the Christian scriptures. This group, consisting of millions of fanatics, can't wait to descend violently and with righteous zeal upon those whom they believe to be sinners and in league with the devil, It is the same kind of energy as that which fueled the mass killings of black people prior to Reconstruction and even after. These believers claim that God ordained America to be a Christian nation, and that the Christian nation is under attack by internal, satanic enemies (including the so-called socialists and communists), and that Christian patriots must wage "spiritual warfare" against these demonic forces in order to restore the America that God intended. Many of them also believe that God anointed Trump to save America at this crucial time in its history. They also believe in QAnon conspiracy theories—people are living in made-up myths in this country, it's a willing suspension of disbelief that takes them out of the domain of the banal and the ordinary, so they can feel they are living in a Hollywood movie—and the Democrats are playing the role of Satanic cannibals who torture and consume children.

Most Catholics believe that Christ will return at some distant time in the distant and unknowable future and remove those who are saved into some celestial dimension known as Paradise. Justice will be realized in the world after death. I follow Jose Porfirio Miranda that the eschaton--what Christians call the Last Judgment--is now, and that this reality obliges all of us—including the far-right who continually postpone the eschaton, delaying it's injunction to create justice in the here and now on earth—to recognize that justice must be fought for here on earth right now, and differentiating wealth, that is, wealth directed at creating surplus value, at profit-making for the rich, must be transformed in the interest of economic justice. And right now, not in some time in the unknowable future. Hence, the need to challenge the value augmentation of predatory capitalism, which exploits the labor-power of the worker. And, hence, the need to transform the world in the interests of those who toil and suffer under the asymmetrical relationships of power and white privilege embedded in capitalist social relations. Those who attack Marxists would do well to understand some of Marx's basic principles: that capital grounds all social mediation as a form of value and that the substance of labor itself must be interrogated because doing so brings us closer to understanding the nature of capital's social universe

out of which our subjectivities are created. Because the logic of capitalist work has invaded all forms of human sociability, society can be considered to be a totality of different types of labor. We have a political responsibility to our fellow human beings to ensure they are not exploited by the process of surplus value extraction; that they are not exploited insofar as they are forced to sell their labor power to capitalists for less than the full value of the commodities they produce with their labor. This is our responsibility as part of building the Kingdom of God right now, right here on earth, and not in some distant time in the future, after Jesus returns like a thief in the night. Porfirio believes Jesus has already returned as the Holy Spirit. The time to rebuild the work in the interests of justice is right now.

The United States finds itself at a critical juncture, grappling with a crisis of unprecedented proportions. To repeat: The formidable evangelical base rallying around Trump poses a looming threat, enveloping him in a ritualistic fervor of prayers and exultation. Their vision is unsettling—they aspire to transform the nation into an exclusive Christian enclave, vehemently excluding any divergent faith-based organizations.

To them, Trump is not just a political figure; he is a messiah. Their agenda seeks to shackle democracy, aiming to rule with an iron fist, imprison dissenters, and even execute those they deem contrary to their fundamentalist interpretation of Christian scriptures. This zealous collective, numbering in the millions, eagerly anticipates descending violently upon perceived sinners with a self-righteous zeal reminiscent of historical atrocities against black communities.

These believers ardently assert that God has ordained America as a Christian nation, a nation under siege from internal, satanic enemies, including alleged socialists and communists. In their worldview, Christian patriots are duty-bound to wage "spiritual warfare" against these demonic forces in order to restore to the America they believe God intended. The narrative extends to QAnon conspiracy theories, where fantastical tales paint Democrats as Satanic cannibals engaged in heinous acts against children. This distorted perception creates a fictional realm where reality is suspended, akin to living in a Hollywood movie.

In order to address the asymmetrical power dynamics and white privilege ingrained in capitalist social relations, it becomes imperative to transform the world in the interest of those who bear the brunt of labor exploitation.

Capitalist logic has permeated all facets of human sociability, rendering society a totality of various labor forms. We, as Marxists, and as responsible citizens, and members of the

Kingdom of God, have a political duty to prevent our fellow human beings from falling prey to exploitation through surplus value extraction. This responsibility compels us to ensure that individuals are not forced to sell their labor power for less than the full value of the commodities they produce.

Now what about Trump who believes he is the Chosen One of God? To be hailed as being God's chosen one, who is compelled and prepared to revise the Constitution, by someone who is a self-absorbed misogynist and racist and malignant narcissist, and who has vowed to seek revenge on his opponents, is not something out of a Hollywood horror film, but now a normal part of the U.S. political scene. Trump is a candidate for president again, sheerly out of his need for vengeance. He showed this when he proclaimed: "In 2016, I declared, 'I am your voice.' Today, I add, I am your warrior, I am your justice, and for those who have been wronged and betrayed, I am your retribution!" This is nothing short of a proclamation spoken by someone who lusts for revenge. He is consumed by revenge to the point of madness. His is no Hamlet out to revenge his father but more like Captain Ahab in search of the white whale. Where in these dark remarks of a man who is unhinged by his lustful search to punish his enemies, is there a concern for the 'other' wholly different from himself? Where in the Zeitgeist of this country is the echo of philosopher Levinas, who argued (often in direct contrast to Heidegger's phenomenological ontology) that we possess a compulsion to respond to the obligation posed by others, even those others who are absolutely Other; that enables us to posit particularism free from all that interferes with its universalism? Where are we reminded that to live a truly ethical life we must put aside the temptation to treat every obstacle outside of ourselves as something to be surmounted and eventually integrated into our (settler colonial, Eurocentric) orbit of experience, to be swallowed up by our own lives, to create a tear in the fabric of totality, by refusing to integrate into a higher synthesis our very own thought that has separated from itself? As Peter Hudis notes, "what escapes our grasp in thought is often forcefully annulled in life, as the history of colonialism, imperialism, racism, and their accompanying genocides suggest." Levinas's response to the holocaust largely is what largely defined the terrain of his own thought. The role of critical pedagogy has never been more important than today. Many of the tenets of critical pedagogy are contained in the field of Ethnic Studies. Ethnic Studies has been approved in California. Under the new law, passed in 2021, high schools must begin offering ethnic studies courses in the 2025-26 school year, and students in the class of 2030 will be the first ones subject to the graduation requirement. Some argue that critical pedagogy, while it has much to offer, lacks an explicit attention to race and racial relations that is at the center of Ethnic Studies. While this may be the case in some circumstances, it is not the case in all contexts. Critical pedagogy

cross-references itself with work in ethnic studies very often and issues of race, indigeneity, colonialism, Afro-Pessimism and racial capitalism are often topics addressed within both critical pedagogy and Ethnic Studies. We can only hope that if Trump is elected, critical educators will be able to succeed in keeping Ethnic Studies and critical pedagogy in teacher education programs and as an integral part of the high school curricula.

The future does not look promising, especially when it comes to the anti-imperialist left. Take the situation in Ukraine with leftist journalism, here in the U.S. I oppose the moral decay brought about by 'campism', which condemns anything even remotely and unprovenly associated with American and Western imperialism or culture. It is crucial to recognize the moral complicity of 'campist' journalists with Russian aggression. I express this stance as someone who has vehemently criticized Western imperialism for over three decades. As William I. Robinson notes, in a similar vein, the German socialist August Bebel once astutely labeled antisemitism as the "socialism of fools," highlighting its flawed nature wherein critics of capitalist exploitation only discerned it when the exploiter happened to be Jewish. More than a century later, a self-proclaimed "anti-imperialist" left has resurrected a similar folly. This faction vehemently condemns capitalist exploitation when practiced by the U.S. or Western powers but turns a blind eye, or worse, defends repressive regimes solely because they face opposition from Washington. This convoluted logic is evident in the cases of China, Nicaragua, the BRICS, and the advocacy for multipolarity. Karl Marx, Eugene Debs, Rosa Luxemburg, and C.L.R. James all consistently emphasized that workers in each country should support those in another in their struggles for democracy and social justice. Supporting Ukraine, in the spirit of international working-class solidarity and democratic socialist internationalism, unequivocally rejects the simplistic notion of 'the enemy of my enemy is my friend.' Much of the debate within the US Left revolves around an overly narrow focus on the U.S. as the main enemy of the world's people. This perspective is sophistry. The U.S.'s attempt to weaken Russia by supporting Ukraine is driven by a desire to weaken China, the primary target of U.S. aggression, approached indirectly through Russia. While opposing U.S. imperialism, NATO, and the neoliberal government of Ukraine, I maintain that it is still possible to support Ukraine in its struggle for sovereignty and freedom against Russia's genocidal attacks. This nuanced view differs from many on the far left, which blames NATO expansion and U.S. international interventionism for Russia's invasion, opposing military aid to Ukraine. Even the far right in the U.S. opposes such support, aligning with the age of Trump. Absolutely, I am well aware of Ukraine's pervasive corruption, and as committed leftists, we vehemently condemn its neoliberal policies, the stereotypical portrayal of Western society, and the

presence of groups like the neo-Nazi Azov Battalion. The war, undoubtedly, serves as a boon for war profiteers, allowing Western oil companies to exploit petroleum resources without much regard for environmental consequences. However, as a socialist, it is imperative to denounce Russia's long-standing disregard for Ukraine's right to self-determination. Mere acknowledgment of Ukraine's legitimate reasons for self-defense is not sufficient; a true socialist stance demands an unwavering commitment to supporting Ukraine in its struggle for national liberation, despite the backdrop of inter-imperialist conflicts between Russia and the US. Putin definitely is no Leninist. Lenin exhibited a remarkable ability to transcend the pitfalls of imposing political ideologies when confronted with questions of culture and nationality. The enduring tension between these historical behemoths was palpable, as Lenin diverged from Stalin's rigid definition of a nation, particularly objecting to its exclusionary implications for various groups, notably the Jews. Lenin articulated his principles, asserting the proletariat's imperative to oppose the coerced retention of oppressed nations within a state, emphasizing the struggle for the right of self-determination. This stance, he argued, was crucial for fostering proletarian internationalism and forging solidarity between workers of oppressor and oppressed nations. Lenin staunchly adhered to this stance, advocating for the unconditional right of small nations to secede, resisting Stalin's centralization ambitions. Under Lenin's influence, the Bolshevik government creatively governed a multi-ethnic state, establishing national territories, languages, and cultural initiatives. Stalin, however, pursued a more insular socialist vision for Russia alone, proposing autonomy for Soviet republics but consolidating key functions within Russian ministries. Lenin vehemently opposed this approach, advocating for a federation of equal republics, but after his death, Stalin's Great-Russian chauvinism prevailed. Think of the Soviet Union's suppression of uprisings in East Germany, Hungary, and Czechoslovakia. This underscored the deviation from Lenin's national policies. Lenin's commitment to native languages in Soviet institutions contrasts dramatically with Stalin's bureaucratic barriers hindering the development of national languages. Lenin's vision of a multi-ethnic state is very different from today's ethnonationalist Republicans and their attacks on democracy, voting rights, and multicultural values. Putin has gone so far as to blame Lenin for Ukraine's existence. Ukraine's independence was ratified by an overwhelming majority in a 1991 referendum. It's crucial to recognize that while NATO expansion may have imperialistic aspects, the US's motivation extends beyond targeting Russia, involving the absorption of post-Soviet Eastern European militaries into NATO for global operations. My assessment characterizes the conflict in Ukraine as a Russian imperialist, revanchist, neocolonial war. Putin's overt denial of Ukraine's right to exist, coupled with attacks on civilian infrastructure, reveals a



disturbing agenda aimed at erasing an entire nation. The justifications for Russia's senseless attacks on Ukraine's energy system, holding a nuclear plant hostage, and assaulting cultural institutions become clearer when viewed through the lens of Putin's disdain for Ukrainian identity. The Marxist principle of international solidarity calls for countering Putin's neo-colonial control and affirming Ukraine's right to self-determination. Yes, it's true, historically, the movement of NATO eastward did have detrimental consequences. While recognizing the groundwork laid by NATO, the responsibility for the invasion lies squarely with Putin. Putin's refusal to recognize Ukraine as a sovereign state, coupled with his failure to honor international commitments, underscores his disregard for diplomatic norms. Putin's aggression stems not just from concerns about NATO but from the underestimated pro-democracy movement in Ukraine. A genuine peace settlement requires Russia to withdraw its troops, ensuring Ukrainian neutrality. The global ramifications of the conflict, particularly in the Balkans and the tinderbox nature of world affairs, underscore the urgency for a comprehensive and peaceful resolution. In supporting Ukraine's right to self-determination, we must acknowledge the complexity of the situation and avoid solely focusing on the shortcomings of NATO and US imperialism. The Marxist principles of solidarity and liberation demand a nuanced and comprehensive approach to address the multifaceted challenges posed by Putin's actions in Ukraine. As William I. Robinson argues, the global landscape of capitalist exploitation and social control is intricately shaped by the contradiction between a globally integrated economy and a nation-state-based political system. While economic globalization propels global capitalism forward, political fragmentation exerts a counterforce, leading to heightened geopolitical conflicts. The widening chasm between global economic unity and political competition among ruling groups is exacerbated by the escalating crisis of global capitalism, setting the stage for the contemporary "socialism of fools." China, Nicaragua, the BRICS, and multipolarity serve as case studies illustrating the perplexing logic and regressive politics of the "anti-imperialist" left. In examining China's capitalist development, it becomes evident that the nation's unique model involves powerful transnational capitalists aligned with a state-party elite. This alliance is dependent on capital reproduction, a high-consumption middle stratum, and the exploitation of millions of Chinese workers. Despite significant achievements in poverty reduction, industrialization, and infrastructure, the Chinese Communist Party has abandoned any rhetoric of class struggle or workers' power. China's outward foreign direct investment, especially in the Global South, reveals a complex dynamic wherein the pursuit of capital accumulation overrides concerns for human rights, environmental sustainability, and local autonomy. Robinson also points out the misuse of sovereignty and solidarity is exemplified

by the "anti-imperialist" left's selective criticism and endorsement of regimes based on their opposition to the U.S. In the case of Nicaragua, the Ortega regime's co-governance with the capitalist class, repression of dissent, and erosion of civil society organizations are overlooked or justified in the name of sovereignty. The left's failure to discern non-Western propaganda and its conflation of state with nation expose a flawed understanding of internationalism and solidarity. The BRICS, hailed as a Southern challenge to global capitalism, receives misplaced applause from the "anti-imperialist" left, according to Robinson. However, this support neglects the fact that the BRICS, while contributing to a more multipolar world, are still committed to the control and exploitation of the global working and popular classes. The emergence of a multipolar world does not imply a departure from exploitation and oppression but rather a realignment of power dynamics within the existing capitalist framework. The recent geopolitical events, such as the Russian invasion of Ukraine, signify a potential shift in the post-WWII inter-state order. However, the emerging global capitalist pluralism does not diminish the exploitative nature of the established West or the rising centers like China and Russia. The convergence of these powers around similar nationalist narratives underscores the need for a nuanced understanding of multipolarity. Robinson concludes, and I agree with him, that the "anti-imperialist" left's adherence to a simplistic narrative of opposing the U.S. and its allies as the sole enemy oversimplifies complex global dynamics. The rise of multipolarity does not absolve emerging powers of their exploitative tendencies. Clearly, a much more nuanced and critical approach is necessary to navigate the intricate interplay of global capitalism, geopolitics, and the struggles of the working and oppressed classes worldwide. So we are facing simplistic approaches by factions of the anti-imperialist left in the US to geopolitics when it comes to supporting Ukraine, and simplistic approaches to the rise of multipolarity, to what Robinson calls "the transnational integration of capitals" that provides a centripetal impulse to global capitalism and "political fragmentation" that provides a powerful counter-impulse that is resulting in an escalation of geopolitical conflict. In the U.S. Republicans are salivating over the prospect of another Trump presidency, viewing him as the key to overwhelming power if he is selected president, even if it means bringing fascism with him. I still ardently champion the transformative potency of political action by the working class and emergent social movements such as Black Lives Matter. But our embrace of hope must eschew naive optimism. Fascism, in essence, is a religious movement, not a result of trauma and repression. What propels us forward into the future is the arc of social dreaming, a notion which I have upheld for over three decades, similar to Bloch's concept of the "Not Yet," encapsulated in an "Ontology of Not-Yet Being," where the continuous construction of a concrete utopia unfolds. Where I

differ from Bloch is that I do not believe hope is self-generating but co-generated by a transcendent spirit, that some would call the Holy Spirit. We don't struggle for a pre-existing ideal state but that has been lost; we struggle in the here and now to fulfill the injunction to love our neighbors and to build our social relations around such an love. Christianity is unique in its defense of victims. Both Nietzsche and Rene Girard believed in the singularity of Christianity; Nietzsche, with his disdain for mercy and antipathy towards the weak and victims, believed that Christianity corrupted humanity, Girard believed this singularity is the manifestation of a power that reverses the violent foundations of culture. I follow Girard in this insight. Hope has to be conjugated with a willingness to struggle deeply to love the victims of this world and to create a society that vanquishes those social relations of capitalist exploitation that create modern victims.

Concerned observers, such as socialists like myself, find the U.S. Right's recent engagement with authoritarianism alarming, if not absolutely horrifying, although not completely unexpected. This certainly challenges the prevailing notion that the U.S. over the year has remained "center-right" and is dedicated to free markets, and operates under a neoliberal system. This commonly accepted belief often obscures the historical reality that, during a significant portion of the mid-20th century, a different political landscape defined U.S. politics. Not many people noticed it at the time. As Mike McManus captures the evolution of this different political landscape; see [<https://inthesetimes.com/article/the-new-right-far-right-ideology-liberalism-democracy>]. As McManus has reported, in the 1950s, the conservative movement reemerged from relative obscurity, and then experienced a resurgence in the era of neoliberalism led by Reagan (who can forget Reagan and Thatcher?). Reagan supporters were of three types: social conservatives (especially white evangelicals), neoconservative anti-Communists (later evolving into "War on Terror" hawks who led the attacks on Afghanistan and Iran), and free-market enthusiasts. Substantial intellectual effort and billionaire support aimed to merge these diverse elements into a cohesive whole, but cautiously, so as not to cause alarm, with varying degrees of success. Nobody really worried about them at the time. Today the Republicans have exploded with a ferocity and rage never before seen in U.S. politics, criticizing classical liberalism, which once served as a consensus for both the Republicans and Democrats), claims issues around LGBTQQIP2SAA (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning, intersex, pansexual, two-spirit [2S], androgynous and asexual) communities. Some members of congress have been captured by QAnonconspiracy theories and nearly all of them will say that the 2020 election was stolen because they are afraid of repercussions from Trump if they don't. Sectors of the Republicans such as the Nietzschean Right, embodied in very online far-right personas like

Bronze Age Pervert and L0m3Z, who are openly contemptuous of modern egalitarianism. For a significant faction within today's GOP, the principles of liberalism have ceded too much ground to the Left, fostering "decadence"(primarily in the realm of LGBTQ rights), national decline (attributed to "feminization" and "oversensitivity"), and growing disorder. Conservatives are willingly embracing illiberalism or authoritarianism to advance a consciously radical agenda. The "hard" Right of the Republican Party has, in fact, entered the mainstream. The era of fascism is close upon us. Nationalist Conservatives reject liberalism's focus on moral universalism and rational humanism, advocating for alternative traditionalist" conservative democracies." Postliberals, a largely academic and heavily Catholic movement, aim to replace the dominant neoliberal elite with a conservative elite that implements socially revanchist policies in the name of the "common good." Lastly, the Nietzschean Right, represented by online figures like Bronze Age Pervert and L0m3Z, openly disdain modern egalitarianism, embrace violence, are openly misogynistic and racist and draw upon early 20th-century proto-fascist ideologies to call for a new male aristocracy. Their postliberal magazine, First Things, publishes essays by figures like L0m3Z and introduces the loathsome political philosophy of Russian fascist, Alexander Dugin, and well engages in attacks on me, Paulo Freire and Henry Giroux, see [<https://www.firstthings.com/web-exclusives/2023/07/the-left-is-reengineering-the-human-soul-our-children-are-the-guinea-pigs>]. Each faction of the Republican Party now shares the conviction that "liberalism destroys everything." They are doing everything that they can to end U.S. democracy.

And while these factions aren't a monolith, and they frequently fight each other, they are essentially all in agreement that democracy must end and that a new era of illiberal government must begin. Postliberals agree with NatCons (Nationalist Conservatives) that liberalism must be replaced; postliberals, mainly Catholics, envision a form of "aristopopulism" where conservative elites wield state power and enforce national abortion laws. Many NatCons and postliberals are deeply wary of the Nietzschean Right's open misogyny, racism and embrace of violence, while others are more willing to socialize, and will not likely vote for a socialist candidate. Bernie Sanders was an exception. Despite their differences, each faction is united in their determination to thwart liberalism, even if it means openly advocating for an end to U.S. democracy. The far-right is cultivating dissatisfied young men to bring the various factions of the Republican right together. All factions are growing distrustful of democracy itself and are more open to fascism. Worst still, they have a conservative Supreme Court and control of the judiciary. The Republican right rejects the notion that a more equal society is a more just society. And the American left has nothing with which to counter the various Republican Right

factions. The Left is in bad shape since for years it has accommodated neoliberalism and the carceral state, shutting off the socialists and Marxists within its ranks. What the left needs is to be united around socialism, as a way of challenging the illiberal factions of the right, unless we wish to see what is essentially a fascist coup under Trump. It is socialism or barbarism! Unless Americans are willing to embrace socialism, they will have fascism. And Americans will not likely be able to embrace socialism, and will not likely vote for a socialist candidate. Bernie Sanders was an exception.

Once a hope for socialism, he is now 82, a year older than Biden. What is needed is a young socialist politician who can prove to be a counterweight to Trump. Since 2010, young adults' positive ratings of socialism have hovered near 50%, while the rate has been consistently near 34% for Gen Xers and near 30% for baby boomers/traditionalists. Critical Pedagogy has much work to do. It needs to join forces with Ethnic Studies and create a counter force, a counter public sphere and more socialists need to be elected to office. Right now I can count that number on two hands.

I am certainly worried about the coming years. In the shadows of our classrooms, a sinister manifestation of racist ideology is creeping back, threatening to silence the crucial conversations that can pave the way for a just society. The deliberate omission of narratives surrounding race, racism, slavery, and racial capitalism, intersectionality, genocide, epistemicide, settler colonialism in the U.S. school system is a glaring example of how insidious forces are working to erase the truth from our educational fabric. Across the nation, a disturbing alliance is forming among state legislatures, school boards, conservative parent groups, and city councils, orchestrating a troubling campaign against what they label as "Critical Race Theory (CRT)." This coordinated effort aims to intimidate educators and suppress the illuminating insights that CRT provides into how institutional racism perpetuates discrimination against people of color. CRT, which is confined to law schools, is now under attack by a coalition of white supremacists, armed militia movements, Republican lawmakers, and misguided parent organizations. They propagate a distorted narrative, falsely claiming that CRT is taught in all public school classrooms as part of a mass Marxist indoctrination sweeping through schools, categorizing all white individuals as oppressors and all Black individuals as perennial victims. This misrepresentation is leading to prohibitions on teaching racism-related concepts across the country. Contrary to these misperceptions, CRT does not lay blame on individuals but exposes the embedded racism within U.S. social institutions. It challenges us to confront the racial ideology deeply ingrained in American identity, urging us to disentangle personal identity from the systemic structures perpetuating inequality. Despite acknowledging America's racist history, a growing number of citizens refuse to confront

persistent inequalities, clinging to a false narrative of an evolving equitable democracy. Scholars and activists stress that CRT is not about blaming individuals but addressing the ongoing impact of racism. However, Republicans are distorting its essence to obstruct a crucial national conversation. Efforts to ban CRT through misguided policies hinder the pursuit of a genuinely equitable democracy. The invocation of Martin Luther King Jr.'s words by those pushing for bans conveniently overlooks the broader context of his message. White supremacist politicians exploit this pretext to conceal discriminatory practices, stifling discussions on race and racial justice in classrooms nationwide. Protests against teaching race are erupting all over the country, fueled by conspiracy theories portraying immigrants, particularly nonwhite immigrants, as threats to the existing power structure. White supremacists join these protests, leading to a chilling silence in classrooms where discussions on the true racial history of the United States are forbidden. This regression threatens to create a generation uninformed about essential issues, potentially pushing them towards extremist ideologies. The suppression of CRT extends beyond schools, reaching into college programs discussing intersectionality and queer theory. Fear of white vigilantism persists, with implicit threats using highly charged symbolism. Laws supported by certain Republicans banning CRT only serve to substantiate the theory's warning that the country is structured to maintain the current racial hierarchy. In this atmosphere, where facts are interpreted through pre-existing biases, it is crucial for students to be provided with a critical framework to value new information. However, new laws are preventing teachers from offering this necessary framework for understanding race, history, settler colonialism, the genocide of indigenous populations, epistemicide and indigeneity. The echoes of history are resounding as the nation grapples with the perilous consequences of stifling nuanced discussions essential for progress. We must resist this orchestrated erasure of truth, stand up against the suppression of CRT, and fight for an education system that empowers students to critically engage with the complexities of our shared history. Our collective future depends on it. The country is ripe for fascism, and an election by Donald Trump could prove fatal for democracy.

Freirean education is not a mere journey into the abstract truths of the world, followed by a systematic application of acquired knowledge. It's about immersing oneself critically in material reality, forging an understanding that captures the learner's will and desire. The oppressed, as Freire understood, perceive a world already scripted for them by others whom the oppressed considered rich, or smarter than they were, a world where they feel excluded. Critical consciousness in the Freirean sense involves recognizing the world as a battleground, aiming to challenge the privileged hierarchies that define it – essentially rewriting the narrative by actively engaging with the world, reading the world and the

word. It's a rebellion against the fatalism ingrained in the technocratic logic of capitalist modernity, liberating the oppressed from the shackles of history. For Freire, achieving critical consciousness is the route to humanization, a journey towards fulfilling our intrinsic human potential. It's the transformative path that lays the foundation for individuals to become agents shaping history, breaking free from the burden of historical inevitability. This essence underpins a Freirean interpretation of both the written word and the world, emphasizing co-intentional reading, protagonistic understanding, and dialogical exchange. Freire recognizes revolutionary agents as products of their circumstances, emphasizing the reciprocal relationship between revolutionizing society and revolutionizing thinking. In challenging learners, Freire advocates using words and concepts rooted in their lived experiences. While his ideas have found a place in critical pedagogy, the practical application faces scrutiny, particularly in high schools where discussions on race, class, gender, and LGBTQ issues now face serious opposition. Freire's concepts, drawing from various critical theories, serve as dialectical relays for students to interpret their world through life in the favela. The goal is to foster critical consciousness, encouraging students to make sense of their experiences within broader societal frameworks. Freire rejects a unidirectional transformation or a closed Cartesian epistemological process, criticizing it as an atomistic, neoliberal view of the self. Freire stresses the need for a dialectical relationship between self and social transformation, rejecting the notion of mutually exclusive categories. The concept of praxis emerges as the integration of theory and practice, beginning with personal agency in the world. Revolutionary praxis involves reflecting on one's actions in dialogue with others, using philosophical ideas to navigate everyday life's fault lines and transcend oppressive forms of domination. Freire has been an enduring source of inspiration in both my life and my scholarly pursuits. The expansive Freirean community has become a force uniting many of us on the journey toward liberation, with Freire's dialogical work serving as the adhesive that binds us together. Freire's impactful contributions, rooted in rural and urban settings, faced challenges when applied beyond their original context. The risk of misinterpretation and opposition from political authorities was ever-present. His work, often susceptible to political manipulation, encountered instances where well-intentioned educators reduced it to mere classroom discussions, neglecting the broader scope of critical pedagogy. Freire himself resisted the wholesale exportation of his ideas, emphasizing the need for educators to "reinvent" rather than "transplant" his concepts to diverse national and regional landscapes. For Freire, learning was a dialectical engagement with the word and the world, a process of recognizing "untested feasibilities" for transformative action. Critical consciousness, according to Freire, arises not as a prerequisite for action

but as an outcome of action engaging critically with the world, driven by a profound love for humanity and the world. Societies such as Brazil and the U.S., tainted by genocidal slavery, democide, ecocide, and epistemicide from their inception to the present, often bury the historical memories of these atrocities deep within the crevices of history. Freire's pioneering work has played a crucial role in exposing many of these historical acts. Both Trump and Brazil's former president, Jair Bolsonaro, persisted in waging a war on truth, employing a calculated, artificial logic that has ushered in an era of post-truth politics under the guise of "fake news." Freire reminds us that truth is fundamentally pedagogical, shaped by education's role in forming minds and nurturing counterhegemonic actions. Freire's insights offer us an educated reason and a comprehensive theory of education, grounded in the realities and struggles of his own life, including imprisonment, work in Guinea Bissau, support for Latin American guerrilla movements, and collaboration with teachers across the Americas. The events surrounding George Floyd's murder, the rise of the Black Lives Matter movement, and the global pandemic highlight the stark disparities between rich and poor, White individuals and Black, Indigenous, and People of Color, and immigrants and so-called "real" Americans. Trump continues to propagate the Big Lie of the stolen 2020 election, to degrade pluralism, promote white supremacy and xenophobia, and advocate for a white Christian ethno-state.

Freirean education is not a mere journey into the abstract truths of the world, followed by a systematic application of acquired knowledge. It's about immersing oneself critically in material reality, forging an understanding that captures the learner's will and desire. The oppressed, as Freire understood, perceive a world already scripted for them by others whom the oppressed considered rich, or smarter than they were, a world where they feel excluded. Critical consciousness in the Freirean sense involves recognizing the world as a battleground, aiming to challenge the privileged hierarchies that define it – essentially rewriting the narrative by actively engaging with the world, reading the world and the word. It's a rebellion against the fatalism ingrained in the technocratic logic of capitalist modernity, liberating the oppressed from the shackles of history. For Freire, achieving critical consciousness is the route to humanization, a journey towards fulfilling our intrinsic human potential. It's the transformative path that lays the foundation for individuals to become agents shaping history, breaking free from the burden of historical inevitability. This essence underpins a Freirean interpretation of both the written word and the world, emphasizing co-intentional reading, protagonistic understanding, and dialogical exchange. Freire recognizes revolutionary agents as products of their circumstances, emphasizing the reciprocal relationship between revolutionizing society and revolutionizing thinking. In challenging learners, Freire advocates using words and



concepts rooted in their lived experiences. While his ideas have found a place in critical pedagogy, the practical application faces scrutiny, particularly in high schools where discussions on race, class, gender, and LGBTQ issues now face serious opposition. Freire's concepts, drawing from various critical theories, serve as dialectical relays for students to interpret their world through life in the favela. The goal is to foster critical consciousness, encouraging students to make sense of their experiences within broader societal frameworks. Freire rejects a unidirectional transformation or a closed Cartesian epistemological process, criticizing it as an atomistic, neoliberal view of the self. Freire stresses the need for a dialectical relationship between self and social transformation, rejecting the notion of mutually exclusive categories. The concept of praxis emerges as the integration of theory and practice, beginning with personal agency in the world. Revolutionary praxis involves reflecting on one's actions in dialogue with others, using philosophical ideas to navigate everyday life's fault lines and transcend oppressive forms of domination. Freire has been an enduring source of inspiration in both my life and my scholarly pursuits. The expansive Freirean community has become a force uniting many of us on the journey toward liberation, with Freire's dialogical work serving as the adhesive that binds us together. Freire's impactful contributions, rooted in rural and urban settings, faced challenges when applied beyond their original context. The risk of misinterpretation and opposition from political authorities was ever-present. His work, often susceptible to political manipulation, encountered instances where well-intentioned educators reduced it to mere classroom discussions, neglecting the broader scope of critical pedagogy. Freire himself resisted the wholesale exportation of his ideas, emphasizing the need for educators to "reinvent" rather than "transplant" his concepts to diverse national and regional landscapes. For Freire, learning was a dialectical engagement with the word and the world, a process of recognizing "untested feasibilities" for transformative action. Critical consciousness, according to Freire, arises not as a prerequisite for action but as an outcome of action engaging critically with the world, driven by a profound love for humanity and the world. Societies such as Brazil and the U.S., tainted by genocidal slavery, democide, ecocide, and epistemicide from their inception to the present, often bury the historical memories of these atrocities deep within the crevices of history. Freire's pioneering work has played a crucial role in exposing many of these historical acts. Both Trump and Brazil's former president, Jair Bolsonaro, persisted in waging a war on truth, employing a calculated, artificial logic that has ushered in an era of post-truth politics under the guise of "fake news." Freire reminds us that truth is fundamentally pedagogical, shaped by education's role in forming minds and nurturing counterhegemonic actions. Freire's insights offer us an educated reason and a comprehensive theory of education,

grounded in the realities and struggles of his own life, including imprisonment, work in Guinea Bissau, support for Latin American guerrilla movements, and collaboration with teachers across the Americas. The events surrounding George Floyd's murder, the rise of the Black Lives Matter movement, and the global pandemic highlight the stark disparities between rich and poor, White individuals and Black, Indigenous, and People of Color, and immigrants and so-called "real" Americans. Trump continues to propagate the Big Lie of the stolen 2020 election, to degrade pluralism, promote white supremacy and xenophobia, and advocate for a white Christian ethno-state.

### **Final thoughts**

The public school system could be devastated by the return of Trump. Republicans in the United States have raised the possibility of dismantling the Department of Education, a move that could be reconsidered if Trump is re-elected. Drawing parallels with past Republican administrations, there are concerns about potential appointments echoing controversial statements. Former Secretary of Education William Bennett, known for a contentious remark, could be a candidate. Trump, addressing what he sees as a pressing issue in America, criticized the influence of what he referred to as "pink-haired communists" in education. He argued that the Founders intended to intertwine religion, politics, and education, asserting that Marxist ideologies in schools are contrary to Judeo-Christian teachings. To counter this, Trump pledged to aggressively pursue violations of constitutional clauses related to religious freedom. The current Republican focus on concerns about left-wing ideologies in education has led to legislative actions in 28 states, with the passage of 71 bills restricting teachers and students. This includes purging school libraries, imposing subject-matter restrictions, and exposing teachers to potential legal challenges from parents. The Republican narrative is centered around opposition to Critical Race Theory and critical pedagogy, but public opinion, as per surveys, favors a balanced approach to teaching history. Despite a broad consensus among Americans (92%) supporting teaching both positive and negative aspects of history, a majority of Republicans (54%) believe that teachers and librarians are indoctrinating children. This disparity is contributing to a trend where certain Republican-led states, such as Florida, are implementing voucher programs for private or religious schools. However, these vouchers often fall short of covering the full cost, leading to concerns about exacerbating educational and wealth disparities, eventually resulting in a "separate but equal" system – a goal some attribute to the GOP. Critics argue that elements within the Republican Party, leaning towards fascism, fear an educated public that might oppose their agenda. They suggest that fostering ignorance serves the interests of such factions.

-----

## Israel/Hamas War

Discussion of the war between Israel and Hamas has generated much controversy in the U.S. in terms of protests against Israel that have occurred on college campuses. I have written a three-part series of articles on the Israeli/Hamas war.

<https://pesaagora.com/columns/fearful-symmetry-in-israel-and-palestine/>

<https://pesaagora.com/columns/fearful-symmetry-in-israel-and-palestine-2/>

<https://pesaagora.com/columns/fearful-symmetry-in-israel-and-palestine-3/>

Part One was written shortly after the attack on Israel by Hamas fighters and included an unequivocal denunciation of Hamas. It also criticized the response by the IDF (Israel Defense Forces). Parts Two and Three continued my critique of the IDF, with the last article focusing on the crisis of global capitalism and, following the work of William I. Robinson and Hoai-An Nguyen, the impact of global capitalism on the situation in Gaza, suggesting that genocide could potentially emerge as a political strategy in the future.

I summarized some important points made by Robinson and Hoai-An Nguyen relating how Gaza serves as an immediate warning signal that genocide could potentially emerge as a political strategy in the future, addressing the enduring conflict between economic surplus and surplus humanity.

[<https://thephilosophicalsalon.com/gaza-a-ghastly-window-into-the-crisis-of-global-capitalism/>]. What follows is my summary of their recent analysis. While the military outcome in the Gaza war remains uncertain, the authors maintain that that Israel and its supporters in the core states of the world capitalist system are undeniably losing the political battle for legitimacy. The initial months of the Gaza siege seemed to solidify a Washington-NATO-Tel Aviv alliance willing to normalize genocide, even at a significant political cost. However, the Palestinian plight has resonated deeply with global publics, particularly the youth, injecting fresh vigor into the ongoing global uprising of working and popular classes.

This surge has heightened the political contradictions of the crisis. In the United States, where these words are written, there has been an exceptional surge of solidarity with Palestine, led by a younger generation of Jews disassociating themselves from Zionism and the Israeli state. As the authors point out, the Palestinian flag, prominently displayed in street demonstrations, sports events and on social media platforms, has evolved into a symbol of popular discontent and a global intifada against the prevailing status quo. According to the authors, the crisis of world capitalism in the 1930s laid the groundwork for the ascent of fascism in Europe, the violent disintegration of the international political and economic order, and a devastating second world war. Preceded by an era of extravagant capitalist indulgence amid escalating inequalities and growing mass

dissatisfaction, the so-called Gilded Age witnessed unbridled capital hurtling towards a crisis of overaccumulation, culminating in the crash of 1929. The global financial collapse of 2008 marked the initiation of a new era of overaccumulation and persistent stagnation. A crucial insight from the work of Robinson and Nguyen is that the political economy of genocide in our contemporary era is defined by this crisis.

The predicament of surplus capital is inherent to capitalism, but, in the past couple of decades, it has reached unprecedented levels. Leading transnational corporations and financial conglomerates have reported record profits concurrently with a decline in corporate investment. The transnational capitalist class has amassed staggering wealth, surpassing reinvestment possibilities. The disproportionate concentration of the world's wealth in the hands of a few, coupled with the accelerated impoverishment and dispossession of the majority, has made it increasingly challenging for this transnational capitalist class (TCC) to identify new outlets for unloading vast accumulated surplus. Robinson and Nguyen maintain that as traditional avenues for surplus capital dry up, new outlets must be violently created, relying on debt-driven growth, unrestrained financial speculation, the pillaging of public finance, and state-sanctioned militarised accumulation to sustain the global economy amid chronic stagnation. This is a compelling insight with frightening premonitions of world-historical consequences of our own making.

Key to the analysis by Robinson and Nguyen is their keen observation that before genocide could be considered, two prerequisites had to be addressed. Firstly, the role of Palestinian labour in the Israeli economy had to be resolved. The establishment of the Jewish state in 1948 involved the violent expulsion of Palestinians, but it also led to the incorporation of Palestinian labourers for various jobs. This created a tension between the goal of ethnically cleansing the state and the economic need for cheap, ethnically demarcated labour. In the 1990s, Israel began resolving this tension by gradually replacing the Palestinian labour force with migrant labour through transnational mobility and recruitment.

The second factor that Robinson and Nguyen underscore was the imposition of Israel's 'closure' policy in 1993, sealing off Palestinians in occupied territories and escalating settler colonialism. Hundreds of thousands of migrant workers from various countries started labouring in the Israeli economy. Unlike Palestinians, these migrant workers are not subjected to the apartheid system, as their temporary migrant status effectively achieves social control and disenfranchisement. In the aftermath of a Hamas attack, Israel deported Palestinian workers and considered hiring foreign workers to replace them. The authors maintain that the Palestinian masses, once a tightly controlled and super-exploited labor force, have become surplus humanity standing in the way of capitalist expansion. Gaza symbolizes the plight of surplus humanity globally, exacerbated by decades of

globalization, neoliberalism, and the potential increase in surplus humanity due to conflict, economic collapse, and climate change. The tension between the economic need for super-exploitable labor and the political need to neutralize rebellion is evident globally, with borderlands becoming zones of death.

For genocide to become an option aligned with global capital accumulation, Robinson and Nguyen argue that there also needed to be a new political-diplomatic dispensation for Israel's economic integration into the larger Middle Eastern and global economy. The 2003 US invasion of Iraq and subsequent globalization of the Middle East have seen massive transnational corporate and financial investments. Israel's integration with capitals from the Middle East and global circuits of accumulation have led to common class interests between Israeli and Arab capitalists, transcending political differences. The Abraham Accords in 2020 marked a shift toward normalization between Israel and Gulf states, promoting deeper regional integration through transnational capital. However, the authors go on to argue that Palestinian resistance has disrupted this normalization, putting it on hold. The global corporate and financial elite, meeting in Riyadh, expressed concerns about how the Gaza war has escalated geopolitical tensions globally, contributing to long-term financial instability and stagnation.

The authors point out that each emerging global conflict presents fresh opportunities for profit-making to counteract economic stagnation, such as militarized accumulation. Following the 2022 Russian invasion of Ukraine, there was a notable surge in the shares of military and security firms in the United States, Europe, and elsewhere. This was driven by the anticipation of a significant increase in global military spending. Similarly, the Gaza war serves as a fresh stimulus for militarized accumulation, with substantial funds flowing to Israel from the US, other Western governments, and international arms dealers. Orders at major arms companies worldwide are approaching record highs. In the eyes of some financial executives, such as one from Morgan Stanley, the siege of Gaza aligns well with their investment portfolio. While historical wars have traditionally provided essential economic stimulus and facilitated the disposal of surplus capital, there is something qualitatively new happening now with the ascent of a global police state. The authors report how overcoming the limits to growth requires the adoption of new technologies focused on death and destruction, portraying barbarism as the face of capitalist crisis. Welcome to hell, it's just around the corner.

For decades now I have called for a socialist alternative to capitalism. I won't rehearse my arguments on this topic since they are readily available. The fight for a social alternative in Israel is complicated by the fact that the majority of young people in Israel identify as right-wing. A 2022 poll by the Israeli Democracy Institute found that 73% of Jewish people

surveyed between the ages of 18 and 24 identified as right-wing compared with 46% of people polled over the age of 65. I posed the question at the end of Part Three: Could the conflagration that besets Israel and Palestine finally bring us to realize that religious ecumenism is an existential necessity for both survival and transcendence? But discussions related to theological mysteries cannot occur in contexts where bodies are ripped asunder, where blood, gristle and bone mix with concrete in an unholy mosaic of destruction and death. Where the screams of children echo in a symphony of misery from apartment blocks that have been razed to the ground, and the world teeters on atomic algorithms of mutual self-destruction.