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ABSTRACT

Building on the work of Peter McLaren, Henri Lefebvre, and David Harvey, this dissertation develops a revolutionary critical pedagogy for space. I begin with a historical and theoretical survey of the roots critical pedagogy, a pedagogical orientation that is often called upon but rarely situated deeply. I then break down revolutionary critical pedagogy into seven components. I elaborate the dominant trends in the current social-political moment. I introduce two terms here, neoliberalism and the global class war. I argue that the former is a necessary but ultimately insufficient framework for understanding the present moment, and that the latter provides a necessary supplement because it looks at the global project of the restoration of capitalist class power after the circuit of socialist and national liberation struggles that transformed the globe between 1945-1979. This all entails an emphasis on the level of the global, but why is it that the global is so important, let alone space? I turn to these questions next, bringing in the “spatial turn” in education. I situate this work within the overall development of capitalism. I next turn to a particularly important spatial formation in the present: the city. Cities, I argue, are where the global contradictions of capitalism are most acute and concentrated; where capitalism is most vulnerable to disruption and overthrow. I bring in political movements and research on the “right to the city” as one way that revolutionary critical pedagogy can seize on such vulnerability. Finally, I return to the question of “pedagogy,” a move that not only spatializes educational theory but also educationalizes spatial theory. I do this by focusing in on Lefebvre’s theorization of the production of space as a revolutionary activity and his spatial framework of 1) representations of space; 2) representational spaces; and 3) spatial practice. I augment this framework with an

educational triad of 1) learning; 2) studying; and 3) teaching. Claiming that this triad needs to be held in a precarious and dialectic relation, I read this triad through two pedagogical examples: the schoolhouse as curriculum and the 2015 Baltimore Rebellion as praxis.

PEDAGOGY, SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION, AND SPACE:
TOWARD A REVOLUTIONARY CRITICAL PEDAGOGY FOR SPACE

by

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B.A. Goucher College 2008
M.S. Syracuse University 2012

Dissertation

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in Cultural Foundations of Education.

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It is not without due consideration that I implicate the following people, organizations, and institutions in this manuscript. This section has been the most important to me, and I hope that fact offers some consolation to those who are less than enthused to be included here.

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Don Mitchell has had a tremendous influence on the development of my thinking over the past three years. Not only has he helped my Marxism become simultaneously stricter and more flexible (i.e., more dialectical), but he is solely responsible for introducing me to the spatial manifestations of capitalism and the struggles against it. I have always looked forward to spending Monday evenings in his seminars ("Mondays with Marx"), in which theory and historical inquiry meet practice and contemporary analysis in the most seamless of ways. I'm in constant awe of his intellect and his ability to situate, explain, advance, and *teach* politically relevant and motivating content.

One of the highlights of my graduate career has been working with Peter McLaren. After learning and studying his rich body of theory and practice, I was fortunate enough to meet Peter in 2013 and today it is a truly remarkable privilege to call

him not only a mentor and adviser, but also a friend and a comrade. To have the leading scholar in my field demonstrate such support for and interest in my work has been motivating beyond belief. Peter is incredibly busy and in demand, but whether he is traveling to build with movements in Chiapas, Caracas, Istanbul, or Changchun, he is always willing to take time to answer my questions, write a letter of recommendation, or just check in. Peter's generosity of spirit is a model that I hope to replicate in my academic and political life. Thank you, Peter.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS:

Acknowledgements	v
CHAPTER ONE: Introduction	1
Toward a revolutionary critical pedagogy for space	
Layout of the dissertation	
On audience	
CHAPTER TWO: Revolutionary critical pedagogy	14
Introduction	
Foundations of critical pedagogy	
Critical theory and the Frankfurt School	
The “secret” of commodity fetishism, reification, and demystification	
Ideology and reproduction	
Learning laboring subjectivities	
Paulo Freire and form	
Toward a critical pedagogy	
Toward a revolutionary critical pedagogy	
Totality and difference	
Uncertainty and ignorance	
Marx is back: Political economy, rent, and the distilling of class	
Toward a revolutionary critical pedagogy	
Conclusion	
CHAPTER THREE: Education, neoliberalism, and the global class war, or, the 20th century is not yet over	61
Introduction	
Neoliberalism	
Accumulation by dispossession	
Freedom in the state	
Learning in and for neoliberalism	
Education and ideological production-circulation	
The accumulation of educational capitals	
Education and the production of subjectivity	
Neoliberalism and the global class war: From revolution to counterrevolution	
The global revolutionary offensive	
Global counterrevolution and the class character of China	
Revolutionary critical pedagogy in the age of global counterrevolution	
Conclusion	
CHAPTER FOUR: Educational spaces and the logic of capital	103
Introduction	
The spatial turn in education	
Educational architectures	

Surveys of education and the spatial turn	
Cautionary notes in spatial education studies	
Capitalism and the production of space	
Absolute and relative expansion	
The town and country	
Transportation and communication	
Fixed capital and the built environment	
Conclusion	
CHAPTER FIVE: Struggling in and for the city	139
Introduction	
Capitalism and the city	
The right to the city	
Critical education and the right to the city	
Lefebvre's right to the city	
Debates about the right to the city	
What kind of right?	
Whose right?	
What city?	
Cities and the global class war	
Conclusion: Revolutionary critical pedagogy for the city and the urban	
CHAPTER SIX: A pedagogy for space: Learning, teaching, and studying in the streets	171
Introduction	
Abstracting and producing space	
Lefebvre's spatial triad	
Representations of space	
Representational space	
Spatial practice	
An educational triad	
Learning	
Studying	
Teaching	
A pedagogy for space	
Studying the schoolhouse	
Studying in the streets	
CHAPTER SEVEN: Conclusion	205
References	214
Curriculum vitae	226

CHAPTER ONE INTRODUCTION

“The weapon of criticism cannot, of course, replace criticism by weapons, material force must be overthrown by material force; but theory also becomes a material force as soon as it has gripped the masses.”
- Karl Marx

After yet another brutal murder of a person of color by police in the United States, the streets of Baltimore were on fire during April-May of 2015. This fire was sparked just before 9 am on April 12, when 25 year-old Freddie C. Gray was beaten and arrested by three cops, Lieutenant Brian W. Rice, Officer Edward Nero, and Officer Garrett E. Miller, who were patrolling the area of the Gilmor Homes low-rise housing project in the Sandtown neighborhood on the Westside of Baltimore City. Gray was walking in his own neighborhood—a dangerous activity for any person of color—when the three cops spotted Gray who, according to police reports, “made eye contact” with them and then ran away. A chase ensued, and Gray was attacked and arrested for carrying a small pocketknife (which the State’s Attorney for Baltimore City, Marilyn Mosby, has said was of legal size). The arrest was recorded by two community members, and the recording documents Gray screaming in agony as cops beat and drag his limp body.¹ The cops threw him in a police transport van.

Gray was taken for what people in Baltimore—and cities across the country—call a “rough ride,” during which the cops place a victim unrestrained or improperly restrained in a van and drive it chaotically around town. That the cops had other things than “justice” on their mind is confirmed by the fact that they chose to make four stops

¹ The cops, of course, paint a different picture, but I do not legitimate this picture by mentioning it. This is a political and epistemological choice, based on the recognition that including the cops’ narrative, even under the pretense of “fairness” or “showing both sides of the story” would only work to reinforce that narrative, doing a grave injustice to Gray’s legacy and the movement against police brutality.

between Gilmore Homes and the Western District police station, a distance of about half a mile. Further, it took them 30 minutes to make the five block trek. When they finally arrived at the police station paramedics were called in. The paramedics treated Gray for just over 10 minutes before taking him to the University of Maryland R Adams Cowley Shock Treatment Center. Gray was in a coma, had multiple broken vertebrae, and a severed spine at the neck.

When news of this brutal act of aggression spread through the streets spontaneous protests began. They took place nightly in front of the police station. Then, on April 19, one week after Gray was arrested and attacked, he was pronounced dead at the hospital. The protests continued, but increased in militancy, with the first scuffles between protesters and cops taking place. The protests also stopped taking place exclusively on the predominately Black-populated Westside and moved toward the downtown and Inner Harbor area, an area that hosts government and corporate offices, hotels, chain restaurants, a mall, high-rise condominiums, sports arenas, and convention centers. On April 25 the first day of mass organized actions took place. These marches turned into open confrontations between people and cops. As day turned to night, people spontaneously regrouped throughout the city to stage more demonstrations. Outside the Western District police station swarms of people hurled bottles and rocks across barricades at the cops, eventually forcing them to retreat.

Then, on April 27, just after school let out, a full-scale rebellion took place, an urban insurrection that was so not just because it took place *in* a city, but because it was a struggle *over* and *for* the city, for the right of people to truly inhabit the city and to make it their own. The city was no longer a built environment that supported the circulation of

capital or a playground for the bourgeoisie; the city as exchange-value was attacked and in its place the city as *use* was claimed. A violence was unleashed not just against police brutality but against the very system that police brutality serves to protect: the capitalist mode of production. At the time of this writing (May 26, 2015), the struggle in Baltimore has ebbed, but it hasn't vanished.

The most frustrating thing for any militant is that the moment and duration of struggle is almost completely out of our control. No matter how hard we wish, how many flyers we post around town, how many invites we get out on social media, how much networking we do with likeminded individuals and organizations, how alluring our wording is, we can't make a movement happen. The objective conditions have to be laid, a crisis has to be present. These objective conditions have historically been laid by economic contractions, imperialist wars and, most recently in the U.S., racist state violence. Given this, the task of the militant (or, in tamer terms, the "organizer") is to focus in on the subjective conditions, on our understanding and critique of the current order of things, on changing ourselves and orienting ourselves and others toward the possible futures that are immanent in the present. When crises erupt, then, we are better prepared to turn them into general crises that can provoke wholesale transformation in the mode and relations of production. In his reflections on the May 1968 uprising in France, Henri Lefebvre (1969) put it like this:

Economic crisis is not revolutionary in itself. On the contrary. As analyzed and presented by Marx, economic crisis has a "purgative" function in capitalist society. It is absorbed by the cycle, which can now resume its course... Following a few inevitable disturbances, production and reproduction (including that of social relations) are resumed. Only the action-critique of superstructures (ideologies and institutions) transforms the economic crisis into general crisis, making it thus

possible to transform social relations and the structures proper (production and property relations). (pp. 34-35)

It is such an action-critique that this dissertation seeks to develop. While the dissertation is not explicitly about the Baltimore Rebellion (which had just occurred while I was working on the last chapter), it is an action-critique of the contemporary configurations of global capitalism to which the Baltimore Rebellion was a response.

Toward a revolutionary critical pedagogy for space

The transformation of relations of exploitation and oppression that characterize capitalism into an alternative social and economic formation is the impetus behind an emerging body of educational theory and practice known as revolutionary critical pedagogy. This work has been most fully developed by Peter McLaren who, beginning in the mid 1990s, began turning away from semiotic, cultural, and post-structuralist analyses and toward a concern with the social relations of production (McLaren, 2010). McLaren's shift took place when post-structuralism was still an ascending analytical framework that was just gaining ground in education and when critical pedagogy was being institutionalized and tamed. A renewal in Marxist educational theorizing bolstered McLaren's formulation of revolutionary critical pedagogy at the end of the 1990s into the current century. Scholars like Dave Hill, Paula Allman, Glenn Rikowski, Mike Cole, Sheila Macrine, Ravi Kumar, and others influenced McLaren's work, and a few of these scholars proved fruitful collaborators on different projects (McLaren, 2015, p. 231).²

² McLaren (2005) credits Paula Allman with the term "revolutionary critical pedagogy" (p. 57).

Revolutionary critical pedagogy is still an emerging body of work that is materializing across the globe through a host of different networks.³ Thus there isn't one standard text that can serve as any holy grail for the field. Still, McLaren (2005) provides a helpful, broad breakdown of the nascent pedagogical tradition:

Revolutionary critical pedagogy begins with a three-pronged approach: First, students engage in a pedagogy of demystification centering around a semiotics of recognition, where dominant sign systems are recognized and denaturalized, where common sense is historicized, and where signification is understood as a political practice that refracts rather than reflects reality... This is followed by a pedagogy of opposition, where students engage in analyzing various political systems, ideologies, and histories, and eventually students begin to develop their own political positions. Inspired by a sense of ever-imminent hope, students take up a pedagogy of revolution, where deliberative practices for transforming the social universe of capital are developed and put into practice. (p. 59)

Revolutionary critical pedagogy is thus both an epistemological and an ontological project, which is to say that it is concerned with both understanding the world and transforming it, that is to say, actually engaging in popular, collective struggles against oppression and exploitation.

In an article that served as a sweeping indictment of postmodernism in educational theory and laid out a program of action to reassert critical pedagogy as a dangerous force, McLaren (2005) called on critical pedagogy to “move into the direction of challenging new carceral systems of social control through the development of a critical pedagogy of space” (p. 93).⁴ McLaren calls for critical pedagogues to turn to the work of critical geography “to explore the spatiality of human life and couple this with its

³ Here, again, McLaren's work has been instrumental in establishing connections and forming intellectual and political alliances, as he travels regularly around countries such as China, Venezuela, Turkey, Greece, Mexico, and Colombia (see Ford, 2015b).

⁴ Reprinted in his 2005 book, *Capitalists & conquerors*, this article initially appeared in a 1998 special issue of *Educational Theory* on critical pedagogy. The articles by Lather and Biesta cited in the next chapter are also drawn from this special issue.

historicality-sociality” (ibid.). This follows from the broader call for educational studies to finally make the spatial turn. Unfortunately, however, McLaren’s important call has not yet been taken up in any sustained manner and considerations of space in critical pedagogy remain underdeveloped.

The only article to take up McLaren’s calls specifically is a 2000 article by John Morgan. In this article, Morgan (2000) is excited about the spatial turn in education but worries “that this proliferation of spatial metaphors has blurred the distinctions between different meanings of space” (p. 274). In response to this, he briefly surveys a few different conceptions of space from critical geography, noting that this type of geography is vastly different from how geography is taught in primary and secondary schools. Morgan begins with the work of David Harvey who, Morgan says, has argued that space is the product of power and politics. Harvey only receives a few paragraphs before debates over his work are brought into the conversation. These debates center on the role that class struggle plays in the production of space. The work of Gill Valentine is brought in to demonstrate that public space is produced as heterosexual “through the accumulation of repeated acts, including things such as different-sex couples holding hands as they walk down the street” (p. 279). These varied acts are enacted differently and, moreover, those who are excluded or marginalized through this spatial production make their own interventions, such as organizing gay pride parades. The point here is that space is the product of multiple intersections of power.

The critical pedagogy of space that Morgan proposes has a few tasks, which are primarily related to the understanding of space as socially produced and thus, susceptible to being produced differently. The main idea here is that spaces should be read as “social

texts” (p. 285). He writes, “A critical pedagogy of space would involve analysing examples... to help students recognise the ways in which space is used to dominate and oppress some individuals and groups;” it is also meant to “enable students to consider that there are also geographies of resistance through which people deal with, and resist, oppressive practices” (p. 283). Finally, Morgan insists that local struggles be emphasized, lest class struggle play too determinant a role, for “space is not simply the product of capital and class relationships” and so “we should also take seriously the role of other social relationships in the production of space” (p. 280).

Morgan’s article thus serves as an introductory sketch of some ways that critical pedagogy might begin to consider space. Because of its introductory nature and its article length, however, we don’t get an in-depth examination of any one theory of spatial production. Additionally, the actual engagement between critical pedagogy and space remains fairly superficial; all we get are calls for critical pedagogues to help students understand how power produces spaces and how people resist these spatial productions. These are important calls, to be sure, and they are calls that I attempt to solidify in this dissertation. What I want to do in what follows, however, is lay the groundwork for a revolutionary critical pedagogy *for* space, one that integrates theories and histories of spatial production within the framework of revolutionary critical pedagogy delineated in the previous section. The emphasis that this pedagogy is *for* space is meant to accent an emphasis on ontological production rather than epistemological tarrying. Of course, intellectual investigation is absolutely crucial in what follows. But it is not the end game. Instead, this dissertation works to mobilize critical understandings of space together with revolutionary critical pedagogy to develop a framework for understanding and producing

space in ways that disrupt the contemporary global political-economic order, and hopefully contribute to the overthrow of that order and the reconceptualization and enactment of a different order.

Layout of the dissertation

Chapter Two begins with a historical and theoretical survey of the roots critical pedagogy, a pedagogical orientation that is often called upon but rarely situated in any historical and theoretical depth. I examine the theoretical traditions from which critical pedagogy emerged: the critical theory of the Frankfurt School; Marx's notion of commodity fetishism and later developments on reification and demystification; ideology and reproduction; resistance theory; and the work of Paulo Freire. I then turn to a few of the attacks on critical pedagogy that took place in the 1990s, grouping these around questions of totality, difference, uncertainty, and ignorance. I believe that this is a new moment in which to engage these debates, and I argue that these critiques are important to address. I argue that they have forefronted vital concerns, particularly around difference. This sets the stage for outlining more specifically what revolutionary critical pedagogy entails, which I break down into seven components: centering a critique of political economy; asserting class as an antagonist structural relation; linking the classroom to social movements; moving from epistemology to ontology; taking up the problem of the production of subjectivity; rejecting reformism and opportunism; and keeping in mind the ongoing processes of colonial-settlerism. Through this process I respond to some of the critiques of the late 1990s. For example, I show how considerations of difference are absolutely central to revolutionary critical pedagogy, and this centrality entails that

difference always be thought in relation to political economy, lest difference be absorbed and subsumed within the system. I do argue, however, that the critiques of certainty and ignorance are based on misunderstandings. Drawing on the work of Antonio Negri, I write that critical pedagogy has never argued for *the* truth, but has instead only wished—and claimed—to uncover the social and economic forces behind knowledges.

If revolutionary critical pedagogy is to become a significant antagonistic factor in the present era it has to take space—and its production—seriously. The rest of the dissertation takes on this task. This happens in several steps. Because space is tied up with production and social relations, I turn first to examining the contemporary state of these relations. This is the focus of chapter three. Most critical work in education—including revolutionary critical pedagogy—speaks of the present moment as best defined by the term “neoliberalism.” Yet while neoliberalism is evoked frequently its roots and importance are seldom questioned. In fact, one 2013 study of 110 journal articles in education found that only 29 gave substantive definitions of neoliberalism (at least two paragraphs), 27 gave brief definitions (up to one paragraph), and a staggering 54 gave no definition at all. I begin the chapter, then, by examining exactly what neoliberalism means and how education facilitates and helps reproduce neoliberalism. I then argue that neoliberalism is a necessary yet ultimately insufficient framework for understanding the logics and parameters of contemporary capitalism. Specifically I claim that neoliberalism is helpful for understanding recent shifts that have taken place *within* advanced capitalist states but that it is unhelpful for grasping changes in *global* class and international relations. To account for these changes I introduce the framework of the global class war, which was developed by Sam Marcy in the 1950s. This framework provides a necessary

supplement to neoliberalism because it looks at the global project of the restoration of capitalist class power after the circuit of socialist and national liberation struggles that swept and radically reconfigured the globe between 1945 and 1979-1980. This, I claim, provides sound reason for revolutionary critical pedagogy to center not just on political economy, but on *international* political economy which, in turn, helps guard against reformism and opportunism.

Chapter three is situated at the level of global space. But why is the global is so important, let alone space? It is to these questions that I turn in chapter four, which brings into the conversation the “spatial turn” in education that began with the work of Michael Peters (1996). Whereas most educational research has viewed “globalization,” “neoliberalism,” “post-Fordism,” or the “information economy” as reasons for the spatial turn in social theory, I argue that the spatial turn is really the result of capital’s development. As such, I go back to Marx and Engels and draw out four lines of their thinking that are deeply spatial and hold relevance for the current moment: 1) absolute and relative expansion; 2) the town and country division and antagonism; 3) transportation and communication; and 4) fixed capital and the built environment. This chapter lays bare the deep roots that lie underneath the development of the *global* class war and the important role of the production of space in capitalism. By going into the relationship between capitalist production and the production of space we gain another level of understanding as to why it is that space is so important for capitalism and for resistance to capitalism.

Chapter five homes in on one particularly important spatial formation under the present: the city. As Andy Merrifield (2002) reminds us, “Political struggles always

happen somewhere and at some time, in specific locations, predominantly in cities, given that they are crucibles of power in our society” (p. 15). Cities are where the global contradictions of capitalism are most acute and concentrated; cities are absolutely imperative to the reproduction of capitalism, yet they are also where capitalism is highly vulnerable to disruption and, potentially, overthrow. I begin this chapter with a closer examination of the relationship between capitalism and the city before turning to literature on the right to the city. This literature has only been superficially engaged in critical educational theory, and it has not yet made an entrance into revolutionary critical pedagogy. I take time to trace the development of this literature in the work of Lefebvre, while also leaning on writings by David Harvey, Andy Merrifield, and Don Mitchell. Next I concentrate on some important debates that have taken place over the right to the city, including: what kind of right is it, whose right is it, what exactly is a city, and how does the international division of labor affect struggles for the city? In the concluding section I make explicit the lessons that we learn by placing revolutionary critical pedagogy in a conversation with the right to the city, focusing in particular on the way that struggles in and over the city help us think through the relationship between political economy in difference and can orient us toward the encounter and simultaneity—and the *use* and *use-value* that they necessitate—that always resist within and against the logic of capital. The city is a privileged spatial formation under capitalism and revolutionary critical pedagogy should be involved in conversations and movements for the right to the city. Yet this intervention mustn’t happen uncritically. Teasing out some of the intricacies and complexities of the right to the city will help keep this framework from being reabsorbed into oppressive ways of producing, knowing, and relating.

At this point in the dissertation I acknowledge that I have thus far been concentrating primarily on “revolutionary” and “critical,” and have not yet explored “pedagogy.” Part of the reason for this is because, in order to understand why space is important at all—and for revolutionary critical pedagogy in particular—we have to achieve a deep understanding of the structural relations and the history of spatial production. In other words, just saying that “space matters” isn’t enough. Having laid this groundwork, chapter six takes the *production* of space as a pedagogical problem, a move that not only spatializes educational theory but also educationalizes spatial theory and is oriented explicitly toward ontological transformation. This move takes place by focusing in on Lefebvre’s theorization of the production of space as a potentially revolutionary activity. I situate Lefebvre’s analysis and then take it up as an educational problematic and seek to develop a pedagogy for space. I do this by augmenting Lefebvre’s spatial triad of 1) representations of space; 2) representational spaces; and 3) spatial practice with an educational triad of 1) learning; 2) studying; and 3) teaching. I propose that each component needs to be held in a precarious, contingent, and dialectical relation. To ask more precisely after this process—and the relationship between learning, studying, and teaching in the production of space—I read this pedagogy through two examples. The first is a fairly generic example of the schoolhouse. I ask how the school building can be harnessed as an object of educational intervention. The next example, more specific and timely, is the 2015 Baltimore Rebellion. I read the days leading up to and encompassing the rebellion educationally and spatially.

On audience

The primary audience for this dissertation is the field of revolutionary critical pedagogy, those individuals, groups, and networks who are part of—or at least sympathetic to—this burgeoning tradition. I aim to demonstrate the importance of taking geography and space into account, showing how it is through taking up, occupying, and transforming space that the social relations of production can be radically transformed. In this respect, I mean to be more constructive than deconstructive. In other words, I do not constantly seek out flaws, contradictions, or other inconsistencies within revolutionary critical pedagogy. I am rather concerned with building on the foundation laid by revolutionary critical pedagogues and advancing this work. This does not mean that I hold any punches along the way, of course. For example, the third chapter on the global class war and its critique of the use of neoliberalism will likely be controversial. Defending actually existing socialism isn't the most popular thing to do nowadays, even on the Left. But I don't waste any time presenting arguments *for* exploitation and oppression; I take for granted that the reader understands that exploitation and oppression are bad things that should be eliminated from our world. My intervention is in *how* we can rid the world of these structural components of capitalism with the help of the development and deployment of revolutionary critical pedagogy. However, this dissertation is not a set of prescriptions. Indeed, it only seeks to develop *a* revolutionary critical pedagogy for space.

CHAPTER TWO REVOLUTIONARY CRITICAL PEDAGOGY

Introduction:

One of the most remarkable achievements of the offensive waged by capital against education and the global working class since the 1970s has been the ideological cleaving of politics and education. The nexus between education and politics has always been a central concern and debate for educators, educational theorists, researchers, and policymakers, dating back to Socrates and Plato. Yet contemporary discourse around education—and this is not limited to the discourse pulsing through the corporate mass media, but includes teacher education programs, professional educational organizations, and a variety of academic publishing outlets—is predicated upon the very severance of education from the political. Instead of political concerns over values, directions, goals, and purposes, educational debates are increasingly staged in a highly abstracted economic register. It might be more accurate to say, then, that the political presuppositions of contemporary educational discourse are so well entrenched that they appear to be effaced. That education should be oriented toward the insertion of subjects into the global capitalist political economy is taken for granted not only by right-wing think tanks and venture philanthropists (read: capitalists) like the Walton Family, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, and Edison Schools, but also by liberals like Linda Darling-Hammond (2010) and Diane Ravitch (2014). The latter school only differs from the former in that it wishes to intervene slightly in the global political-economic order in an effort to smooth out growing contradictions and antagonisms. For example, neither Darling-Hammond or

Ravitch want to do away with capitalism (and neither even mention imperialism). They merely want to reduce income inequality.

There remain, however, subversive strands of educational thought and praxis that are being theorized and enacted to expose and attack this tight wedding of education to global capitalism. One of the stands of educational thought and practice that is most subversive to the subjugation of education to global capitalism is critical pedagogy, and it is the purpose of this chapter to explore this educational contestation to inequality and exploitation. Yet this is not an easy task, for several related reasons. One difficulty lies in the fact that critical pedagogy has a nearly 40-year history, and so the mere breadth and depth of the field as a whole can be quite unwieldy. Another difficulty concerns the demarcation of the field of critical pedagogy; the question as to what precisely can be grouped under this signifier. The question, “What is critical pedagogy?” is one that will elicit various and probably irreconcilable answers. The debates that have taken place around and within the field testify to the great instability of the term as a signifier, a discursive formation, and a practice. Jennifer Gore (1993) noted the ambivalence of the term “pedagogy” itself over 20 years ago, preferring instead to write about “pedagogies” in order “to signify the multiple approaches and practices that fall under the pedagogy umbrella” (p. xi). In addition to this multiplicity, however, is the difficulty of attending to the many contradictions and antagonisms that animate these various iterations.

The difficulties of surveying the field of critical pedagogy, then, are historical, categorical, and theoretical. The primary way in which I navigate these difficulties in this dissertation is by being explicit about what I am attending to and what I am not. I only focus in on a select few purposes of and themes and debates within critical pedagogy.

There are a few justifications for this move. The first has to do with the limitations of any dissertation. The second justification is a desire to avoid the danger that Dennis Carlson (1998) identified, of producing yet another a reading of a “critique of Lather’s critique of Giroux’s critique of Ellsworth’s critique of Giroux” (p. 552).

While acknowledging that any origins story is necessarily incomplete, to situate the field as a whole I begin with a brief overview of the origins and development of critical pedagogy, beginning in the 1970s. I spell out the theoretical traditions and concepts from which critical pedagogy emerged, including critical theory and the Frankfurt School, commodity fetishism, reification, and demystification, ideology and reproduction, resistance theory, and the work of Paulo Freire. I then turn to the contemporary manifestation of critical pedagogy with which this dissertation is most interested: *revolutionary* critical pedagogy. Yet before I delve into this iteration of critical pedagogy, I pay some attention to some of the attacks on critical pedagogy that took place in the 1990s, focusing in particular on debates about totality, difference, uncertainty, and ignorance. I do this because revolutionary critical pedagogy has emerged in part as a response to the debilitating effects of these attacks on the field. Thus, when I do turn to explaining what revolutionary critical pedagogy is I am able to better situate the field and to clear up some misconceptions on both sides of the debate. In the final section I delineate seven components of revolutionary critical pedagogy: a critique of political economy; the assertion of class as a structural relation; a move from the classroom to the streets; a move from the epistemological to the ontological; a concern for the production of subjectivity; the rejection of reformism; and the foundational problem of colonial-settlerism.

Foundations of critical pedagogy:

At the most general level of abstraction critical pedagogy is an approach to and a conception of education that categorically and unashamedly acknowledges the political nature of education; pedagogy and politics are seen as indivisible (Kincheloe, 2008). Embracing the notion of education as a profoundly political practice, it is “in one way or another committed to the imperative of transforming the larger social order in the interest of justice, equality, democracy, and human freedom” (Biesta, 1998, p. 499). It is organized around a liberatory socio-political vision, one that is devoid (as much as possible) of oppression, alienation, and exploitation. Endorsing the idea that there is an intimate relationship between means and ends, critical pedagogy at this general level attempts to construct (or deconstruct) a pedagogy that is both consistent with and works toward that liberatory vision.

Critical theory and the Frankfurt School

One of the theoretical origins of critical pedagogy lies in the critical theory of the Frankfurt School (Burbules and Berk, 1999; Gur-Ze'ev, 2005; Kincheloe, 2008). Joe Kincheloe (2008) goes so far as to identify the Frankfurt School as “the foundation” of critical pedagogy (p. 45). Although the Frankfurt School grouped a number of disparate, loosely affiliated thinkers together, members of the school were united by some general, common concerns. For one, the theorists of the Frankfurt School were attempting to rethink Marxism in an effort to overcome what they saw as the limitations of Soviet-style socialism and the economic determinism that they argued dominated much Marxist thought during the mid-20th century. This was ultimately a critique of the Soviet Union's

emphasis on developing heavy industry and concentrating on economic productivity and economic relations at the expense of social relations. The position was essentially that the Soviet Union was developing an economist form of socialism that left capitalist social relations intact inside and outside of the workplace; they were focusing too much on the production and distribution of values, under the erroneous assumption that production and distribution mechanisms and logics would give way to an alternative superstructure, or an alternative set of social relations (e.g., Adorno, 1968; Marcuse, 1985). This critique, I would argue, was enabled by ignoring the historical and political conditions compelling the Soviet Union to focus on production, such as the newly found state's "civil" war (which entailed invasions from 14 different countries) and the general economic backwardness that the country was attempting to overcome.⁵

Frankfurt School theorists were also combatting the rise of positivism in the social sciences. Positivism is, by and large, an epistemological stance that holds that truth can be determined by looking at the "facts" of being. Positivism is closely linked to the Enlightenment and scientific notions of rationality. Rationality and positivism present interpretations as non-ideological, abstracting them from their social and historical contexts. The main critique of positivism is thus that "it recognizes no factors behind the 'fact'" (Giroux, 1983, p. 15). One response to positivism was to argue for the centrality of theory. All scientific observations and experiences must be situated theoretically, this argument goes, as all interpretations are necessarily value-laden; science cannot be severed from politics, ethics, or the social.

⁵ Frankfurt School theorist Walter Benjamin was somewhat of an exception to this particular criticism, owing largely to the influence that Bertolt Brecht had on him.

Economic determinism is a form of positivism in that the relations of production are seen as the “facts” that give rise to reality and truth. If you can uncover and change the relations of production, so it goes, then you can uncover and change reality. Thus, theorists of the Frankfurt School saw themselves as countering the trend of economic determinism by emphasizing and studying the superstructural elements of society and the role that elements such as culture, knowledge, language, and desire play in the maintenance and reproduction of oppression, inequality, and injustice (i.e., capitalist social relations). Many of these elements, such as knowledge and language are intimately connected with schooling and education. This is evidenced by the fact that Peter McLaren (2015), when outlining the major concepts utilized in critical pedagogy for his foundational textbook, *Life in schools*, writes about such concepts as forms of knowledge, culture, cultural forms, hegemony, ideology, and discourse. These concepts help link macro social structures to micro social relations within the classroom and, more generally, in everyday life. The superstructure, therefore, is always viewed in its relation to productive relations, but not in any necessarily determining way. In fact, there is a two-way street between the base and superstructure that is mediated by a dialectic.

Leaving aside the myriad, tired and, I would argue, ultimately distracting debates about base and superstructure—not to mention the way that some Frankfurt School theorists ultimately posited superstructural determinism against economic determinism—critical pedagogy picks up on the idea that educational processes, practices, and modes of engagement play an active role in the production and reproduction of social relations and

social systems.⁶ Critical pedagogy is concerned with the ways that schools and the educational process broadly conceived work to sustain and reproduce systems and relations of oppression. The idea is that, if education is a site for the reproduction of oppression, it can also potentially be a site for the disruption of oppression and even liberation. More specifically, theorists of critical pedagogy are concerned with alleviating or combatting and oppression and human suffering *through* pedagogy. Thus, its attention is focused on both power relations in the classroom, school, and university, and how these power relations connect with broader social structures, including the mode of production. This connection between the classroom and society is definitional of critical pedagogy. As McLaren (2005) writes, “Critical Pedagogy is a way of thinking about, negotiating, and transforming the relationship among classroom teaching, the production of knowledge, the institutional structures of the school, and the social and material relations of the wider community, society, and nation-state” (p. 35). Critical pedagogy finds in the Frankfurt School its legitimation for locating the school and education as sites of social transformation that can actually work to change the base of society because of the importance attributed to the superstructure.

The “secret” of commodity fetishism, reification, and demystification

Key to this process of thought, negotiation, and transformation—and to critical theory altogether—is the notion of demystification, of revealing the fetishization of social relations under capitalism. Demystification is rooted in Marx’s concept of commodity

⁶ As Raymond Williams (1977) tells us, the very strength of Marx’s notion of base/superstructure was because it was “mainly directed against the *separation* of ‘areas’ of thought and activity... and against the related evacuation of specific content... The common abstraction of ‘the base’ and ‘the superstructure’ is thus a radical persistence of the modes of thought which he attacked” (p. 78).

fetishism and the “secret thereof,” which appears at the end of the first chapter of volume 1 of *Capital*. Here, Marx (1867/1967) notes that the “commodity *appears*, at first sight, a very trivial thing, and easily understood” (p. 76, emphasis added).⁷ We walk into the grocery store and see before us a host of commodities. We are not confused. Each has a price, a weight, a size, a package, a list of ingredients, a brand, a category, and so on. We think that we have all of the information that we need about the products. Upon further inquiry, however, Marx finds that the commodity “is, in reality, a very queer thing, abounding in metaphysical subtleties and theological niceties” (ibid.). What is it that is so queer and metaphysical about a loaf of Wonder Bread?

The commodity is a complicated and confusing thing because of the relationship between its form and its content. What the commodity contains is human labor-power; commodities are literally the congealed form of particular socially-useful human labor-powers. Yet this thoroughly subjective content takes an objective form. Commodity fetishism, then, is the way in which

the social character of men’s labour appears to them as an objective character stamped upon the product of that labour; because the relation of the producers to the sum total of their own labour is presented to them as a social relation existing not between themselves, but between the products of their labour. (p. 77)

Stated differently, commodity fetishism is the way in which relations between subjects (i.e., workers) take on the appearance as relations between things. At the grocery store the relations between workers and bosses, unions and CEOs, politics and immigration officials, and so on, are rendered completely invisible through the form of the commodity. These are the true contents of the Wonder Bread, and they are found nowhere on the

⁷ Marx’s *critique* of political economy can in many ways be operationalized as getting underneath the world of appearances to the reality of social relations.

packaging. This is so because the useful labor embedded in the commodity is hidden in the production process and only comes to light, so to speak, through exchange. When I do my weekly grocery shopping, the commodities that confront me in the store *appear* to me as things—as objects with prices—when they are also, and at their heart, products of particular forms of human labor-power. This “mystical veil” (p. 84) is an inescapable dressing of capitalism, particularly in its highly developed, globally networked form.⁸ It is inescapable because, given complex conditions and circuits of production and consumption and the rapid rate at which production and exchange take place, it is impossible for one to know what the conditions of production and exchange were for each commodity. This is heightened more and more as production becomes increasingly fragmented throughout global society.

Georg Lukács picked up on and expanded Marx’s concept of commodity fetishism in his *History and class consciousness*. In this book he develops the concept of reification, a concept that is often deployed yet rarely theoretically situated. For Lukács (1971), the commodity form and its accompanying fetishism structure not just the way that we interact with commodities in a grocery store, but more fundamentally they structure the way that people in capitalism understand themselves and the world. This, he argues, is why Marx began *Capital* with the chapter on commodities; for “the problem of commodities” is “the central, structural problem of capitalist society in all its aspects” (p. 83). Lukács’ reification is in essence Marx’s commodity fetishism—the notion that through the commodity social relations are obscured and presented as relations between

⁸ The fetishism of the commodity is also absolutely necessary for bourgeois political economy to disregard the *value-form*.

objects—extended throughout the totality of capitalist society. This is so because in advanced capitalism the commodity form has “penetrate[d] society in all its aspects,” thereby “remould[ing] it in its own image” (p. 85).

Such a generalization of the commodity structure throughout society has two implications, both of which have to do with rationalization, the increasing role of exchange-value over and above use-value, and the dominance of abstract labor. First, the object of production itself becomes fragmented in time and space through the increasing international division of labor (which, again, deepens the fetishism of the commodity through increasing the complexity of production). Second, the subject engaged in the production process is also fragmented and rationalized; as a result, “human qualities and idiosyncrasies in the worker appear increasingly as *mere sources of error* when contrasted with these abstract special laws functioning according to rational predictions” (p. 89). The human becomes viewed and thought of as a machine or automaton, and any form of difference is seen as an error to be corrected instead of a *human* trait or quirk.

The role of money as a social representation of value is also important to the operation of reification. For, although surplus-value, the lifeblood of capitalism, is produced in the workplace, money and commodities “constitute the pure, authentic, unadulterated forms of capital” because they are the most *immediate*. As a result, “the reified mind has come to regard them as the true representatives of his societal existence” (p. 93). Work becomes equated with the wage, and the reproduction of everyday life becomes distilled to the exchange of the wage for the commodities in the marketplace.

Commodity fetishism and reification are both forms of mystification, or the veiling of social relations. Commodity fetishism is inevitable and inescapable under

capitalism. Only under communism—defined at this point in volume 1 of *Capital* as “a community of free individuals, carrying on their work with the means of production in common, in which the labour-power of all the different individuals is consciously applied as the combined labour-power of the community” (Marx, 1867/1967, pp. 82-83)—can social relations regain their rightful place in our understanding of an experience in the world and with our fellow beings. Critique is important for demystifying these relations under capitalism. It is similar with reification. For Lukács (1971), reification

Can be overcome only by constant and constantly renewed efforts to disrupt the reified structure of existence by concretely relating to the concretely manifested contradictions of the total development, by becoming conscious of the immanent meanings of these contradictions for the total development. (p. 197)

Demystification, or the unveiling of the form of appearances under capitalism, is therefore necessarily an educative process of framing, of rendering social relations visible. More specifically, it is something that is *taught*, and, for Lukács, it is taught by the Party. Demystification as an element of critical pedagogy is thus an approach to working in the superstructure of society to change the base of society, as the Frankfurt School theorists would put it.

Ideology and reproduction

A chief question animating critical pedagogy is: How is it that exploitative and oppressive social relations are reproduced? In capitalism, the question is more specifically: How is it that class subjectivities appropriate to the class structure of capital are produced and reproduced? Critical theory and the Frankfurt School tell us that they are reproduced in the realm of culture, ideas, and knowledge, and commodity fetishism

and reification explain the roots of this reproduction through an examination of the commodity form. A closer examination of *how* this reproduction takes place was performed by Louis Althusser's work on ideology, most notably his famous essay "Ideology and ideological state apparatuses: Notes towards an investigation."

For Althusser (1971/2001), the reproduction of labor-power entails the reproduction of skills, techniques, and knowledges, a reproduction that, under capitalism, "is achieved more and more outside production: by the capitalist education system, and by other instances and institutions" (p. 88). At the same time, the reproduction of labor-power and the capital-labor relation requires:

a reproduction of... submission to the rules of the established order, i.e. a reproduction of submission to the ruling ideology for the workers, and a reproduction of the ability to manipulate the ruling ideology correctly for the agents of exploitation and repression. (p. 89)

The reproduction of labor-power takes place through both repressive state apparatuses and ideological state apparatuses. The former are composed of those traditional elements of the state with which Marxist theory—and, most famously, Lenin—has been concerned, such as the police, army, prisons, and courts. The latter—and this is one of the major contributions of this essay of Althusser's—are composed of institutions such as the family, trade union, media, culture, religion, and *education* (p. 96, emphasis added). Through these institutions, ideology is *negotiated*, and ideology for Althusser "represents in its necessarily imaginary distortion not the existing relations of production... but above all the (imaginary) relationship of individuals to the relations of production and the relations that derive from them" (p. 111). Ideology is *unconscious* in that ideology is not adopted from a detached position; we are *always-already* in ideology.

Or, as Althusser says, “ideology never says, ‘I am ideological’” (p. 118). From even before birth we exist wrapped in a complex network of discourses and institutions that make us intelligible as subjects. In this way, Althusser doesn’t set up ideology against non-ideology. There are instead *different* ideologies for different classes; ideology is a site of class struggle.

Althusser conceives of the French Revolution in part as an “attack on the number-one Ideological State Apparatus: the Church” (p. 102). After the French Revolution the educational apparatus (i.e., the school)—“coupled with the Family” (p. 106)—takes the church’s place as the dominant ideological state apparatus. It is the school that provides the student “with the ideology which suits the role it has to fulfill in class society” (p. 105). Importantly, at the end of this section of the essay Althusser acknowledges “those teachers who, in dreadful conditions, attempt to turn the few weapons they can find in the history and learning they ‘teach’ against the ideology, the system and the practices in which they are trapped” (p. 106). Actually, Althusser not only *acknowledges* these teachers but also hails them as “a kind of hero” (ibid.). This is a crucial moment in the essay, but it is one that is, unfortunately, commonly glossed over. For example, Giroux (1983) makes absolutely no mention of it, and this is what allows him to make the claim that “Althusser has developed a notion of power that appears to eliminate human agency” (p. 82).⁹ Indeed, if Althusser had eliminated agency his essay(s) would not be littered with reference to the class struggle (or, perhaps to be fair, maybe Althusser eliminated *human* agency in order to theorize *class* agency). In any case, Althusser locates the

⁹ The commonness of this misreading makes one wonder just how carefully—or even if—Althusser is read these days. It might be that reading Althusser has been replaced by reading critiques of Althusser.

school as a chief institution that reproduces the ruling ideology, and he leaves open the possibility for teachers to teach against *that* ideology. Critical pedagogy, in this instance, is about fostering and developing those critical teachers in quantity and quality.

Although Althusser is not cited in *Schooling in America*, Samuel Bowles and Herbert Gintis (1976) think more strictly through how and in what forms this ideological reproduction takes place in schools. Thus, the “correspondence principle” is introduced. This principle holds that

The education system helps integrate youth into the economic system... through a structural correspondence between its social relations and those of production. The structure of social relations in education not only inures the student to the discipline of the work place, but develops the types of personal demeanor, modes of self-presentation, self-image, and social-class identifications which are crucial ingredients of job adequacy. Specifically, the social relationship of education—the relationships between administrators and teachers, teachers and students, students and students, and students and their work—replicate the hierarchical division of labor. (p. 131)

Thus, the reproduction of labor-power takes place not just through content but, more importantly, through the social relations of which the school is comprised.

Along with Althusser, Bowles and Gintis have been accused of stripping agency away from students and workers. The claim is that Bowles and Gintis put forward a highly structuralist and determinist account of the relationship between education and capitalist society, whereby schools produce workers directly for the needs of capitalist production and consumption. This account is regularly discredited as depriving students and workers of agency and of discounting resistance and opposition. Ken McGrew (2011) has documented this misreading of Bowles and Gintis, and has concluded that our “determinist” authors have really been used as “a foil for theories of resistance which argue that previous Marxist work failed to understand the role of human agency in social

reproduction” (p. 249). Bowles and Gintis (1976) do see the school as a fairly limited site of potential resistance to capitalism, and thus end their book with a call for “a more general revolutionary movement—a movement which is not confined to schooling, but embraces all spheres of social life” (p. 246). It was as a contribution to this general resistance movement that the book was written.

Theories of ideology and reproduction help critical pedagogy examine the links that school knowledges, rituals, and social relations have with the maintenance and reproduction of capitalism. These links generate new understandings of ways that teachers and educational processes and institutions help reproduce social and production relations. More importantly, they reveal where these links might be vulnerable to subversion—and the teacher is one of these crucial links, as Althusser indicates.

Learning laboring subjectivities

Critical pedagogy was erected on the groundwork laid by what is referred to as the new sociology of education. Emerging in Britain in the 1970s, the new sociology of education studied how educational institutions, processes, and cultures were productive of subjectivities and meanings that corresponded to and resisted capitalist power and social relations. One of the most influential studies emerging out of this context was Paul Willis’ (1977) study, *Learning to labor*. This is a book of ethnographic research on white, male, British working-class students as they transition from the school to the factory. Through observations and interviews, Willis seeks to answer a question emanating from concerns of ideology and social reproduction that Althusser and Bowles and Gintis explored more theoretically: how do working-class students come to accept, and even embrace,

working-class jobs?¹⁰ In answering this question, Willis refuses outright to accept the “gradient model,” which advances the idea of working-class kids “unquestioningly taking on the worst jobs thinking somehow, ‘I accept that I’m so stupid that it’s fair and proper that I should spend the rest of my life screwing nuts onto wheels in a car factory” (p. 1). Through his study, Willis ultimately finds that the counter-culture of working-class youth paradoxically provides a bridge between school and the factory, a bridge that the students-cum-workers not only accept, but actually embrace.

Class relations intersect with teacher-student relations in a particular way to bring about the phenomenon that Willis marks. While in class society education is about the reproduction of social labor-power—and although this is a major reason that the state has historically taken an interest in institutional education (see Malott and Ford, 2015)—the teacher “exerts his social control through an educational, not a class, paradigm” (p. 67). The basic educational paradigm is one of exchange, whereby the teacher has important information and skills to transmit to the student and, in exchange for these qualifications, the student shows respect for the teacher and conforms to her or his expectations. Willis terms the process through which working-class kids reject the basic educational exchange as differentiation. Through differentiation a working-class school counter-culture is developed by drawing upon the larger working-class cultural experience: Neighborhood, street, and the larger symbolic articulations of working class youth cultures supply themes for, and are themselves strengthened dialectically by counter-school culture” (p. 73). The lads reject qualification, which “for them constitute[s] the practical arm of the

¹⁰ Willis’ study is often viewed as a response to the “economic determinism” of Bowles and Gintis. Again, McGrew (2011) wonderfully documents in mischaracterization. See also Gottesman (2013).

power of knowledge as it is institutionally defined” (p. 94). Knowledge and theory are “cissy” traits and are de-valued in relation to manual, physical, *real* labor; *doing* is separated from and valued over *knowing*. Masculinity is associated with independence through manual labor. As opposed to the claustrophobic, unrewarding life of the school, “the working class male world of independence, physicality and symbolic intimidation” is embraced (p. 75). The weekly wage represents financial independence, something that enables the lads to go dancing, play in the street, and take girls on dates. Patriarchy permeates this counter-culture, for it is through the male’s wage that the family is reproduced. Racism is also key to linking the lads’ culture to the workshop floor culture because of the racialization of the division of labor in capitalism.

The counter-culture of the lads is, then, contradictory, and this provides a more nuanced analysis to the work of Althusser and Bowles and Gintis. Willis’ theoretical framework for understanding this contradictory nature is developed through two key terms: penetration and limitation. Penetration refers to the lads’ ability to see through the mystifications of the capitalist education system, such as the notion “that opportunities can be *made* by education” (p. 127), and that qualifications will help one obtain satisfying, “quality” work, and that they are individuals. Instead, the lads know that there is no social mobility through education and that rather than individuals they are members of classes and social groups. These provide insights and potentially potent critiques of qualification, meritocracy, and bourgeois individualism. Further, the lads’ counter-culture “demonstrates that labour power is not a fixed but a variable quantity, and that no matter how it is presented normally or officially the individual has at least some control over its

expenditure” (p. 130). The *value* of labor-power, as will be examined in more detail in chapter 4, is not fixed but is a matter of constant struggle.

During school the lads engage in “guerrilla warfare of the classroom and corridor” (ibid.), and this is precisely about taking control over one’s ability to labor (or not to labor, or to labor differently). There are parallels with this and the workplace, although on the shop floor labor is “more strictly coerced to produce” (ibid.). Finally, the lads’ counter-culture penetrates the reality of *abstract labor*, which for Marx stands opposed to “concrete” or particular labor:

The lads’ indifference to the particular form of work they enter, their assumption of the inherent meaninglessness of work no matter what kind of ‘right attitude’ they take to it, and their general sense of the similarity of all work as it faces them, is the form of a cultural penetration to their real conditions of existence as members of a class. (p. 136)

This last penetration is tied to the lads’ penetration of bourgeois individualism. The lads, in relationship to capitalism, anyway, are not individuals but members of the working class. None of these penetrations, however, are articulated as such. They are rather *performed* through cultural activities and struggles because the lads are not conscious of these penetrations.

The penetrations are limited from turning into *critiques* and, therefore, also from being articulated into *political-economic* struggles. This has to do with what Willis refers to as limitations. One limitation is the absence of a mass political (communist) Party that “attempts to interpret and mobilise the cultural level” (p. 145). Yet more intrinsic to the counter-culture of the working class, on the shop floor, and in the schools are the division between manual and mental labor, sexism, patriarchy, and racism. Each of these limitations obscures and cuts across any truly radical and political critique, preventing

any mobilization against capitalism from occurring and bearing real fruit. Again, Willis might turn to the Party as an organization that militates against these limitations.

One of the main contributions that this work made to critical pedagogy was that it “demonstrate[s] in part that the mechanisms of social and cultural reproduction are never complete and are always faced with partially realized elements of opposition” (Giroux, 1983, p. 100). This is important because critical pedagogy is aimed squarely at the production of subjectivities that are oppositional to the social order. Willis provides critical pedagogy with a study of the promises and dangers of such subjectivities, of how our attitudes and dispositions produced through schooling and society are somewhat ambiguous, holding potential for both revolution and reaction.

Paulo Freire and form

More than any other theorist, educator, or revolutionary, Paulo Freire is credited with being one of the founders of critical pedagogy proper (Kincheloe, 2008; McLaren, 2000). His book, *Pedagogy of the oppressed* (1970/2011) is arguably the best-known work inside and outside of academia that is associated with the field. It is a book born from Freire’s reflections on his work in literacy campaigns, teaching poor peasants in Brazil how to read and write, or how to “name the world” (p. 88). While Freire’s starting point in Latin America makes him somewhat of an exception to the other theorists on which the field draws, Freire spent many years in the U.S. during exile, and his work draws from many of the other theorists already explored (but Freire also brings in Latin American figures like Che Guevera and Fidel Castro).

Freire was jailed in Brazil in 1964 and later exiled following a right-wing military coup in the country. Freire was targeted as a revolutionary educator because of his work with poor peasants. McLaren (2000) gives an example of this work:

In 1962, the town of Angicos, in Rio Grande de Norte, was witness to a remarkable event: Freire's literacy program helped 300 rural farm workers learn to read and write in forty-five days. By living communally with groups of peasants and workers, the literacy worker was able to help campesinos identify generative words according to their phonetic value, syllabic length, and social meaning and relevance to the workers. These words represented the everyday reality of the workers. Each word was associated with issues related to existential questions about life and the social factors that determined the economic conditions of everyday existence. (p. 143)

For Freire, education must be rooted in the daily lives and experiences of students, and it must be oriented toward the transformation of those lives and experiences.

Generative words and, later, themes are extracted from everyday life. One strategy employed in this regard was the codification and decodification process. Codifications are generally photographs or other images that illustrated an everyday barrier or contradiction, but they can also be words or other symbols. In the decodification phase, students are asked to place the codified images in the context of larger historical and social forces, institutions, and processes. Codification is, then, a *representation* of an existential situation and decodification is the critical understanding of that situation (Freire, 1970/2011, p. 105). This process is referred to as *conscientização*, or coming-to-critical-consciousness.

A decisive element to the location and direction of *conscientização* is the pedagogical relationship. This relates to Freire's critique of the banking model of education and to his reconception of the teacher-student relationship. The banking model of education represents a vertical relationship between teacher and student in which the

student is an empty vessel for the teacher to fill with knowledge, information, skills, habits, and so on. Against this, Freire theorized a dialogical relationship between teacher and student, one which is *more*—but, and this is absolutely crucial, not completely—horizontal. In this schema,

The teacher is no longer merely the one-who-teaches, but one who is himself taught in dialogue with the students, who in turn while being taught also teach. They become jointly responsible for a process in which they all grow... Here, no one teaches another, nor is anyone self-taught. People teach each other, mediated by the world, by the cognizable objects which in banking education are “owned” by the teacher. (p. 80)

The teacher does not relinquish authority or power in critical pedagogy, at least in Freire’s version. He later cautioned, “I cannot fall into the type of naïveté that will lead me to think that I am equal to my students” (Freire, 1998, p. 68).

While the pedagogical relationship and process is an important part of Freire’s thought, it has tended to be isolated from Freire’s ideological commitments and it has come to stand in for Freire’s entire work. This may be because the first two chapters of *Pedagogy of the oppressed* are most often emphasized. This is not to say that the dialogical aspect of Freire’s thought is not important to critical pedagogy; indeed it was a vital development in the *form* of critical pedagogy. It is rather to say that Freire’s methodological component of dialogic pedagogy has been substituted wholesale for his broader conceptual work, his vocabularies and theories that generated new understandings of education and revolution. There is nothing inherent in dialogue or codification/decodification that necessarily leads to progressive, critical understandings. For this to happen the codified images must be placed in a particular context by a teacher. McLaren (2015) goes so far as to say that “Political choices and ideological paths chosen

by teachers are the fundamental stuff of Freirean pedagogy” (p. 241). In a related manner, Tyson Lewis (2012) has shown how Freire’s pedagogical thought actually emerged from within Lukács’ theory of the Party as teacher. Lewis suggests that, “Freire, as a close reader of Lukács, furthered his project by providing the pedagogical techniques intoned yet lacking in the vanguardist position” (p. 101). This all reinforces the inseparability of theory and method, or of *critical* and *pedagogy* in Freire’s work, meaning that we cannot “detach the pedagogy of the oppressed as a method from its connections to leadership (and thus the thorny question of Marxist revolution)” (p. 102).

Freire offers critical pedagogy an overall conceptual framework that connects pedagogy to the process of revolution. His

working vocabulary of philosophical concepts and his intercourse of vocabularies from theology to the social sciences enables the world of the oppressed to become visible, to inscribe itself as a text to be engaged and understood by the oppressed and nonoppressed alike. (McLaren, 2000, p. 160)

Further, Freire’s thought (and life) sutures the means and ends of liberation by insisting on a more horizontal relationship between teachers and students. Or, better, it advances a dialectical conception of the teacher and student identity and relationship. Yet this aspect of Freire’s thought raises more problems than it solves. As McLaren notes, Freire’s “pronouncements on pedagogy can be highly frustrating, in that they index important concerns but do not fully provide the necessary theoretical basis for positing more progressive and programmatic alternatives to the theories and perspectives he is criticizing” (p. 164). Thus, Freire is often overplayed in readings and critiques of critical pedagogy, as if his work stands in for the entire educational orientation.

Toward a critical pedagogy

While the brief excurses above into critical theory, commodity fetishism, reification, and demystification, ideology and social reproduction, the new sociology of education, and Freirean thought are certainly not exhaustive, they do draw out some of the main elements of critical pedagogy. In the critical theory of the Frankfurt School critical pedagogy finds its bearings in struggles in and over the superstructure, struggles over cultural formations, discourses, and knowledges. These components of the superstructure are viewed as active—and not merely reactive or determined—agents in the mode of production. Additionally, this body of literature asserts the importance of theory over and against the supposed scientific objectivity of positivism and empiricism. Commodity Fetishism and reification establish the roots of mystifications in the commodity form, demonstrating how our relations to ourselves, others, and the world are covered over and obscured not by an orchestrated act of deception, but by the very structure of capitalist production and exchange. Demystification then takes this fetish as an educational problematic, and Lukács turns it into a question of teaching.

Ideology and social reproduction theories and the new sociology of education examine in more detail the ways that educational processes and institutions so fundamentally work to reproduce unequal and unjust social relations. With these, we discover the links between school processes, institutions, and logics and the reproduction of capitalism. We learn the importance of subjectivity in the formation of and contestation over these links, and attend to the contradictory ways that resistance and reproduction play against each other.

Finally, with Freire we get a broad, unified—although incomplete—pedagogical orientation. Freire provides critical pedagogy with a *pedagogy*, a way of navigating the process of teaching and learning, a dialectical conception of the teacher and student that does not eliminate authority but tampers it a bit. He weds the teaching-learning relationship to critical consciousness and revolutionary transformation and leadership. This existential orientation and pedagogy are generated from the everyday lives and problems of students, and they are guided by the teacher in such a way as to generate new understandings and potential solutions with the student.

In sum, critical pedagogy seeks to deconstruct unequal and exploitative social relations and to reconstruct them in more just ways. This deconstruction and reconstruction composes a single process; as Henry Giroux and Roger Simon (1988) proclaim, “to propose a pedagogy is to construct a political vision” (p. 3). At the most general level, this task is accomplished by linking classroom and school sites, institutions, relationships, and practices to broader structures and relations of power and ideology. Knowledge and discourse, textbooks and curricula, teacher-student relationships, teaching and learning strategies, conceptions of students, classroom and school policies, teacher authority, and literacy practices can be contextualized in their relation to and role in reproducing current political, social, and economic orders. With this critical understanding, alternative knowledges, social relations, and educational projects can be enacted that empower students and teachers to participate in transformational movements. Critical pedagogy shows students “how to become individual and social agents” (Giroux, 2011, p. 13); how “to *name* the world” (Freire, 1970/2011, p. 88). The teacher is, in this

sense, a “transformative intellectual” (Giroux and Aronowitz, 1985) with a political intent and agenda.

The *extent* to which critical pedagogy (and education more broadly) can facilitate a revolutionary transformation is, of course, the subject of much debate. Giroux (1983) wrote that the field “must be viewed as having an important but limited role in the struggle for oppressed groups to reclaim the ideological and material conditions for organizing their own experiences” (p. 237). Regarding the school as a site of such a struggle, Giroux held that they “will have to be seen as only one significant site providing an ‘opening’ for revealing capitalist (and other oppressive) ideologies, and for reconstructing more emancipatory relations” (ibid.). Michael Apple (2005) views the school as a more determining factor, holding that “the educational... system is an exceptionally important element in the maintenance of existing relations of domination and exploitation” (p. 9). One’s position on this question will determine in part to where critical pedagogy should be directed (i.e., the classroom, the streets, social movements) and what it can achieve.

Toward a revolutionary critical pedagogy:

Since the turn of the century, a new wave of critical pedagogy has developed that has been termed *revolutionary critical pedagogy*. This wave has been generated by a return to Marx. While I have already demonstrated critical pedagogy’s roots in Marxism—and what is often referred to as “neo-Marxism”—these roots have tended to lie within secondary Marxist literature on consciousness and ideology, such as that literature produced by the Frankfurt School. By contrast, revolutionary critical pedagogy has

centered Marx's critical of political economy. Ideology, alienation, and other Marxist categories are still highlighted, yet they are always located within Marx's overall political-economic critique. I believe that a major factor contributing to the rise of this wave of critical pedagogy has been the 2007-2008 global economic crisis, which catapulted the contradictions of capitalism into the analytical and agitational spotlight of the left. This could be referred to as an external motivating factor, and in addition to this there was a major internal motivating factor: namely, the domestication of critical pedagogy. Before I turn to revolutionary critical pedagogy I examine this process of domestication. I give an example of the institutionalization of critical pedagogy before moving on to the more interesting critical pedagogy debates of the 1990s.

As the field of critical pedagogy became more and more popular throughout the 1980s and 1990s it also became caricatured and institutionalized. There are debates about how precisely this domestication took place and the extent to which it took place. As already mentioned in the section of Freire, however, critical pedagogy has often been reduced to a method. As McLaren (2005) says:

...at the level of classroom life, critical pedagogy is often seen as synonymous with whole language instruction, adult literacy programs, and new "constructivist" approaches to teaching and learning based on a depoliticized interpretation of Leo Vygotsky's work and a tie-dyed optimism of "I'm okay, you're okay." (p. 83)

Critical pedagogy, on this view, became identified with circle seating, dialogue, and mainstream multiculturalism.

Consider as an example of such domestication a recent article about the use of critical pedagogy in the sociology classroom. Here, critical pedagogy is broken down into four components: 1) "Encourages the eradication of the student-teacher contradiction;" 2)

“Promotes a problem-posing dialogue;” 3) “Fosters epistemological curiosity in both teachers and learners;” and 4) “Strives for praxis: reflection and action of the social world in order to transform it” (Fobes and Kaufman, 2008, pp. 26-27). There is no mention of oppression or exploitation, the commodity form, revolutionary leadership, and so on. This dilution of critical pedagogy becomes more evident in the “concerns” that the authors have about the use of critical pedagogy. Most egregiously, they relay a concern about the “free-rider problem.” This “problem” allegedly results from critical pedagogy’s encouragement of group work. In group work, they say, there will be “free-riders,” or “students who benefit from group grades without doing their fair share of the work” (p. 28). This concern is certainly a far stretch from critical pedagogy’s concern with critiquing and overthrowing capitalism and other systems of oppression. It is even a far stretch from the authors’ stated interpretation of critical pedagogy; it’s hard, for example, to see how this concern about “free-riders” benefitting from group grades really works against the student-teacher contradiction.

Another factor that has contributed to the taming of critical pedagogy is the postmodern/poststructural turn in educational theory. This is, however, really tricky territory into which to enter. First, postmodernism and poststructuralism, while often conflated, are two different (but related) theoretical movements. Second, within each of these movements there are countless disagreements, tensions, and contradictory formulations. Both of these problems are compounded when these theoretical orientations are transplanted into education. Tracing these debates, then, can quickly devolve into a game of who said what using what theory in what journal in response to X’s critique of Y’s critique of Z. Additionally, these debates were often deeply personal.

In what follows I turn to some of these heated and intense internal critiques of critical pedagogy that transpired predominantly in the 1990s. It is absolutely not my intention here to provide an encyclopedic reading of these debates, for such an effort would surely require a dissertation of its own.¹¹ Nor do I intend to offer up some sort of balance sheet, as if these problems could be neatly shored up and set aside once and for all. There are two reasons that I refrain from going too in depth here. First, I am not convinced that the *specifics* of these debates hold much relevance for contemporary educational theory. In fact, many of the critics haven't engaged in any dialogue with the field for at least a decade (although they still make the regular dig here and there). Second, however, all of the specifics of these debates aren't relevant to the present work; this isn't a dissertation about the critical pedagogy debates.

Additionally, I should state that in revisiting these debates I do not intend to fortify along the same old lines; the postmodernists over here, the Marxists over there. Indeed, one of the benefits of the current historical moment is that there is an opportunity for something of a rapprochement. Such a move is not a dominant concern of mine in this dissertation, but it is nonetheless present. As such, after framing and reading the critiques of critical pedagogy, drawing out some of the main problematics struggled over, I turn to some of the proposals that were generated in their wake. Not all of these critiques have contributed to the domestication of critical pedagogy, and even theorists like McLaren point regularly to the contributions made by these critiques. I also keep these critiques

¹¹ Dennis Carlson (1998) notes that there has already been a "cottage industry" of books and articles spawned from these debates. Another reason that I don't go into these debates exhaustively here is because there is not only the issue of what the critiques were, but to what incarnations of critical pedagogy they were directed.

and proposals in mind as I move forward in updating revolutionary critical pedagogy throughout the rest of the dissertation.

Totality and difference

One of the main points of contention over the usefulness and theoretical consistency of critical pedagogy as a liberatory philosophical praxis concerns its relationship to Marxism. Jennifer Gore (1993), for example, writes that, although critical pedagogy has broadened its scope as to who should be empowered and toward what ends, the field “still demonstrates a primary concern for struggles against the evils of capitalism” (p. 99). Marxism is, on this view, seen as a “totalizing” discourse, which is to say, “as a movement of controlling, labelling, and classifying which denies its complicity and investment in dichotomy at the expense of the Other” (Lather, 1991, p. 24). Marxism then is viewed as a master discourse or grand narrative that seeks to subsume every ontological and epistemological phenomenon within its system. As Awad Ibrahim (2007) writes, “There is a clear language (unfortunately, that of the classic Marxist critique) for locating and subsuming any discussion of difference under class struggle” (p. 94). For some critics, even so much as an *emphasis* on Marxist political economy represents “a homogenizing address and a totalizing politics that offers global political solutions to humanity in a way that homogenizes social bonds” (Lather, 1998, pp. 491-492).

While Marxism isn't her stated object of critique Elizabeth Ellsworth's (1989) famous essay, “Why doesn't this feel empowering? Working through the repressive myths of critical pedagogy” ultimately takes aim at alleged universalist Marxist notions of class struggle. Ellsworth argues instead for a locally rooted pedagogy of difference.

She argues overall “that key assumptions, goals, and pedagogical practices fundamental to the literature on critical pedagogy... are repressive myths that perpetuate relations of domination” (p. 298). In particular she critiques notions of transformation, rationality, empowerment, voice and dialogue, and subjectivity present in critical pedagogy literature.¹² Overall, the critique leveled is based upon what she sees as decontextualized, ahistorical, and humanist-universalist assumptions undergirding critical pedagogy “prescriptions” as experienced through her “facilitating” (read: not teaching) a course on media and race.

Critical pedagogy wants to transform the present order. Yet what precisely is this transformation *toward*? Ellsworth finds that this transformation is toward abstract, decontextualized signifiers such as “radical democracy” and “social justice” (p. 301). Moreover, the deliberation of what transformative goals to work towards insists upon rationality, which “has operated in ways that set up as its opposite an irrational Other” (ibid.). Because rationality is tied to the Enlightenment, she argues that “the myths of the ideal rational person... have been oppressive to those who are not European, White, male, middle class, Christian, able-bodied, thin, and heterosexual” (p. 304). Ellsworth believes that critical pedagogy wants debate that is “‘public’ or ‘democratic’ in the sense of including the voices of all affected parties and affording them equal weight and legitimacy” (p. 301). This is an impossible project, for her, given the notion of rationality upon which it rests.

¹² For this study Ellsworth reviewed over 30 articles published between 1984-1988 in leading education journals.

Transformation necessitates an empowered populace, and Ellsworth is skeptical as to the empowerment offered by critical pedagogy. She reads empowerment as the process of instilling in students rationality and reducing or redefining teacher authority. Critical pedagogues, she writes, have engaged in all sorts of acrobatics to deal with this particular problem. Across these acrobatics, however, the teacher is ultimately the one with the power and knowledge, as the teacher is the one who helps students place their experiences and lives in perspective, helping subjugated knowledges emerge. This is a problematic, if not impossible task, because teachers are not free of their own “learned and internalized oppressions” (p. 308). Relatedly, Ellsworth troubles critical pedagogy’s insistence upon dialogue and its emphasis on student voice. Again, this relates to the different subject positions teachers and students can occupy. Ellsworth remarks that she, as a white woman, cannot “unproblematically ‘help’ a student of color to find her/his authentic voice as a student of color (p. 309). There is also skepticism of the desire for the expression of the Other¹³ and an objection to the idea that those are “voiceless somehow lack agency” (p. 312).

The conception of empowerment and the understanding of power upon which it rests are taken up more explicitly in Jennifer Gore’s (1993) book, *The struggle for pedagogies*. Gore contends that critical pedagogy operates on an understanding of “power as property.” Such an understanding is implied in the very word “empowerment,” for “to em-power suggests to give power, to confer power, to enable the use of power” (p. 95). We can consider, for example, some formulations by Freire. For Freire, “the dominated

¹³ This critique is expanded in Allison Jones (1999) and explored in Ford (2014a)

classes can determine the contours of the dominant classes only when they rediscover power by *taking it* from them (Freire and Faundez, 1989, p. 81, emphasis added). In *Pedagogy of the oppressed*, Freire (1970/2011) goes so far as to say that the oppressors have the power to deny the oppressed “the right to say their own word and think their own thoughts... for to do so would mean either that they had relinquished their power to dominate... or had lost that power” (p. 126).

Ellsworth’s (1989) critique of empowerment is that it is addressed in “ahistorical and depoliticized abstractions,” which thereby defines empowerment “in the broadest possible humanist terms.” This definition, she argues, “fails to challenge any identifiable social or political position, institution, or group” (p. 307). Gore’s (1993) focus, by contrast, is that empowerment relies on the modern operation of power, in which power is something that exists “out there” and the dominant groups have it and the dominated groups do not. Fore exposes and then challenges this conception of power by calling on Foucault who, in his critique of modern Marxist projects, interprets power not as a property to be possessed, transferred, or refused, but rather as a *relation* that exists only in circulation. There is no power, in other words, that exists apart from power relations, which take place necessarily between subjects and between subjects and institutions. Power, therefore, is certainly struggled over, but it is never taken.

Another chief tension has been the utilization of truth and knowledge in critical pedagogy. Nicholas Burbules and Rupert Berk (1999) argue that in critical pedagogy “there is a givenness to what a ‘critical’ understanding should look like that threatens to become its own kind of constraint” (p. 60). Critical, they say, is another word for the correct understanding of a given situation. They point to Freire’s use of the term

“decodification,” which they believe denotes a process of unmasking ideological mystifications in order to *reveal reality as it really is*. This is congruous with a critique that Gert Biesta (1998) makes. For Biesta, demystification, as the production of true knowledge corresponding to reality, is an impossible task. More specifically, Biesta questions “whether there is any reason to believe that the knowledge produced by the criticalist is itself uncontaminated by the operations of power” (p. 506). Knowledge is always infused with power, it is always power/knowledge, and thus demystification—as the untangling of knowledge from power, or of truth from the present order of things—is impossible.

Uncertainty and ignorance

Because prescriptions are viewed in this literature as inherently violent and exclusionary, as acts that silence and subsume differences, and because the literature rejects universality and generalizability for the same reasons, it can be difficult to discern precisely what should be done after reading these critiques (other than generating more critiques, of course). Sandy Grande (2004) refers to this as “negative pedagogy,” one more identifiable by what it stands against than what it stands for” (p. 22). While not in wholesale disagreement with Grande, I do read some sort of positive pedagogy into these critiques. I suggest that against the allegedly totalizing claims of Marxist-inspired critical pedagogy, critics have embraced and called for pedagogies of uncertainty, openness, contingency, impossibility, and ignorance.

For example, Ellsworth (1989) recommends a “pedagogy of unknowability,” that is, a pedagogy that embraces the partiality and incompleteness of subjects and groups; a

pedagogy that allows for different, competing, and contradictory forms of knowledge. Such a position acknowledges not only the ignorance of each subject, but also the ignorance of the teacher in that “there are things that I as professor could *never know* about the experiences, oppressions, and understandings of other participants in the class” (p. 310). This pedagogy is contextually and contingently located, and ultimately uncertain of its destination. Ellsworth writes that in her course students formed affinity groups based on their subject positions. The formation of these groups changed the goal of the course from “building democratic dialogue between free and equal individuals” to “building a coalition among the multiple, shifting, intersecting, and sometimes contradictory groups carrying unequal weights of legitimacy within the culture and the classroom” (p. 317). The unknown and the unknowable, for Ellsworth, are not as dangerous as the “social, political, and educational projects that predicate and legitimate their actions on the kind of knowing that underlies current definitions of critical pedagogy” (p. 320).

Certain only that there can be no certain goals of transformation—and if that seems like a contradiction it’s because it is—Lather (1998) endorses a praxis that “is about ontological stammering, concepts with a lower ontological weight, a praxis without guaranteed subjects or objects, oriented toward the as-yet-incompletely thinkable conditions and potentials of given arrangements” (p. 495). This praxis is located in aporias of being and it is generated from the impossible possibilities immanent in the present. These locations and generations are repressed, Lather argues, in critical pedagogy’s need for certainty. In a similar vein, Gore (1993) outlines what she calls a “radical pedagogy.” What is perhaps most fundamental in the suggestions that make up

this pedagogy is her call for a move to ethics, understood as an inquiry into self-relation and the production—or as Foucault put it, the care—of the self. The point is to look less at “the ways in which we act on others” and more at “the ways we act on ourselves” (p. 131). Through this move, Gore argues, “we confront the technologies through which we make ourselves into subjects, through which we participate in our own subjectification” (p. 155). While Gore’s proposals are actually a bit more concrete than Lather’s or Ellsworth’s, they have in common an insistence upon the contextuality of critical teaching as well as a focus on micro-resistances.

Biesta (1998) advances the position that critical pedagogy should embrace the impossibility of demystification. This impossibility opens up the possibility of the counter-practice of *transgression*. Transgression is “the experimental illumination of limits,” the task of which is “to show (to prove, as Foucault says) that the way things were was only one (limited) possibility” (p. 507). Thus, transgression isn’t necessarily positive, it is merely a revealing, an opening; “it reveals one other possible power/knowledge constellation” (ibid.). Crucially, Biesta’s formulation does not end with this opening. He rather insists that a value judgment be made. Critical pedagogy is, after all, an explicitly political project with explicit political commitments. When asking “if critical pedagogy needs to be *grounded* in a historical materialist approach” and if it “need[s] a set of standards... a criterion, a normative reference, a utopia,” Biesta responds: “In a certain sense, the answer to this question has to be an unqualified ‘yes’” (p. 508). These normative, political commitments, however, have to remain open.

Marx is back: Political economy, rent, and the distilling of class

Again, not all of the critiques just explicated have been attributed to the domestication and weakening of critical pedagogy. It is rather those critiques—or, to be most fair, some aspects of those critiques—that have retreated wholesale from the project of revolution that have contributed to the taming of critical pedagogy. In particular, Ellsworth and Lather, while they offer important reminders about the opacity and uncertainty of the subject, the Eurocentricity of rationality, and danger of dialogue, retreat to what I would argue is ultimately a defeatist insistence that the best we can do is tweak oppression and exploitation instead of dismantling them altogether. Or, to be fair, it may be that they do believe we can finally end oppression and exploitation, they just choose not to write about it and instead focus on all of the problems with such attempts. McLaren (2005) is worth quoting at length here when he writes that because many of these critiques

...operate from a theoretical terrain built upon a number of questionable assumptions—that is, they view symbolic exchange as taking place outside of the domain of value; privilege structures of deference over structures of exploitation and relations of exchange over relations of production; emphasize local narratives over grand narratives; encourage the coming to voice of the symbolically dispossessed over the transformation of existing social relations; reduce models of reality to historical fictions; abandon the assessment of the truth value of competing narratives; replace the idea that power is class-specific and historically bound with the idea that power is everywhere and nowhere—they end up advancing a philosophical commission that propagates hegemonic class rule and reestablishes the rule of the capitalist class. (pp. 83-84)

Note—and this is absolutely crucial—that McLaren is *not* arguing that concentrating on symbolic exchange, structures of deference, local narratives, and subjugated knowledges is incorrect. It is rather the privileging of these elements *at the expense of* and *disconnection from* an overall critique of political economy. When educational theory makes such sacrifices it can all too easily be subsumed within global capitalism, either

augmenting the system and/or contributing to its optimum functioning, bringing more differences into its logic.

David Harvey's (2001) work linking culture and rent provides a compelling example of the ways that differences thought outside of political economy can be subsumed within global capitalism. Harvey begins by noting that it is now commonsense that culture is and can be commodified. Yet how does this commodification take place when culture is something that is directly lived (as opposed to, say, worn or eaten)? To answer this question he turns to Marx's theory of rent. Rent is treated specially by Marx (1894/1981) in the third volume of *Capital* because "Landed property presupposes that certain persons enjoy the monopoly of disposing of particular portions of the globe as exclusive spheres of their private will to the exclusion of all others" (p. 752). This makes rent unique. Monopoly is the basis of rent, but there are a few different ways that rent arises. The first has to do with differences in the quality or characteristics of land, such as when a plot of land with high fertility—due either to technological or natural means—yields higher levels of productivity. The second has to do with centrality, or locational advantages, such as when a piece of land is positioned near a bustling part of a city or near a transportation hub.

Both forms of rent can be socially produced. Harvey (2001) argues that monopoly rents "are as much 'an effect of discourse' and an outcome of struggle as they are a reflection of the qualities of the product" (p. 401) or service produced on or through a plot of land. By demonstrating how monopoly rent connects with culture Harvey writes "that capital has ways to appropriate and extract surpluses from local differences, local cultural variations and aesthetic meanings of no matter what origin" (p. 409). This is

precisely how tourism generates profits, through “claims to uniqueness, authenticity, particularity and specialty” (p. 404). The music industry is another case in point of a sphere of production that is able to appropriate various local cultures to create “unique” (i.e., monopolizable) commodities.¹⁴ It is along these lines that differences detached from a critique of political economy can be absorbed into capitalism, advancing and even perfecting it.

At first blush it might not appear at all that considerations of class have disappeared from critical pedagogy or critical education more generally. After all, terms like “inequality” and “poverty” are still major concerns from educational administration to curricular design. With the world still wandering through the disarray and tragedy brought about by the 2007-2008 financial crisis, and with the various global resistance movements that have arisen in its wake, educational researchers and theorists have to take economics, and even class, into consideration. While this is true to some extent, it has been done in a mystified manner.

One of the starkest representations of this inadequacy is drawn from the larger realm of political economics: Thomas Piketty’s *Capital in the 21st century*. This book bemoans (some of) the *effects* of capitalism without ever addressing the structures of capitalism, or the *causes* of those effects. In educational research this mystification takes the form of neo-Weberian conceptions of “social class,” or what Paula Allman, Peter McLaren, and Glenn Rikowski (2005) refer to as the “box people” concept. This refers to

¹⁴ However, there is a contradiction here because capital is, at base, a homogenizing field, in which everything is exchangeable; there is thus a contradiction between particularity and universality. As Harvey (2001) writes: “The search for it [monopoly rent] leads global capital to value distinctive local initiatives... It also leads to the valuation of uniqueness, authenticity, particularity, originality and all manner of other dimensions to social life that are inconsistent with the homogeneity presupposed by commodity production” (p. 409).

the grouping of people according to income, consumption power, and social status. In other words, in this schema class is determined by checking off boxes on some form around such categories as “household income.” In fact, oftentimes the term “class” is completely eclipsed by reference to income, in which “low income” replaces “working class.” According to Dave Hill and Mike Cole (2001), there are three problems with the move toward “social class:” 1) it denies the presence of the capitalist class; 2) it hides the antagonism between the working and capitalist classes; and 3) it obscures, fragments, and divides the working class. Thus, neo-Weberian talk of social class represses and denies the class antagonism running through and producing society; capital is removed from analytic purview.

What revolutionary critical pedagogy has not responded to is the charge of certainty. This stems from the critique of demystification (Biesta, 1998; Burbules and Berk, 1999). Demystification is *not* about revealing The Truth about something that was previously mystified and therefore false. Antonio Negri (2014) presents three reasons why such an understanding is incorrect. First, in Marxism fetishism and mystification are *economic* and not abstract categories. Second, mystifications can indeed be true in the sense that we live and breathe them, and that they in many ways can define the parameters of our being. Third, “the process of demystification is none other than the revelation of the [class] interests behind an affirmation” (pp. 279-280). Thus, the revolutionary critical pedagogue doesn’t have some special access to the ultimate truth or the final story, and neither does she discover this story with the oppressed. Rather, the act of revolutionary critical pedagogy uncovers the class forces operating in a given situation.

Toward a revolutionary critical pedagogy

Now that we have reviewed some of the theoretical and historical contexts out of which revolutionary critical pedagogy has emerged, I'd like to turn specifically to an explication of the field. Revolutionary critical pedagogy, pivoting as it does on a hardened critique of political economy begins with analysis and critique of the material production and reproduction of life. What I want to do in this section is layout some of the components of revolutionary critical pedagogy, and I base this primarily on the work of Peter McLaren, who has been the leading proponent of this variant of critical pedagogy.

The first point I wish to draw on concerns the primacy of political economy within educational theory and practice. It is necessary to begin here not only because this is a foundational component but also because it has been the cause of unfortunate caricaturing and unnecessary standstills and the victim of misleading critiques. To affirm the primacy of political economy is *not* to jettison concerns of race, gender, sexuality, ability, nationality, ethnicity, or any other form of difference. It is rather to maintain that these differences must always be understood in relation to the mode of production, to the ways in which we produce and reproduce the conditions of our existence. These differences themselves are always linked to class formations, keeping in mind that class is a *process*, a *relation*, and a *relationship*, and not a thing. Difference, then, must "be understood as the product of social contradictions and in relation to political and economic organization" (Scatamburlo-D'Annibale & McLaren, 2004, p. 185). It is the mode of production that determines the manner in which values, symbols, and signs are produced, distributed, and realized throughout society, and in this way the mode of production as a conductor of the ever-changing ensemble of differences. This is not to say that the mode of production *exhaustively* determines the logics of other axes of

oppression, for these axes “do often take on a life of their own” (McLaren, 2015, p. 217). It is rather to say that capital and class struggle largely set the coordinates of these logics as the capitalist system is a totality, one that sets limits even on non-capitalist social and economic relations. As such, one of the reasons for placing as central a critique of political economy is that capital is a unifying relation that incorporates, allows for, and produces differences; class struggle is a “generative matrix,” one “that helps structure and shape the particularities of other antagonisms. It creates their conditions of possibility” (ibid.). More to the point, McLaren and Farahmandpur (2005) write that oppression along the lines of identity “may therefore be said to be conditioned by class struggle but not determined by it” (p. 17).

Second, revolutionary critical pedagogy reasserts class not as a label for different income brackets or a particular social status but instead as a structural antagonistic relation that is fundamental to capitalism; it is the relation that produces all value and the value-form itself. Put quite simply, if not just a bit reductively, one’s class is determined by one’s relationship to the means of production. The capitalist class lives by owning while the working class lives only through selling its labor-power to the capitalist. Yet this labor-power must be of a socially-useful kind, which means that it must be able to create particular use-values for society that can be exchanged. This labor-power, importantly, is not found ready made, but is actively and socially produced through schooling, training, and education, and this is an imperative location for the potentiality of revolutionary critical pedagogy. Glenn Rikowski (2004) has identified the social reproduction of labor-power as the weakest link in the capitalist chain. The productive consumption of labor-power in the production process is the means by which all value is

created. However, because labor-power is embodied in the subject it is “an aspect of personhood, and hence under the sway of a will that is potentially hostile to the social domination of capital in education, and indeed the whole of social life” (p. 574).

As class is a structural relation it is not an identity. Revolutionary critical pedagogy works to *abolish* class and the class relation, and this is another helpful way to think through the difference between class and other forms of identity. It is often said of movements based around identity that they do not wish a world without identity but one in which identity doesn't imply hierarchical differentiations. Feminists, for example, fight for a world not without gender but a world without gender oppression. Disability activists do not fight for a world without differences in ability but a world in which those differences don't prohibit and exclude anyone. This is not the case with class, for class *is* a hierarchical differentiation. It makes no sense to say that we want a world not without class but in which class doesn't make a difference.

The third aspect of revolutionary critical pedagogy is that it is not limited to the classroom. In fact, one of the invigorating maneuvers that this pedagogy has made has been the call to move from the classroom to the barricades, wherever those barricades are at the time. This is a praxis-oriented approach, one that “bridges the gap between critical knowledge and social practice” (McLaren, 2015, p. 26). The barricades toward which this pedagogy is directed are thrown up on global streets and cities across throughout the world. For example, Nathalia Jaramillio, Peter McLaren, and Fernando Lázaro (2011) recently examined factories in Argentina that were occupied by workers, students, and artists. They studied these factories as spaces where revolutionary critical pedagogy is taking hold and being advanced. Workers refused to leave the factories when they were

shut down and transformed these into generative pedagogical sites. Through this process artists, educators, students, and workers “began to see themselves as cultural workers, as public pedagogues, as subjects of social transformation who shared in a vision and struggle to occupy and recuperate social, cultural and pedagogic spaces of factory life” (p. 748).

The extension of critical pedagogy across all sectors and spaces of society also helps wrest the praxis and philosophy from its confinement on the register of epistemology. As McLaren (2005) has written, critical pedagogy “needs to be made less informative and more performative” (p. 96). While demystification and the examination and generation of knowledges are necessary, they are not in themselves sufficient. The fourth element of revolutionary critical pedagogy is therefore the fact that it also operates at the level of ontological production. In this it aims to generate new social relations and practices. Hinging on a critique of the present order it also moves toward imagining and enacting new futures, insisting upon the endless process of becoming (Malott and Ford, 2015).

Fifth, revolutionary critical pedagogy is particularly concerned with the production of subjectivity. Capital permeates not just our time in the workplace; its reach is much more inclusive, it structures our very being, our ways of understanding ourselves and our relationship with ourselves and others in the world. This pedagogy specifically works toward the production of subjectivities that are antagonistic to capital and its attendant social relations. As McLaren (2000) notes, “the struggle against capitalism in essence becomes the struggle to create resistant subjectivities through ideology critique and counterhegemonic praxis” (p. 106). Elsewhere, McLaren and Farahmandpur (2001)

have written that “it is the task of the critical pedagogue to identify alternative subject positions” (p. 145) that students and teachers might take up. This is a strong indication that revolutionary critical pedagogy is not a form of economism, as subjectivity is seen as a determinant historical and social force. Jason Read (2003) helps to demonstrate the extremely productive role of subjectivity in economic relations and socio-economic transformation. He writes that, while subjectivity depends upon “the ensemble of relations that make it possible,” subjectivity itself is a determinant factor in the formation of that ensemble: “It is not the same subject that dissolves the old mode of production and produces a new one” (p. 25). Following Althusser, Read refers to this as the *effectivity* of subjectivity.

One of the characteristics that makes this particular movement of critical pedagogy *revolutionary* is its rejection of reformism, and this is its sixth component. This does not mean that it rejects reforms themselves. To be sure, reforms within the current system—the lessening of oppression, calls for inclusion, and a lowered rate of exploitation—must be demanded, won, defended, and advanced. But they must not be seen as ends in themselves, but rather as temporary gains that work to galvanize a broader and more militant movement. *Reformism* is when reforms become the end-game of a project, which ultimately works to perpetuate relations of domination. This was one of Lenin’s most scathing critiques of the Second International during the First World War, what is referred to in communist history as the “great betrayal.” This betrayal is what led Lenin to split from this organization. Most of the prominent members of the Second International had pledged to oppose supporting any inter-imperialist war at separate conferences in 1907 and 1912. Yet when war credits came up for a vote in states that

socialist parties had representatives in, nearly every single one voted in favor of the war. The Bolsheviks in Russia were the only exception. Lenin (1920/1965) argued that this betrayal had material, economic, and systemic roots. He believed that monopoly profits extracted by imperialist powers, those profits “obtained over and above the profits which capitalists squeeze out of the workers of their ‘own’ country” made it “*possible to bribe* the labour leaders and the upper stratum of the labour aristocracy” (p. 9) so that they would unite with their exploiters in their own country against their allies in other countries. In other words, some workers and socialist groups in imperialist countries were won over to the side of their national bourgeoisie by being offered incentives, like higher wages or the ability to keep their party offices and newspapers. Reformism can thus be defined as sacrificing the gains of the entire working class for the short-term gains of a particular section of the working class; the class *snuggle* in lieu of the class *struggle*, as we say.

As I am writing about revolutionary critical pedagogy in the United States, it is absolutely paramount that the “Indian question” be addressed. This question has been forefronted most richly by Sandy Grande, particularly in her book *Red pedagogy*. The United States is a colonial-settler nation, and this process is ongoing; it takes place militarily, juridically, culturally, linguistically, and educationally. Regarding the educational component of this process, Grande (2004) notes that “indoctrination to capitalist logic [was] an explicit aim of Indian education” (p. 14). Indigenous peoples were literally kidnapped and forced into boarding schools where they “were subjected to English-only and Anglo-centric curricula and to a cocurriculum that incorporated paramilitary structures of forced labor and ‘patriotic’ propaganda” (ibid.). The point

about forced labor is important because the relationship between the settler-colony and the subjected peoples is characterized by *exploitation* and not just *domination*. In other words, settler-colonialism is about the exploitation of a people's labor, land, and resources. Revolutionary critical pedagogy in the U.S. thus has to begin by recognizing this ongoing colonization and engaging in a process of decolonization, attending to the different ways in which different groups in the U.S. are subjected to capitalist exploitation and oppression.

Conclusion

Tracing the field of critical pedagogy is a difficult intellectual task as the field is something of a melting pot of different theoretical and disciplinary traditions and political movements. Further, the field of critical pedagogy was never able to solidify itself in any formal way; struggles over just what critical pedagogy is have always littered the field. Ultimately the main unifying thrust of critical pedagogy is that it aims to deconstruct unjust and oppressive social relations and then reconstruct them in more just and less oppressive ways. That said, in this chapter I have surveyed and threaded together the origins of critical pedagogy, from the critical theory of the Frankfurt School to commodity fetishism and reification, and from ideology and social reproduction to resistance theory and the work of Paulo Freire. This story tells of an educational project that has one foot in the base and one in the superstructure.

Revolutionary critical pedagogy represents a promising educational challenge to the contemporary political, economic, and social order. The domestication and taming of critical pedagogy is countered through recentering political economy; asserting class as

an antagonistic structural relation; linking the classroom and educational sites and institutions to global struggles taking place in streets, factories, and cities all over the place; refusing to remain at the level of epistemological critique and venturing into the realm of ontological transformation; concentrating on the production of subjectivity; rejecting reformism and opportunism; and militating against ongoing forms of colonization. Having laid this groundwork, however, it is now crucial to ask after the particular contours of global capitalism that revolutionary critical pedagogy seeks to intervene in and ultimately overturn. It is this question that I turn to in the next chapter.

CHAPTER THREE
 EDUCATION, NEOLIBERALISM, AND THE GLOBAL CLASS WAR,
 OR, THE 20TH CENTURY IS NOT YET OVER

“Everything under heaven is in utter chaos; the situation is excellent.”
 - Mao Tse-Tung

Introduction:

Critical pedagogy is an intervention in the present order of things, a force of contestation that not only insists that there are alternatives to present social formations but, and more importantly, develops visions of what those alternatives might look like (or at least some elements of what they entail) and additionally formulates ways in which we can teach, learn, study, and struggle ourselves toward those alternatives. As such, critical pedagogy must have an adequate understanding of the current moment, of the contours of present-day life, of the determinations of our time. Such an understanding of the determinations of our time first demands that we grasp the historical forces and events that have placed us here, those “circumstances directly encountered, given and transmitted from the past” (Marx, 1852/1972, p. 15). This chapter works to construct a narrative of the determinations of contemporary critical pedagogy, one that seeks to correct an overemphasis on neoliberalism by asserting the *primacy of the international situation*.

I begin with an exploration of the dominant understanding of the present in critical education and critical pedagogy: neoliberalism. To do this I lean heavily on the work of David Harvey, as this work has been the most influential in and beyond education. I then move to examine the relationship between neoliberalism and education in the U.S. I argue that there are three ways that education facilitated and continues to reproduce the neoliberal order. First, education represents a means by which the

production and dissemination of neoliberal ideology takes place. Second, education represents a vast public good that could be—and is—made subject to privatization and deregulation, thereby being forced into the free market. Third, schools are important sites where neoliberal subjectivities are produced; that is to say, it is largely in and through schools that particular subject forms that are adequate to the demands of neoliberal life take shape.

Next, I contend that neoliberalism is a necessary but, by itself, insufficient framework for understanding contemporary global power dynamics. Neoliberalism, I argue, is useful for demonstrating the reconfiguration of capitalist class power *within* capitalist states. However, it does not appropriately account for changes in global class and national relations. In order to account for such changes I introduce the concept of the global class war, which was first articulated by Sam Marcy in the 1950s. Based on this framework, I define our contemporary moment as one that is dominated by global counterrevolution. Such an appraisal might first seem dramatic or even pessimistic, for there are surely promising sparks of uprisings routinely occurring, flickers of protest and social movements, and sustained flames of resistance around the globe. Indeed, in some parts of the world resistance movements even hold political, military, social, and/or economic power. Yet compared to the circuit of socialist and national liberation struggles that swept the world throughout the 20th century—providing an effective counterweight to imperialism and a pole around which the world's workers and oppressed could congregate—the period from roughly 1979 until today has been one of reaction against such struggles. The gains made by oppressed peoples, beginning with the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution, have been a focal point of concerted attacks by international capital and

imperialism. This placed critical pedagogy's project within the larger historic struggle of workers and oppressed people, a struggle that has been simultaneously beautiful and tragic. Thus, this chapter situates a revolutionary critical pedagogy for space at the global scale.

Neoliberalism:

There seems to be a consensus among critical educators and critical pedagogues that we are living in an age defined as “neoliberal” (e.g., McLaren, 2005; Giroux, 2011; Porfilio & Abendroth, 2015). Even liberal educators like Diane Ravitch have utilized the term. At the 2014 meeting of the American Educational Studies Association there were 31 presentations with the word “neoliberal” in the title. Yet preventing any consensus as to what neoliberalism is are two problems. The first problem is that neoliberalism is a fairly chaotic and nebulous signifier, one that can have as many definitions as there are journal articles concerned with it. The second problem is that neoliberalism can also be an empty signifier, one that is never even defined. In a recent study, Julie Rowlands and Shaun Rawolle (2013) collected data on how the word neoliberalism and its variants, such as neo-liberal, have been utilized in peer-reviewed English-language education journal articles that contained the word neoliberalism in their titles. What they found was that, out of 110 articles studied, 29 gave substantive definitions of neoliberalism (at least two paragraphs), 27 gave brief definitions (up to one paragraph), and a staggering 54 gave no definition at all. There was even one article that used “neoliberalism” in the title but nowhere in the text. Rowlands and Rawolle thus urge critical educational researchers to

use “the word ‘neoliberal’ and its variants consciously (indeed, reflexively) and critically in our research” (p. 270).

What, then, exactly is this thing called neoliberalism? To work towards a definition I call on literature that mobilizes neoliberalism as a gathering term for different changes that have taken place on the international scene since the late 1970s, but I also locate these changes in a larger historical narrative of the capitalist mode of production. In this way, I follow from McLaren (2005) and others (e.g., Malott, Hill, & Banfield, 2013), who present neoliberalism not as a radical break or departure from previous iterations of capitalism but as a particular phase of—or strategy within—capitalism. Harvey’s oft-cited work on neoliberalism helps to do just that. Although the picture of neoliberalism that Harvey paints is not without limitations—and, as I will show later, potentially damaging misunderstandings in the case of China—he presents a compelling definition of neoliberalism as a class strategy *within* capitalism. Using the research of Gérard Dumènil and Dominique Lévy, Harvey (2005) argues that neoliberalism is “associated with the restoration or reconstruction of the power of economic elites” (p. 19).

The theoretical origins of neoliberalism can be traced back to an intellectual exchange during the 1920s and 1930s over the role of the government in economic and political crises of the time. The theories began to be centralized in 1947 with the founding of the Mont Pelerin Society, whose most notable members included Thomas Hayek and Milton Friedman. The purpose of the society—which, tellingly, was named after the spa where its meetings were held—was to revive the study of free-market policies in response to Keynesian economic policies in the capitalist countries and the ascendancy of the Soviet Union and socialism after World War II.

Harvey locates the rise of what we might call actually existing neoliberalism in the years 1978-1980, which witnessed monumental events that occurred at varying locations and with a similar logic, sometimes coincidentally and sometimes not. The first event he points to is the rise of Deng Xiaoping (and the rest of the eight elders) in China in 1978, after the death of Mao Tse-Tung and the arrest of the “gang of four,” a group of leaders in the Chinese Communist Party during the revolutionary Mao era. Deng and his associates initiated a series of economic reforms in China that “liberalized” the economy, opening up space for private property, competition, and some (heavily state-sanctioned) foreign capital flows. This was a gradual—if uneven—dismantling of the key aspects of China’s socialist economy, the four pillars being central planning, the absence of private property, collective ownership of the land, and absolute state monopoly on foreign trade and investment. The second event that Harvey points to is the appointment of Paul Volcker to the position of chairman of the board of governors for the Federal Reserve System in the U.S. Volcker orchestrated what is called the “Volcker shock:” a monetary policy aimed at fighting inflation by increasing the federal interest rate, which sent unemployment numbers skyrocketing. The third event, which accompanied this, was the election of Ronald Reagan in the U.S. in 1980. Reagan extended Volcker’s monetarist treatment into the political and social sectors, particularly in regards to fighting the power of labor unions and implementing generalized deregulations of industry, agriculture, and finance. The final event was the election of Margaret Thatcher in Britain in 1979, who carried out a similar economic and political agenda to that of Reagan.

To what were these key events responses? In the case of China, which Harvey admits was quite distinct, the Deng reforms aimed “to amass wealth and upgrade its

[China's] technological capabilities" to protect China from internal and external threats and "to project its power outwards" (pp. 122-123). In the U.S. and Britain, however, the neoliberal turn arose in response to the growing political and economic threats posed by organized labor and the new social movements of the 1960s-1970s. These movements were strengthened in the aftermath of World War II as a result of the "capital-labor" compromise. As a result of rising productivity—and capital realization—in the U.S. and Britain after the war, organized labor (representing primarily white workers) was able to negotiate higher shares of the values produced in the production process. In addition to the power of organized labor and the additional surplus labor-time that they were able to reclaim there were a host of social and potentially revolutionary movements stirring, such as the Black Panther Party and the Weather Underground.

In his analysis, Harvey writes that neoliberalism was a capitalist class strategy within industrialized states and developing states and does not pay much attention to the broader global class struggle. The important point here, however, is that there was an "*economic* threat to the position of ruling classes [that] was becoming palpable" (p. 15). Neoliberalism, then, was about disciplining these movements, particularly when the economic crises of the 1970s emerged. This disciplining took—and takes—place through "deregulation, unrestricted access to consumer markets, downsizing, outsourcing, flexible arrangements of labor, intensification of competition among transnational corporations, increasing centralization of economic and political power, and finally, widening class polarization" (McLaren and Farahmandpur, 2001, p. 137). What I want to do now is go more in-depth into two aspects of neoliberalism, one economic and the other social-subjective.

Accumulation by dispossession

One of the operative aspects facets of neoliberalism for Harvey is “accumulation by dispossession.” This language refers to Marx’s concept of primitive—or really, primary—accumulation, which comprises the last part of the first volume of *Capital*. Marx (1867/1967) here is taking up and criticizing the bourgeois political economists’ story of the origins of capital accumulation (hence he titles this part of the book “so-called primitive accumulation”). The formation of these prerequisites for capitalist production and accumulation are assumed in bourgeois political economy. More accurately, this formation story is *mystified*, so much so that it ultimately “plays in Political Economy about the same part as original sin in theology. Adam bit the apple, and thereupon sin fell on the human race” (p. 667). The origin story told by bourgeois political economy is as follows: once upon a time (when exactly this time was, we are never told),

There were two sorts of people: one, the diligent, intelligent, and, above all, frugal elite; the other, lazy rascals, spending their substance, and more, in riotous living... Thus it came to pass that the former sort accumulated wealth, and the latter sort had at last nothing to sell except their own skins. (p. 667)

In radical contrast to this origin story, Marx demonstrates that it was actually “conquest, enslavement, robbery, murder, briefly force” (p. 668) that were the primary mechanisms through which the initial capital—and the conditions necessary for capitalist production—were produced and accumulated. There are three interrelated presuppositions on which capitalist production rests: first, a mass of people (workers) are separated from the means of subsistence (e.g., agricultural producers are expropriated from the land); second, there is a need for commodities (i.e., the creation of the market by

divorcing people from the means of production); third, there is a concentration of resources, raw and ancillary materials, and primary means of production in the hands of one class. These three components are each part of the establishment of the capital-labor relation/antagonism. Marx here portrays primitive accumulation as something in the past, something that laid the foundation for capitalist production and then vanished into history.

First, producers had to be transformed into wage-workers, and in order for this to happen they had to be divorced from the land, i.e., expropriated. Feudal estates and retainers were broken up. With the Reformation, the state in an alliance with capitalist landowners began seizing the Church's property. From the 15th century on, lands that were previously held in common had to be enclosed, or privatized. This took place "by the turning of arable into pasture land" and "by means of individual acts of violence against which legislation for a hundred and fifty years, fought in vain" (p. 677). In the 18th century, however, the Acts for the enclosures of the Commons enabled landlords to legally take "the people's land as private property" (p. 678). In sum, this process of proletarianization took place through "The spoilation of the church's property, the fraudulent alienation of the State's domains, the robbery of the common lands, the usurpation of feudal and clan property, and the transformation into modern private property under circumstances of reckless terrorism" (p. 685).

This expropriation was accompanied by a series of legislations that were intended to discipline those whom capital "freed" from their means of subsistence. This disciplining was necessary because the new proletarian subject "could not possibly be absorbed by the nascent manufactures as fast as it was thrown upon the world" (p. 686) and because many simply rejected the new form of work. Those falling into either of

these categories “were turned *en masse* into beggars, robbers, vagabonds, partly from inclination [the latter category], in most cases from stress of circumstances” (ibid.). In addition to “bloody legislation” against acts such as begging, the state stepped in to regulate wages and working hours and to prevent the workers from “conspiring” or organizing.

Several Marxist revolutionaries and scholars have done important work on *ongoing* processes of primitive accumulation. Most notably, Rosa Luxemburg (2003), in her seminal work, *The accumulation of capital*, argues that there is an organic connection between capitalist production proper (the production of surplus-value via the exploitation of wage-labor) and primitive accumulation (via colonial policy, international loan systems and payments of interest, war, and so on). These represent two distinct forms of exploitation under capitalism.

Most recently, Harvey has written of “accumulation by dispossession.” He identifies this type of accumulation as a primary element of neoliberalism and delineates four comprising features: 1) the privatization and commodification of formerly public goods, assets, and services; 2) the rise of finance capital and the deregulation of financial mechanisms of trade and accumulation; 3) the creation and management of debt crises as levers of accumulation; and 4) redistribution of values from workers to bosses via the state (e.g., corporate welfare). One of the reasons why accumulation by dispossession is so crucial for Harvey’s conception of neoliberalism is because it is a primary way in which the power of labor has been broken by organized efforts of the capitalist class. The power of labor is cut away by attacks on labor unions and union-organizing drives, the

privatization of public goods and the general transfer of wealth from the working to the owning classes.

A recent example of accumulation by dispossession was the 2008 bank bailout, which was literally the largest transfer of wealth ever from the working class to the capitalist class, a transfer that was facilitated by the U.S. state in a totally bilateral agreement. In addition to a \$700 billion bailout to the banks, the U.S. state gave “trillions of dollars more in loan guarantees and other benefits to the major banks, insurance companies and other corporations” (R. Becker, 2012, p. 3) that caused the global capitalist economic crisis in which we are still mired. Richard Becker relates the story of a reporter who called the major banks to follow up on how they used the bailout money.

He lists some of their responses:

Thomas Kelley, JPMorgan Chase (recipient of \$25 billion): “We have not disclosed that to the public. We’re declining to.”

Kevin Heine, Bank of New York Mellon (\$3 billion): “We’re going to decline to comment on your story.”

Carissa Ramirez, Morgan Stanley (\$10 billion): “We’re going to decline to comment on your story.” (ibid)

The banks were allowed to make this choice because the bailout package did not attach any public accountability to the wealth transfer. Becker notes how absurd the absence of any such requirement is when compared with any other government grant that, say, a community group might receive. In these cases the government wants to know where every single cent ends up, and if any money can’t be properly accounted for then it must be returned.

Freedom in the state

Neoliberalism is, then a pretty naked form of class rule, and one way that this class rule has been ideologically justified is by appeals to freedom. The base of “freedom” here is the free-market, meaning that the market should be free from government intervention. We hear this talk all of the time on “both sides of the aisle.” Yet it is a blatant ideological mystification, for there can be no private property—and thus no free market—without the state *enforcement* of private property. In other words, there has to be an immense repressive apparatus to legislate and enforce the rights of private property and trade. Harvey (2005) writes that the state is needed in neoliberalism insofar as it must maintain “those military, defense, police, and legal structures and functions required to secure private property rights and to guarantee, by force if need be, the proper functioning of markets” (p. 2).

This apparatus exceeds the nation state, and we can glimpse the paradoxical status of the relationship between the free market and the neoliberal order by looking at supra-national free-trade agreements. As Sam Marcy (1990) notes in regards to the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, “What is the very existence of such an agreement as GATT but as a form of restricting the freedom of trade?” (p. 8). Marcy notes that, at base, such trade agreements are “a way to include some countries and exclude others from a particular arrangement among the monopolistic groupings in the imperialist world” (ibid.).

While there is a necessity for state intervention into the economy and society (and this is one thing that puts the *neo* in neoliberalism), and while the state still serves as a mediating institution between antagonistic class and social groupings, there is

nonetheless a prevailing emphasis on freedom. This includes “individual” freedom. This emphasis on freedom is able to subsume different discourses, many of which might at first seem to be antagonistic to capital. As Harvey writes, this “foundational emphasis upon individual freedoms, has the power to split off libertarianism, identity politics, multiculturalism, and eventually narcissistic consumerism from the social forces ranged in pursuit of social justice through the conquest of state power” (p. 41). This abstract notion of freedom is able to tame and encompass a plurality of political, social, cultural, and economic trends. This sheds additional light on the ways that pedagogies that do not pivot on political economy can be subsumed within and made to work to perpetuate capitalist economic and social relations.

Learning in and for neoliberalism

Education has been a central hinge on which neoliberalism has swung. To begin with, it is worth recalling that Milton Friedman first put neoliberal policies “to use in his support of government-financed vouchers for school choice” (McLaren, 2005, p. 81). In this section I show that there are three ways in which education has facilitated and continues to work to reproduce the neoliberal order. First, education represents a means by which the production and dissemination of neoliberal ideology takes place. Second, education represents a vast public good that could be made subject to privatization and deregulation, thereby being forced onto the free market. Third, schools and education are crucial sites where neoliberal subjectivities are produced; that is to say, it is largely in and through schools and educational discourse that particular subject forms that are adequate to the contours of neoliberal life take shape.

Education and ideological production-circulation

Educational institutions provided breeding grounds for the production and dissemination of neoliberal ideologies from day one. Consider that neoliberalism originated not as some government practice or policy, but precisely as a *theory*. It was formulated in the halls of academia, debated in academic conferences, and exacted in publications. This is a fairly obvious remark that frequently goes unmentioned. It is absolutely imperative, I believe, in defending the contemporary need for educational theory. In fact, the ascendancy of neoliberalism is a terrific example (in that it is both fitting and *terrifying*) of the importance of theoretical formulations and their ability to alter the entirety of the world, from supranational institutions to everyday subjectivities and relations.

While neoliberalism was a minor theory for several decades, educational spaces and processes continued as sites and mechanisms for the production and distribution of neoliberal ideologies throughout the 20th century; they in many ways prepared the way for the execution of the Reagan-Thatcher agenda. Take, for example, an internal U.S. Chamber of Commerce memo by Lewis Powell, who was then a corporate lawyer on the board of 11 corporations and who was soon to be a member of the Supreme Court. Referred to simply as the “Powell Memo,” this document begins by decrying a broad-based “attack” on free enterprise. Higher education is viewed as a primary hatchery for this attack, and academics such as critical theorist Herbert Marcuse are named. The memo then calls on the Chamber of Commerce to produce a range of scholars, speakers, and a speakers’ bureau. After lamenting that “the civil rights movement insist[s] on re-writing many of the textbooks in our universities and schools,” Powell insists that the Chamber of Commerce support the evaluation of textbooks by pro-business (and, one

supposes, racist) scholars (Powell, 1971). Other recommendations include solidifying relationships with “the increasingly influential graduate schools of business” and encouraging the Chamber’s “‘faculty of scholars’ to publish in influential journals” (ibid). As Harvey (2005) notes, while it is difficult to track the spread of neoliberal ideology, “by 1990 or so most economics departments in the major research universities as well as the business schools were dominated by neoliberal modes of thought” (p. 54).

The accumulation of educational capitals

Second, education has been the target of neoliberal schemes to accumulate capital since the early 1980s. The neoliberal agenda for education is generally dated to the 1983 publication of *A nation at risk* by Reagan’s National Commission on Excellence in Education. Blaming the economic recession of the late 1970s and early 1980s on public schools, this report embedded the goals and purposes of education within a nationalist framework of economic and technological productivity, called for “rigorous” standards and accountability mechanisms and technologies, and placed teachers firmly in the crosshairs of reform efforts, among other things. All of this was done with the rhetoric of the Cold War and the arms race. Consider:

Our nation is at risk. Our once unchallenged preeminence in commerce industry, science, and technological innovation is being overtaken by competitors throughout the world. This report is concerned with only one of the many causes and dimensions of the problem, but *it is one that undergirds American prosperity, security, and civility*... the educational foundations of our society are presently being eroded by a rising tide of mediocrity that threatens our very future as a Nation and as a people... If an unfriendly foreign power had attempted to impose on America the mediocre educational performance that exists today, we might well have viewed it as an act of war. (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983, p. 5, emphasis added)

The unnamed competitors in this report are not only the other imperialist countries like Japan and Britain, but also those in the opposite class camp, such as the Soviet Union. The public school is situated as the cornerstone of the U.S.'s economic and social hegemony.

Although this was only a report, and was not a law that compelled any particular actions to be taken, it was tremendously influential in delimiting the discursive field regarding education's purposes and goals. This influence is evident today even among the left-liberals in education like Linda Darling-Hammond and Diane Ravitch, who are often upheld as the leaders of the movement against neoliberal attacks on education. For example, in Darling-Hammond's (2010) book, *The flat world and education*, she offers different solutions to the "educational crisis," but accepts wholesale the nationalist-crisis driven rhetoric of *A nation at risk*. She writes that

...while the United States must fill many of its high-tech jobs with individuals educated overseas, more and more of its own citizens are unemployable and relegated to the welfare or prison systems, representing enormous personal tragedy, as well as a drain on the nation's economy and social well-being, rather than a contribution to our national welfare. (p. 23)

In this short excerpt we see that Darling-Hammond has accepted the xenophobic and nationalist anti-other framework of the education debate. The purpose of education is to promote economic productivity and to ensure the U.S.'s competitiveness on the world market, and it is apparently U.S. citizens (whom she conflates with those educated in the U.S.) who should be responsible for this productivity. She also accepts the ridiculous neoliberal tropes that unemployment is due to unemployability (and is therefore not structurally integral to capitalism), that this unemployability is the reason behind the U.S.'s almost unimaginably high rate of incarceration (and not due to the racist war on

drugs, the disciplining of surplus populations, and so on), and finally, that those who are not within the properly productive circuits of the U.S. are economic and social “drains.” There is a bit (but not much) more nuance to her analysis than what has been presented in this brief reading of this brief excerpt, the point is to illustrate the ways that the rhetoric of *A nation at risk* continues to frame the terms and institute the acceptable limits of educational analysis and thought today.

This also points to one of the most effective ideological justifications for privatization and neoliberalism in education and elsewhere: a particular conception of globalization. We live in a global world (which Darling-Hammond, following from Thomas Friedman incorrectly labels as “flat,” instead of “small” or “compressed”). Globalization generally denotes the increasing mobility and flexibility of capital, its ability to flutter across the globe quickly and with ease.¹⁵

On the one hand, globalization refers to the process of integration of economies across international boundaries. On the other hand, it refers to the sense that, not just in economic terms, but in social, political, and cultural terms, the world is ever more connected... and places and borders are of decreasing importance. (p. 165)

With global economic integration and capital’s (alleged) ability to shuffle across the globe at a moment’s notice, the purposes and goals of education can be tightly tethered to the demands of the global economy in the interests of the U.S. If we don’t educate students for the “flat world,” so it goes, we will be left behind our competitors.

There are two recent education policies that have been devised and implemented by the Bush and Obama administrations that follow from the framing provided by *A*

¹⁵ In the next chapter I excavate the heritage of globalization from within the system of capital and pinpoint some contradictions and mystifications of the story of globalization.

nation at risk: No Child Left Behind (NCLB) and Race to the Top (RttT). NCLB was passed in 2001 as an iteration of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965. The NCLB is notable for introducing a strict set of educational standards, an emphasis on accountability and high-staked standardized testing (with a good dose of “equality” and “fairness” rhetoric peppered throughout), and the introduction of school choice. These are effectively mandated by the threat of withholding federal funding from states that do not follow suit. The emphasis on standards, accountability, and testing, as David Hursh (2007) has shown, is another ideological masking that obscures the real neoliberal agenda for education:

First, some neoliberal and neoconservative organizations have stated that their real goal is to use testing and accountability to portray public schools as failing and to push for privatizing education provided through competitive markets. Second, evidence suggests that our educational system is becoming more, not less, unequal, with a higher drop-out rate for students of color and students living in poverty, who are also more likely to be subjected to curricula and pedagogical practices that are less demanding. (p. 501)

RttT was introduced by and passed under the Obama administration as part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. RttT is a cash-prize contest that rewards states for falling into line with neoliberal education policies. Carr and Porfilio (2011) spell out several aspects of RttT that help facilitate the privatization of education, or the transfer of capital from the public and into the hands of corporations and other private interests. First, the program expedites the expansion of charter schools by encouraging states to remove or raise caps on the percentage of charter schools that can operate in the state. Carr and Porfilio, for example, mention a New York State law passed to increase the number of charter schools to put the state in a better position to receive federal dollars.

Charter schools, of course, allow corporations and wealthy individuals to capture federal and state moneys destined for education through operating the school and exploiting the labor-power of non-unionized and precarious teachers and staff. This is particularly true of “for-profit” charter schools, although “non-profit” charter schools also run on a similar logic. Additionally, there are performance-contractors, groups that contract with school districts to run or otherwise manage schools within the district for a definite period of time.

Kenneth Saltman (2010) provides a list of some of the forms that educational privatizations take: “‘performance-contracting,’ for-profit charter schools, school vouchers, school commercialism, for-profit online education, online homeschooling, test publishing and textbook industries, electronic and computer-based software curriculum, for-profit remediation, educational contracting for food, transportation, and financial services” (p. 17). Carr and Porfilio (2011) emphasize the profits to be made through the production of “standardized curricula, textbooks, and test preparation materials” (p. 12). Through commercialism in schools, children are made targets of corporate marketing campaigns, as advertisements for candy and toys appear in tests and textbooks, and as corporations “partner” with school districts. Overall, the high-stakes standardized testing regimes that were in many ways inaugurated in the 1978-1980 neoliberal turn are aimed not at improving learning or lessening educational inequality, but instead have their sights on huge sums of money and contracts.

Pedagogically speaking, however, these reforms also allow for the production of particular types of workers, notably workers that will fill the precarious and flexible positions in the service-sector of the economy. Because charter schools are publicly

funded but privately owned and run, they are a guaranteed market for business interests, not only in terms of their ability to help realize values but also in their ability to produce a suitable workforce. Part and parcel of this latter effect of educational privatizations is an attack on critical pedagogy, or critical thinking skills more broadly. Standardization, testing, and accountability grants corporations and private interests “the power to subvert teachers’ ability to implement pedagogies that guide students to reflect critically about self and Other, knowledge and power, and the role they and their students can play to eliminate oppression in schools and their communities” (ibid.).

Education and the production of subjectivity

As Stephen Ball (2012) observes, neoliberalism is not just a political and economic rule; it also “gets into our minds and our souls, into the ways in which we think about what we do, and into our social relations with others” (p. 17). Neoliberalism is not only about privatizing public goods and services, it is additionally about privatizing social relations and subjects; it is therefore deeply concerned with subjectivity. These different components of neoliberalism are, to be sure, intimately co-dependent. As mentioned earlier, neoliberalism triumphs a particular kind of freedom, and this is the freedom of the atomized individual. Michael Peters (1996) makes the connection explicit:

The central tenet of the theories underlying public sector restructuring, including corporatization and privatization strategies and a concerted attack on principles of the social-democratic state, is a philosophy of individualism that represents a renewal of the main article of faith underlying classical economic liberalism. (p. 80)

One of the primary ways that subjectivity is privatized is through the redefinition of the relationship between the subject and the state. Most specifically, there is a transformation

from the *citizen* (a political subject) to the *consumer* (an economic subject). Instead of a citizen with rights to particular services and goods from the state we have a consumer with no more than the rights to consume competitive services provided by private or public-private hybrids; “‘welfare-rights’ have become commodified as consumer rights” (Peters & McDonough, 2007, p. 158).

The type of subjectivity operative here is known as *homo economicus*, the rational and self-interested subject that seeks utility maximization in all aspects of life. This “abstract and universalist” subject is the one that legitimates “the policy agenda of most western countries and also has been the basis for imposed structural adjustment in other parts of the world” (p. 158). This transformation in conceptions of subjectivity and modes of subjection is produced by and helps to reproduce the privatization of public goods and cutback in social programs. The subject who is poor, for example, is poor because he or she did not sufficiently maximize the utilities available to them; the poor are poor because they are bad entrepreneurs. If, that is, “personal and individual freedom in the marketplace is guaranteed, each individual is held responsible and accountable for his or her own actions and well-being” (Harvey, 2005, p. 65).

If an individual is not successful or fails to achieve the “good life,” then it is by no fault of the state or society. The flaw is not in any system but in the individual subject. In his recent book on debt, Maurizio Lazzarato (2012) demonstrates how this process of individualization is linked to the privatization and financialization of neoliberalism through the reassertion of the contract:

First within companies and for several years now within “public services,” it has been part of a process of individualization that aims to neutralize “collective” logics. Even with unemployment insurance and welfare assistance, beneficiaries

are made to sign an “individual contract” in order to claim their right to compensation. The company, then, is not a place of conflict between workers and bosses, nor are public services a place where highly asymmetrical powers are exercised between agents representing the administration and beneficiaries (the unemployed, the sick, welfare recipients). The private firm or public institution is a set of *individual contracts* linking different actors who, in pursuit of their own individual interest, are equal. (pp. 101-102)

Just as the political-economic aspect of neoliberalism is a modification of capitalist political economy, so too should this subjective component be seen not as a break or radical rupture from capitalism, for capitalist production has always worked to produce atomized individuals.

“Production,” Marx (1939/1973) writes in the *Grundrisse*, “not only creates an object for the subject, but also a subject for the object” (p. 92). Marx here is writing about the relationship between the production and consumption of commodities and the manner in which new needs, desires, and tastes are created through the production of commodities. This is one of the most succinct phrasings through which Marx’s deep concern with subjectivity is communicated. We glimpse here the central role that the production of subjectivity plays in the capitalist mode of production. Jason Read provides an innovative and comprehensive analysis of this role in Marx in his book, *The micropolitics of capital*. In this book Read (2003) demonstrates that, whereas in pre-capitalist modes of production subjectivity was always conservative—in that it was about the reproduction and repetition of the same subject—“the capitalist mode of production has at its formation and foundation a collective subject that is ‘free’ from the constraints and guarantees of a particular form of life” (p. 62). In other words, capitalism actually insists upon “a multitude of subjects that are constituted as basically interchangeable” (ibid.). This is quite simply because *expanded reproduction* is definitional of capitalism;

capitalism is by definition the *expansion* of value. It is a dynamic system that never sits still. There is therefore an antagonism within the production of subjectivity under capitalism that Read identifies: subjects are multitudinous but at the same time they are interchangeable. The nature of this antagonism is located in the contradictory unity of labor under capitalism in which labor is simultaneously abstract (exchangeable) and concrete (particular). I want to now touch on the ways in which capitalism has worked to produce and legitimate the atomized individual with which neoliberalism is currently so obsessed.

At the basis of capitalism, particularly in the industrial era, was the rights-based contract. As such, a landscape of formal equality and individuality as the grounds for consent was necessary for its functioning. This is, in large part, what set apart capitalism from feudalism and slavery. It did not matter, according to bourgeois ideology, whether one was a worker or a capitalist. In fact, as one surveyed the bodies in the modern marketplace, one noted that “it is impossible to find any trace of distinction, not to speak of contradiction, between them; not even a difference” (Marx, 1939/1973, p. 241). In addition to being equal, each subject had to be conceived of as autonomous and sovereign in order to enter into a contract to buy or sell labor-power. Equality, autonomy, and sovereignty are prerequisites for consent. The owners of commodities (money or labor-power) “must therefore recognize each other as owners of private property” (Marx, 1867/1990, p. 178). If I am to sell my labor for a certain amount of time then I must be certain that it is really mine to sell and that the products that I produce have really been produced by me. The hegemony of private property, then, means that even the body must be conceived of as such, that is, as the private property of the *individual* worker. This, of

course, is the ideological presentation, for in reality “the worker belongs to capital before he has sold himself to the capitalist” (p. 723).

Of course, it is also imperative for ensuring the continued exploitation of labor under capitalism that workers be posited as individuals, lest they be presented as a class. This was particularly important under industrial capitalism because of the fact that, in large-scale industry, “the ability to set the means of production to work... only belongs to a ‘collective laborer’” (p. 282). In reality, it is not the individual worker, but the social worker, that is productive of value in capitalism. The concept of the individual and the philosophy of individualism that followed from it thus remain integral in preventing workers from uniting and confronting capital as a class. The notion of the citizen also has this effect, in that it obscures distinctions of class and identity categories, uniting different and antagonistic subjectivities under a common heading. The effect of this structural-discursive construction differs depending upon the context of the nation(-state) and its relationship to the global political-economic order. Most significantly, the mobilization of the national identity can have progressive effects in oppressed nations but reactionary ones in oppressor nations.

This third point is thus that schools—and educational processes more generally—are central sites in and through which subjectivities are fashioned. One of the dominant mechanisms by which this fashioning occurs is through the regime of accountability. There are a few conceptions of accountability. First, there is a general meaning of accountability as “being answerable-to,” but the one operative in education today is what Biesta (2010) calls *managerialist* accountability, in which “an accountable organization is seen as one that has the duty to present auditable accounts of *all* of its activities” (p.

51). Biesta argues that “the rhetoric of accountability operates precisely on the basis of a ‘quick-switch’ between the two meanings, making it difficult to see an argument against accountability as anything other than the plea for irresponsible action” (ibid.).

Managerialist accountability is therefore a generalization of financial accountability and accompanies the reduction of the teacher-student relationship to “an implicit contract between buyer and seller” (Peters & McDonough, 2007, p. 159).

Arguing that exploitation operates directly on subjectivity, Noah De Lissovoy and McLaren (2003) link the standardized test (as a mechanism of accountability and standardization) to transformations in subjectivity. They argue that what allows standardized tests “to serve as the mechanism for accountability initiatives, is the reduction of learning and knowledge to a number, i.e. a score” (p. 133). De Lissovoy and McLaren locate the “deep structure” of accountability within the commodity-form of capital. When things, services, social relations, and people become subjected to the commodity-form of capital they “can be compared to each other by means of a universal equivalent—in the economy, this is money” (p. 133). In education, this universal equivalent is the scoring unit or scale.

Once knowledge and learning have been quantified they can be compared. Yet it is not only knowledge and learning that are quantified, compared, and made commensurable, but students themselves. Subjectivity, social relations, consciousness, ways of knowing, and forms of life are all subject to (attempts at) reduction to numbers and rankings. This all amounts of the reification of the human, a violent cutting away at the complexity of life. Yet there is also a more literal violence done to human subjectivity, “a literal disciplining of the body which is organized in the forced performance by

students of their subjection to the state that the *procedure* of testing represents” (p. 137).

It is not just the reduction of pedagogy and the quantification of knowledge,

It is also a question of the rituals of test preparation and test taking themselves: the training (in a *horticultural* sense) of the body into a posture of subjection before columns of empty bubbles, and the forcing of the will and intelligence against arbitrary, alienating and demeaning problematics. (p. 138)

High-stakes standardized testing thus subjects students and their bodies to reification and violent discipline. Through these processes we enter more fully into neoliberalism, and we begin to experience and understand ourselves quantitatively, as numerical rankings. This is not only the case for students, but for teachers as well: “Contemporary scripted curriculum, test preparation, and classroom management regimes demand that teachers do more than endorse a set of values; rather, they must act as the effective instrument of schooling as procedure” (De Lissovoy, Means, & Saltman, 2014, p. 75). It is through these regimes that we become intelligible as subjects, both in terms of the ways we think and conceive of ourselves and our social relations, and in terms of the very practices, movements, comportments, habits, and forms of life that we perform in response to them.

Neoliberalism and the global class war: From revolution to counterrevolution

Neoliberalism has not taken shape uniformly across the globe. As such, an examination of actually existing neoliberalism must be attentive to a host of particularities. Not every nation-state that has taken the neoliberal turn has done so in the same way or for the same reasons. For example, in Chile neoliberalism was enforced through the military dictatorship of Augusto Pinochet (put in power through a CIA-led coup). Chile was actually in many ways the testing ground of early neoliberal doctrines, leading Freidman

to coin the phrase “Miracle of Chile.” This certainly differs from the neoliberal turn in the U.S., Britain, and Sweden, none of which involved military coups or fascist dictatorships.

Because of the uneven development of neoliberalism in practice it is imperative to acknowledge that there are numerous and important debates taking place about *how* neoliberalism should be utilized as a theoretical framework for understanding contemporary political, economic, and social changes. Jamie Peck and Adam Tickell (2002), for example, have argued for the importance of “walking a line” (p. 381) between “overgeneralized accounts of a monolithic and omnipresent neoliberalism” and “excessively concrete and contingent analyses of (local) neoliberal strategies” (p. 382). In response to this, Kalervo Gulson (2007) has claimed that neoliberalism is best theorized as a bricolage (and not a binary), and has thereby viewed “the ‘monolithic’ and ‘extralocal’ aspects of neoliberalism as mutually constitutive” (p. 191). In other words, “neoliberalism is [in many ways] a meta-narrative” (p. 179), but this meta-narrative is highly contingent upon the varied localized ways in which it is expressed in policy and practice. In fact, it may be more proper to speak of neoliberalism as meta-narrative that itself is not homogenous, but rather depends upon its varied instantiations.

In what follows I want to offer a clarification of what neoliberalism is by placing it within a broader historical-materialist framework. I do so by placing neoliberalism within the context of the global class war. Sam Marcy’s conception of the global class war—and its component global class camps—is crucial, I believe, if revolutionary critical pedagogy is to properly conceive of neoliberalism. The global class war helps us see that neoliberalism is part of a *global class strategy*, and is not merely a capitalist class strategy *within* capitalism. It thus provides a more accurate understanding of the forces to

which neoliberalism was and is responding to, and of its overall strategy. In other words, neoliberalism is a necessary tool for understanding recent changes within capitalist states but it does not adequately account for recent global changes in class and national dynamics.

The global revolutionary offensive

Sam Marcy, whom I would argue is one of the most important and unfortunately ignored U.S. communist theoreticians of the 20th century, formulated the concept of the “global class war” in a document addressed to the internal membership of the Socialist Workers Party in the U.S. in 1953 (and this laid the theoretical basis for a split with the Party later in the 1950s). In the document, titled “The global class war and the destiny of American labor,” Marcy (1979) asks two questions, one of which is internal to the politics of the SWP and the other of which holds greater relevance for the communist movement: “Is there an independent destiny for the American proletariat?” (p. 45). The answer, of course, is no, because the American laborer is not an independent social entity, but part of an international working class. Marcy turns to a quote from Lenin’s *What is to be done?* to spell this out:

The whole of political life is an endless chain composed of an infinite number of links. The whole art of the politician consists in finding and taking firm hold of the link that is most difficult to take from you, the most important at the given moment and the one which best guarantees to you the possession of the whole chain. (Lenin in Marcy, 1979, p. 46)

Not only is the U.S. working class part of the link in the global political chain, it is a *decisive* link. Not only, then, is the U.S. working class not an independent social entity,

but it is “an inseparable and completely interdependent link... of an entire and global class camp” (ibid.).

What is the global class war? Marcy locates the origins of this war in the Korean War. Korea was not a war between states or a war between the North (led by the Korean Workers’ Party) and the South (led by the U.S. under the cover of the United Nations); it was a war between classes. The Korean War was the first time that the imperialists united under the umbrella of the U.S. to fight their opposing class. Marcy argued that the U.S. communists as a whole were late to this realization and that the bourgeoisie had long “regarded the war from an exclusively global viewpoint” (p. 47). On one side of the global class war is the camp of imperialism, those states and forces of capital expansion. On the other side is the camp of the proletariat, Marcy’s camp. This camp contains within it not only socialist states but also states liberated from colonialism and proletarians in imperialist states. There are four changes in the composition of the proletarian class camp that Marcy identifies: 1) it includes, “unlike the previous epoch... the bulk of oppressed peoples in the colonies and dependent countries,” those “peasants, semi- and non-proletarian elements;” 2) it “has state allies, states where the working class, if not in a political sense, then certainly in a social and historic sense, holds the ruling power;” 3) the “deformity” of Stalinism is on its way out; and 4) it has new allies in China and Eastern Europe, and this particular change “so thoroughly undermined the foundations of the imperialist structure that it can virtually be said that the world relationship of forces has been definitely and irretrievably turned in favor of our camp” (pp. 46-47). The “Cold War,” that is, was not about the U.S. versus the Soviet Union, but was instead a struggle

between classes, a struggle that often manifested itself as a battle between leaderships, states, and other groupings.

Marcy's analysis helps revolutionary critical pedagogy understand more fully the global context within which the "capital-labor" compromise in the advanced capitalist countries took place. Viewing the struggle of the U.S. working class as one link in the global chain we see that the advances made by organized labor in one country were propelled and enabled by the global proletarian struggle. If it were not for the advances made by the proletarian camp in the Soviet Union, China, Korea, Cuba, and so on, then the status of the camp in the U.S. and Britain, for example, would be drastically different. Interestingly enough, Critical Race Theorist Derrick Bell (1995) gives this analysis credence in relation to race relations in the U.S. and the 1954 landmark *Brown v. Board of Education* ruling. Asking why, after decades of ruling against the desegregation of public schools the Supreme Court ruled in favor of desegregation, Bell suggested that the decision was the result of political and economic factors, not altruistic ones. Situating the decision historically, Bell noted that it emerged after the de facto end of the Korean War and at the beginning of the Cold War (i.e., the global class war). As communist and national liberation struggles were being waged in Asia, Africa, the Middle East, and Latin America, the U.S. recognized that continued legal racism would only fan the flames of revolution in the U.S. and worldwide. In other words, the national liberation struggles of the Third World, waged primarily by people of color, were more likely to turn to the Soviet Union and China than the U.S., given the notoriously racist state of the latter and the progressive state of the former.

We can see the period between 1945, after the end of the World War II, and 1979-1980 as a period of global revolution in which the proletarian class camp was on the offensive. There were revolutionary, indigenous governments in power in the northern part of Korea and Vietnam. After defeating the nationalists, the Chinese Communist Party took power in 1949. In addition, there were new socialist states in Yugoslavia, East Germany, Poland, Hungary, Bulgaria, Romania, Czechoslovakia, and Bulgaria. By 1950, two-fifths of the world's population lived within countries governed by a communist party. This solidification of working-class power as an effective counterweight against U.S. imperialism undoubtedly provided a major impetus for a wave of national liberation struggles across the world. To name just a few examples: In 1952 the Egyptian revolution brought the nationalist government of Gamal Abdel Nasser to power, officially breaking the country free from British colonialism. A revolution in Iraq in 1958 freed that country from the same form of oppressive rule. Kwame Nkrumah and his Convention Peoples Party had liberated Ghana a year earlier. The Cuban Revolution took place in 1959, overthrowing the U.S.-backed dictatorship and kicking out foreign corporations. Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, nationalist or socialist revolutions and coups continued to take place in countries such as Syria, Libya, Ethiopia, Iran, Afghanistan, Angola, Mozambique, Nicaragua, and Guinea-Bissau. These movements depended on material, military, and ideological support from the Soviet Union and, in many instances, China.

At this point it might be objected that this story is too linear, too neat, too laudatory, in a word, too *modern*. There is certainly some credence to these objections, for there was definitely no linear global march toward progress occurring during this period. In terms of linearity, it is important to note that there were setbacks throughout

this period. There was the CIA and British-backed coup against Mohammad Mossadegh's nationalist government in Iran in 1953, and the overthrow of Salvador Allende's socialist government in Chile in 1973 that was mentioned previously. In terms of the neatness of presentation, it should go without saying that revolutionary situations are messy, violent, and contradictory. And, just as neoliberalism has unfolded differently in different states, so too have socialist and nationalist revolutions.

In terms of the laudatory nature of my remarks on this period I will be a bit more defensive. I have, to be sure, not offered a nuanced appraisal of each and every revolution during this period, and that is a task is far outside the scope of this dissertation. I am ready to admit that there were many mistakes, errors, and even crimes committed in the name of socialism and progressive nationalism. There are, however, a few caveats that are imperative to mention about any such defaults. First, the task of overthrowing a centuries old social system and implementing an entirely new one cannot be an easy or seamless task. A revolution is not, as Mao Tse-Tung (1966) said, "a dinner party, or writing an essay... it cannot be so refined, so leisurely and gentle, so temperate, kind, courteous, restrained and magnanimous" (p. 11), for revolutions are ultimately violent acts of insurrection. Added to this reality is the fact that these social systems had to develop in difficult and hostile circumstances. For example, after the success of the Russian Revolution in 1917 the U.S. sent in troops—13,000 by 1918—to play a counterrevolutionary role for two years. All in all, 14 imperialist countries sent troops to fight against the first successful worker's revolution. The invaders worked together with the White Army forces loyal to the former Russian ruling class, which engaged in a

sustained campaign of terror against the revolution. Summarizing the long-term effects of this military intervention, William Blum (2004) comments:

History does not tell us what a Soviet Union, allowed to develop in a “normal” way of its own choosing, would look like today. We do know, however, the nature of a Soviet Union attacked in its cradle, raised alone in an extremely hostile world, and, when it managed to survive to adulthood, overrun by the Nazi war machine with the blessings of the Western powers. The resulting insecurities and fears have inevitably led to deformities of character not unlike that found in an individual raised in a similar life-threatening manner. (p. 8)

In addition to threats and actions of military interventions, all states hostile to—or even just uncooperative with or independent of—imperialist forces suffer from political and social sabotage and economic blockades and embargos. It should not be unexpected that new social systems would be characterized by deficiencies and errors, particularly when birthed and developed in such hostile historical conditions.

Furthermore, my claim is not that this revolutionary period, marked by the offensive of the global proletarian camp, was idyllic or perfect. It would be absurd to claim that these revolutionary movements and states were paradises, just as it would be absurd to argue for a return to these particular formations. Neither am I claiming that these socialist or national liberation movements achieved some sort of internal harmony amongst the entirety of the population. Once the former colonizers were kicked out, for example, it is not as if there were not still problems of sexism or, in the national bourgeois states, class antagonisms. My claim is rather that, taken as a whole, this global trend represented a radical advance against the machinations of capitalism and imperialism. If we take any country that was liberated from colonialism or imperialism during this wave of struggles we witness drastic improvements in standards of living,

literacy rates, and life expectancy, and we often see radical changes in the gender and race relations.

Global counterrevolution and the class character of China

The global scene throughout the 1970s looked promising in many ways. Not only were there great struggles taking place around the world that were dealing huge blows to imperialism, there were also burgeoning resistance movements in the U.S. The Civil Rights Movement had blossomed into a Black Liberation movement. In this latter movement the primacy of the international situation was very clear, for the most organized expression of this movement, the Black Panther Party, saw itself as a domestic expression of Marxism, Leninism, and Maoism. This link was also clear in the anti-war movement, which quickly became anti-imperialist as young people not only opposed U.S. military intervention in Vietnam but actively supported Vietcong fighters. Some groups, like the Weather Underground tried to literally bring the war home by engaging in clandestine armed struggle.

The tide of world revolution turned, however, after the Iranian, Grenada, and Sandanista revolutions of 1979. It is at this moment that imperialism launched a real counterrevolution, setting out to reverse the gains made by the proletarian class camp during the previous three decades. Thus, neoliberalism was not only a strategy to reassert the rule of the capitalist class against labor *within* capitalist states, as Harvey insists. Neoliberalism is part and parcel of a broader global class program against the power of the proletarian class camp, which again includes not only socialist states but those states independent of imperialism and those forces antagonistic to imperialism. This means,

additionally, that capitalism did not “triumph” over socialism with the overthrow and dissolution of the Soviet Union and the Eastern Bloc socialist states between 1989-1991. It means, instead, that the forces of counterrevolution are currently dominant. But it’s far too early to declare any victor in this global war.

One watershed event that propelled this counterrevolution forward was the alliance formed between China and the U.S. in 1979. I have already touched on how, after the death of Mao, Deng liberalized China’s economy, undoing some of the pillars of the state’s socialist infrastructure. What I want to do now is offer a clarification of the historical and ongoing role of China in neoliberalism and the global class war. There is no doubt that the alliance between China and the U.S.—which was ultimately an alliance *against* the Soviet Union, Vietnam, and the Eastern Bloc—represented the desertion of China to the bourgeois camp. Ever since Deng and his supporters wrested control of the Communist Party of China in 1976, Deng had been upheld as a “reformer” by the imperialists and their press (save for the extreme right wing). Thus, when Deng accepted an invitation by then U.S. President Jimmy Carter for a series of talks between January 29 and February 13, 1979, this was seen as a potential opening—and not just the potential of opening China to capitalist investment and exploitation, but an opening also for the imperialist camp to launch its counteroffensive. Potentiality was turned to actuality when, 12 days after these talks ended, China officially invaded the northern part of Vietnam with 400,000 troops. This signaled a *de facto* military alliance between China and imperialism. What China got out of this alliance was, of course, access to the latest Western technologies and scientific developments as well as foreign investments to boost production.

Does China's desertion to the side of the bourgeois camp mean that China is no longer socialist? Does it mean that China is neoliberal? I believe that, while we should answer the first question with an unqualified "yes," the answer to the second question remains negative. China is no longer properly a socialist state, in that "public ownership, centralized planning and the monopoly of foreign trade" (B. Becker, 2008, p. 16) have been either destroyed or severely eroded. There is a bourgeois, owning class in China that lives by exploiting labor-power. As Brian Becker (2008) notes:

The economic reforms instituted since 1978 have eviscerated many of the social insurance guarantees previously enjoyed by the workers and even more numerous peasantry. Basic social rights—healthcare coverage for all, the right to a job, free public education, affordable housing—have been severely cut back for millions. (p. 17)

While the pillars of China's socialist economy have been uprooted and while capital has marched forward, displacing and ravaging China's working class and peasantry, it does not follow that China has become a neoliberal state, as Harvey argues. To his credit, Harvey does pay attention to the particularities of China in neoliberalism. Yet, on the cover of his oft-cited book, *A brief history of neoliberalism*, a picture of Deng sits sandwiched in between pictures of Reagan, Thatcher, and Augusto Pinochet, establishing something of an abstract visual equation between these three figures.

China is a contradictory social and political formation. There is private property, competition, foreign investment, economic and social inequality, and exploitation. Yet this does not mean that capitalism necessarily has the upper hand in China. There are still many state firms and industries in China, enough to earn the condemnation of *The Economist* (2009, Nov. 12). In fact, the Chinese constitution both consecrates the logic of the free market *and* affirms the presence of central-planning based on social needs.

Article 15 reads, “The state practices economic planning on the basis of socialist public ownership... balancing... economic planning and the supplementary role of regulation by the market” (cited in Thompson, 2008, p. 91). Furthermore, China’s economic prowess tends to be greatly over exaggerated. In fact, China is still technically an underdeveloped country. As Zheng Bijian (2005) notes, “China remains a low-income developing country, ranked roughly 100th in the world. Its impact on the world economy is still limited.”

Bijian goes on to write that, according to China’s own estimations, it won’t be until 2050 that the state will have overcome the long legacy of colonialism and underdevelopment.

Power is also still held by a Communist Party, which has a membership of over 85 million people. This is a massive organization and, as such, it is not a homogenous entity. Because of the principles of democratic-centralism, which keep democratic debate internal to the Party, we are not privy to all of the different factions within the organization. Yet in order to maintain its power the Party cannot turn its back on its entire social base, and so one can deduce that there must be significant socialist groupings within the Party. Actually, we have more than the powers of deduction. On July 12, 2007, an open letter to the Party’s leadership—which was penned by 17 Party members—was circulated in advance of the 17th Party Congress. The letter called for a return to Marxist-Leninist-Maoist thought and offered specific recommendations to the Party’s leadership, warning that if China’s economic “reforms” are not abandoned then “A Yeltsin-type person will emerge, and the Party and country will tragically be destroyed very soon” (Ma Bin, et al., 2008, p. 108). This letter clearly attests to a left wing within the Party, one that is significant enough as to voice its criticisms publicly.

The U.S.-China alliance that was cemented in 1979 served to further isolate the Soviet Union and the Eastern Bloc from the world economy. That same year, the U.S. refused to ratify the Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty with the Soviet Union (referred to as SALT II because the first treaty was also shot down by the U.S. in 1972). This pressure resulted in the ascendancy of Gorbachev to the rank of Secretary of the Soviet Communist Party in 1985. And this was the overall context for the dissolution and overthrow of the Soviet Union and Eastern Bloc socialist states between 1986-1991. This period—a historic setback for the proletarian class camp and the general struggle of oppressed people—had nothing to do with aspirations for “democracy” or “freedom,” as is taught in U.S. history textbooks, and is often parroted by “critical” educational scholars.¹⁶ Or, perhaps to be more accurate, this period and the counterrevolutions across Eastern Europe were for democracy, but democracy for the capitalist class. Thus, what we have witnessed in the decades since the collapse of world communism has been the wide scale expropriation of previously commonly-held resources and industries by international capitalists. Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri (2009) correctly write that this development largely propelled neoliberalism: “a large portion of the ‘generation’ of wealth,” they write, “has been achieved merely by feeding off the corpse of socialism, in the former second world as well as the first and the third, transferring to private hands the wealth that had been consolidated in public property, industries, and institutions” (p. 266).

Additionally, without an effective counterweight against imperialism many independent and socialist states found themselves under the immediate threat of military

¹⁶ In fact, these movements were largely unpopular. In a referendum held in March 1991, the majority of people in the Soviet Union voted in favor of maintaining the socialist union.

and economic attack. The economic blockades on Cuba and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea were immediately expanded and intensified. A new war was started against Iraq—first by military means, then by economic means, and then again by military means. Thousands of bombs were dropped on Yugoslavia, Bosnia, and Kosovo to break up the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, sending the different nations within the federation into turmoil and chaos. Panama was invaded and its President was kidnapped and taken hostage in a U.S. prison. This all is the context in which the recent wars on Afghanistan, Libya, Syria, and Yemen must be seen. The invasion of Iraq in 2003 was not the doing of George W. Bush but flowed naturally from imperialist policy since 1979. It is similar with the U.S.'s policies toward states such as Venezuela, Bolivia, Ecuador, Iran, Sudan, China, Ukraine, Zimbabwe, and Russia.

All of the states targeted by the U.S. since 1979 have had one thing in common: they have all been socialist or independent (bourgeois-nationalist) and thus a thorn in the side of the imperialist camp. As Brian Becker (2013) argues, this thrust is oriented toward the “destruction of the independent states that emerged in the formerly colonized world which had managed to sustain their independent status from Western imperialism as a consequence of their economic and military ties to the USSR and the socialist bloc” (p. 25). The *tactics* used by the U.S. against the states (and against resistance movements that do not hold state power, like the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia or the Zapatista National Liberation Army) have differed over time and in relation to each other, but they are all part of the same global class *strategy*.

Revolutionary critical pedagogy in the age of global counterrevolution

Revolutionary critical pedagogy has to have an adequate understanding of the global relationship of class and national forces, and in the U.S. context in particular this understanding has to be primary. If one examines the current neoliberal privatizations of U.S. public schools and subjects outside of this context then one will have a partial and therefore inadequate understanding of the dynamics and work, the futures and lives at stake, and the potential for domestic social struggles to become revolutionary movements. For example, without taking into account capital's ability to thrive off of accumulation by dispossession through imperialist policies and wars we cannot fully appreciate capital's ability to revive itself after severe economic crises. This is one of the reasons why I believe that we are still in a period of counterrevolution: just look at the ways that the revolutionary energy of the "Arab Spring" was channeled quickly into reactionary ends that were fairly satisfactory with imperialist desires in the region. Further, without taking an internationalist perspective we can fight against neoliberal privatizations at home while actually supporting imperialist wars abroad. We also miss the ability to establish alliances and goals with those fighting the same forces abroad (see Ford, 2015), and we miss some important lessons from the historic and contemporary struggles of workers and oppressed peoples across the globe. Some of these lessons come in the form of grave mistakes that we seek to prevent and others come in the form of triumphs from which we seek inspiration.

Moreover, unless revolutionary critical pedagogy has a correct theoretical assessment of and practical approach to the global class war we can end up acquiescing to imperialism and uniting with our class enemy, thereby betraying our commitment to

the rejection of reformism. This is particularly dangerous in the U.S., a country in which patriotism, national chauvinism, and war propaganda have done much damage to social movements. The recent war on Libya provides an instructive example here. Before the 2011 war on Libya there had been a decades-long demonization campaign against the Libyan government and its leader, Muammar Gaddafi, as well as military attacks and several rounds of economic and political sanctions against the nation. Thus, when an armed uprising broke out against the government in 2011, many people and groups on the left in the U.S. completely capitulated to the imperialist camp. Brian Becker (in Glazenbrook, 2013) offers a proper, if scathing, assessment of this situation:

So, in the case of Gaddafi and Libya, part of the left and the peace movement said, well, Gaddafi's rule was dictatorial, or he was a bizarre leader, or there was a violation of human rights... echoing all the arguments of the imperialists. Absent social pressure, all of the socialists in their meeting can make militant speeches to each other... But will you go out into the public arena, when the public has been trained by the imperialists to say if you oppose a war in Libya, then you are an apologist for Gaddafi, for the demon? If you are not just fighting conservatives, but mainstream public opinion that has been poisoned by demonization, you have to be strong. Much of the left's betrayal of internationalism was nothing other than an exercise in cowardice, in accommodating to public opinion, imperialist-generated public opinion, but cloaked and masked in left rhetoric and human rights rhetoric (p. 35)

Becker here is essentially bringing Lenin's condemnation of the Second International that was addressed at the end of the previous chapter into the contemporary arena. He shows that one of the main reasons that there was not a mass movement against the war on Libya is that so much of the left and the "peace" movement ultimately parroted the line of their own imperialist governments. This was facilitated by patriotic propaganda that held the U.S. as "democratic" and Libya as a "dictatorship." I would argue that we have witnessed the exact same trend happen in regards to Syria and that it could very well

happen in any war against the DPRK or Iran. Compare this to the state of social movements in the 1970s, when the Black and Chicano liberationists and the left more generally forged active links with anti-imperialist movements and states across the globe. This is an arena in which revolutionary critical pedagogy could provide an immensely productive anti-imperialist intervention not only in education but also in protest and social movements. This intervention, however, rests upon an appropriate understanding of the global class war.

Conclusion:

As many critical scholars note, education in the U.S. is undergoing a radical transformation in response to the neoliberal agenda. Beginning with the 1983 report, *A nation at risk*, educational workers, institutions, and processes have been in the crosshairs of the capitalist elite. As part of the overall push by the capitalist class to discipline and push back the gains of the proletarian class camp, education has increasingly become subjected to privatization schemes over the last three decades. This privatization has been both *economic*—in that it has involved the accumulation of values and the expropriation of public goods and services—and *social-subjective*—in that it has also entailed transformations in the production of subjectivity, including the shift from the citizen to consumer. Charter, voucher, and corporate-managed schools are on the rise, teacher unions are under attack, teaching and pedagogy are being reduced to the sheer transmission of predetermined information, and the lives and bodies of teachers and students are being coerced into reified ontological schemas. The work done so far in this

regard has linked classrooms to broader processes and analytically centered political economy.

All of this, however, has been seen exclusively through the lens of neoliberalism, which does not sufficiently account for the contemporary state of the global class struggle. Thus, in addition to locating the roots of current education reforms and privatizations within the logic of capital, I have proposed asserting the primacy of the global situation, shifting the scale of our understanding and intervention from the national to the global. In doing so we reject reformism and guard against the defection of potentially antagonistic subjectivities to the side of the imperialist class camp.

CHAPTER FOUR

EDUCATIONAL SPACES AND THE LOGIC OF CAPITAL

“Not that the production of space is solely responsible for the survival of capitalism; it is in no sense independent of the extension of capitalism to pre-existing space. Rather, it is the overall situation—spatial practice in its entirety—that has saved capitalism from extinction.”

- Henri Lefebvre

Introduction:

This rest of this dissertation continues to develop the foundations of a revolutionary critical pedagogy that pushes forward the process of turning the tables of the global class war against the forces of counterrevolution. The particular way that this task is engaged is by turning to space as a central site, stake, and form of that struggle. If revolutionary critical pedagogy takes class and political economy as key objects of inquiry and targets for intervention then, so I wish to show in this chapter, it has to take the production of space into consideration. This move has theoretical and political import; it helps bring the problem of capital *realization* into our analysis and it demonstrates how space and spatial production are absolutely crucial to the reproduction of capital, and hence they will also be absolutely crucial to the revolt against capital.

Before I get into this task, however, I bring into this conversation the spatial turn in education. I begin here with the educational area that has historically been most concerned with space: school architecture. After sketching this history, I move on to the spatial educational turn, focusing on a few surveys of spatial studies in education. Next, and by way of transition, I note some cautions about bringing spatial studies into education and in response justify my own nascent spatial turn in revolutionary critical pedagogy. The second section of this paper looks at the capitalist production of space.

Whereas most educational research sees the spatial turn as the result of “globalization,” “post-Fordism,” or “neoliberalism,” I argue that the spatial turn is the result of capital.

I begin this section by laying some conceptual groundwork for understanding the spatial relations of capitalism. Once this is done, I draw out some spatial concerns of Marx’s, concerns that are both implicit and explicit in his work (and in his work with Engels). In particular, I focus in on four areas: 1) absolute and relative expansion; 2) the town and country; 3) transportation and communication; and 4) fixed capital and the built environment. Throughout this exploration I draw on the work of a few critical geographers who have taken on and developed these various aspects of Marx’s thought. I also pay attention to potential contradictions upon which revolutionary critical pedagogy can seize, and note that this perspective widens our focus to both the production and realization of value. In this section I also underscore the deep roots upon which both the previous chapter and the chapters to come are built. The chapter is also intended to open up further lines of inquiry around revolutionary critical pedagogy and space.

The spatial turn in education

The revolutionary critical pedagogy for space developed in this dissertation follows a more extensive “spatial turn” in the social sciences that began in—and has been accelerating since—the late 1960s. At this time, social theory became increasingly concerned with spatial problems and analyses, recognizing that space had “been undertheorised and marginalized in relation to the modernist emphasis on time and history” (Usher, 2002, p. 41). As Kalervo Gulson and Colin Symes (2007a) note, this is

“a spatial turn... that education has yet to undertake, at least in any concerted way” (p. 97). This echoes Michael Peters’ (1996) observation over a decade earlier, that

Educational theory is dominated by considerations of time, by historically oriented theories, by temporal metaphors, by notions of change and progress... Most of the sociological or anthropological theories that educationalists use as explanatory frameworks or paradigms are variants of European strands of thought that are heavily imbued with nineteenth-century historicist assumptions. In short, “modern” educational theory has all but ignored questions of space, of geography, of architecture. (p. 93)

Education has, of course, like every other process and discipline, taken place *in* some space, and so it is not as if the relationship between education and space has been totally neglected. The most explicit consideration of this relationship has taken place in research on classroom and school architecture (Gulson & Symes, 2007a).

Educational architectures

In the earliest stages of the European colonization of North America education was an informal, sporadic, and uneven practice—a reality that corresponded to the absence of any centralized state structure. Formalized schooling during this time period was the prerogative of each colonial town. In the early 19th century, however, as something of a centralized state began to develop in the North, education—and its spatial form, the school—began to undergo a drastic transformation. The symbolic import of the schoolhouse grew, as did a belief in the connection between the schoolhouse and educational ideals. School design came to be seen as an educational tool that could enhance instruction, discipline, and socialization. Although school architecture would eventually become a discipline in its own right, it was and is always contaminated by

other architectures, particularly those that serve public and disciplinary functions, like prisons, mental asylums, and courthouses.

Henry Barnard and Horace Mann are viewed as the founders of the first educational reform movement that sought to improve and standardize educational facilities beginning in the 1830s. Mann's schoolhouse design intended to counter the disorder and mayhem characteristic of one-room schoolhouses.¹⁷ In Mann's design, the teacher's desk was elevated and positioned in front of ordered rows of individual desks. The spatial organization was meant to be entirely prescriptive: "On walking in the door, one knew where to go and how to act" (Weisser, 2006, p. 198). The next major innovation in school design came in 1847 with the construction of the Quincy grammar school in Boston. This was the first fully-graded school to be divided into self-contained classrooms, in addition to the first school with a large auditorium or study hall (Cutler, 1989, p. 5). The Quincy design, which was replicated in several urban areas, was basically an assemblage of Mann's one-room schoolhouse.

The idea of the built-form of the school as an educational tool was strengthened over time. The school began to house multiple rooms and spaces differentiated by function and purpose: "Gymnasiums, auditoriums, cafeterias, locker rooms, clinics, laboratories, and workshops housed physical training, exercises in citizenship, health care, and experiences in science and the fine and practical arts" (Weisser, 2006, p. 201). After the differentiation of schools the next innovation to educational architecture and design was John Dewey's Laboratory School in Chicago, which housed elementary and

¹⁷ For more information about the reality of early one-room schoolhouses in the U.S., see Zimmerman's (2009) book, *Small Wonder: The Little Red Schoolhouse*.

secondary grades. This design was in many ways a critique of the Mann and Quincy designs, which Dewey believed to be planned for “the only educational activity that can possibly go on in such a place. It is all made ‘for listening’” (cited in Weisser, 2006, p. 201). The Laboratory School was designed with regards to “both internal cohesion and relatedness to the world outside its walls” (Wirth & Bewig, 1968, p. 81). Dewey worked against what he perceived as the strict discipline, passivity, and surveillance of the Mann and Quincy designs by introducing moveable desks and by emphasizing the importance of experience over studying in both curriculum design and its spatial expression.

Although Dewey was trying to reject the Mann and Quincy prototypes, his architecture, as Jan Masschelein and Marteen Simons (2010) note, shared a similar logic: the logic of “pedagogic baptism.” Pedagogic baptism is the process whereby the student is inaugurated into the existing order of things through the educational process and the space of the schoolhouse. In other words, early thinking about the relationship between space and education was thoroughly functionalist, which is to say that there was advanced a cause-and-effect relationship between the built-form of the school and the social relations and arrangements that would take place within it. In general, space was seen as a container that could be filled with carefully arranged objects in order to facilitate a particular type of learning experience and process of indoctrination. This was still a minor tradition in a narrow field within educational research and practice, however, for as Gulson and Symes (2007a) tell us, “most studies of school architecture have treated it as a mere background phenomenon, with limited power dimensions or, when these have been appreciated, then they have been seen as innocuous, generally for the educational good” (p. 105).

Surveys of education and the spatial turn

Educational researchers began to theorize space beyond school architecture in the mid-1990s, and Michael Peters (1996) was the first educational theorist that I have found to do so.¹⁸ Drawing on Foucault's (1984) assertion that "space is fundamental in any exercise of power" (p. 225), Peters (1996) surveys the work of a few critical geographers and architects and, based on this reading, suggests "a series of theoretical concerns for a critical theory of education that takes space and the politics of space seriously" (p. 95). I concentrate here on the geographical literature upon which Peters draws. Peters' entry point into this project is the increased importance of knowledge and information in post-industrial and post-modern society. Educational processes and institutions are, he says, decisive agents in this transformation. Peters argues that this move "is conceived as both the production (research) and the reproduction (transmission) of knowledge. Society itself is analyzed in terms of the production, distribution and reproduction of knowledge" (p. 96).

Lyotard's (1984) notion—elaborated in *The postmodern condition: A report on knowledge*—that knowledge is playing an increasingly important role in the production process and, as such, is increasingly only deemed useful based upon its exchange-value, is important here. Peters (1996) writes that this represents "the mercantilization of knowledge and the marketization of education" (p. 97), and that these have clear spatial dimensions which, in turn, are necessarily educational. According to Peters it is these

¹⁸ I concentrate in this section on articles that serve as surveys of spatial studies in education. While there are certainly examples of more specific studies (e.g., Gulson & Symes, 2007b; Gulson, 2008; Buendía, 2011; Ellsworth, 2005; Monahan, 2005), I do not bring this literature in because it is not immediately relevant to the task at hand. I merely want to cover some of the groundwork that has previously been laid by educational theorists.

spatial dimensions that critical spatial theorists are trying to understand. He first brings in David Harvey's thesis that postmodernism is ultimately "an expression of a new round of time-space compression that has taken place with the transition from Fordism to flexible accumulation" (p. 98). He next draws on Manuel Castells' work on the "information city," which shows how "the new informational technologies have been decisive in the implementation of capitalist restructuring" (ibid.). Neoliberal educational restructurings can and should be seen through these viewpoints, Peters says, because these restructurings are "based on the notion that education is not only a factor of production in its own right but also enhances the information effect, encouraging higher rates of innovation and increasing the productivity of human resources" (p. 99). Education is no longer a human right but "a form of investment in the development of skills" (ibid.), and this has national and international spatial implications. There is a resulting inequality in terms of investment in education, "which can be seen in terms of the emerging division of labor within an informational economy" (ibid.).

Peters draws four conclusions for a critical theory of education that takes space seriously. First, he says, we need to question and challenge the historicism in educational theory, or the privileging of time and time periodizations. Second, we need to interrogate the relationship between space and the exercise of power. The third conclusion is that we have to carefully consider the ways in which the education-state nexus has been transformed, and the fourth is that we need to develop educational theories that take seriously the politics of space, or the ways in which space is always the result of political processes. To my knowledge, Peters hasn't himself taken up these calls.

Gulson and Symes (2007a) also provide a survey of the spatial turn in social theory in education, although they focus more on drawing out some relevant implications for educational *policy*. Arguing that “spatial theories are not restricted to geography” (p. 98), they look at how the boundaries of education are transformed by turning to space. This stretching of the boundaries of education proper takes place because, they say, spatial studies are inherently interdisciplinary. The contention is thus not that space adds new problems to education but that it enables us to approach these problems with new frameworks and may also allow us to advance new propositions. The authors concur with Peters that temporal considerations have dominated educational thinking, but offer that this is due to the fact that time has been seen to be “more amenable to change, specifically political change, than space, which was seen as more incorrigible and resistant to change” (p. 100). This wasn’t unique to education, of course, but had to do more broadly with the Euclidean conception of space as an empty container that had to be filled by events, or as an empty vessel through which events took place. This changed in the 1960s-1970s as urban sociologists and geographers began to examine “the political relationship between space and social relations” (p. 101).

The specific address of educational spaces is quite brief (only three pages), but there are a few important remarks made. First, the authors note that educational institutions “are important sites in the constitution of the modern city” (p. 104). Second—and this is an observation upon which I have already drawn—they address educational architecture, which is the most predominate way that space has been incorporated into educational thought and practice. Most of this work, they say, has “concentrated on the ‘look’ and fabric of the school” and has viewed these as “fixed and stationary” (p. 105). It

was with the thought of Foucault that attention started to turn to “buildings as places of surveillance and regulation, as places where dividing practices were rife, and routines for separating and calibrating students and teachers were the norm” (ibid.). Third, and in agreement with Peters, they look to the spatial effects of neoliberalism, arguing that neoliberal policies have “brought into focus the differentiating spatial effects of unequal provision” (ibid.). In a fourth point that they hesitate to mark out as entirely separate they note that globalization has forced questions of the movement of people, capital, policies, and so on, into educational literature. Finally, they mention some research done on space and literacy, curriculum, critical pedagogy, and disability. There are no definitive conclusions drawn, and instead the authors end by urging us to make “*space* for space in education” (p. 107).

Cautionary notes in spatial education studies

There are important reasons to be deliberate and cautious when spatializing educational theory. The academic publish or perish regime under which we currently operate sometimes drives us to pursue avenues of thought merely because they are new territories to explore, stake our claims, and establish our research agendas. Joseph Ferrare and Michael Apple (2010) write that “any time calls for a new ‘turn’ begin to surface it is crucial to interrogate exactly what is being called for and how it will advance a critical understanding of education” (p. 209). They note that, when engaging spatial analyses, we “must be willing to accept that there will be times when ‘space matters’ and times when it will not” (p. 212). While I concur that we should be careful about spatializing education, I do object to this latter argument, however. I contend that, because power relations are

always inscribed in space, space always matters. The *extent* to which space matters or is determinate, however, must certainly be left open. But the general point I take from Ferrare and Apple is that we have to be specific about *why* we are calling upon space.

Why does space matter for revolutionary critical pedagogy? For one, while Marx didn't explicitly and at length address issues of space, it was important to his analysis and it certainly mattered for his theorization of capitalism and communism. And Frederick Engels' (1935) *The housing question* remains a foundational work of urban theory. As we will see below, space and mobility provide important barriers, problems, contradictions, and solutions or "fixes" for capital production. Space has been absolutely fundamental to the development of capitalism, and we can develop theories and politics around space that can help overthrow the capitalist mode of production, throwing off the shackles of oppression and exploitation.

Further, as Curry Malott (2012) insists, "successfully defeating capitalism requires an ability to identify where the centers of corporate power are located" (p. 161). In other words, we need to have an understanding of where capital is most powerful and where it is most vulnerable, which is often, but not always, in one and the same place. One can think, for example, of Lenin's thesis of links in the chain of imperialism upon which Marcy formulated his global class war theory. Capitalism generates certain spatial formations, and how these formations develop and relate to the production and reproduction of capital will be of central importance to any effective critical pedagogy.

One additional reason why this spatial turn may be fruitful follows from a finding that Isaac Gottesman made in his recent historical inquiry into Bowles and Gintis and the origins of Marxist educational theory. Gottesman (2013) convincingly demonstrates that

one of the contributing factors to the success of Bowles and Gintis' correspondence theory was that their research was located within a broad network of left scholarship and discourse. Thus, Gottesman concludes his study by stating, "As radical scholarship in the field of education continues to take shape, the question of intersection should remain front and center" (p. 24). Linking revolutionary critical pedagogy with spatial studies could do much to benefit both fields, and to benefit the struggle against the rule of capital.

There are, however, important reasons to be careful about *how* we formulate spatializations of education. Indeed, as Gulson and Symes (2007a) note, "we should not underestimate the power of spatial language to distort" (p. 99). Spatial theories are complex and many, and the nuances and historical debates that accompany them must not be lost as they become incorporated into the domain of critical education studies. With this in mind I am proposing a *specific* spatialization of a *particular* critical educational domain. This specificity and contingency is one reason why I limit this dissertation to the consideration of a select few theorists. Additionally, I want to start moving critical educational studies beyond the general stance of "we should take space into consideration" that is so prevalent in the literature.

Capitalism and the production of space

Because this dissertation is concerned with beginning to develop a critical pedagogy for space, one that is rooted in the tradition of revolutionary critical pedagogy, I am concerned here with the relationship between capitalism and space. And, as it turns out, this is quite fitting, as the recent turn to space in social theory has had everything to do with transformations in the capitalist mode of production. Thought, after all, does not

develop in a vacuum and, as such, there is a material basis for this turn to space in both education and the social sciences. Peters, Gulson, and Symes call this material basis the “postmodern,” “postindustrial,” and the “neoliberal” society. I argue that this material basis is not any of the above terms, but rather capital, and so all of the signifiers referred to by Peters, Gulson, and Symes do not represent radical breaks (although they may very well warrant their own signifiers).

The different labels used to describe the current moment all relate to the phenomenon known as globalization. This is why Gulson and Symes (2007a) hesitate to separate globalization from the other tendencies that they mark out. As noted in the previous chapter, globalization generally denotes the increasing flexibility and mobility of capital, or “the international unification of capital in which capitalists are becoming free to move their capital anywhere in the world” (McLaren & Baltodano, 2007, p. 47). International economic integration is the key force behind this process, which is facilitated by radical enhancements in the transportation of money, information, knowledges, commodities, machinery, and people (labor-power in particular). In this way, globalization can be seen as a manifestation of capital’s “annihilation of space by time” (Marx, 1939/1973, p. 524).¹⁹ Although, it might actually be more appropriate to say that globalization does not annihilate space by time so much as it radically reconfigures space or, even better, produces new spatial arrangements.

To say that capitalism produces space is not in itself a novel statement. Indeed, while Marx tended to focus on temporality in his studies (the main element of capitalism

¹⁹ As Neil Smith (1984/2008) notes, this isn’t actually Marx’s phrase; the “original author” of the phrase is Alexander Pope (p. 281, f47).

being the production value, which is defined as socially-necessary labor-time), space and geography were absolutely crucial—if conceptually embryonic—elements in his analysis and critique of capitalist political economy. In fact, Marx was able to identify the process of globalization a century before all of the hype around it began. In *Grundrisse* notebooks, which were preparatory sketches for *Capital*, Marx (1939/1973) wrote that “The tendency to create the *world market* is directly given in the concept of capital itself” (p. 408). Why is this so? In order to answer this question, we have to lay some groundwork, establish some concepts, and draw some analytical boundaries.

Marx begins the first volume of *Capital* with the commodity form (the fetishism of which was covered in this dissertation’s second chapter). Harry Cleaver (1979/2000) writes that Marx begins with the commodity because “it is the elementary form of wealth in capitalist society” (p. 81). Whereas Cleaver says that commodities *are* the elementary form of wealth under capitalism, Marx (1867/1967) actually begins *Capital* by writing that commodities *present* themselves as the elementary form of wealth in capitalism (p. 45). In the Penguin Press edition it is translated as *appears* (Marx, 1867/1990, p. 125). The distinction is between reality and appearance, and it is an important one to make because commodities, as we will see below, are congealed labor-power, and so labor-power is the source of all real wealth. Thus, the distinction is important to make in order to avoid the fetishism of commodities and to lay bare the social and living character of wealth. In any case, Harvey (2010) writes that beginning with the commodity form “turns out to be very useful because everyone has daily contact with them and experience of them. We are surrounded by them at every turn, we spend time shopping for them, looking at them, wanting them or spurning them” (p. 15). Thus, for Harvey the

importance of beginning with the commodity is politically strategic, and not necessarily theoretically necessary.

What is a commodity? At first blush, a commodity is a unity of use-value and exchange-value. The use-value of a commodity is its utility, or the fact that it, well, has a use to which it can be put. Use here is not defined naturally but socially. What is considered useful today may very well fall out of use tomorrow, and this happens all of the time. Further, use is a qualitative and heterogeneous attribute. The use-value of a commodity is realized only in and through the act of use. The exchange-value of a commodity, on the other hand, “presents itself as a quantitative relation as the proportion in which values in use of one sort are exchanged for those of another sort” (Marx, 1867/1967, p. 44). That exchange-value is a *relation* indicates that it is not intrinsic in the physicality of the commodity, which is the case for the commodity’s use-value. Exchange-value is, properly speaking, “only the mode of expression, the phenomenal form, of something contained in it, yet distinguishable from it” (p. 45). Exchange-value is an abstraction away from use-value, for the qualities that make a commodity useful matter not at all in its exchangeability. In this sense, while a commodity is a unity of use-value and exchange-value, it is a *contradictory unity* or a *unity of opposites* in that “As use-values, commodities are... of different qualities, but as exchange-values they are merely different quantities, and consequently do not contain an atom of use-value” (ibid.).

In order for two commodities of different use to be exchangeable they must have something in common; there must be some equivalent between them. This common thing is not use-value, for use-values are qualitative relations and heterogeneous. Instead, this common thing is that which is “contained within it yet distinguishable from it” (ibid.): the

fact that all commodities are products of human labor, and abstract human labor in particular. This labor is abstract as opposed to concrete, and the difference is this: the labor-power that makes commodities exchangeable is of a general and not a particular form. When labor is of a particular form it is referred to as concrete labor. This two-fold character of labor corresponds to the two-fold character of the commodity. Concrete labor is defined qualitatively and by use while abstract labor is defined quantitatively and by exchange. It is abstract labor that gives the commodity its exchange-value and concrete labor that gives it its use-value. It is the *socially-necessary labor-time* required for the production of a commodity that gives that commodity its *value*. Socially-necessary labor-time “is that required to produce an article under the normal conditions of production, and with the average degree of skill and intensity prevalent at the time” (p. 47). It would be odd to suggest, by way of contrast, that if two workers produce the same commodity in different quantities of time that the commodity with the greatest labor-time embedded within it would be more valuable than the other.

The exchange of commodities takes place because people find useful objects or services that they cannot themselves produce. The increasing diversity of commodities and the speed of their exchange bring about the need for a universal equivalent, i.e., money. This is what characterizes the act of simple exchange, which is characteristic of the feudal mode of production, the mode of production that precedes capitalism: the C-M-C circuit, where C stands for commodity and M stands for money. Under simple exchange the owner of a commodity sells that commodity for a certain sum of money in order to use that money to purchase another commodity that she or he cannot produce. Obtaining another, different use-value is the goal of simple exchange, and the circuit

begins and ends with the commodity. It is fundamentally different from barter (or C-C, in which one commodity is directly exchanged for another) in that the money used to facilitate the transaction continues to circulate. “Circulation,” Marx writes, therefore “bursts through all restrictions as to time, place, and individuals, imposed by direct barter” (p. 115).

This is the point at which capital begins, but it is not yet capital. To arrive at capital we have to consider a different form of circulation: M-C-M. Here, money is exchanged for a commodity, and that commodity is again exchanged for money. Marx refers to M-C-M as the “general formula” of capital. Where as the C-M-C circuit is finite in that it ends with the purchase of a commodity to be consumer and is thus motivated by the desire for use-value, it is the opposite with the M-C-M circuit. This latter circuit is driven by the desire for exchange-value, and it is theoretically without limits in that the money obtained at the end of the circuit can again be cast into circulation. Moreover, the money *must* be cast into circulation again if the circuit is driven by the quest for exchange-value. While simple circulation breaks through the barriers of time, place, and people, it is still a process with a beginning and an end. This is not the case with capitalist circulation, which “suddenly presents itself as an independent substance, endowed with a motion of its own, passing through a life-process of its own, in which money and commodities are mere forms which it assumes and casts off in turn” (pp. 152-153). The M-C-M circuit, however, “would be absurd and without meaning if the intention were to exchange by this means two equal sums of money’ (p. 146). The money—again, as a measure of *value*—obtained after the purchase and sale of a commodity must be

augmented in some manner and quantity; there must be *surplus-value* for this circuit to make any sense.

From where does this surplus-value arise? It can't come from selling commodities above their value or buying them below their value, or some combination thereof, for this wouldn't account for the *creation* of any additional value; it would merely explain how one seller or buyer might get over on another. The exchange of equivalents can't produce surplus-value, and thus we will not find our answer to this problem solely in the sphere of circulation. Marx puts the problem like this:

Our friend, Moneybags, who as yet is only an embryo capitalist, must buy his commodities at their value, must sell them at their value, and yet at the end of the process must withdraw more value from circulation than he threw into it at the starting. (p. 163)

If money cannot—on its own or through mediating an exchange of equivalent values—explain the origin of surplus-value then it must be in the use-value of a commodity. In other words, “our friend, Moneybags, must be so lucky as to find... a commodity, whose use-value possesses the peculiar property of being a source of value” (p. 164). This commodity is labor-power, and the value of this commodity is determined, like the value of all commodities, by the socially-necessary labor-time required for its production (and reproduction). This is determined in two ways: first, by “natural wants, such as food, clothing, fuel, and housing,” all of which “vary according to climatic and other physical conditions” of a country; second, these wants “are themselves the product of historical development” (p. 168). There is, therefore, to the value of labor-power “a historical and moral element” (ibid.). This is one point in which Marx explicitly mentions education, noting that education enters into the value of labor-power (see Malott and Ford, 2015).

At this point, there is still a problem that prevents us from understanding the origin of surplus-value in the general formula of capital. We know how the exchange-value of labor-power is determined, and we know that its use-value is that it produces additional value. Yet so far we are still within the realm of circulation, and the use-value of labor-power is not consumed in this sphere. We have to go elsewhere:

Accompanied by Mr. Moneybags and by the possessor of labour-power, we therefore take leave for a time of this noisy sphere, where everything takes place on the surface and in view of all men, and follow them both into the hidden abode of production, on whose threshold stares us in the face “No admittance except on business.” Here we shall see, not only how capital produces, but how capital is produced. We shall at last force the secret of profit making. (p. 172)

The “secret” turns on the difference between the value of labor-power and the value that it produces, which must be different magnitudes if the capitalist is to purchase labor-power at all. This is the—or, rather, a first—definition of surplus-value: the value produced after the point at which the value of labor-power has been reproduced. Because the value of labor-power has a “moral and historical” element, it is always a source of intense struggle, or really, it is *the* site of class struggle. For, other circumstances remaining the same (e.g., length of the working day, rate of productivity, technological innovation, mass of laborers employed), the higher the value of labor-power the lower the rate of surplus-value. Thus, the interests of labor and capital are diametrically opposed; when one gains, the other loses.

Just two more concepts remain before we can move on to consider the capitalist production of space. First, labor-power is *variable* capital, and it is so because it produces value in the production process. As Marx writes, “In so far then as labour is such specific productive activity... it raises, by mere contact, the means of production from the dead,

makes them living factors of the labour-process, and combines with them to form new products” (p. 194). Variable capital stands opposed to—yet in a necessary relationship with—constant capital, which is called so because its value remains constant throughout the production process. Constant capitals “never transfer more value to the product than they themselves lose during the labour-process by the destruction of their own use-value” (p. 197). The value of the cotton that is spun into a t-shirt, for example, is merely transferred to the t-shirt. The spinner, however, through the act of spinning—and thus by transforming the raw material of the cotton and raising the spinning wheel from the dead—produces additional value. Constant capital thus includes raw and auxiliary materials and means of production.

While Marx never developed a theory of the capitalist production of space, he certainly identified the necessity for capital to produce space, delineating key reasons as to why this is necessarily so and pinpointing some of the ways that this spatial production takes place. Now that I have elaborated some of the basic precepts of Marx’s though I want to draw out some spatial concerns of Marx’s. I do this not to argue that just because Marx cared about space we should too. Nor are the following sections intended to represent a comprehensive account of the capitalist production of space. The point is rather to locate within the logic of capital—and its historical manifestations—the contemporary spatial trends with which social science and education have been concerned. Moreover, the point is to draw out the importance of struggles over the production of space and the relevance that this has for revolutionary critical pedagogy. Marx’s spatial insights have deep relevance for understanding our world today, how and why it came to be (and look, and feel), and what we can do to remake it differently.

Absolute and relative expansion

Consider, as an entry point here, the following passage from *The manifesto of the Communist Party*: “The need of a constantly expanding market for its products chases the bourgeoisie over the whole surface of the globe. It must nestle everywhere, settle everywhere, establish connexions everywhere” (Marx & Engels, 1848/1972, p. 476). This type of expansion is part of the logic of capital, as capital again is defined by the *expansion* of value. This value must not only be *produced*, it must also be *realized*; hence the need for the constantly expanding market. Once the national market of a capitalist economy becomes saturated with commodities then that market can no longer serve as an adequate source of value realization. The national bourgeoisie must go elsewhere to sell its goods, and this process entails the creation of external markets, or *absolute expansion*.

As capital is at its heart a social relation (between labor and capital), when the national bourgeoisie seeks out markets for its commodities it also thoroughly transforms the mode of production and the social relations in the newly conquered territory.

The bourgeoisie, by the rapid improvement of all instruments of production, by the immensely facilitated means of communication, draws all, even the most barbarian, nations into civilisation. The cheap prices of its commodities are the heavy artillery with which it batters down all Chinese walls... It compels nations, on pain of extinction, to adopt the bourgeois mode of production; it compels them to introduce what it calls civilisation into their midst, *i.e.*, to become bourgeois themselves. In one word, it creates a world after its own image. (p. 477)

Previous modes of production are rendered obsolete in the face of capitalist productive forces, as the latter’s production relations and means of production drive down the costs of commodities (including labor-power). Producers who cannot sell their commodities at these low prices are either driven out of business altogether or forced to adapt to the dictates of capitalist production, including again the *relations* or production.

The creation of the world market was not, to be sure, accomplished merely by the cheap costs of commodities, but also by a range of violent acts, even genocides. Or, rather, capitalism and commodity production rest on, engender, and reproduce a whole host of violent processes. This was covered in the previous chapter, but I will reiterate two important relations that the expansion of the world market forces across the globe. One of the primary components of the capitalist marketplace is a class of people who—owing to their “freedom” from the means of subsistence—must purchase commodities, and who—owing to their “freedom” from the means of production—must sell their labor in order to survive until tomorrow, when they can again show up at the gates of the workplace. Additionally, there must be a concentration of resources, raw and auxiliary materials, and primary means of production in the hands of one class. These two components are each part of the establishment of the capital-labor relation, and this is the process of primary accumulation.

Primary accumulation—the creation of the preconditions necessary for capitalist accumulation—happened differently and unevenly across the globe. While Marx writes about this process in England in the last section of the first volume of *Capital*, the very last chapter in that book consists of a few pages on “the modern theory of colonization.” This placement may seem odd, particularly because the penultimate chapter deals explicitly with socialist revolution and contains beautiful and militant calls for the “expropriation of the expropriators.” Yet the move is actually quite intelligible, and it is intelligible for specifically spatial reasons: capitalism must expand outward, or *absolutely*. Capital must cover the globe, forcing its way into every nook and cranny, and in so doing it transforms modes of production and accompanying social relations of production. “In

Western Europe,” at the time of Marx’s writing, “the process of primitive accumulation is more or less accomplished” (p. 716). Colonialism thus in part entailed a spatial generalization of primary accumulation.

After it transformed the social relations of production in England—or the United States—capitalists (as representatives of capital) expanded outward through colonization, and later through imperialism. Moreover, as capitalist accumulation grows in England, it requires an additional influx of raw materials. It is for this reason that the burgeoning capitalist textile industry in England required the imported cotton from the U.S. In order for capitalism to grow *intensively* in a country it also may need to grow *extensively*. It is in part the combination of these two dynamics that accounted for the underdevelopment of the Global South.

Throughout the 19th century the world was divided between the “great” imperialist powers. The culmination of this division is commonly located with the Berlin Conference of 1884, in which 14 established and emerging imperial powers met to determine the fate of Africa, dividing almost the entire continent amongst themselves. As Brian Becker (2011, Mar. 30) notes:

The 1884 Conference of Berlin, more than any other single event, became emblematic of the dynamic transformation of capitalism into a system of global imperialism... By 1902, 90 percent of Africa’s territory was under European control. African self-governance was wiped off the map in most of the continent. Only Ethiopia remained an independent state. Liberia was technically independent too, but it was in fact under the control of the United States.

With the world more or less divided up into colonies and semi-colonies the era of imperialism officially begins. About this, Lenin (1920/1965) writes:

The characteristic feature of the period under review is the final partition of the globe—final, not in the sense that a *repartition* is impossible; on the contrary,

repartitions are possible and inevitable—but in the sense that the colonial policy of the capitalist countries has *completed* the seizure of the unoccupied territories of our planet. For the first time the world is completely divided up, so that in the future *only* redivision is possible, i.e., territories can only pass from one “owner” to another, instead of passing as ownerless territory to an “owner.” (p. 9)

The period between 1884 and 1945 can be defined as the era of inter-imperialist rivalry, a characterization to which the two World Wars attest. It was the arrival of the Soviet Union as a major power and the cycle of national liberation struggles surveyed in the previous chapter that changed the dynamics and helped to unite the previously warring imperialist nations. The primary point that I wish to emphasize here, however, is that once capital finishes expanding *absolutely* it has no other choice to but expand *relatively*. This analysis provides, then, another frame through which to view the work done in the previous chapter. As Marcy indicated, the global class war was a struggle over the determination of social borders. During the period of global revolution, capital was forced to withdraw from large portions of the globe. The result is that, during our contemporary period of global counterrevolution, capital is once again engaged in the process of absolute expansion, although relative expansion still takes place within territories already conquered by capital.

The town and country

One form through which this relative expansion takes place today is through the making and remaking of cities, primarily through the processes of disinvestment and reinvestment in the same absolute space of the city, or what Neil Smith (1984/2008) called the “see-saw motion of capital.” Yet the city has long played a central role in capitalist production, and this is explored through the antagonism between the town and

country in a famous section of *The German ideology*. Marx and Engels (1945/1970) here write that this antagonism is fundamental to capitalism for a host of reasons. In the town “individuals must be brought together” to interact with instruments of production “created by civilisation;” in the country individuals “find themselves alongside the given instrument of production as instruments of production themselves,” and these are “natural instruments of production” (p. 68). Thus, the difference between the town and the country is one of the general divisions of labor between industry (town) and agriculture (country).

This spatial division of labor has important consequences. In the country “property (landed property) appears as direct natural domination,” while in the town property appears as the “domination of labour, particularly of accumulated labour, capital.” People in the country are “united by some bond” while those in the town “are only held together by exchange.” In the country “the domination of the proprietor over the propertyless may be based on a personal relation, on a kind of community,” while in the town this domination is maintained through “a third party—money.” In the country there may still be a unity of physical and mental activity, while in the town this division “must already be practically completed” (ibid.). It is the town that necessitates “administration, police, taxes, etc.” (p. 69). In other words, the spatial differentiation between town and country signals a differentiation of nature and production, social relations, forms of community and belonging, and subjectivity, or the division of the self into mind and body.

The relationship between capitalism and the town and country antagonism, argues Smith (1984/2008), is oft cited yet seldom properly understood. He clarifies that capitalism didn’t produce the separation between town and country, but rather inherited it

from previous modes of production. Before capitalism, the town is the place of exchange, but under capitalism it increasingly becomes the place of production (as well as place of exchange and consumption). Further, while as noted above this separation is the result of the general division of labor, under capitalism this separation “proceeds to become the foundations... for the further division of labor” (p. 148). Subjected to the dictates of capital, that is, additional divisions of labor spring up between and within the town and country.

It would be decidedly undialectical—and therefore anti-Marxist—to read the town and country antagonism as fixed. But this is precisely what many do, Smith contends. Rather than being fixed, the separation of town and country is actually eroded under capitalism. To give just one example, Smith writes: “The urbanization of the country, through industrialization of agriculture, is today an overwhelming reality and one which Marx foresaw” (ibid.). This is certainly not to say that there is today no difference or antagonism between town and country as distinct spatial entities, but rather that there is no ultimate, essential separation. The exact course that this urbanization has taken and how it relates to education will be the focus of the next chapter. At this point, however, I will note one primary contradiction for the development of cities under capitalism, namely that, as workers become concentrated in cities for the purposes of the capitalist production of value, the foundations for the development of anti-capitalist communities, networks, and organizations are also laid.

Transportation and communication

Much fuss is made today about the mobility of capital, which can certainly move about the globe like never before. Yet as the above section on the absolute and relative expansion of capital has already indicated, this tendency toward mobility is inherent in the very concept of capital itself. It was by studying and exploring the circulation of capital—or, more specifically, capitals—that Marx laid out tremendous insights into the capitalist production of space. The circulation of capital concerns this section as well as the next one, which is on fixed capital. Capital expands over the globe, subjecting everything it reaches to its logic, the law of value, and the commodity form. As it does this, it throws together masses of capital and labor to produce vast metropolises. And in order to do this, it develops revolutionary new means of transportation and communication, which casts an urban fabric over the globe—although one that is without doubt filled with holes, is unfinished, and unfixed.

These revolutions in transportation and communication arise in response to the barriers that capital encounters as it expands absolutely and relatively. Many of these barriers are internal to the logic of capital, while others are erected by social and political forces (Harvey, 2013, p. 280). The dynamics of capitalism ultimately work to constantly reduce the time necessary for production and circulation. Capitalism, then, constantly works to produce a set of spatial relations that enables production and circulation to happen as quickly as possible. Selling time is particularly important in this regard. Marx (1885/1978) writes that “A permanently effective cause of differentiation in selling time, and hence in turnover time in general, is the distance of the market where the commodities are sold from their place of production” (p. 327). This is another motivating

force behind capital's drive to annihilate space by time, and developments in transportation are absolutely fundamental to this: "With the development of means of transport, the speed of movement in space is accelerated, and spatial distance is thus shortened in time" (ibid.). This is accompanied by developments in the means of communication, "so that for instance many ships depart for the same ports at the same time, several trains run between the same two points along different railways" (ibid.). Developments in communication help coordinate advances in transportation.

There are two contradictory implications that arise from these concurrent developments. The first implication is that the overall mass of commodities circulating through space and time increases and, as a result, there is a greater outlay of capital that is locked in commodity form. The second implication is that there is a greater outlay of capital invested in transportation and communication. These are contradictory developments because, while advances in transportation and communication are intended to—and, in many ways, do—help facilitate the realization of value, by increasing the outlay of capital in the two aforementioned ways the risk of crisis is heightened and intensified (the risk of crisis by devaluation, for example).

Movement through space is not just limited to the circulation of capital, however; it is also a means of production and, hence, directly productive of value. The transportation industry produces a "change of location" (p. 329). As Marx writes, "People and commodities travel together with the means of transport, and this journeying, the spatial movement of the means of transport, is precisely the production process accomplished by the transport industry" (p. 135). In some instances, this is consumed unproductively (like leisure travel), while in others it is consumed productively (like

when raw materials, labor-power, or means of production are shipped overseas). In this way, space can be thought of as a means of production or, as Smith (1984/2008) observes, as a raw material. And the greater the advances made in transportation and communication, “the more geographical space is drawn into the economy as means of production” (p. 117). This leads us to the growing importance of fixed capital and the built environment.

Fixed capital and the built environment

Revolutionary critical pedagogy has focused almost exclusively on the distinction between variable and constant capital, the distinction that provided the frame for Marx’s analysis of the *production* of capital. This focus makes a lot of sense, for it is variable capital that is the source of all value, and it is the production of this variable capital with which the process of education in capitalist countries is concerned. However, capitalism is not just about the production of value. “The specific purpose of capitalist production,” Marx (1885/1978) writes, “is always the *valorization* of the value advanced” (p. 233, emphasis added). In other words, value has to be both produced and *realized*. It is not just the time during which labor-power is consuming the means of production to transform raw materials to produce a commodity or service that concerns capitalism and, thus, anti-capitalist pedagogy. It is also—and just as importantly—the time and space of circulation. Both of these durations are grouped together, for Marx, under “turnover time.” Specifically, the turnover time “is the time for which he [Mr. Moneybags] has to advance his capital in order for this to be valorized and for him to receive it back in its original

shape” (p. 236). It will appear in its original *shape*, but its *amount* will be augmented, of course.

It is in investigating this turnover time that Marx introduces another schema that has important implications for revolutionary critical pedagogy, and this is the distinction between fixed and circulating capital. Circulating capital physically circulates; it includes the raw and auxiliary materials used in the production process, as well as variable capital. The cotton used in making a t-shirt is transformed in reproduction, and its values are transferred to the t-shirt. Similarly, the value of the labor-power employed in the spinning of the cotton is transferred. These values accompany the t-shirt through transportation, distribution, and consumption. Circulating capital, “in so far as [it is] transformed into the product, is ejected from the production process, and passes as a commodity from the sphere of production into that of circulation” (p. 237).

Circulating capital changes form, it circulates. This is not so with fixed capital, however, which is literally fixed, locked in place:

...another part remains fixed in the means of labour and hence in the production process. The value fixed in this way steadily declines, until the means of labour is worn out and has therefore distributed its value, in a longer or shorter period, over the volume of products that has emerged from a series of continually repeated labour processes. (pp. 237-248)

Fixed capital is therefore all that constant capital that is left behind after one turnover period. The materiality of fixed capital does not circulate, which is unlike the “other material components of the capital advanced in the production process,” which are “circulating or *fluid*” (p. 238). As a result, fixed capital “does not circulate in its use form. It is rather its value that circulates” (ibid.). A range of things count as fixed capital: buildings, machinery, ports, and so on. Yet to be so, fixed capital does not necessarily

have to be immobile; machinery, for example, can certainly be moved throughout space, although at a much greater cost than the commodity that the machine helps to produce. One thing that is unique about fixed capital that is immobile, however, is that it “cannot be sent abroad or [to] circulate as commodities on the world market” (p. 242).

Fixed capital, Marx notes in the *Grundrisse*, is not an accidental but a necessary form of capital; it comes about as a direct consequence of capital’s logic. Part of this has to do with the competitive laws of capitalism, which compel individual capitalists to adopt labor-saving technologies. These technologies increase production and enable the individual capitalist to capture a greater share of surplus-value. Over time, however, these technologies become generalized throughout a particular branch of production—and often have spillover effects in other branches. The coercive laws of competition compel other capitalists to adopt this technology or be driven out of business.

Fixed capital is quite a contradiction for capital in that it is, well, fixed, while capital is all about motion and fluidity. Fixed capital is absolutely necessary for capital, however: “Fixed capital is as much a presupposition for the production of circulating capital as circulating capital is for the production of fixed capital” (Marx, 1939/1993, p. 734). Don Mitchell (2003) makes the significance of this antagonistic necessity explicit: “For capital to be free,” he writes, “it must also be fixed in place” and this represents “the central geographic contradiction of capitalism” (p. 165). One way that capital attempts to deal with this contradiction is, not surprisingly, through ideology. Through touting itself as infinitely mobile and able to leap across the globe at the drop of a dime, capital is able to dictate a range of local policies and practices. Unfortunately, there is a tendency even

in revolutionary critical pedagogy to fixate on the mobility of capital. Yet, as Smith (1984/2008) quips,

It is all very well that \$500 million can be whizzed around the world at the push of a button, but it must come from somewhere and be en route to somewhere. This somewhere is the production process, where in order to produce surplus value it is necessary that vast quantities of productive capital be spatially immobilized for relatively long periods in the form of factories, machinery, transport routes, warehouses, and a host of other facilities. (p. 120)

Ultimately, “by effectively masking the degree to which capital must be located, the ideology of globalization allows officials... to argue that they have no choice but to prostrate themselves before the god Capital” (Mitchell, 2003, p. 166). This ideological presentation of capital is one of the ways that educational curriculum is able to be so tightly tethered to the demands of the global capitalist market, and in this way it works to lay the legitimating groundwork for high-stakes standardized testing.

To be sure, while the degree to which capital can move freely is greatly exaggerated in the ideology of globalization, there is no doubt that as a direct result of the aforementioned geographic contradiction capital works to continuously free itself from place. This, I believe, is largely what is behind the drive toward e-learning, which is already widespread in higher education and is beginning to be introduced in primary and secondary education. For example, in 2011 the Utah State Legislature established the Statewide Online Education Program, which allows students to earn high school credits toward graduation through publicly funded online learning courses. There are even school districts, like Dearborn Heights in Michigan, that have schools that are completely online. This should be viewed in part as an attempt to de-link the production of labor-power from particular places, thereby freeing up existing fixed capital, which can then be

expropriated and used for other purposes, or which will no longer require any expenditure from the state. Additionally, the online learning courses that are privately managed but publicly funded represent a form of primary accumulation.

There is another essential and related contradiction that fixed capital generates and upon which revolutionary critical pedagogy can seize. In order to examine this second contradiction, however, the definition of fixed capital has to be made a bit more precise. In the first volume of *Capital*, Marx makes a key distinction between money and capital: money is capital *when and only when* it is being advanced to produce surplus-value. A similar distinction holds when examining fixed capital. Take a building, for example: a building is fixed capital if and only if—or when and only when—it is being used to produce surplus-value. This is the case because, as Harvey (1982/2006) reminds us, “fixed capital cannot be considered independently of the specific useful effects that machines and other instruments of labour have within the production process. Fixed capital cannot be defined independently of the use to which material objects are put” (p. 205). From this it follows that the same material objects can be, at different times, both fixed capital and not fixed capital. In the *Grundrisse*, Marx (1939/1993) writes:

It is not necessarily the case that *fixed capital* is capital which in all its aspects serves not for individual consumption, but only for production. A house can serve for production as well as for consumption; likewise all vehicles, a ship and a wagon, for pleasure outings as well as a means of transport; a street as a means of communication for production proper, as well as for taking walks, etc. (p. 687)

In *Capital*, Marx (1885/1978) puts the distinction like this, again drawing on the dual use of the house:

The same thing... can function at one time as a component of productive capital, and at another time form part of the direct consumption fund. A house, for example, when it functions as a place of work, is a fixed component of productive

capital; when it functions as a dwelling, it is in no way a form of capital in this capacity. The same means of labour can in many cases function at one time as means of production, at another time as means of consumption. (p. 282)

When a material object is not being used for production proper it is not fixed capital but rather part of the consumption fund, meaning that it is being used for non-productive consumption. Yet because consumption is a part of the valorization of value it is certainly important, and the consumption fund—its production and, lately, its dismantling—has been a crucial component of capitalism over the last 70 years. Moreover, the “social decision” (Harvey, 2013, p. 119) as to how to use these products is of the utmost importance for capitalism and struggles against it, for an object can be produced as fixed capital but put to another use. This indicates that there are always risks for capital in the production of fixed capital.

With the production of machinery and other technologies there is certainly the risk that they will be socially devalued before their useful life is over. In other words, there is the risk that the machinery will be rendered obsolete by another piece of machinery before the end of its useful life. The more important risk for revolutionary critical pedagogy, however, is that it can be put to a different social use, one that is not productive of or for capital. This risk becomes greater—and more promising—once we expand our definition of fixed capital to include the entire landscape of capitalist production: the built environment. Harvey (1982/2006) provides a good definition of the built environment, noting that it

...comprises a whole host of diverse elements: factories, dams, offices, shops, warehouses, roads, railways, docks, power stations, water supply and sewage disposal systems, schools, hospitals, parks, cinemas, restaurants—the list is endless. Many elements—churches, houses, drainage systems, etc.—are legacies from activities carried on under non-capitalist relations of production. At any one

moment the built environment appears as a palimpsest of landscapes fashioned according to the dictates of different modes of production... Under the social relations of capitalism, however, all elements assume a commodity form. (p. 233)

The built environment is necessary for capitalist production and accumulation: a particular and evolving landscape has to exist in order for the production, distribution, and consumption of commodities to take place. And, in addition to being a constant risk of devaluation or disinvestment, it is always under the risk of social repurposing. We can think of the school as both fixed capital and not fixed capital depending upon the use to which the school is being put. More specifically, the school will be fixed capital when it is being used for the production of the commodity labor-power (i.e., when “schooling” or “training” proper are taking place).

This analysis also helps us understand the current resistance to the teaching and production of knowledges, skills, and social relations that are not viewed as being exchangeable on the current market place and are antagonistic to the interests of capital. Viewing the school as a form of (potential) fixed capital, we can appreciate the fact that when critical forms of teaching, learning, and studying take place the school is not being used as fixed capital. When these educational acts take place then the school is not even part of the consumption fund, but is of an entirely different category, a category antagonistic to capital. Capital looks upon such a scenario as a factory owner looks at a factory that is being used not for production but for a union-organizing meeting. The regime of high-stakes standardized testing is thus implemented in order to monitor and police the productiveness of the school and to ensure that only knowledge that is oriented toward the demands of the current capitalist economy is being taught.

Conclusion

The phenomenon known as globalization is often presented as a new, radical break in the order of things. And there is no doubt that the transportation, communication, and mobility of people, ideas, policies, commodities, culture, and so on today carry on at speeds and intensities previously unknown. Yet globalization has its roots in the logic of capital; it is “directly given in the concept of capital” (Marx, 1939/1993, p. 408).

Capitalism is not the first mode of production to produce space, of course. We have seen how the simple exchange of feudalism itself breaks down barriers of time, place, and people. But capitalist exchange—the M-C-M' circuit—represents a radical acceleration of this process. Yet new barriers pop up for capital, barriers that are internal to capital itself, and those that are posed by social and political forces. As massive transportation and communication systems speed up the circulation of commodities, greater masses of capital become fixed in highways, trucks, ships, and ports, and greater masses of commodities are tied down in the process of circulation. As capital gathers workers in cities for the purposes of exploitation it also lays the social and spatial foundations for resistance against exploitation to take place. Capital breeds resistance, and this resistance always manifests itself in some space, and it always concerns some space. By uncovering the logic of the capitalist production of space, and investigating the contradictions that this production engenders, revolutionary critical pedagogy can be better positioned to fight exploitation and contribute to movements that move beyond the rule of capital. In addition to surveying the broader spatial turn in social theory and education, this chapter has inaugurated an educational investigation into the capitalist production of space through a Marxist framework. In the next chapter, I home in on the capitalist production

of the city, incorporating and advancing the work done above and situating revolutionary critical pedagogy in relation to current struggles over the right to the city.

CHAPTER FIVE STRUGGLING IN AND FOR THE CITY

“If one wants to go beyond the market, the law of exchange value, money and profit, is it not necessary to define the place of this possibility: urban society, the city as use value?”
- Henri Lefebvre

Introduction

Educational research and practice have entered the urban age. There are all sorts of conferences, special issues, books, book series, and journals dedicated to the study of urban education. My school, Syracuse University, markets itself as a leader in urban education. The urban first became an object of educational inquiry with the 1965 Elementary and Secondary Education Act and the Equality of Educational Opportunity Study in 1966, which is commonly referred to as the Coleman Study (Buendía, 2011, p. 2). It seems, however, that the urban is rarely defined. Edward Buendía writes that the earliest urban education policy documents “constructed a population deemed as the urban that has been reduced to racial, economic, cultural and spatial attributes that are seen as corresponding to the totality of their aspirations, experiences and intellectual proclivities” (ibid.). I would argue that this happens today when the urban is referred to uncritically: the urban is completely conflated with poor Black and Brown communities and people; spaces of chaos and instability are colored Black and Brown.

The problem with uncritically calling upon the “urban” in urban education is not only that it risks reifying city spaces as ones of disorder and chaos, tying these characteristics to poor people and people of color; the problem is also that we miss identifying the urban as a desirable way of understanding contemporary struggles over education, and indeed over life itself. The urban is, moreover, a useful way of naming our

aspirations, particularly as they relate to education and life in cities, where most of us live these days, for the urban is the city as *use*. It is to an exploration of the urban and the city that I now turn.

Thus far in this dissertation I have explored the history of critical pedagogy, surveying the ups and downs of the field as it has developed since the 1970s. From this survey and history I have sketched out revolutionary critical pedagogy as an emergent educational theory and orientation that holds promise for organizing for, in, and after the moment of insurrection. Using the concepts of neoliberalism and the global class war I have also sketched out the larger, international contours in which critical pedagogy is currently situated. In the last chapter I made a move to space, exploring the ways that spatial transformations have been fundamental in the ongoing development of capitalism. In this chapter I want to focus in on one particular spatial formation that powerfully contains and expresses some of the major motors of capitalist production and reproduction: the city. As Merrifield (2014) puts it, the city “is crucial for the expansion of capitalism and for overthrowing capitalism” (p. 1). As such, I posit that revolutionary critical pedagogy would benefit from an engagement with critical geographic literature on the city and struggles *in* and *for* the city.

I begin this chapter by examining the relationship between capitalism and the city, how the city was subjected to the rule of capital and completely transformed in the process, as well as how and in what ways cities have been central to the maintenance and development of capitalism. I then turn to literature on the right to the city, asking what precisely this right is by tracing its formulation back through the work of Henri Lefebvre, but also calling on the work of others, such as Harvey, Merrifield, and Mitchell. The next

step is to begin to bring in some of the important debates that have taken place around the right to the city, including: what kind of right is it, whose right is it, what exactly is a city, and how does the international division of labor affect struggles for the city? In the concluding section I make explicit the lessons that we learn by placing revolutionary critical pedagogy in a conversation with the right to the city.

Capitalism and the city

The previous chapter briefly addressed the development of the town and the antagonism between the country and the town under capitalism.²⁰ These topics were addressed by turning to a few potent pages from Marx's and Engels' *The German ideology*. In that early work, Marx and Engels (1945/1970) write that "The town already is in actual fact the concentration of the population, of the instruments of production, of capital, of pleasures, of needs, while the country demonstrates just the opposite fact, isolation and separation" (p. 69). In these few words we glimpse our communist theoreticians' aversion toward the country and their ambivalence toward the city. The city was, for Marx and Engels, beautiful and tragic—as it is for us today. Regarding their aversion toward the country and their favoring of the city, Marx and Engels (1948/1972) would later write in *The manifesto of the Communist Party* that the capitalist subjection of the countryside by the town "greatly increased the urban population as compared with the rural, and has thus rescued a considerable part of the population from the idiocy of rural life" (p. 477). While this could be taken as a dig at the intelligence or habits of country-dwellers, Mitchell (2003) is quick to point out that Marx's and Engels' use of the term "idiocy" refers not to

²⁰ "Town" is basically British for "city."

intellect but rather “to the essential *privacy*—and therefore isolation and homogeneity—of rural life” (p. 18).

The city certainly isn’t romanticized in opposition to the country; it is seen instead in dialectical fashion as both positive and negative, boiling over with misery and simmering with possibility, an oppressive and liberating formation. For, while the city congregates people and production, letting loose the productive capabilities of humans, it also atomizes people. As Merrifield (2002) writes regarding workers and the dialectic of city life:

On the one hand, they’re separated as individuals, alienated from each other, sundered from their product and activity, forced apart by competition and the very purpose of their union. And yet, on the other, this same movement helped create giant industrial cities, cheap and quick communication, and thus made new innovative forms of association and progressive action possible. (p. 20)

This both/and view of the city follows suit with Marx’s and Engels’ overall view of capitalism: both figures stood in awe and condemnation of the capitalist mode of production.

The bourgeoisie, it must be remembered, were a *revolutionary class*, a class that ushered in a new mode of production, one that, for the first time in human history, enabled the elimination of scarcity. Further, it ushered in this new mode of production through revolutionary means, i.e., force. Marshall Berman (1982/1988) helps to explain what could only be described as a fascination with capitalism, noting that Marx and Engels are not interested in the specific *products* of capitalism (the study of which Marx relegated to “history” in the first lines of volume one of *Capital*). They are instead interested in “the processes, the powers, the expressions of human life and energy: men working, moving, cultivating, communicating, organizing and reorganizing nature and

themselves—the new and endlessly renewed modes of activity that the bourgeoisie brings into being” (p. 93). Of course, by the time that Marx and Engels were writing the bourgeoisie had already outlived their usefulness and had become a fetter on their own productiveness, a fact that is infinitely truer today. But the point is that Marx—and marxists—can be both in awe of and disgust with the city. This is the dialectic.

The city is beautiful because it concentrates people and centralizes productive forces, and this concentration and centralization results in a proliferation of interchanges, possibilities, and encounters. With the concentration of people new ideas, languages, and forms of communication and solidarity are generated. These are built into the city’s infrastructure (as both part of fixed capital and the consumption fund) through the construction of things like libraries, museums, and public parks. The centralization of productive forces amplifies production and increases the availability of these cultural products. At the same time, the concentration of people leads—via capitalist rent—to cramped and unfit living conditions, and the centralization of productive forces increases the rate of exploitation and unemployment.

Capitalism obviously didn’t produce the city; it inherited it and the division of labor between the city and country. Prior to capitalism the city was the site of administration, consumption, and exchange. The values that went into the building of cities were either extracted from the countryside or were investments on behalf of the social groups and individuals in control of the city. There is thus an important relationship between the city and surplus. While a surplus doesn’t necessitate a city, the city is, in a strong sense, the concentration of surplus. “The extraction of surplus labour power does not necessarily give rise to urbanism,” writes Harvey (1973/2009), but

“urbanism relies upon the concentration of a significant quantity of the social surplus product at one point in space” (p. 226).

Because cities were places of exchange they were always places of encounter. Just who could encounter whom was certainly the result of power and struggle. The much-celebrated agora in the ancient Greek city-state, for example, was certainly not accessible to slaves. In any case, it is with the advent of the capitalist mode of production and the process of industrialization that the city really comes into being. Industrialization transforms the city by making it the place where not only exchange happens, but also the place where production—the production of commodities, customs, habits, languages, and so on—takes place. As capitalism is based on the endless drive for accumulation, the city itself is harnessed as a raw material for the production process. Yet the ends toward which the city is deployed are always the result of contestation and struggle. And just who is included in the city, what kind of encounters can take place, and where and how they can take place, remain key stakes of all sorts of social, political, and economic battles. It is these battles that have, since the 1960s, been grouped and theorized under the banner of the “right to the city.”

The right to the city

The year 2009 marked a significant turning point in the global spatial arrangement of people in that by the end of that year most of the world’s population was, for the first time ever, living in urban rather than rural areas (towns or cities rather than countryside) (UN DESA, 2009). All of the processes that we engage in—inhabiting, playing, producing, consuming, exchanging, moving, learning, teaching, studying, desiring, and

so on—are predominantly taking place in cities. This is not simply a quantitative shift; it is instead a qualitative rupture in the social organization of production and reproduction. More specifically, it is not just that these processes are now predominantly taking place *in* cities. It is, rather, that these processes are now in many ways produced by—and productive of—city spaces. This qualitative rupture had been building for hundreds of years, first slowly and then, beginning in the 19th century, at an accelerated pace. Writing in 1967, Henri Lefebvre anticipated this rupture in his short book, *The right to the city*, by locating the city as the ultimate site and stake of anti-capitalist political struggle.

On the one hand, Lefebvre argued, the city had become increasingly central to the production and reproduction of everyday life. On the other hand, however, people had become increasingly alienated from participation in that life and those processes of production, including the production of the city. The brilliance of city life—the encounters it facilitated, the forms of communication and solidarity, the social relations it generated—was everywhere under attack by technocratic politicians and bureaucratic urban planners. But the brutalism of capitalist urban development and control could never fully repress the desires and *jouissance* birthed through the city form for Lefebvre. As he put it: “use and use value resist irreducibly” (Lefebvre, 1996, p. 170). By harnessing this side of the city dialectic, the people who produce the city can reclaim their right to it; the contradictions of the capitalist city had to burst open. And they did. The next year, 1968—which is when Lefebvre’s book was printed—France witnessed a wave of protests that shut down entire cities and universities.²¹ Not coincidentally, these protests started at

²¹ When speaking about “1968” there is a damaging tendency to homogenize the many, diverse, and even contradictory events subsumed within the signifier. This is especially problematic given the radically

the Paris University of Nanterre, where Lefebvre had been teaching sociology since 1965. While the uprising was ultimately defeated it nonetheless marked a pivotal historical moment for exactly the reasons that compelled Lefebvre to write his manuscript: the class war had taken on a spatial form. Workers and poor people “found themselves steadily decanted and banished” from the city, which had become “conquered by the well-heeled, by the bourgeois, whose playground it henceforth became” (Merrifield, 2002, p. 84).

The decades that have followed have confirmed Lefebvre’s prognosis of the centrality and importance of the city in the maintenance of global capitalism. The contradiction between the repression and resistance of city life has reached higher levels and, accordingly, the right to the city has become an important rallying “cry and demand” for a diverse range of movements. Just like the expansion of the city itself, calls for the right to the city have spread across the globe, appearing in a host of different and contradictory sites and contexts, from grassroots alliances in New York City to the movement of red shirts in South Africa; it has even been appropriated by the United Nations and World Bank. As Harvey (2012) notes in his preface to *Rebel cities*, the fact that the right to the city has retained and increased its importance in social struggles has little to do with Lefebvre himself and everything to do with the material and social conditions in which people find themselves. Nonetheless, it is important to examine the historical trajectory of the right to the city as a concept and organizational-strategic framework, particularly because it has become a somewhat nebulous and floating signifier.

different class characters of the movements (i.e., whether they occurred in capitalist or socialist states). For the purposes of this chapter and to avoid any such homogenizing, I exclusively mention France.

Critical education and the right to the city

Over the last few years the right to the city has begun to be taken up by critical education scholars who are theorizing the neoliberal attacks on education in the U.S. as well as resistances to those attacks (e.g., Lipman, 2011; Ford, 2013; Means, 2014). The right to the city has been mobilized to think through education policy and theory and its relationship with broader capitalist restructurings in the neoliberal age. Yet the right to the city, as a whole, has been taken up in relatively superficial ways. The most telling example of this is Pauline Lipman's (2011) otherwise excellent book, *The new political economy of urban education: Neoliberalism, race, and the right to the city*. Lipman convincingly demonstrates that education is not only impacted by neoliberalism, but that educational policy is also "constitutive of urban restructuring processes" (p. 22). She studies the ways in which school closings play an integral role in contemporary strategies of capital accumulation at the level of the city, in addition to exploring some of the ways that students, teachers, and parents are resisting this capital-city-education nexus.

Lipman looks at neoliberal urban restructuring in Chicago as a case study in the book. Chicago was an industrial city and an industrial powerhouse with manufacturing, processing, and transportation being the largest sectors of the city's economy through much of the 20th century. The city had a strong tax base and, in accordance with the general Keynesian welfare policies that dominated city planning and advanced capitalist economies in the mid-20th century (owing again to the ascendancy of the proletarian class camp), the city invested in housing, education, and other public infrastructures. Yet in the 1950s racial and economic contradictions began to surface:

Higher wages earned by [w]hite workers... led to a demand for better housing and schools. At the same time, there was a postwar migration of African Americans from the South... Real estate practices that provoked ‘panic’ home sales... set off mass [w]hite working class and middle class flight to the suburbs” (p. 27).

This suburbanization devastated the city, depriving it of its tax base as the most well paid and steadily employed workers fled the city. Additionally—and Lipman doesn’t really get into this—but during the migration from the South there did not exist a perfect correspondence between migration and employment, as if every Black person who moved to Chicago—or to any other urban area for the matter—walked right into a job (Puryear, 2015, May 12).

To address this economic and social turbulence the city “embarked on a ‘growth machine’ strategy of downtown development” (Lipman, 2011, p. 27) that “provided massive public subsidies to corporate, banking, and real estate interests” (p. 28). There was an accompanying disinvestment from public goods such as housing and education. While disinvestment from education was a *de facto* policy since the 1970s, it has been deepened since 2003, when the Commercial Club of Chicago, a group that unashamedly promotes the interests of the city’s elite, released their report titled *Left behind*. As Lipman notes, the report

...argues for opening up public education to a market of education providers, weakening unions, and strengthening centralized management... The report goes on to say that although vouchers are the CCC’s “preferred” solution, “the political climate in Illinois seems hostile,” so the best way to create competition and provide consumer “choice” is to fund charter schools and expand the charter school market. (p. 58)

Enter Renaissance 2010, which was birthed in June of 2004. Ren2010 was “an aggressive partnership of capital and the state” (ibid.) that was pushed for by for-profit companies in Chicago. The plan was to close as many public schools as possible and open as many

charter schools as possible by 2010. All told over 50 public schools were closed and over 100 charter schools were opened. After 2010, the city has continued to pursue this strategy, although the name Ren2010 has been left behind. Lipman argues that strategies like Ren2010 are not reactive to neoliberalism but actively shape the restructuring of cities and new modes of capital accumulation. By depriving workers and poor people of the resources that they need to reproduce themselves they are pushed elsewhere and forced to relocate outside of the city, thereby making the city ripe for investment and inhabitation by the elite.

Against this plan, Lipman turns to the right to the city, noting that “Cities are strategic locations for capital accumulation and thus a key locus for opposition to its logics” (p. 160). The city needs to be taken hold of by people to reclaim its vitality, which she argues, following Lefebvre, comes from “its diversity of people, ways of living, and perspectives” (p. 161). Lipman argues that education is

...integral to a movement to reclaim the city. It is a demand for all those locked out of equitable access to public education and dispossessed of their schools, a demand for public schools that are not exclusionary (racist, homophobic, discriminatory) and for all those simply desperate to find a “good school” for their children. (ibid.)

More specifically, critical pedagogy is important for the right to the city, according to Lipman, as it “plays an important role in helping children and youth develop tools of critical consciousness and social practice to enable them to participate fully in movements for social transformation” (p. 167).

Perhaps most importantly, Lipman writes that the right to the city “is a call for a wholly different city and society” (p. 161). Throughout the book Lipman refers to “anticapitalism,” “radical democracy,” and even “socialism” (and “prosocialism”). The

recognition that the right to the city is a demand that cannot be won within the capitalist mode of production is absolutely essential for critical educational theory. Although this key point is made (albeit in language that is a bit vague and potentially contradictory, e.g., “socialism” and “prosocialism”), there are only a handful of paragraphs in the entire book about the right to the city. The book’s index signals that the topic is broached on only 10 pages. Furthermore, there is no discussion of—or even nods to—struggles over precisely what the right to the city means. There is no shortage of such struggles. As Andy Merrifield (2013) tells us, “Recently, urban theorist and planner Peter Marcuse joked that the only word he doesn’t have a problem with in ‘The Right to the City’ is ‘to’” (p. 24). The point here is not necessarily—or, not only—to criticize Lipman for this omission and the more general superficial engagement with the right to the city, but more importantly to signal that there is much work for critical educationalists to do in this regard. This is important work for any scholar or group engaging the right to the city for, as Harvey (2012) writes, “the right to the city is an empty signifier. Everything depends on who gets to fill it with meaning” (p. xv). In the rest of this chapter I want to begin filling this signifier with meaning by first returning to Lefebvre and asking what precisely the right to the city means for him. I then turn to some of the debates that followed in Lefebvre’s wake.

Lefebvre’s right to the city

Lefebvre’s short book was published on the centenary of the publication of volume one of Marx’s *Capital*. Lefebvre sought to update Marxism through an incorporation of spatial analysis by reading the development of the city, from ancient times to

industrialization and urbanism, deploying a non-determinist dialectic in the process. By doing so, Lefebvre opens up spaces for action and broadens our conceptualization of production and, thus, the working class. While the book itself is more of a fragment than a totality, it is widely cited and has provided the theoretical and conceptual underpinnings for and across a range of academic fields and activist struggles.

Lefebvre (1996) begins the book with a brief theoretical and historical overview of the city that is fairly similar to what has been covered in this dissertation and that doesn't stray too far from what has become the standard Marxist take on the development of the city. But Lefebvre does make unique contributions here, first by dividing the development of the city up into three periods. First there is industrialization, which is an "assault and ravage on pre-existing urban reality" (p. 81). Industrialization is the process that Marx and Engels were writing about, the concentration of productive forces and labor-power in city centers. In this quote from Lefebvre we find evidence of his romanticization of pre-capitalist cities and societies which, as Harvey (2012) observes, stems from his lack of "care to depict the dismal conditions of life for the masses in some of his favored cities of the past (those of the Italian Renaissance in Tuscany)" (p. xiv). The second period is urbanization. During urbanization "urban society becomes general" and we find "that the whole society is liable to fall apart if it lacks the city and its centrality" (Lefebvre, 1996, p. 81). This second period marks the point at which the city has become absolutely fundamental to the reproduction of capitalism and capitalist relations of production. The third period, in which Lefebvre was living and in which I would posit we live today, is defined by the discovering and reinventing of "urban reality"

(ibid.). In this third period, that is, we struggle over the city and to assert our right to centrality, to be central to the production and reproduction of our daily lives.

In sum, then, for Lefebvre industrialization and urbanization is an “implosion-explosion,” an unfinished unity of contradictions, an attack on urban reality that at the same time generalizes urbanism and lays the foundation for a new, more just and more inclusive, urbanism. It might be helpful at this point to tease out the difference between the city and the urban, a conceptual distinction that Lefebvre makes explicit at one point in the text and later seems to disregard (and this confusion is compounded when we take other works, like *The urban revolution*, into account). Nonetheless, Lefebvre does make the distinction explicit and it does prove helpful:

We should perhaps introduce a distinction between the *city*, a present and immediate reality, a practice-material and architectural fact, and the *urban*, a social reality made up of relations which are to be conceived of, constructed or reconstructed by thought. (p. 103)

The city is a built thing, an assemblage of brick and mortar, a physical and historical site, and the urban is an ensemble of social relations that are built upon and react back to form and reform the city. The urban thus depends on the city. As Lefebvre writes, “Urban life, urban society, in a word, the *urban*, cannot go without a practico-material base, a morphology... The *urban* is not a soul, a spirit, a philosophical entity” (ibid.). Just as revolutionary critical pedagogy insists that difference is understood in relation to political economy, Lefebvre insists that the social relations that constitute the urban must always be examined in their relationship to the built-form of the city, and vice versa.

The urban therefore does not arise spontaneously or automatically from the city, and both the city and the urban are subject to—and products of—class dynamics and

class and other social struggles. Clearly, the capitalist class has the upper hand in determining the content and form of the city and the urban, at least in capitalist countries. Class domination thus asserts itself spatially in the city, and for Lefebvre this takes place through technocratic and rational planning, or what Lefebvre refers to as *habitat*. The city becomes a habitat when it is subjected to the whims of city planners, real estate developers, banks, finance capital, land speculators, and corporate interests and their political representatives. The city as habitat is the city that is produced *for* (certain kinds of) people *by* capital.

For an illustration of such habitats we can turn to just about any major metropolitan city in the U.S., in which we find expensive condominiums strewn about in between convention centers and hotels, corporate-sponsored sports stadiums, Hard Rock Cafés and Barnes & Nobles, a few policed and surveilled parks and other “public” spaces, a performance center, and business towers. The city as habitat is the city as a product to be consumed, and it can only be consumed by those who can afford it, of course; it is the city as hyper-planned, as abstraction, and as function, or the city as *exchange-value*. In this sense, “the people (the ‘inhabitants’) move about in a space which tends towards a geometric isotopy, full of instructions and signals, where qualitative differences of places and moments no longer matter” (p. 128). Mitchell (2003) updates Lefebvre’s take here when writing about the disneyfication of space, or those

...landscapes in which every interaction is carefully planned... right down to specifically planning the sorts of ‘surprises’ one is supposed to encounter in urban space. Market and design considerations thus displace the idiosyncratic and extemporaneous interactions of engaged people in the determination of the shape of urban space in the contemporary world. (pp. 139-140)

Disneyfication is the attempt to completely plan space and what can happen in it, subjecting it at every turn to the rule of exchange-value, eliminating heterogeneity, difference, and the possibility of the true encounter with alterity to take place.

Against the city as habitat Lefebvre invokes the city as a space for *inhabitation*. Inhabitation is not about the consumption of exchange-value but about *use* and *use-value*. To really inhabit the city one must have a right to the city as *oeuvre*, or the right to continually produce and reproduce the city anew (as opposed to the “right” to consume the city as a finished product). Inhabitation, then, entails the rights of urban dwellers to be central in the production of the spaces, rhythms, and relations of the city. Stated differently, inhabitation is the collective, social practice whereby those who live in the city produce and use the city for their own desires. What would such a right look like? Lefebvre includes numerous components in his theorization of what exactly the right to the city entails:

...the need for security and opening, the need for certainty and adventure, that of organization of work and of play, the needs for the predictable and the unpredictable, of similarity and difference, of isolation and encounter, exchange and investments, of independence (even solitude) and communication, of immediate and long-term prospects... the need for creative activity, for the *oeuvre*... the need for information, symbolism, the imaginary and play. (p. 147)

The right to the city is clearly not one right amongst others, as if it could be introduced as an amendment to the U.S. constitution. Instead, this right

...manifests itself as a superior form of rights: right to freedom, to individualization in socialization, to habitat and inhabit. The right to *oeuvre*, to participation and *appropriation* (clearly distinct from the right to property), are implied in the right to the city. (pp. 173-174)

For the right to the city to be won and enacted would entail a revolutionary reorganization of society. Specifically it would entail the reorganization of society along socialist lines:

The proclamation and realization of urban life as the rule of use (of exchange and encounter disengaged from exchange value) insist on the mastery of the economic... and consequently is inscribed within the perspectives of the revolution under the hegemony of the working class. (p. 179)

Such a right is clearly not a right to the Keynesian social-democratic city that characterized many advanced capitalist countries during the era of the proletarian offensive in the global class war. In fact, it was precisely this type of city to which Lefebvre was opposed. This city was perhaps best documented by one of Lefebvre's student and later (for a time) antagonist, Manuel Castells. Castells viewed the urban as a spatial moment in the reproduction of labor-power, and the main role that the urban played was in the management of the production and consumption of collective goods (Merrifield, 2002). Collective goods are those commodities (like health care, education, roads, sewage treatment plants, transportation and so on) that are necessary for capital but not produced by capital; they are—or were—instead produced by the state. These collective goods, because they are not directly productive of capital, are often seen as being in the realm of social reproduction. Capital does not want to bear any of these costs but it was forced to take them on by the particular contours of the global class war at the time.

Lefebvre's problem with all of this was that it manifested itself in a rationalized and hyper-planned process that delimited possibilities of encounter and difference, of heterogeneity and simultaneity. Interestingly enough, however, while Lefebvre was

rallying against the Keynesian social-democratic city, it was capital's attack on this city through the neoliberal offensive that helped animate calls for the right to the city, giving Lefebvre's theory and program new breath. As Merrifield (2014) elaborates:

What arose over that decade [the 1970s]... was a strange and conflictual predicament for progressive people: items of collective consumption so vital for reproduction of the relations of production, so vital for freeing up "bottlenecks" in the system, so vital for providing necessary (yet unprofitable) goods and services, so indispensable for propping up demand in the economy—were now being cast aside. (p. 16)

As the 1980s came, not only was the state disinvesting from the realm of collective consumption, it also began to "actively and ideologically wage war" (ibid.) against that realm.

There was a dialectic with the Keynesian social-democratic city for, on the one hand, all of the collective goods were produced specifically to facilitate the production and realization of capital while, on the other hand, those goods materially benefited the working class and "incited labor... politicizing hitherto unpoliticized aspects of social life" (Merrifield, 2002, p. 121). In other words, while the capitalist state's intervention in social reproduction helped to temporarily smooth over some of the contradictions of capital, it also, and at the very same time, galvanized and empowered workers in that it represented a greater share of value that was accrued to the working class, and thus advanced the position of workers in the class struggle. The accumulation by dispossession that was discussed in chapter three thus assumes a distinctively urban character in that the elements of collective consumption are privatized and completely subjected to the laws of the market. This process, of course, is uneven and the extent to which it occurs is always the result of class struggle.

Harvey (2012) presents another way in which the urban is a site of dispossession and exploitation. He refers to this dispossession as one of the “secondary forms of exploitation,” which

...are primarily organized by merchants, landlords, and the financiers; and their effects are primarily felt in the living space, not in the factory... Wage concessions to workers can, for example, be stolen back and recuperated for the capitalist class as a whole by merchant capitalists and landlords and, in contemporary conditions, even more viciously by the credit-mongers, the bankers, and the financiers. (p. 129)

One of the insights gleaned from this history of the city is a widened conception of production and, thus, of the working class. This is undeniably one of the main ideas that Lefebvre was interested in when he wrote about the right to the city. Lefebvre retained loyalty to the working class as the subject of history, as the revolutionary agent that could overthrow capitalist relations of production, but he felt that the mainstream Left’s focus on the working class as the factory worker was dangerously narrow. Of course, Lefebvre was writing mainly against those in the French Communist Party, which did have a much more restricted view of the working class than, say, the Chinese Communist Party. This is the political value of Lefebvre’s insistence on mobilizing the term urban inhabitant: it expands the boundaries of the working class from those engaged directly in value production to those involved in the entire realm of social reproduction, including not only those laboring for the state (like teachers) but also those laboring in the domestic sphere. *This line of thought thus has important theoretical and strategic implications: it places the ownership and use of space and land as central to the mechanisms of capitalist production and hence revolutionary potentiality, all while expanding our conception of the agent of the potentiality.*

The privatization of the city and the disinvestment of the state from the realm of collective consumption also add a large segment of workers to the realm of value production. Harvey relays this when he describes the ways in which the city weaves together workers separated by distance, writing that

...there is a seamless connection between those who mine the iron ore that goes into the steel that goes into the construction of the bridges across which the trucks carrying commodities travel to their final destinations of factories and homes for consumption. All of these activities (including spatial movement) are productive of value and surplus value. (p. 130)

Even those workers who are not directly engaged in value production, however, are engaged in labor that is absolutely socially necessary for the production of value.

Debates about the right to the city

If the above overview of Lefebvre's conception of the right to the city seems a bit all over the place, then my summary and relay of his argument has been successful. Lefebvre can be a very difficult writer to engage for precisely the reasons that Smith (2003) identifies in his foreword to Lefebvre's *The urban revolution*. In these pages, Smith notes that Lefebvre's

...writing can come across as a stream of philosophical consciousness that mixes coherent analytical agendas with fascinating diversions, apparently casual or completely intended, that might double back or end abruptly, before picking up the thread of the argument again—or stretching for a related thread that the reader must struggle to connect. (p. xxii)

Indeed, Lefebvre (1996) begins *Right to the city* by condemning “systems” of thought because they “tend to *close off* reflection, to block off horizon” (p. 63). Lefebvre's book, by contrast, “wants to break up systems, not to substitute another system, to *open up* through thought and action towards *possibilities* by showing the horizon and the road”

(ibid.). Thus, my critique of Lipman's use of the right to the city is not that it is not Lefebvrian enough, as if Lefebvre constructed some coherent system of thought that could then be applied to an understanding of educational policy or the current configuration of the global class war (i.e., international political economy). My critique instead comes from an insistence that we attend to the historical and theoretical roots of the right to the city and not latch onto it as an academic or activist fad, as something that gives us currency in research or organizing circles. This insistence gains credence in light of the myriad and opposing ways in which the right to the city has been mobilized. Not only is rights talk in general increasingly popular with the far right, but the right to the city has specifically been "reappropriated and defanged" in such places as "the UN Habitat's 2010 Charter and World Bank's manifesto for addressing the global poverty trap" (Merrifield, 2013, pp. xii-xiv). If the right to the city is an empty signifier, we have to attend to the boundaries of thought and action that it delimits and makes possible.

There are, to be sure, numerous debates that have grown from these roots, such as those about *who* should have the right to the city and *what kind* of right the right to the city is. What I want to do in this section is to signal some of the investigations and debates taking place within and around the right to the city, as both a body of literature and a demand mobilizing different social struggles. This discussion is meant to be, in Lefebvrian fashion, an opening for further discussion and debate, and is thus illustrative and in no way exhaustive.

What kind of right?

The first question is: what does the *right* in right to the city mean? This question has been explored most in-depth by Kafui Attoh (2011), who rightly observes that the questions of “rights within the literature on the right to the city remain a black box” (p. 669). Attoh acknowledges that, while this openness (read: lack of definition) of rights in the right to the city literature can be positive in that it can allow for the unification of different groups and struggles, within this openness we are going to encounter “rights that not only collide but are incommensurable” (p. 674). One example of this possible incommensurability pivots on the right *for* and *against* democratic management, and to examine this Attoh pits Harvey against Mitchell.

Harvey’s (2008) basic definition of the right to the city is the right to “greater democratic control over the production and utilization of the surplus” (p. 37). In other words, what gets produced, how it gets produced, and the ways in which products are distributed throughout the city should be subject to (greater) democratic deliberation. It is through this democratic control that citizens will be able to participate in the city as *oeuvre*. But, Attoh notes, rights are also used to protect one or a group against such democratic decisions. To illustrate this, Attoh turns to Mitchell’s (2003) work on anti-homeless laws in the U.S. These laws ultimately work to police public space and the public sphere more generally, defining what one can and can’t do in a public space and, also, who can and can’t be part of the public. As homeless people have no place to be but in public, laws restricting the use of public space against acts like sleeping, bathing, and loitering (read: hanging out) represent “an ongoing war against homeless people”

(Mitchell, 2003, p. 199). Attoh (2011) writes that these laws can be enacted by “a possible majority who might believe that such laws are just and appropriate” (p. 677).

To assert the right of homeless people to public space is, in this instance, to assert a right *against* democracy: “If, on the one hand, a right to the city appears as a collective right to democratically manage urban resources, then, on the other hand, following Mitchell, the right to the city appears as a right against such management” (p. 677).

While this conflict is certain to take place in bourgeois democracies such as the U.S., Attoh writes that even in more expansive and inclusive forms of democracy we will still have to decide between majority and minority rights claims. We can certainly imagine instantiations of this battle over schooling and the right to the city. Under the current order of things, for example, many of the participants in struggles against educational privatizations are far from homogenous, and are actually made up of rather distinct and even oppositional political, social, and economic identities. In particular, fairly different actors make up the struggles against school closing and those against standardized testing; with the former representing the poor and working class and the latter being comprised of well-paid workers (i.e., the “middle class”), petit-bourgeois, and full-on bourgeois elements. Another potential struggle would be around the inclusion of students with disabilities. It is certainly imaginable that a democratic decision about inclusive schooling would involve the exclusion of students with disabilities, enhancing one group’s right to education against that of another group.

Whose right?

This all leads to another important question regarding the right to the city: *whose* right is it? Peter Marcuse (2009) approaches this line of inquiry by insisting that the “cry and demand” that the right to the city entails are each distinct. The demand for the right to the city springs forth “from those directly in want, directly oppressed, those for whom even their most immediate needs are not fulfilled: the homeless, the hungry, the imprisoned, the persecuted” (p. 190). The demand for the city is made out of absolute necessity. The cry for the city, by contrast, is an *aspiration*, not an immediate need. This “cry comes from... those superficially integrated into the system and sharing in its material benefits, but constrained in their opportunities for creative activity, oppressed in their social relationships, guilty perhaps for an undeserved prosperity, unfulfilled in their lives’ hopes” (ibid.).

The demand arises from the oppressed and excluded while the cry emanates from those who are included but still alienated in some way. This is actually one quite useful way to understand the current resistance to the neoliberal education agenda. Those demanding the right to education are deprived of education in the first place, while those crying for the right to education might have access to schools but are nonetheless alienated by, say, things like the Common Core Standards Movement.

Taking a different approach, Mark Purcell (2002) claims that the right to the city belongs to the *inhabitant*. This implies a change in both the subject and scale of political decision-making. Current notions of enfranchisement rest at the scale of the nation state and are thus concerned with the national citizen. Against this received notion of enfranchisement, Purcell argues for a scalar shift to the city as the primary site of political

authority, an authority that must be wielded by those who actually inhabit the city. This certainly signals a progressive shift in that it works to include more people in the production of the city and militates against reactionary notions of citizenship that currently permeate nationalist rhetoric. It is also, to a large extent, in alignment with Harvey's call to increase democratic participation in the production and distribution of the surplus. While Purcell's schema also represents "an explicit and direct challenge to the social relations of capitalism" (p. 103) in that it insists on the right of inhabitants to *appropriate* the city, it is, I claim *too inclusive*. After all, bankers, CEOs, and real estate developers do inhabit the city, and there is absolutely no reason that they should have any right—at least not *as* capitalists—to the city. In fact, the whole problem with life in capitalist cities today is that capitalists are the ones with the right! Thus, while Purcell's concept of the urban inhabitant *challenges* capitalism it in no way works toward the abolition of capitalism. It is rather something of a social democratic compromise, a capitalism with a human touch. Marcuse (2009) is much more helpful here, in that he is keen to maintain that the collective subject demanding and crying for the right to the city not be too inclusive. "It's crucially important," he writes, "to be clear that it is not everyone's right to the city with which we are concerned" (p. 191). This, in part, helps answer the question of democracy and rights that Attoh raises in that we see that the right to participate in the production of the city will be predicated upon the exclusion of particular groups, which will not only cease to be majoritarian, but minoritarian as well, as they are wiped off the social map (not as individuals, but as embodiments of capital).

What city?

There is also debate as to precisely what constitutes the city. Merrifield (2013) has argued that it no longer even makes sense to speak of the city as the site and stake of political struggle. The premise of this argument is actually located in a text that Lefebvre published in 1970—just a few years after *Right to the city*—titled *The urban revolution*. Lefebvre (2003) begins with work with the hypothesis that “Society has been completely urbanized” (p. 1). For this Lefebvre (and there are certainly many Lefebvres scattered across his 60 plus books) the urban is “preferable to the word ‘city,’ which appears to designate a clearly defined, definitive *object*” (p. 16). The urban, by contrast, is “defined not as an accomplished reality... but, on the contrary, as a horizon, an illuminating virtuality” (pp. 16-16). The urban has gone from virtuality to reality, according to Merrifield. To speak of the city is, for him, too limiting and too bounded and, as such, it fails to accurately represent our political reality and aspirations. In 1968 the city may have been the center of political, economic, and social power, but this power is today diffused throughout the globe.

Instead of demanding the city we need to push “outward onto the world, into a world without nation and without borders; into another way of seeing, of perceiving a mongrel world with a mongrel politics” (Merrifield, 2013, p. 86). Boundless, the urban is more appropriate to our world of hypermobility and global integration. While it is certainly true that the composition and production of cities have changed dramatically since 1968 and that today, for example, financial institutions in Hong Kong work to directly produce space in New York City or San Francisco, Merrifield rushes this conclusion and pushes it too far. As illustrative of what can only be labeled idealism,

Merrifield (2014) writes that “the binary between developed and developing worlds no longer seems analytically or politically tenable, given parasitic urbanism nestles everywhere and marks the pathological condition of our neoliberal age” (p. 111). I am not sure that the Palestinian inhabitant of the Gaza Strip would agree with such a seamless presentation of the global situation. Actually, Merrifield here works to marginalize some of the most oppressed and dispossessed inhabitants of the globe, who are still struggling in the face of imperialism and settler-colonialism to maintain the built-form of the city as, for example, Palestinians in Gaza have to rebuild their schools, hospitals, roads, and other vital infrastructures after each genocidal Israeli war.

Cities and the global class war

Merrifield’s romanticization of the urban foregrounds the ongoing division of the world between oppression nations and oppressed nations, between the imperialist camp and the camp of the proletariat and its allies in the colonized and formerly colonized nations.

Although using different language, Margrit Mayer (2012) places the right to the city in a more helpful and accurate global context than Merrifield, one that takes the uneven development between the global North and South into primary consideration. This is crucial because, without taking seriously the international division of labor, right to the city movements in the global North can be completely reabsorbed into the hegemonic rule of capital.

This claim rests on the observation that contemporary actors in right to the city struggles in the global North are “disparate groups that share a precarious existence... by middle class urbanites who seek to defend their quality of life, by radical autonomous,

anarchist, and alternative groups and various leftist organizations” (p. 78). Some of these groups can be—and are—“usefully absorbed into city marketing and locational politics for attracting investors, creative professionals, and tourists” (p. 77). This process is currently taking place in Detroit, which is competing to be one of America’s most “creative cities.” The composition of right to the city movements in the global South is markedly different, Mayer observes, in that they are formed “on the basis of indigenous, marginalized, and (post)colonial experiences” (p. 79). For Mayer, the different material realities that give rise to these different movements present a direct challenge to “theories which imply that urban movements today must organize on a global scale” (ibid.). This is not to say, of course, that movements in the global South are not inherently global, but rather that these movements draw little strength from “transnational networks, which are more oriented to the needs of the North” and are instead rooted in “specific local requirements” (ibid.).

There is no doubt that cities are produced globally and any call for the right to the city has to be conceived of globally. Particularly for those of us in the global North, or what I refer to as oppressing nations, the way in which we conceive of and take into account the global situation is absolutely imperative. Mayer points out that we run the risk of being absorbed into the capitalist reproduction of the city and that we cannot limit ourselves to demanding the right to certain cities in our nation states. In turn, we are implored “to identify commonalities and connectivities generated in the realities of globalization” (p. 81). Identifying these connectivities also means that we have to pay attention to the places and networks from which the values that we wish to redistribute

come. The right to the city has to be resolutely anti-imperialist, lest we liberate our own cities at the expense of other working and oppressed people in other cities.

Conclusion: Revolutionary critical pedagogy for the city and the urban

Placing revolutionary critical pedagogy in conversation with the right to the city makes for a politically, theoretically, and strategically useful engagement. The city is where all of capitalism's contradictions reach their boiling point. It is in cities where immense wealth sits immediately adjacent to unspeakable poverty; where the productive potential of workers is felt but stifled by the need to sell our labor-power for a wage; where centers of financial, merchant, and even industrial capital are within walking distance from incredibly explosive populations. Cities thus provide an important socio-spatial nexus toward and in which revolutionary critical pedagogy can be oriented.

Struggles over and in the city help us to think through the relationship between international political economy and other forms of difference in really useful ways. The intractable tethering together of the material and the discursive, the economic and the ideological, the base and superstructure is lived in myriad ways. This can be viewed through Lefebvre's insistence on that which can never disappear from the city, no matter how planned it is, no matter how much it is dominated by the logic of exchange-value: the encounter. The right to the city is a right to claim the possibility of the encounter, to wrest it from the landlords, banks, developers, bosses, and city planners; it is a struggle over and for the encounter.

What does it mean to say that there is a struggle over the encounter? Although often using different language, Mitchell (2003) sheds light on this, writing that "for the

encounter with difference to really succeed... the right to *inhabit* the city—by different people and different groups—had always to be struggled for” (p. 18). Mitchell here is referring back to Lefebvre’s distinction between habitat and to inhabit, between the city as product and the city as *oeuvre*. The main point, however, is that in order for the urban to exist, in order for the city to exist for use and use-value, there has to be different groups and different identities. It is ultimately only by occupying space somewhere that a group or identity is able to represent itself; “Representation both demands space and creates space” (p. 35). And because the possibility of the encounter requires difference, and in particular different subjects, we have to attend to the material struggles of different social groups. This is where Harvey’s (2008) articulation of the right to the city as the “greater democratic control over the production and utilization of surplus” (p. 328) is crucial.

In other words, the right to the encounter and to difference is bound together with—and, importantly, dependent upon—the right of groups and subjects to housing, transportation, communication, play, and so on. These material conditions must be taken into primary consideration. Turning back to the relationship between the city and the urban, we can say that these material requirements are the practice-material morphology which is, at the same time, produced by and productive of the encounter. The dynamics of capital accumulation and production do not determine this possibility in any predetermined way, but they do set the coordinates upon which we erect and enact these possibilities. But it is *for* the rights of all groups and subjects to represent themselves in public that we engage in these struggles. This ties together the first, fourth, and fifth components of revolutionary critical pedagogy discussed in chapter two: the primacy of

political economy, the insistence on ontological production, and the concern with the production of subjectivity.

The agent of revolutionary critical pedagogy, the subject of history that it wishes to mobilize, is reinforced as an expansive subject after turning to the right to the city. The concept of the working class is not just defined by one's relationship to the means of production but also to the means of reproduction. A whole host of activities and subjectivities are categorically socially necessary for capitalism to continue to function, including not only domestic labor but also artistic, creative, intellectual, and educational labor. A critical pedagogy oriented toward the city thus not only affirms class as an antagonistic structural relation—the second aspect—it also causes the pedagogue to completely bridge the classroom and the world, “bring theory into the streets,” as McLaren (2015, p. 26) puts it (and this is the third aspect of revolutionary critical pedagogy).

Again, however, this chapter has been intended as exploratory and, in line with the rest of this dissertation, as an act of foundation building, hence my insistence on bringing in some of the debates about the right to the city into the critical education conversation. There is the risk that as critical pedagogy orients itself toward struggles over and for the city we end up reinforcing imperialist relations between nation-states, and this is where the sixth and seventh components of revolutionary critical pedagogy come into play: the rejection of reformism and the foregrounding of colonial-settlerism. The framework of the global class war, I believe, militates against reformism, as it helps us correctly identify our class enemy and prevents us from uniting with them through the guise of patriotism and nationalism. We must always be attentive to the contours of the

global class struggle, but we have also to question whether we can even ask for a “right” to cities in the U.S. Or, perhaps, we need to return to the question of: *whose* right?

CHAPTER SIX
 A PEDAGOGY FOR SPACE: LEARNING, STUDYING, AND TEACHING IN THE
 STREETS

They throw the tear gas we throw it right back.
 Spin the block and we'll be right back.
 Seven cops down, they don't like that.
 This Baltimore city, bitch we fight back.
 - Comrade (Chris Goodman)

Introduction

It could be said that this dissertation on revolutionary critical pedagogy has so far emphasized “revolutionary” and “critical” and has not spoken much about pedagogy, and it is this final term that I want to examine in this final chapter. This chapter, then, works not only to spatialize educational theory but, and more importantly, to educationalize theories of space, and to do so in a systematic manner that is consistent with revolutionary critical pedagogy and oriented toward ontological transformation. It does so by homing in on Lefebvre’s (1974/1991) theorization of the production of space as a potentially revolutionary activity.

The chapter begins by situating Lefebvre’s historical and theoretical analysis in *The production of space*. This is a necessary task because this is a book that is cited frequently in educational literature on space but rarely deeply engaged. When it is engaged—and not only in educational literature—the focus tends to be exclusively on the spatial triad developed in the book’s opening chapter. Thus, the crucial distinction between abstract and differential space is generally glossed over or ignored. This is a problem because it is upon this distinction that Lefebvre’s whole orientation depends and, I would argue, any revolutionary critical pedagogy. After situating Lefebvre’s book I take his understanding of the production of space as an educational problematic and then seek

to develop a spatial educational theory and a pedagogy for space, the latter being a mobilization of the former. In particular, I propose to augment Lefebvre's spatial triad of 1) representations of space; 2) representational spaces; and 3) spatial practice with an educational triad of 1) learning; 2) studying; and 3) teaching. I propose that each component needs to be held in a precarious, contingent, and dialectical relation. The purpose of this educational triad is to assist in the struggle for differential space against abstract space, in the struggle for the proletarian class camp in general, in the struggle to wrest cities and our productive forces away from the bourgeoisie and imperialists. In order to ask more precisely after this relationship and to grasp how we might deploy this educational theory to understand and produce space and work for revolution I read the theory through the schoolhouse and the 2015 Baltimore Rebellion.

Abstracting and producing space

In *The production of space* Lefebvre performs a transdisciplinary reading of the history of space and its production, drifting from and between political economy, history, sociology, architecture, philosophy, art, and geography. The primary overarching claim in the book is that space is not an empty or neutral container within which—or blank canvas upon which—social interactions take place. Rather, space is produced again and again by and through social interactions; “Space,” Lefebvre (1974/1991) proclaims, “*is social morphology*” (p. 94, emphasis added). As social morphology, space is produced and productive.

It is by approaching and theorizing space through its production that Lefebvre unifies “first, the *physical*—nature, the Cosmos; secondly, the *mental*, including logical

and formal abstractions; and, thirdly, the *social*” (p. 11). In this schema it is the social that dominates and serves as the unifying force. This effort, however, is not about producing “a (or *the*) discourse on space,” it is instead concerned with working “to expose the actual production of space by bringing the various kinds of space and the modalities of their genesis together within a single theory” (p. 16). Space is produced, and Lefebvre wants to demonstrate these processes of production so that we might begin to collectively and intentionally produce space differently, more justly, in accord with use and use-value and against exchange-value. This theory, uniting as it does the physical and the social with the mental is simultaneously an epistemological and ontological endeavor; it entails a reworking of things and our conception of things, things as they are lived and things as they are conceived.

Why the emphasis on space, and why the necessity of producing space differently for Lefebvre? To begin answering this question, Lefebvre points to several developments happening around the time of the writing and publishing of the book in 1974. Lefebvre marks three historical phenomena: 1) the worldwide consolidation of the state; 2) resistance and transgression in the face of this consolidation; and, relatedly, 3) the persistence of class struggle (as the dominant expression of resistance and transgression). The consolidation of the state has to do with the strengthening of the state that begins with the Keynesian social-democratic state, in which the state takes on many aspects of social reproduction and inserts itself more and more into the everyday, the micro. The resistance and transgression to this state refers to the movements of 1968 that sought to break free from the rule of capital and exchange-value, from the hyper-planning of the city and life. Finally, this resistance is always expressed through class struggle, as

Lefebvre insists on the primacy of political economy even as he concerns himself constantly with difference.

We can begin to see the importance of the dialectic for Lefebvre and his insistence on the persistence of class struggle: “State-imposed normality makes permanent transgression inevitable... differences can never be totally quieted. Though defeated, they live on, and from time to time they begin fighting ferociously to reassert themselves and transform themselves through struggle” (p. 23). We can trace a similarity to Lefebvre’s insistence on the endless resistance of use and use-value, of the encounter and simultaneity, traced in the last chapter. Lefebvre maintains that this dialectic, between homogeneity and heterogeneity, between capital and labor, between use-value and exchange-value, takes place not only *in* space but are manifested as struggles *over* and *for* space and its production.

The increasing importance of space for Lefebvre has to do with transformations in the capitalist mode of production, in which space takes on “a sort of reality of its own, a reality clearly distinct from, yet much like, those assumed in the same global process by commodities, money and capital” (p. 26). As demonstrated in chapter four, space has become central in capitalist production and in the reproduction of capitalist social relations. If capital is, as Marx (1939/1993) says, a “*unity of production and realization, not immediately but only as a process*” (p. 407) then space serves as both a form of production and a means through which realization takes place. As Lefebvre (1974/1991) writes: “Though a *product* to be used, to be consumed, it [space] is also a *means of production*; networks of exchange and flows of raw materials and energy fashion space and are determined by it” (p. 85). When space becomes a means of production the

relationship between production and realization is altered, or “widened” (ibid.). Not only is production no longer taking place behind the factory gates, in Marx’s “hidden abode of production,” but both production and realization can take place in the same absolute space.

The introduction, or “invasion” of space into production relations means that space has been subjected to the capital-labor dialectic. As such, in order to uncover the production of space Lefebvre employs what he calls *architectronics*, the task of which “is to describe, analyse and explain” how “the preconditions of social space have their own particular way of enduring and remaining actual within that space” (p. 229). Things have a way of remaining in space; “In space,” Lefebvre writes, “nothing ever disappears—no point, no place” (p. 212). This is similar to Harvey’s (1973/2009) assertion that the city “in capitalist countries is a veritable palimpsest of social forms constructed in the images of reciprocity, redistribution and market exchange” (p. 245), which are each forms of economic integration, concepts that Harvey finds more precise than modes of production. In both cases, the idea is that social relations remain etched in space throughout time, in varying degrees.

Lefebvre is particularly concerned with understanding what he calls abstract space, which is associated with space under the capitalist mode of production. Abstraction here does not refer to a mental activity as, for example, it does for Marx (see Ollman, 1993). Abstraction for Lefebvre is rather the ontological process akin to, or really even synonymous with, rationalization. The abstraction of space is, to begin with, the subjection of space to capitalist reification through the rule of exchange-value. Employing architectronics, Lefebvre reads this historical process through urbanization,

which could be defined as the generalization of the rationality of the town. Here his story augments the story of the development of the city told in *Right to the city*, although both stories serve as acts of demystification in that they both reveal the class forces behind a naturalized and obscured process (a process that comes to be seen as a thing). Historically, urbanization is located as beginning in the 16th century, when “the town [was] separated from the countryside that it had long dominated and administered, exploited and protected” (p. 268). More than separation, the growing import of the town was the beginning of the decline of the feudal organization of society. Indeed, the rationality of the town is “the rationality of calculation and exchange—the Logos of the merchant” (p. 269). The town assembled people and goods in time from across space for the purpose of exchanging use-values, but over time the importance of exchange-value becomes dominant. The city is defined in part, then, as “the space of accumulation” (p. 263). Lefebvre marks this separation of town and country (again, inherited and not created by capitalism) as the first “spiral of spatial abstraction” (p. 269). The second spiral of abstraction was the domination of the city by state and productive forces through capitalist state planning.

At this point we can more concretely develop what Lefebvre means by abstract space, by the subjection of space to the domination of exchange-value. Mercantile and, later, capitalist logic reifies the lived space of the city. It seeks to produce and organize space in order to facilitate the production and realization of surplus-value, and we saw this clearly in the previous chapter. The city is reified, it comes to be seen as a finished *thing* instead of a *process* and *product* of social labor. Development, housing patterns, roads and transportation networks, the distribution of goods and labor, and circuits of

exchange are all put to the service of capitalist accumulation. As these lives spaces come under the domination of exchange-value differences are sought out, flattened, and absorbed within capitalism. Or at least the attempt to reduce and contain difference is made. “On first inspection,” Lefebvre notes, “it appears homogenous; and indeed it serves those forces which make a *tabula rasa* of whatever stands in their way, of whatever threatens them” (p. 285). Upon later inspection, however, after insisting on the persistent resistance of use and difference, Lerebvre finds that this abstract space, this “space that homogenizes thus has nothing homogenous about it” (p. 307), for differences can never be totally disappeared.

Abstract space embodies contradictions it cannot fully contain. The task is to study and seize upon these contradictions in order to produce a new space, a space of difference. Only through struggles directly over the production of space can capitalism and its attendant injustices be overthrown. To make this proposition, Lefebvre turns to Marx’s concept of constant capital as congealed, or dead labor that is consumed productively: “Capital,” writes Marx (1867/1967), “is dead labour, that, vampire-like, only lives by sucking living labour, and lives the more, the more labour it sucks” (p. 224). It is only through the private ownership of the means of production (dead labor) that capital is produced. Lefebvre’s political goal is to turn this upside-down, or, better, right-side up:

But how could what is alive lay hold of what is dead? The answer is: through the production of space, whereby living labour can produce something that is no longer a thing, nor simply a set of tools, nor simply a commodity. In space needs and desires can reappear as such, informing both the act of producing and its products... In and by means of space, the work may shine through the product, use value may gain the upper hand over exchange value. (Lefebvre, 1974/1991, p. 348)

After the second spiral of abstraction space becomes mobilized as a means of production; more specifically, it becomes mobilized as a means of productive consumption. In the capitalist mode of production abstract space presents itself as dead, objectified labor towering over and ruling workers and inhabitants. But this presentation, this form of appearance, is demystified and challenged in larger social movements and in smaller everyday practices. In space goods and services are appropriated by social groups to be *used* in a way that cannot happen in, say, a factory—which is not at all to say that the factory is no longer an important site of struggle. But the factory remains a fragmented site of life, whereas space—urban space, in particular—the totality of life, its encounters and contradictions, is present in simultaneity. Struggles have always taken place *in* space, of course, but Lefebvre observes that struggles are increasingly *over* and *about* space: “Space is becoming the principle stake of goal-directed actions and struggles... it has become something more than the theatre, the disinterested stage or setting, of action” (p. 410). The production of space has been foregrounded recently by the various Occupy movements, for example, and also by the 2015 uprising in Baltimore to which I turn later on in the chapter. These are always struggles about economic inequality, state repression, and injustice more generally, but the demands that they make are manifest through the staking out and taking up of space, and the generation of new, alternative spaces. And, relating this to education proper, we can say that the university campus and schoolhouse are viewed as stakes of struggles for public education against neoliberal privatizations, as was discussed in chapter four.

With the above examination of *The production of space*—coupled with my reading of *Right to the city* in chapter five—Lefebvre convincingly demonstrates the role of space in capitalist production and reproduction, the reproduction of social relations, and the importance of space in social struggles and everyday life. He shows how capitalism has made space abstract and sought to homogenize differences. Further, he demonstrates how differences always persist and resist. Most importantly, he locates space—and the space of the city in particular—as a privileged site of revolutionary activity, where living labor can appropriate dead labor, where use-value can reign over exchange-value, where use can annihilate the law of value altogether, and where social groups can be constituted as subjects. In short, through the production of space the expropriators can be expropriated.

The question, of course, is *how* these insights and forces can be harnessed for revolutionary transformation. Thus, the lack of an articulated educational theory haunts all of these formulations. Lefebvre does make fleeting reference to “pedagogy” throughout the book, but nowhere is this pedagogy developed in any cursory—let alone satisfactory—manner. What I want to do in the rest of this chapter is propose one contribution to the question of how revolution can occur. Educational theory is uniquely posed to contribute to answering this question, as “the production of an unprecedented social condition is essentially a process of teaching and learning” (De Lissovoy, Means, & Saltman, 2014, p. 80). In order to develop a pedagogy for space I turn first to Lefebvre’s spatial triad that he sketches for understanding how space is produced. I then move to developing a spatial educational triad to add to this understanding, giving an explicit educational inflection to the production of space and providing revolutionary

critical pedagogy with one pedagogical approach to working for radical social transformation. In the final section, I provide an example of a pedagogy for space by reading the educational triad through the examples of the schoolhouse and the 2015 Baltimore uprising.

Lefebvre's spatial triad

To begin formulating an educational theory I want to turn to one of Lefebvre's conceptual schemas put forth in *The production of space*: his spatial triad. It is introduced as a conceptual framework for understanding spatial practice and the production of space as well as for understanding how abstract space has come to dominate. The spatial triad consists of: 1) representations of space; 2) representations of space; and 3) spatial practice. This is introduced early on in the book but, as Merrifield (2006) notes, it "is more implicit than explicit, assumed rather than affirmed" (p. 109). It makes a brief appearance and then remains latent throughout the rest of the work, and is of course, in Lefebvrian fashion, never to make an appearance in a later work. This openness, however, means that we can "add our own flesh, our own content... rewrite it as part of our own chapter or research agenda" (ibid.).

Representations of space

Representations of space order social relations, or attempt to, anyway. These spaces are those produced by technocrats and city planners, bankers and bureaucrats, real estate developers and landlords. We might think here of the "bird's-eye-view" map of the city available in the local tourist shop at the highway rest stop on the way into town.

Representations of space prescribe the path from the café to the mall, from the park to the workplace. They are thus concerned with consumption, with order, with exchange-value. Lefebvre refers to representations of space as *conceived spaces*, which is to say, as spaces as conceived of by technocrats and planners; they are “tied to the relations of production and to the ‘order’ which those relations impose, and hence to knowledge, to signs, to codes” (ibid.). Representations of space tell us what to do in certain spaces; they tell us what is allowed and what is not, where we should stand or sit, nap or congregate. They tend to represent space through signs that, of course, are always backed up by state power. In this way, representations of space are always “informed by effective knowledge and ideology,” they are soaked up with the power of capital and “must therefore have a substantial role and a specific influence in the production of space” (p. 42). Referring back to Lefebvre’s work on the city, representations of space order the *habitat*, the city as exchange-value to be consumed.

Representational spaces

Representational spaces are those of the *inhabitant*, of the dweller in space who makes the space their own through use; spaces as they are directly *lived* in everyday life. These spaces are “linked to the clandestine or underground side of social life, as also to art” (p. 33). Whereas representations of space are found on maps in tourist shops, representational spaces might be found in community archives or urban folk stories, etched on walls with graffiti or spoken about in corner stores. A representational space “is alive... It embraces the loci of passion, of action and of lived situations” (p. 42). As such, representational spaces are less epistemological, less about codifications and

signage, and more ontological, about being and feeling. In fact, these spaces resist codification and abstraction. Yet representational spaces can be turned into—but not reduced to—symbols.

Spatial practice

Spatial practice refers to the production and reproduction of a given social formation (e.g., capitalism). There are three levels to spatial practice: 1) biological reproduction; 2) the reproduction of the working class; and 3) the reproduction of production relations. Spatial practice, then, is that which produces the everyday organization of life, from the family to workplace, from the community to the state. It is that which “secretes... society’s space; it propounds and presupposes it, in a dialectical interaction” (Lefebvre, 1974/1991, p. 38).

Spatial practices include a host of infrastructures and networks that move and guide people through space. In bodily terms, Lefebvre will refer to this as *perceived* space, or the way in which we think of—or fail to think of—the spaces that structure our lives.

Under what Lefebvre calls “neocapitalism,” which I would refer to as social-democratic capitalism, perceived spaces and spatial practice could “be defined—to take an extreme but significant case—by the daily life of a tenant in a government-subsidized high-rise housing projects” (ibid.). There is “continuity and some degree of cohesion” (p. 33). This cohesion means that subjects can move about the space of society in some orderly manner, yet it does not mean that subjects will move about in predetermined or mechanical ways. Spatial practice mediates between representations of space and representational space and it is predominantly concerned with the “reproduction of social relations” (p. 50).

Although dialectics commonly denotes a unity of two elements (hence, *dialectics*), a triple dialectic mediates this spatial triad—although Lefebvre won't, or can't, say exactly *how* the triad is mediated. He is sure, however, that all three elements “should be interconnected, so that the ‘subject’, the individual member of a given social group, may move from one to another without confusion” (p. 40). This interconnection makes the experience of space commonsense, and thus it takes effort to decode and break it apart, and this is what archetectronics does. For Lefebvre the dialectic is not a linear movement of progress, but a dwelling within and between contradictory spaces. The purpose of the triple dialectic “is not to deny one or the other term nor to transcend them (*dépasser*), but to reveal the continual movement between them” (Kofman & Lebas, 1996, p. 10). Thus, the spatial triad of representations of space; representational space; and spatial practice—or in bodily terms, of conceived, lived, and perceived—is not posited by Lefebvre in order to privilege one over the others, to claim that we must, for example, fight for representational spaces in order to annihilate representations of space.

It is absolutely clear, however, that representations of space dominate in the capitalist production of space, and hence in the way that we, today, experience space. This domination encroaches on the ability of lived space to exert itself. The domination of representations of space is inextricably tied to a spatial practice that produces and reproduces capitalist social relations in that they demand abstraction through the rule of exchange-value which, it should be remembered, is based on *abstract* and not *concrete* labor. Lefebvre's spatial triad thus helps us pose the problem of capitalism and space in this way: the problem is that the dialectic between these three elements has become stuck; it can no longer move fluidly between perception, conception, and life. If we are to

deploy this spatial triad to both understand *and* transform space, then the relationship between representations of space, representational spaces, and spatial practice must be thought of pedagogically, and it is here that educational theory can make a unique contribution. In order to develop such a theory I augment Lefebvre's spatial triad with an educational triad consisting of 1) learning; 2) studying; and 3) teaching.

An educational triad

Learning

Learning is often what is most associated with education, yet it is less a specific educational practice than teaching or studying because learning as a process has become so thoroughly generalized throughout society. We are now living, we are told by politicians and policy makers at all scales, in a “learning society.” In this learning society, “A range of activities—from child-rearing, having sex, eating, or communication, to traveling and using free time—are regarded as being competency-based and in need of a prior learning experience” (Simons & Masschelein, 2008, p. 391). The learning society is caught up in transformations in the capitalist mode of production, namely the increasing importance of information and knowledge and the transition from Keynesian social democracy to neoliberalism. The former has made learning a never-ending process that one must engage in throughout one's life, and has thus accompanied the rise of lifelong learning, while the latter has made learning an individual rather than social responsibility (Biesta, 2011; Simons & Masschelein, 2008).

There are several problems with learning. For Biesta (2006), the problem is that the language of learning “has facilitated a redescription of the process of education in

terms of an *economic transaction* (p. 19). This positions the student as a (indebted) consumer with a demand of knowledge, and the teacher and educational institution (public, private, or hybrid) as the supplier of that knowledge. Biesta summarizes the effects as follows:

...to think of education as an economic transaction not only misconstrues the role of the learner and the educator in the educational relationship, it also results in a situation in which questions about the content and purpose of education become subject to the forces of the market instead of being the concern of professional judgment and democratic deliberation. (p. 31)

Learning describes a *process* and doesn't denote the "content and direction" (Biesta, 2010, p. 18) of that process, which eclipses discussions about the purpose of education (and subjugates that discussion to the logic of the market).

Similarly, Maarten Simons and Jan Masschelein argue that learning has become fundamental to the ways in which we refer to and understand ourselves and each other. Learning, they caution, is a historically specific assemblage of concepts and practices, and not a timeless thing. There are four problems with learning that are interwoven: "the necessity of learning for a knowledge economy, the importance of learning in order to guarantee freedom in a changing society, the educational expertise concerning learning and instruction, and the importance of the employability of learning results" (Simons & Masschelein, 2008, p. 396). Learning is, on this view, both a problem and a solution. This view has currency, given the ways in which so many social problems have been presented as problems of learning (Labaree, 2012).

Tyson Lewis (2013) argues that learning is the *educational logic* of contemporary capitalism in that it insists on the actualization of potential. Drawing on the work of Italian philosopher Giorgio Agamben, Lewis (2011) writes that the problem with learning

is "not that it views the child or student as a lack but that it views the child as an infinite potentiality that *can* and *must* be actualized through constant performance testing" (p. 587). In other words, the logic of "learning" demands investment in potential in order to maximize economic viability and, thus, profitability. On this view, "Learning is... the putting to work of potentiality in the name of self-actualization and economic viability" (Lewis, 2013, p. 5). Learning is thus purely about ends, and it is about reaching those ends as efficiently and quickly as possible. In agreement with Biesta and Simons and Masschelein, Lewis holds that these ends are always pre-determined to correspond with the current and anticipated future needs of global capital.

Each theorist views learning as a process of the acquisition of knowledges, skills, habits, forms of life, ways of being, and so on. Learning is, then, about competency, about gaining the know-how to think or take some action. It is thus always measurable, hence all the talk about "learning outcomes." It is in particular "the measurability of learning that lends itself to becoming the educational logic of biocapitalism. Learning *improves* performances, *maximizes* outputs, *increases* productivity" (Lewis, 2014, p. 114). Learning is, I would argue, fundamental to—but certainly not sufficient for—any process of production and reproduction. This is especially true for the reproduction of the capitalist mode of production, which is of course based on the constant expansion of value. In this sense, learning shares an affinity with representations of space, which "offer an already clarified picture" (Lefebvre, 1974/1991, p. 189) of the world. Life is presented in a prefigured package; lines are already drawn, connections are already established, and signifiers already have signifieds. The only thing to do is to understand and master these relationships, and perhaps work to improve them, make them more efficient, more

productive, and so on. Learning therefore is about the acquisition of the *already-is* and, as such, the relationship between learning and the production of space will depend not only on the current configuration of space but, more importantly, on the dialectical movement between learning and the other two components of the educational triad.

Studying

Studying is one way in which to operationalize “student;” a student is one who studies. In this definition, the student is a student without learning and without the act of teaching. So what is it that constitutes study? To begin, study names the generation “of thought and experimentation that leave one intoxicated, those moments of encounter in a text or conversation that blow one’s mind, driven by curiosities that are closer to pleasure, to play, to wandering, to leaving work” (Arsenjuk & Koerner, 2009, p. 8). Studying is thus oppositional to learning, for whereas learning is always a means to a pre-determined end, studying is not about arriving at any destination. In fact, it is definitional of studying that one does not have a destination in mind. While lost in the archives, travelling between references, or moving between definitions in a dictionary, one is detached from any predetermined end.

Using the work of Giorgio Agamben, Tyson Lewis has most richly developed a theory of studying. Whereas learning, for Lewis, is about the constant actualization of potential, studying is about im-potentiality. Im-potentiality is different than impotence, for the latter indicates that one cannot, while the former indicates that one both *can* and *cannot*. Or, as Lewis (2013) puts it in one formulation: “Studying suspends ends yet does not retreat into pure potentiality. It is the ambiguous state of recessive sway that holds

within itself this and that without choosing either” (p. 147). What this means is that studying is not about inaction or mere laziness. On the contrary, it is about perpetual activity, about activity that does not come to an end because it lacks an end; studying is a means without end, as the command of the end would actualize—and thus destroy—potentiality.

What precisely does it mean to say that studying is a means without end? One way that Lewis fleshes this out is by turning to Agamben’s writings on poetic rhythm. For Agamben, “rhythm is not outside chronological time but rather is a disruption of linear time from inside its own chronological unfolding” (p. 55). Thus, poetic time is messianic time, not the time of *waiting* for the messiah but the messianic time of the now that “exceeds chronological time by introducing future eternity as an internal surplus to the everyday and likewise bleeds the chronological as excess into the eternal” (p. 100). The poem performs this messianic time in two ways: first through its unfolding in on itself, for as each line unfolds it gestures toward what is to come and anticipates what has come; second, through its decompleting unitary structure, its sudden ending that is always abrupt and never conclusive.

The studier, like the poem, remains within “the space and time between subjectification and desubjectification, oscillating between poles to the point of indistinction,” where and when the subject “as defined by measurable mental mastery, definitive judgments, reliable capabilities, or professional accreditation” (p. 58) is suspended. This spatiotemporal placement of the “I can I cannot” that is studying is paradoxical and it is always about exploration. It may be helpful to again contrast this with learning. Whereas learning as the passage to actualization is always “in accordance

with the expectations of *this* world,” studying leaves the studier open to “the possibilities of *a* world beyond the current order of things” (p. 63). Studying is thus linked with Lefebvre’s representational spaces in that it is concerned with *endless* playful generation and appropriation, with the discovery and expression of difference. Indeed, Lefebvre (1974/1991) might say that studying “need obey no rules or consistency or cohesiveness... it is essentially qualitative, fluid and dynamic” (pp. 41-42). Studying is about inhabiting and dwelling within texts, concepts, and possible worlds. But there are no hard and fast rules here. We could say that studying is one method for generating representational spaces. Further, it is concerned exclusively with *use*; use for the sake of use.

Teaching

Teaching is generally seen as a key component of education. Yet teaching, more so than learning or studying, is the subject of a good deal of confusion. What exactly is the purpose of teaching? It is predominately thought that teaching should be about learning. As Gert Biesta (2015) writes, “The phrase ‘teaching and learning’ has become so prominent in the English language, that it often feels as if has become one word—teachingandlearning” (p. 230). For Biesta (2014) this amounts to an attack on teaching and this animates “a very practical concern about the disappearance of teaching and the demise of the role of the teacher as someone who has something to say and something to bring” (p. 56). Biesta locates the ascent of this threat with the rise of constructivist learning theories and pedagogies. Constructivism, in the way that it has been taken up in education at least, has “promoted the idea of teaching as the creation of learning

environments and as facilitating, supporting, or scaffolding student learning” (p. 45), which has positioned the teacher as a mere “resource” for learning.

Against this, Biesta repositions teaching as *definitional* of education and defines teaching as a transcendental act in that it is “something that comes from the *outside* and brings something *radically new*” to the student (not to the world) (p. 52). More accurately, this is a “weak” transcendence, in which the act of teaching, the act of bringing something new to the student from the outside cannot be guaranteed or secured. There is always risk, misunderstanding, and the possibility of failure. Understood in this way, teaching is a form of weak authority: “the teacher’s power to teach is a weak, existential power, a power that relies on interaction and encounter” (p. 53). Teachers are made, that is, in the moment of teaching, not prior to the act. Moreover, teaching has to have a purpose, as does education more generally. As Biesta (2015) writes, “the point of education is not that students learn, but that they learn *something*, that they learn it for particular *reasons*, and that they learn it *from someone*” (p. 234). Teaching is the act of bringing something new to the student, some idea, concept, object, or action; the teacher is responsible for arranging encounters with alterity. But teaching is also concerned with learning and the acquisition and attainment of knowledge, skills, and so on. In this way, teaching has resonance with spatial practice in that it holds both reproduction and production in tension, allowing for the new and for the reproduction of the same, or for learning *and* studying. Here it is important to note, then, that learning and studying are not entirely or purely opposites. Indeed, as Lewis (2014) notes, “one must know how to do something (be in potential) before one can experience the im-potentiality of study” (p. 114). Again, studying entails the logic of “I can, I cannot.”

Biesta's conception of teaching is educationally and politically important because it insists on the possibility of the truly new to emerge through the educational encounter, on ceaselessly working to allow for difference to emerge. Further, it wrests teaching away from learning, reclaiming teaching as an act of intervention and not of facilitation. This, in turn, opens the act of teaching up to the possibility of political intervention, of changing the order of things. Yet Biesta only provides this opening, and so we might say that his conception of teaching is only concerned with ontology, or with *staging* the educational encounter. For teaching to be political it has to also be about *situating* a project, and this is an epistemological endeavor. Unless teaching has an explicitly political purpose it will reinforce the current order of things. This is where revolutionary critical pedagogy comes in for, while teaching allows for the possibility of the new and of difference, unless it is situated in a critique of political economy that the new and difference can be subsumed within capitalism and made to recirculate within relations of oppression and exploitation.

A pedagogy for space

Like Lefebvre's spatial triad, the educational spatial theory I have sketched is posed in a triple dialectical and antagonistic unity. The next thing to do is to ask more precisely after this relationship. In other words: How might we deploy this spatial educational theory to help *understand* and *produce* space? To answer this question I want to read this theory through two examples, one generic and another specific. These examples are drawn from my own experiences as a teacher and political organizer. The first example is the schoolhouse and the second is the recent uprising in Baltimore.

Studying the schoolhouse

Despite the recent emergence of online schools and e-learning platforms (which tend to be linked to privatization schemes), the schoolhouse is still a central feature in modern U.S. society. It constitutes a key aspect of the built-environment and occupies a powerful yet largely un-critiqued role in the popular social imaginary. How might this educational spatial triad be deployed in order to help understand the schoolhouse, and produce it differently?

First, the teacher makes the schoolhouse the object of analysis and intervention. In order to do this, the encounter or interaction must take hold. As Biesta (2014) reminds us, the teacher cannot guarantee this and, as I have argued, it is the processes of production and reproduction that will structure the encounter and the *possibility* of the encounter. Thus, one task for the teacher is to join struggles over the means of value production and distribution (see Ford, 2013). The teacher not only places the schoolhouse as the object of inquiry and action—or *praxis*—but does so in relation to material and social processes of production and reproduction on a variety of scales. The schoolhouse, that is, might be examined as part of the built-environment of the capitalist city (Ford, 2014b). Relatedly, it might also be presented as a site for the reproduction of social labor-power and the reproduction of social relations of production (Bowles and Gintis, 1976; Rikowski, 2004). In short, the schoolhouse is presented not as reified—as an abstraction, a fragmented and immediate *object*—but in relation to the totality of social processes, as a *process*. The teacher is an agent providing “*constant and constantly renewed efforts to disrupt the reified structure of existence by concretely relating to the concretely manifested*

contradictions of the total development, by becoming conscious of the immanent meanings of these contradictions for the total development" (Lukács, 1971, p. 197). It is of critical importance to note that the teacher can be an individual, an organization, an ad-hoc committee, a general assembly, or even a Party. What makes the teacher a teacher is the act of initiation, leadership, intervention. For a process to be educational, that is, some *body*—whether it be individual or collective—must advance a syllabus, propose materials, and enact some form of evaluation.

Moreover, teaching entails the orchestration of learning and studying. These two practices must be held in a delicate, precarious tension. Just as representations of space dominate in the capitalist production of space at the expense of representational spaces, so too does learning dominate at the expense of studying. If learning—as the communication of received knowledges, skills, and competencies, as the already-is—is overemphasized it will reduce the possibility for study to take place. On the other hand, learning constitutes in part a pre-requisite of studying, and so must be given a proper place in a pedagogy for space. This requires studying spaces as they are received from power and instituted knowledge. What does the blueprint of the school look like in paper and in practice? How and in what ways does the blueprint envision and prescribe the flow of students through the halls? What spaces are there to congregate and encounter? How many entrances and exits are there, and where are they in relation to other spaces? How is your body guided through these entrances? How do the lines flow on the blueprint? A blueprint is a representation of space, which is about “established relations between objects and people” that “are subordinate to a logic” (Lefebvre, 1974/1991, p. 41). Learning can trace these relationships, thereby uncovering how spatial practice is

manifested in everyday spaces. Learning from blueprints allows us to uncover logics of surveillance and prescription and enables us to see how our movements and interactions are shaped or guided by larger spatial practices. Any learning outcome will depend on the teacher, because “‘learning’ generally denotes a process or activity” and “is in itself neutral or empty with regard to content, direction, and purpose” (Biesta, 2014, p. 63). The teacher is required to provide the features that learning is not concerned with.

Learning from the school blueprint for the sake of understanding and critique is perhaps sufficient for a pedagogy *about* space, but it is only a necessary condition for a pedagogy *for* space. *Generation* and *appropriation* are required for the latter, and this is where the act of studying enters. Once the schoolhouse has been situated as an educational object in its relation to the totality and the blueprint has been learned, attention can be turned toward holding this knowledge in suspension and imagining otherwise. The prompt here is: stop learning! Try to forget, or at least try to hold what you know in suspension as you occupy the space of the schoolhouse differently. Drift out into the hallways, not to rush to another classroom, but to dwell and breathe. Toward what other ends might the hallways be reconfigured and mobilized? What interventions are possible? Through this type of *dérive* attention is turned to the unnoticed, ephemeral aspects of the schoolhouse. New openings can be created, and repressed and latent encounters and interactions can be given new life. Once this generation takes place, however, new representations of space will be created; the ineffable is given expression and codified. And perhaps the new representational spaces and representations of space can act back upon the overarching spatial practice. Pedagogically speaking, the important point here is to reaffirm that the triad of teaching, learning, and studying is not a linear

progression, but a constant and contingent dialectical movement across and between the three acts.

Studying in the streets

During the end of April and the beginning of May 2015 there was a popular rebellion in Baltimore, an uprising that is best referred to as an urban insurrection. The insurrection was urban not only because it took place in a city, but because it took place *over* the city, over the right to inhabit the city, the right to the city as differential space, as use and use-value. What I want to do in this section is to read this uprising pedagogically, as an example of one way that revolutionary critical pedagogy can be deployed in spatial struggles.

After Freddie Gray was attacked by Baltimore cops on April 12 for looking a cop in the eye, there were immediately protests organized in the city. Baltimore has a fairly rich activist scene, with Black churches, community organizations organized around particular issues scattered throughout the city, and a fairly active left (dominated by anarchists, but with a fair share of marxist organizations, like the Peoples Power Assembly, a group led by the Workers World Party). The first protest took place on April 18 outside of the Western District police station on N. Mount St. on Baltimore's Westside, less than a mile away from where Gray was arrested (Fenton, 2015, Apr. 18). This action was organized by Black religious leaders like Rev. Jamal Harrison Bryant of the Empowerment Temple Family Life Center (who would later give Gray's eulogy) and was attended mostly by local residents of the Westside. Hundreds of people marched on the police station, chanting "All night, all day, we will fight for Freddie Gray!" Unafraid,

once they arrived at the station, protesters went right up to the station's entrance, standing and dancing on the steps and on a short wall that is positioned in front of the station, symbolizing and enacting a barrier between the streets and the cops.

Gray died in the hospital on April 19, and demonstrations got increasingly militant. The first arrests of protesters were made on April 23 during a march from City Hall to the Western police district, one for "disorderly conduct" and another for "property destruction" (Iletto, 2015, Apr. 23). The march was routed through the city's Inner Harbor, which is a truly flawless example of abstract space, of the city as exchange-value, with sports arenas, corporate headquarters, high-rise hotels and condominiums, and chain restaurants taking up the majority of space. If you look at the images available from this protest you can clearly see that either no permits for the march were secured, or that if permits were secured they were totally disregarded.²² Instead, protesters weave through traffic, blocking it as they see fit for a spontaneous "die in." Again, when the people arrived at the police station they took a confrontational stance toward police, shouting in their faces. The police responded by putting out the hashtag "#WeHearYou."

A mass march was planned for Saturday, April 25. There were actually two marches organized, one by the Peoples Power Assembly and another by the Black community and religious organizations, like Black Lawyers for Justice. People from all over the city and county of Baltimore (which are distinct entities) showed up, as did comrades from Washington D.C. and the surrounding areas. One rally started out at City Hall and another took place in the heart of the Gilmore Housing Project, where Gray was

²² As of July 13, 2015, *The New York Times* has a slideshow here: http://www.nytimes.com/2015/04/26/us/baltimore-crowd-swells-in-protest-of-freddie-grays-death.html?_r=0

arrested. Marches proceeded throughout downtown Baltimore. When they got to Camden Yards—home of the Orioles—in the Inner Harbor at 6 pm, however, protesters were attacked by drunk sports fans (Soderberg, 2015, Apr. 28). As protesters chanted “Black lives matter!” a handful of white bar patrons yelled back “No they don’t!” The white bar patrons turned into counter-protesters and escalated the struggle, throwing beer cans and bar stools at demonstrators, who responded in kind. Fights broke out in front of a few restaurants. Protesters attacked property in the downtown area and smashed the windows of cop cars.

The protests continued into the night, and the militancy of the people was channeled directly toward the police, particularly at the Western police station. And something happened at this point, something pedagogical: there was a shift from learning to studying. I couldn’t find out if protest permits had been secured for the march, but the mass demonstration was marked by a high level of coordination and planning. In most respects, it fit well within the confines of protests that take place in—and are acceptable to—bourgeois democracies. There were organized contingents of groups, scripted chants, well-formulated slogans and demands, printed placards, painted banners, and a clear spatial trajectory through the city. But the learning stopped when night fell and a real battle began.

I watched this battle unfold on social media. Several close friends and comrades were on the frontlines, reporting on Facebook and Twitter using their phones. One of my closest comrades, Andrew Castro, an organizer with the ANSWER Coalition and a leader in the Baltimore branch of the Party for Socialism and Liberation, was at a battle between the people and the cops at the Western District police station during the late hours. He

posted a 1-minute video that captured succinctly the tragedy and hope running through the streets. The sun had long been set and the first mass protests that took place earlier that day had ended. It's a nondescript street corner in Baltimore, with multicolored row houses and a corner store in sight, and a few dozen riot cops are standing behind the barricades. We don't get a full view of the street but it looks like the cops outnumber the people. Most of the people are Black and, although we can't see the cops' faces, we know what color most of them are.

There is no march taking place, no rally, no speeches. Instead, people seem to wander about. They are yelling at the cops, and for the duration of the video bottles, cans, rocks, and other objects are constantly being hurled across the barricades. Many people are recording the interactions, and some others are standing right up at the barricades, unafraid of the cops and the state power that they represent. Most of the people are just around the corner, and that's where the attacks on the cops originate (the spatial layout of the battle and barricades makes this the safest place to be). Others approach the barricades, shouting and gesturing at the cops, and then retreat again so they don't get hit by flying bottles and rocks. One woman—the only one that we can see who holds a placard—is standing near my comrade as he records, and so her voice is clear. “Y'all still a bunch of bitches!” she yells. She then begins chanting, “Fuck y'all! Fuck y'all!” Meanwhile, the cops, clad in full riot gear, cower behind their shields.

In another video that is a bit longer (over three minutes) posted by *The Guardian*, we see the cops try to advance against the people.²³ The cops duck out from behind the

²³ As of May 25, 2015, this video is available at: <http://www.theguardian.com/us-news/video/2015/apr/26/baltimore-protesters-pelt-police-demonstrations-violent-video>.

barricades and march toward the people, most of whom remain calm and put their hands up in the air. The video shows that there are at least a hundred police officers. Most of the cops form a new barricade at the location from where most of the objects were being thrown, and then they retreat, marching away from the protest. A few dozen cops remain behind for a bit, harassing protesters and forcing them back just a bit. At this point the video cuts out, but the victors are clear. The people, armed only with bottles and outrage, bandanas and determination, cell phones and will, defeated the riot cops.

Watching this unfold, I couldn't help but see an act of studying taking place. No clear, predetermined goal was expressed through the actions captured on my comrade's camera phone, no plan unfurling. What took place instead was a certain wandering within and beyond boundaries, or rather experimentation with those boundaries and our relationship to them. Instead of well formed chants and orchestrated contingents there were cries of indignation and anger and multitudinous swarms forming and disbanding; advancing, retreating, and advancing yet again. The skirmishes with the cops weren't leading up to a big finale; they were rehearsals for a revolutionary event, for something that we can't quite envision yet, but we know is immanent in the present.

The next day was eerily quiet, suspiciously so. But the streets weren't silent for long. On Monday, April 27 a full-scale rebellion broke out all over the city. This was the day of Gray's funeral, which took place at the New Shiloh Baptist Church, near the transportation hub on W. North Ave, a main gathering center for Baltimore Black community on the Westside. It was an open casket funeral, and the speeches delivered were a contradictory mix, expressing outrage but calling for calm. Outside the funeral, multiple spontaneous swarms were forming through social media. At 3 pm—notably

after school got out—a group of students met up at the Mondawmin Mall, less than a mile away from the funeral, and right by Frederick Douglass High School. The police were aware of the gathering and had hundreds of riot cops stationed at the mall. They also began circulating a rumor that “rival gangs” had formed a pact to “take out” police officers (this rumor was disproven quickly). The police tried to prevent people from getting to the mall, stopping buses and forcing young people out of them and blocking roads.

Groups of students were at the mall, many of them stranded there by the police blockades; the cops “did not allow the after-school crowd to disperse” (Brodey & McLaughlin, 2015, Apr. 28). The cops started marching toward the students, and violence broke out. There is remarkable footage showing the students fighting off the cops, throwing rocks at them and forcing them to retreat.²⁴ The cops were also throwing bricks and rocks at the students. The whole Westside erupted. At the Penn/North transportation hub another crowd had assembled. They broke into a CVS and began “looting” (read: expropriating goods). Cop cars were burned. As tanks rolled through the streets the people hurled anything they could find at them. It was an insurrection, an insurrection of violence and joy, love and rage. As stores were being reclaimed and cops were being attacked people danced in the streets. Watching on live stream I saw people smiling, dancing, and having their pictures taken in front of burning cop cars. All of this has to be placed in context of insurrection:

As the young people came to feel their collective power, they have first gone after the easiest targets, the retail stores in their own neighborhoods. The police and the

²⁴ As of May 25, 2015, the video is available at: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2015/04/27/police-throw-rocks-baltimore_n_7156614.html.

politicians above them were of course perfectly willing to let this happen. When state authority appears to collapse, people go after the things they have long been denied or cannot normally afford. For many in Baltimore, that includes basic household items, food, cleaning supplies and diapers—which is what one could see being taken from CVS. (Party for Socialism and Liberation, 2015, Apr. 28).

The rule of exchange-value over the city and city life was directly challenged with force. Use and use-value reigned supreme as people claimed and consumed goods without regard for price or the laws of exchange. Privatized spaces were destroyed. Fixed capital was no longer fixed capital but the target of indignation. The streets and sidewalks were not being used for production proper nor for social reproduction under capitalism; they were neither fixed capital nor part of the consumption fund, but something else, an insurrection fund.

I contend that all of this was an act of studying. The rules of protest were suspended and new forms of action were experimented with. True, none of this was *radically new*, in that the battle between the people and the cops plays out whenever resistance intensifies past the point of protest. But, especially when compared to the earlier marches, the script was thrown out the window. This is not to devalue organized protests and demonstrations, for these too are rehearsals for revolution. Indeed, while there weren't organized chants and designated chant leaders, the people were shouting phrasings that they had already *learned*. Further, organization is needed for revolutions to succeed and, most importantly, consolidate. This is where the act of teaching comes in. We need spontaneity and organization, studying and learning. But just like the logic of learning has come to dominate at the expense of studying, so too have the received forms of protest that bourgeois democracies can accommodate come to dominate at the expense of insurrectionary tinkering. The hope is that these tinkering can generate new

knowledges, skills, subjectivities, and forms of organization that can then be generalized and subsumed in a mass movement and, ultimately, an insurrectionary moment and a new revolutionary social, political, and economic order. Yet we need teachers to perform the delicate balancing act of studying and learning, to perform the contradictory act of *directing* and *organizing* the processes of learning and studying. During the Baltimore Rebellion the teachers were the Fruits of Islam and a triad of gangs: the Bloods, Crips, and Black Guerrilla Family. These organizations had all united to “minimize looting and refocus the youth’s righteous militancy” (ibid.). These teachers were concerned precisely with counterbalancing organization (learning) and spontaneity (studying). All of this was deeply spatial, too. The organized marches and demonstrations were based on *representations of space*; they followed familiar routes between different official sites (City Hall, the Western District Police Station, Camden Yards, etc...). The spontaneous uprisings took place at these familiar sites and in these same absolute spaces, but they became *representational spaces* as they were radically reclaimed for the people’s use, for challenging power relations—including, most importantly, the *private property relation*.

Conclusion

Maryland Governor Larry Hogan declared a state of emergency and called in the National Guard to repress the Rebellion on the evening of Monday, April 27. The troops arrived the next morning and a curfew was established between 10 pm and 5 am. That day residents of the city cleaned up the streets and organizers talked about how they

would respond to the heightened occupation of their city.²⁵ In the evening people gathered outside of the burnt-out CVS on the corner of North Ave. and Pennsylvania Ave. as curfew neared. Hundreds of people defied the curfew, and open confrontation between the people and the cops resumed. The streets were certainly tamer that night, and the intensity of the street battles decreased over the week until, on May 4, the National Guard withdrew from the city.

I'm writing this two months after Gray's attack, arrest, and murder. The national solidarity protests with Baltimore have subsided, for the moment, anyways. But police brutality, state repression, and capitalist exploitation and oppression are still very much operative, and resistance is, too. I went down to Baltimore at the end of June 2015 to meet with some community leaders and organizers, gang members, and family, friends, and neighbors of Gray. I went down on a Saturday and that day Gray's family and community called for a march to take place at 5 pm the next day. We met on the corner of Mount St. and Presbury St. in the Gilmor Homes projects. Other than about a dozen people, everyone in attendance was from the immediate neighborhood. The march was organized mostly by word of mouth and via Instagram and Facebook. All told, about 100 people showed up. We hung out on the corner, getting to know each other, before a group of women—Gray's sister and her friends—started the march at around 6 pm. They made sure we were taking up the whole street. We marched first to the Western District, where about five police cars and ten cops met us. There, people shouted at the cops and cursed

²⁵ I write that the presence of the National Guard represents a heightening of the occupation because many people feel that the police themselves are an occupying army.

at the police station. After about 20 minutes there we proceeded to march throughout the neighborhood until 8 pm, when we returned to the Gilmor Homes.

What was most interesting about the march for me was the combination of organization and spontaneity. It wasn't a standard political event in that there were no speeches, no chant sheets, no sponsoring organizations, no press releases, and no media. And yet it wasn't a purely spontaneous uprising generated off-the-cuff in an immediate response to some injustice or cruelty. As someone who has been organizing and participating in political actions of all kinds for 15 years it felt both familiar and uncanny. It was clearly a march with political content and leadership, but none of this was explicitly articulated. And as we marched through the streets people would raise their fists and join in. Children, in particular, would join us at one point and then run off a few blocks later, after spotting friends playing nearby. This is what was most interesting about it: this political activity had become a part of everyday life in the community, and in a relatively short period of time. I would argue that what I experienced that day was a form of spatial practice: *the way that an act of studying that produced representational space had become a representation of space, had become codified and, to some extent, formalized.* That this representational space had become a representation of space seemed to be recognized even by the police, who were notably absent from the entire neighborhood. It was as if official power had conceded this territory, the people had forced their right to use their streets and the spaces of their neighborhood in accordance with their own desires and wills.

CHAPTER SEVEN CONCLUSION

There is nothing inherently revolutionary about the spatial-educational triad posited in the previous chapter. There is nothing that binds learning, studying, and teaching to any political project. This is because these educational acts are all concerned with *form*. True, the theorizations of learning, studying, and teaching that I have drawn on and developed have each grown out of critiques of capitalism and neoliberalism. But one always learns, studies, and teaches some *thing*, and this thing is never specified by Masschelein and Simons, Lewis, or Biesta.²⁶ Moreover, there is nothing inherently revolutionary or even progressive about protests or rebellions. Indeed, we have recently witnessed plenty of *counterrevolutionary* protests and rebellions, from the overthrow of the nationalist Jamahriya government in Libya to the Maiden in the Ukraine (the latter of which brought fascist and ultra right-wing forces into power), from the anti-Bolivarian protests and coup attempts in Venezuela to the Umbrella movement in Hong Kong. In both instances—the educational acts and protests and insurrections—what will determine their revolutionary character are their *content* as well as their *action*, their epistemologies and ontologies.

The revolutionary critical pedagogy for space developed in this dissertation has sought to join content and action in order to proffer an understanding of the contemporary global political, economic, social, and educational orders with an eye toward how these orders can be not only changed, but overthrown. This, after all, is the aim of revolutionary critical pedagogy: to understand exploitation and oppression in order to rid the world of both and to create a world that we actually deserve. This dissertation has

²⁶ Even Biesta, who critiques learning precisely because it doesn't talk about content, is silent on this matter.

contributed to this project in several ways: by presenting a comprehensive framework for understanding the contemporary moment and its relation to education; by emphasizing the key role that space plays in the reproduction of exploitative and oppressive social relations and the role that it does and can play in challenging those relations; by locating the city as an especially important spatial formation under capitalism that concentrates contradictions and births resistance; and by turning to the educational practices of learning, studying, and teaching as pedagogical actions that can contribute toward the production of space.

The picture that I have painted of the current social, political, economic, and educational order is a grand narrative that insists on the primacy of the international situation and is thus located at the scale of the global. The understanding of the contemporary era as “neoliberal,” I argued, is necessary but in the last instance insufficient for revolutionary critical pedagogy. It is necessary because it accurately captures the drastic changes that have taken place in advanced capitalist countries since the 1970s, such as the attacks on workers and their unions, changes in production relations, privatizations of public goods and services, discursive transformations (e.g., the move from the “citizen” to the “consumer”), cuts in social spending, deregulations of all sorts, and so on. Education has played an important part in ushering in and legitimating neoliberalism, through the production and dissemination of neoliberal ideology and contributing to the production of neoliberal subjectivities. It has also been the victim of neoliberalism, as public education in the U.S. is an immense public good that can be and is being privatized. Yet these transformations can’t be understood without recourse to the global context, and this is a task that neoliberalism, with its focus on the restructuration

of capitalist class power within capitalism, can't accomplish. Thus, I brought in the framework of the global class war to comprehend the ways in which these internal attacks have actually been part of a larger global class strategy in response to a proletarian offensive that manifested itself through a wave of socialist and national liberation struggles between, roughly, 1945-1979. Unless revolutionary critical pedagogy situates its project within the context of the global class war it can end up as a reformist project, one that fights for one national sector of workers and oppressed people at the expense of other national sectors. Further, failing to take the global context into account can assist in the defection of potentially antagonistic subjects to the side of imperialism, as the mainstream U.S. "peace" movement did with the war on Libya. An adequate understanding of the present moment and the historical forces that shaped this moment—and that are likely to continue shaping the present—is important for any politics, whether such politics occur in the classroom, the school, the community, or the city.

The turn to space in this dissertation, then, has been undertaken explicitly in an effort to galvanize a new proletarian offensive against the forces of reaction. This is an important contribution to revolutionary critical pedagogy because of how crucial space has been in the development and maintenance of capitalism. Moreover, it brings the problem of capital *realization* into the picture, and thus far revolutionary critical pedagogy has focused solely on capital production. Education has always shown some interest in space—primarily in relation to architecture and classroom arrangement—but it has recently taken up spatial questions more explicitly and more broadly. This deepening of spatial considerations has been seen as the result of several things, including globalization, post-Fordism, and neoliberalism. I showed, however, that the roots of the

importance of space today are to be found in capital itself. I did this by looking at latent and overt spatial considerations in Marx and Engels—and on critical geographers who have furthered their work—including relative and absolute expansion, the town and country antagonism, transportation and communication, and fixed capital and the built environment. These excursions result in a deeper understanding of why space is so important to production and social relations as it uncovers the systematic and structural imperatives behind the dominant production of space. In terms of educational activism, the work done in this chapter helps us to better comprehend just what is at stake in the current drive to privatize education. The charter movement, for example, is not just about privatizing *education*; it's also about privatizing educational spaces. One of its aims, for example, is to expropriate public infrastructure to be used to help realize exchange-values. Thus, the physical space of the school is an important site and stake of struggle.

I then focused in on the city as one particularly important spatial formation in contemporary capitalist production and exploitation—and in resistance to that form of production and exploitation. Thus, this chapter moves revolutionary critical pedagogy squarely within the city. Cities are where the contradictions of capitalism are most concentrated, most acute, and most identifiable. Given this it makes sense for revolutionary critical pedagogy to engage this spatial formation, an engagement that I made by turning to literature on and movements for the right to the city. Through Lefebvre and others we learned how and why cities are crucial for the flow of capital, and that this flow that is definitional of capital implies and assumes a massive built environment that is (relatively) fixed in space. All manner of transportation and communication networks, factories, warehouses, stores and malls, housing units,

entertainment venues, and so on have been built up to facilitate the production and realization of capital. Yet this same process has concentrated workers together in space and laid the objective basis for our organizing together as a class against capital. And this has all happened in the space where capital itself is highly concentrated. The struggle doesn't just take place *in* the city, though, it takes place *over* the city, over the right to produce and reproduce the city. This move expands the boundaries of the working class from those engaged directly in value production to those involved in the entire realm of social reproduction, including not only those laboring for the state (like teachers) but also those laboring in the domestic sphere.

Yet there are many debates about the right to the city as a mobilizing slogan and framework for social movements. What kind of a right is it, whose right is it, what is the city, and how does the city relate to the global division of labor? The critical educational literature that has minimally engaged the right to the city has not considered any of these debates. While I mostly surveyed these debates as the groundwork for further inquiry, I cautioned against notions of the right to the city that are too inclusive, insisting that the right to the city is a right *against* capital, whose representatives must therefore be excluded from the right to the city. Further, I insisted that revolutionary critical pedagogy has to place the city within the context of the global class war. This is particularly important in the context in which I am writing, in the U.S., the dominant imperialist nation in the world; if we don't take this into account then we risk liberating cities some cities at the detriment of other cities, reinforcing imperialism and settler-colonialism. This chapter also links struggles over the schoolhouse—explored in the previous

chapter—to broader struggles against exploitation and oppression, global struggles that are mediated through the city.

Finally, a revolutionary critical pedagogy for space has to take the question of *pedagogy* seriously. This entails an educationalization of theories of space, which I approached by reading Lefebvre's theory of the production of space together with certain philosophers of education. Capitalism has abstracted space, subjected it and the social relations that it helps to generate to the domination of exchange-value; chipped away at use and use-value, worked to eradicate difference, reduced the possibility of people to assert their right to be. Through a reading of Lefebvre's *The production of space* I built upon the previous historical and theoretical analysis of the development of cities and the production of space under capitalism before focusing in on the spatial triad that Lefebvre introduces in the book.

This spatial triad is helpful for analytically separating different modes of spatial production and experience: perceived, conceived, and lived. Lefebvre's spatial triad is an archetronics of space that reveals different agents and forces involved in producing space differently and how these antagonistic interests dialectically relate to create space as commonsense. Yet Lefebvre doesn't answer *how* this archetronics can be deployed to produce space differently, a deployment that necessitates an educational theory. I proffered what is admittedly only a beginning to such an educational theory by bringing in contemporary theories (and critiques) of learning, studying, and teaching. Through this move we saw that the production of space is an educational endeavor, and that the dominance of learning over studying and teaching contributes to the reproduction of

capitalist exploitation and oppression, just as the dominance of representations of space over representational spaces and spatial practice does.

As revolutionary critical pedagogy is dedicated to the fight for an alternative society and a new mode of production, it has to take space and spatial production seriously. This is especially true given how important spatial production (and destruction) is to the reproduction of capitalism and capitalist social relations; as Lefebvre (1974/1991) tells us, it was spatial practice as a whole that rescued capitalism from its own undoing. Moreover, an engagement between revolutionary critical pedagogy and space makes a good deal of strategic sense, for all revolutions necessarily take place in some space, and by turning to space we can see just *where* capitalism is most vulnerable. I have posited the city as a vital socio-spatial nexus toward which revolutionary critical pedagogy should be oriented.

Consider, again, the Baltimore Rebellion of 2015. Police violence was the spark that set the Baltimore Rebellion off, but the rebellion wasn't just about police violence. It was about poverty, economic inequality, and gentrification. It was about the right to the city, a right that is currently in the hands of the bankers, real estate developers, CEOs, city planners, and politicians. It is the rights of these groups that the cops serve to protect, and this is why the cops were called to form a wall around the Mondawmin Mall. As Baltimore rapper Comrade says in his song about the Rebellion, titled "Right back:" "Cops posted at the mall though, oh I guess my life ain't got a price tag."²⁷

²⁷ This song is available (with captions) at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HKXP9I3YPAg>.

On any given night around 3,000 people sleep without a home in the city of Baltimore.²⁸ Meanwhile, there are 47,000 vacant homes and other properties throughout the city that are boarded up so that people can't enter them, sleep in them, or fix them up. If someone breaks through the boards and enters into one of these properties, the police arrive to evict and arrest them. In Gray's neighborhood over 50% of people between 18-65 are unemployed.²⁹ Yet on May 18, 2015, the state of Maryland voted to spend \$30 million on a new jail for youth in Baltimore. And two days later the Governor took \$11.6 million from Baltimore school aid. It's not that the resources and materials needed to employ, educate, and house people aren't there; it's that they are privately owned. It's the capitalist mode of production that has produced this reality and the radically unequal spaces of Baltimore, and that city isn't unique in this respect.

Capitalism has abstracted space, produced an uneven and constantly shifting landscape adequate to its needs. This space suits the needs and desires of the 1%, those who have the power to consume space as finished product, space as exchange-value. But, as Lefebvre (1996) reminds us constantly, and as the uprising in Baltimore showed, "use and use-value resist irreducibly" (p. 170). Revolutionary critical pedagogy, as an epistemological and ontological project, has to focus in on this irreducible resistance to advance the status of the proletarian class camp in the global class war, orchestrating the dialectical movement between learning, studying, and teaching to usher in a new mode of production, a new set of social relations, a new world. And it can advance this movement

²⁸ <http://www.hchmd.org/homelessnessfaq.shtml>.

²⁹ <http://static.prisonpolicy.org/origin/md/Sandtown.pdf>.

by calling on space, by engaging theorists and activists struggling to understand space and to produce it differently.

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EDUCATION

Ph.D. in Cultural Foundations of Education (December 2015)

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Syracuse University, Syracuse, NY

M.S. in Cultural Foundations of Education (May 2012)

Thesis: "Continuing to Trouble Critical pedagogy: Judith Butler and the role of subjectivity in the critical pedagogy debates."

- Winner of the Syracuse University Graduate School Master's Prize for Excellence in Research at the Graduate Level.

Advisor: Barbara Applebaum
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B.A. in Peace Studies Program (May 2008)

Minor: Women's Studies Program
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ACADEMIC POSITIONS

West Chester University of Pennsylvania (Fall 2015)

Department of Professional and Secondary Education
Adjunct Instructor

Courses: EDF 255: The evolution of schooling in the United States (Fall 2015). (2 sections)

Central Michigan University's Global Campus (Fall 2015 - Spring 2016)*Adjunct Instructor*

Courses: EDU 660: Methods of Educational research (Fall 2015, online)
 EDU 613: Contemporary Issues in Education (Spring 2016, online)

Hobart and William Smith Colleges (Fall 2014 - Spring 2015)

Social Justice Studies Program

Instructor

Courses: SJSP 100: Foundations of social justice (Fall 2014)
 SJSP 101: Community-based research: An introduction to the scholarship
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Syracuse University (Fall 2012 – Spring 2015)

Cultural Foundations of Education

Teaching Assistant

Courses: EDU 310/610: The American school (Fall 2012 – Spring 2015)

PUBLICATIONS**Peer-reviewed journal articles**

Ford, D. (in press). A pedagogy *for* space: Teaching, learning, and studying in the
 Baltimore Rebellion. *Policy Futures in Education*.

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Ford, D. (in progress). We have never been urban: A critical inquiry into the form, content, and potentiality of the urban. *Journal for Education Policy*.

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Porfilio, B., & Ford, D. (Eds). (2015). *Leaders in critical pedagogy: Narratives for understanding and solidarity*. Rotterdam: Sense Publishers.

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Edited book series, journal issues, and encyclopedias

- Malott, C., Porfilio, B., Pruyne, M., & Ford, D. (Series Eds.). *Critical constructions: Studies on education and society*. Information Age Publishing. (Book series).
- Ford, D., Porfilio, B., & Goldstein, R. (Eds.) (2015). The media and the neoliberal privatization of education. Special issue of *Critical Education*, 6(7-16).
- McLaren, P., Monzó, L., Malott, C., & Ford, D. (Section Eds.). Marxism. *Encyclopedia of Educational Philosophy and Theory*. Springer.
- Ford, D., Convertino, C., & Jaffee, L. (Eds.). (in progress). "Education and the right to the city." Special issue of *The SoJo Journal: Educational Foundations and Social Justice Education*.

Other publications

- Ford, D. (2015). Air and the politics of resistance. *Aggregate 2*(March). <http://we-aggregate.org/piece/air-and-the-politics-of-resistance>.
- Ford, D. (2015). Revolutionary critical pedagogy and the struggle against capital today: An interview with Peter McLaren. *The Hampton Institute*. <http://www.hamptoninstitution.org/peter-mclaren-interview.html>.

PRESENTATIONS

Conference presentations

- Ford, D. (2015). *A critical pedagogy of love with Lyotard and Hardt*. Paper to be presented at the American Educational Studies Association Conference, San Antonio, TX.
- Ford, D. (2015). *Variations on a critical pedagogy of becoming*. Response paper to be delivered at the American Educational Studies Association Conference, San Antonio, TX.
- Ford, D., & Jaffee, L. (2015). *Whose right to what city? Learning to resist colonization in settled cities*. Paper to be presented at the American Educational Studies Association Conference, San Antonio, TX.

- Ford, D. (2015). *Pedagogy for the streets: Educational theory and the 2015 Baltimore Rebellion*. Paper to be presented at Critical Theories in the 21st Century: A Conference of Transformative Pedagogies. West Chester University, PA.
- Ford, D. (2015). *A critical pedagogy for space: Teaching, learning, and studying the production of space*. Paper accepted to the Ohio Valley Philosophy of Education conference, Dayton, OH. (unable to attend)
- Ford, D. (2015). *The air conditions of philosophy of education: Toward a microspherology of the classroom*. Paper presented at the Philosophy of Education Society meeting, Memphis, TN.
- Ford, D. (2015). *Internationalizing education policy: Connecting internal and external capital accumulations*. Paper presented at the American Educational Research Association Conference, Chicago, IL.
- Ford, D., & Porfilio, B. (2015). *The media and the neoliberal privatization of education*. Paper presented at the American Educational Research Association Conference, Chicago, IL.
- Ford, D. (2015). *We have never been urban: Teacher education and architecture for the urban*. Paper presented at the New York State Foundations of Education Association, Colgate University, Hamilton, NY.
- Ford, D. (2015). *The right to what kind of city?: Education, internationalism, and the right to the city*. Paper presented at the 8th Annual Conference on Equity and Social Justice, Buffalo, NY.
- Ford, D. (2015). *A critical pedagogy of becoming*. Paper presented at the 8th Annual Conference on Equity and Social Justice, Buffalo, NY.
- Ford, D. (2014). *Educational atmospheres: The pedagogy and political economy of school air conditions*. Paper presented at the American Educational Studies Association Conference, Toronto, ON, Canada.
- Ford, D. (2014). *Contesting the commons*. Paper presented at the American Educational Studies Association Conference, Toronto, ON, Canada.
- Ford, D. (2014). *The pneumatic common: Learning in, with, and from the air*. Paper presented at the Ohio Valley Philosophy of Education conference, Dayton, OH.
- Ford, D. (2014). *Bartleby breathes: Notes on the conditions of study*. Paper presented at the Philosophy of Education Society meeting. Albuquerque, NM.

- Ford, D. (2014). *Cool kids: School and the politics of air conditioning*. Paper presented at the Conference on Equity and Social Justice, Syracuse University, NY.
- Ford, D. (2014). *Forgetting the name of the thing one encounters: A figural education with Lyotard*. Paper accepted to the Middle Atlantic States Philosophy of Education Society conference. Scranton, PA.
- Ford, D. (2013). *The built-environment of education and imperialism: The geographic contradictions of (fixed) capital and critical pedagogy*. Paper presented at Theories in the 21st Century: A Conference of Transformative Pedagogies. West Chester University, PA.
- Ford, D. (2013). *Lyotard and the two inhumans of the postmodern era*. Paper presented at American Educational Studies Association, Baltimore, MD.
- Ford, D. (2013). *The language of learning and the primitive accumulation of education in the media*. Paper presented at American Educational Studies Association, Baltimore, MD.
- Ford, D., & Pfohl, S. (2013). *Models, on being*. Artist talk presented at American Educational Studies Association, Baltimore, MD.
- Ford, D. (2013). *Gert Biesta's philosophy of education and the right to the city: Toward a materialist theory of the educational encounter*. Paper presented at the Ohio Valley Philosophy of Education Society Conference, Dayton, OH.
- Ford, D. (2013). *The end of learning is the beginning of education*. Paper presented at the Future Professoriate Program/Preparing Future Faculty Conference, Hamilton, NY.
- Ford, D., & Pfohl, S. (2013). *This is not a bench and we are not people: Non-representational photography as queer pedagogy*. Paper presented at The Monstrous, Marginalized, and Other Transgressive Forms of "Humanity" Conference, Syracuse University, NY.
- Ford, D. (2013). *The educational encounter and the right to the city: Education against learning*. Paper presented at the Conference on Equity and Social Justice, SUNY New Paltz, NY.
- Ford, D. (2012). *Judith Butler goes to work: The political economy of the subject*. Paper presented at Historical Materialism, University of London, UK.
- Ford, D. (2012). *The educational encounter and the right to the city*. Paper presented at Critical Theories in the 21st Century: A Conference of Transformative Pedagogies. West Chester University, PA.

- Ford, D. (2012). *The materialism of the encounter: Occupy Wall Street and educational theory*. Paper presented at American Educational Studies Association, Seattle, WA.
- Ford, D. (2012). *Can critical pedagogy escape identity? Or, the secret life of the whatever*. Paper presented at the Graduate Student Conference on Philosophy of Education, Teacher's College, Columbia University, NY.
- Ford, D. (2012). *The epistemology of empire: Libya and the left*. Paper presented at the Conference on Activism, Rhetoric, and Research, Syracuse University, NY.
- Ford, D. (2012). *Subjects in excess: Judith Butler and revolutionary parallelism*. Paper presented at Gender Matters: Gendered Borders, Governor's State University, IL.
- Ford, D., & Kurta, M. (2012). *Educating ourselves as others: Toward a pedagogy of vulnerability and dependency*. Paper co-presented at the Conference on Equity and Social Justice, SUNY New Paltz, NY.
- Ford, D. (2011). *National oppression and institutional racism: The Soviet goes to school*. Paper presented at the Central New York Conference on Publicly-Engaged Graduate Education, Syracuse University, NY.
- Ford, D. (2008). *Cyborgs in exodus*. Paper presented at the Villa Julie Undergraduate Philosophy Conference, Baltimore, MD.
- Ford, D. (2007). *Police and prisons: Maintaining capitalism in postmodern America*. Paper presented at the Villa Julie Undergraduate Philosophy Conference, Baltimore, MD.
- Ford, D. (2007). *Emerging multitudes: A history of the labor movement in Baltimore*. Paper presented at Goucher College City Forum, Baltimore, MD.

Invited presentations

- Ford, D. (2016). Invited plenary speaker at the International Conference on Critical Education. Anglia Ruskin University, London, UK.
- Malott, C., & Ford, D. (2015). *Teaching Ferguson*. Invited presentation at the School of Education, Syracuse University.
- Ford, D. (2014). *What I wish I knew as an incoming graduate student*. Invited panel presentation at the School of Education Orientation, Syracuse University.

- Ford, D. (2013). *Lyotard, the inhuman student, and art*. Guest lecture for TRM 701: Transmedia Graduate Seminar. College of Visual and Performing Arts, Syracuse University.
- Ford, D. (2013). *Derrida, education, and video art*. Guest lecture for VID 510: Video Art History. College of Visual and Performing Arts, Syracuse University.
- Ford, D. (2012). Invited panelist at “Elephant in the Room: Race and Politics” discussion series. Organized by Latino Professional Network of Syracuse, Redhouse Café, Syracuse, NY.
- Ford, D. (2011). *Potentialities of the (un)ccupations: A historical-materialist analysis*. Invited presentation at Occupying Wall Street: Anti-Capitalist Discontent in the Belly of the Beast? Brock University, St. Catherines, Ontario.

AWARDS AND CERTIFICATES

- Certificate of Online Teaching, Center for Instructional Design, Central Michigan University (2015)
- AESA Taylor & Francis Outstanding Graduate Student Research Award (2014)
- Certificate of University Teaching, Syracuse University Graduate School (2014)
- Syracuse University Graduate School Master’s Prize for Excellence in Research at the Graduate Level (2013)
- Teaching Assistantship, Cultural Foundations of Education, Syracuse University (2012-2015)
- Finalist, Central New York Humanities Corridor Graduate Student Public Humanities Fellowship (2013)
- Selected participant, Philosophy of Education Workshop, Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, Central New York Humanities Corridor (2012)
- Community Advocate Award, League of United Latin American Citizens – Syracuse (2012)
- Global Citizens Scholarship, Goucher College (2003-2005)

SERVICE**Service to the profession**

Associate Editor, <i>Issues in Teacher Education</i>	2015-2016
Editorial Board Member:	
<i>Critical Education</i>	2015-present
<i>Policy Futures in Education</i>	2014-present
<i>Journal for Critical Education Policy Studies</i>	2015-present
<i>The SoJo Journal: Educational Foundations and Social Justice Education</i>	2014-present
Manuscript reviewer:	
<i>Critical Education</i>	2014, 2015
<i>Educational Philosophy and Theory</i>	2015
<i>Educational Studies</i>	2014, 2015
<i>Policy Futures in Education</i>	2015
<i>Journal for Critical Education Policy Studies</i>	2014, 2015
<i>Teachers College Record</i>	2015
<i>The Journal of Educational Foundations</i>	2014
<i>The SoJo Journal: Educational Foundations and Social Justice Education</i>	2014, 2015
<i>Theory and Research in Education</i>	2011, 2013
Proposal reviewer:	
Conference on Equity and Social Justice	2014-2016
Critical Media Literacy Conference	2015, 2016
Graduate Student Conference on Philosophy of Education	2015
Member, Jobs for Philosophers Committee, Philosophy of Education Society	2016-2017
Member, Planning Committee, Critical Media Literacy Conference	2015-2016
Critical Theories in the 21 st Century: A Conference of Transformative Pedagogies	2015
Co-Director, Conference on Equity and Social Justice	2014-present
Service to the university	
Supervisor, Renée Crown Honors Program, Syracuse University	2013-2014

Internship Advisor, School of Education	2014
Website Manager, Cultural Foundations of Education	2012-2015
Member, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Celebration Committee	2013
Brown Bag Committee, Cultural Foundations of Education	2011-2013

Service to the community

Board Member, League of United Latin American Citizens	2013-2014
Coordinator, Syracuse Answer Coalition	2010-2015
Co-Founder, United as One Coalition for civil rights	2011-2015

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

American Educational Studies Association
 American Educational Research Association
 Ohio Valley Philosophy of Education Society
 Philosophy of Education Society
 Society for the Study of Biopolitical Futures