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Toward an African-American critical pedagogy for liberation

Kamara, Mohammed Brima, Ed.D.

The University of North Carolina at Greensboro, 1992

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**TOWARD AN AFRICAN-AMERICAN CRITICAL PEDAGOGY
FOR LIBERATION**

by

Mohammed B. Kamara

**A Dissertation Submitted to
the Faculty of the Graduate School at
The University of North Carolina at Greensboro
in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctorate of Education**

**Greensboro
1992**

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APPROVAL PAGE

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This dissertation, as a qualitative study, focuses on critical pedagogy and dialogic teaching as seen through the lenses of dominant reconstructionist theorists. Perceived as essential for African-American education, critical pedagogy and dialogic teaching serve as analytical structures for defining education deficiencies and for proposing major pedagogical transformations, so that schools, colleges, and universities can more effectively fulfill the needs of students and American minorities.

Such a mission entails an ideological examination of African-American insights on how American schools have failed this minority through the propagation of White hegemony and an investigation of pedagogical impediments facing African-Americans in traditional American schools. Likewise, it centers around analyses of critical educational theories, followed by the creation of an African-American critical pedagogy to enlighten and consider all people and their need for freedom, integrity, and equality. Because an African-American pedagogy seeks to liberate African-Americans from political and socio-economic oppression, it means taking risks to create a more just and equitable society and demands acknowledgement of education as a political, social, cultural, and moral enterprise, laying a pathway for change.

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INTRODUCTION

This dissertation deals with an examination of the concepts of critical pedagogy and dialogical teaching in American culture and African-American education, or more correctly, the miseducation of African-Americans.

Methodologically the dissertation focuses on the nature and character of the U.S. curriculum and practice, both of which are infiltrated by the predominant hegemonic structure and its social stratifications of race, class, and politico-economics.

Serving as a basis for my analysis, dialogical teaching provides me with a conceptual framework for exercising, recognizing, understanding, and adopting a critical interpretation or re-interpretation of the American liberal-capitalist process of schooling. In short, I attempt to create a new African-American critical pedagogy which defines a type of "desocializing" model for African-American teachers and students. Because this model strongly affirms the necessity of practical action as the indispensable component for critical consciousness, the education of an oppressed people must from the outset be socio-political and, as much as possible, ethnically non-neutral, or it will never succeed (Freire, 1978). Overall, this newly proposed African-American critical pedagogy will seek to empower African-American educators and students to understand how

U. S. schooling works and then will attempt to enhance their role in replacing and transforming the authoritarian system of education with dialogical teaching relationships.

My mode of inquiry, therefore, involves an investigation of dialogical teaching relationships by employing the critical reflections and interpretations of several dominant reconstructionist theorists, as Paulo Freire, Stanley Aronowitz, Michael Apple, Henry Giroux, and David Purpel. Many of their critical ideas and pedagogies are needed for an augmentation of the existing educational crisis in African-American America and are predicated on the conviction that every human being, no matter how submerged in the culture of silence he or she is, is capable of looking critically at his or her world in a dialogical encounter with others (Shor & Freire, 1987). Since the current U.S. curriculum is oriented in an eurocentric and technical foundation, little attention is usually paid to African-American socio-historical realities or to critical thinking skills that will help individuals gain a transformative education. As a result, such educational deficiencies must be remedied for the establishment of a democratic, non-racial system of schooling.

In my research I have relied largely on a phenomenological mode of inquiry, with its practice of a suspension of prejudices and biases. It serves as an analytical structure which prevents me from canning

pedagogical theories and educational experiences to fit my own ideological orientations. I have, therefore, used it to emphasize the process of critical reflection, with the capacity to distance myself from my day-to-day orientation, and as a descriptive procedure, to allow for the re-creation of a transformative educational theory (Suransky, 1980). Emphasizing my being in a state of epoche as a researcher, phenomenology demands that I be open to others, as well as to myself, and that I do not refuse to "hold the chain at both ends" (Apple, 1983, p. 6) by looking for a more holistic perspective encompassing contrasting views.

Other central themes involved in my research are concepts as domination-subordination, conformity-resistance, critical literacy, change-agency, situated pedagogy, militancy, and public sphere. All of these elements point to the one controlling theme of hegemony--the system of beliefs, morals, and values of the state and dominant class which have infiltrated other subcultures of a society. Implicit in its definition, though, are certain criteria which a series of ideas must meet before they become part of the hegemony (Gramsci, 1971). They must, first, constitute a perspective of the world that is neither consciously nor intentionally structured. No evil higher authority decides upon a value system to introduce into a culture, but, instead, a culture internalizes the hegemonic construct, so that it comes to be perceived as natural. Yet, the values

or morals may involve some distortion of reality, where an individual is led to believe in false promises. All in all, although he or she is not misled intentionally, hegemony consequently acts to preserve the status quo of the dominant class, to ward off change, and to keep the society as it is.

Thus, the infiltration of hegemony into American lives is an insidious process of which many people are unaware. They sometimes accept values, morals and beliefs without questioning how the belief structure becomes a part of their existence. Taking it as common knowledge, Americans even incorporate words for a hegemonic concept into English so that the mores seem natural, a supposedly inescapable part of existence. Rather, individuals tend to avoid a critical evaluation of their actions and language, just as they can be ignorant of how the dominant class and state bring about a certain system of values to justify and legitimate the differences within the class structure. This dissertation, hopefully, will shed light on the hegemonic process in the struggle for an African-American pedagogy of liberation within the educational institutions.

CHAPTER I
DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES ON THE FAILURE OF
AMERICAN SCHOOLS FOR AFRICAN-AMERICANS

Introduction

This chapter focuses on different interpretations of African-American education and its failure for African-Americans in our society. As major strands of thought which have been influential in shaping other theories or which equate with significant African-American ideologies, reproduction Marxism, production Marxism, liberal-integrationism, Afro-Marxism, and Pan-Africanism suggest ways of viewing education and society, in addition to advocating in some cases changes for making schools more equitable for African-Americans. Although these ideologies differ in methodologies and degrees of proposed passivity or violence, each of them concurs in the need for drastic modifications within the existing institutions.

The following paragraphs highlight major tenets of the aforementioned ideologies. Their purpose is to provide some insight into these theories so that the reader will gain a background for seeing how American schools have failed African-Americans and the need for new African-American pedagogies.

Section 1

Common Theoretical Stances of Reproduction and Production

Marxism

Reproduction and production Marxist thinkers present leading modes of thought about education and its connection to economics and culture. The reproduction Marxists see society as a struggle between capitalist owners and workers, where schools function in a complementary manner to what is occurring in society. In other words, cultural events influence what is occurring in schools, and vice versa, so that schools reproduce the class structures already in place (Bowles & Gintis, 1977). By reinforcing the existing status quo, schools thus are connected to the industrial structures and mechanisms of domination and are not perceived as democratic institutions (Giroux, 1983). In contrast, they are viewed as instruments to meet the needs and ideological interests of the dominant groups.

Yet, production Marxists analyze society and its struggles as being continually in a state of flux. To them, society is more than a case of simple reproduction, what is in place reproducing itself into the next generation. Rather, culture--including education and other institutions--is filled with contradictions, problems, and differing ideologies, none of which has simple, clear-cut answers or analyses. Schools, therefore, are depicted as helping to produce society rather than reproduce it, while social and

academic traditions extend beyond mere reproduction of subordinate and dominant groups. Classes, instead, influence and flavor cultural events, just as "education cannot be comprehended entirely as a reflection of the ideology or needs of . . . groups" (Shapiro, 1982, p. 519). Production Marxists, perceiving culture in a more complex and holistic manner than reproductionists, do admit, though, that education serves the economic interests of the dominant classes but only to an extent (Giroux, 1983).

The production and reproduction Marxist views of education failure maintain that it must be treated as an imperative objective, for it is connected to the functioning of the state and the class structures (Shapiro, 1982). Too often, the students who drop out of high schools--with a consequence of narrowing their choice of jobs--are ones from minority or lower-income statuses (Gage, 1990). Thus, their lack of education guarantees that they will probably remain in the same class as their parents, who usually are in the lower income brackets. Both Marxist perspectives, as a result, view education as serving the economic interests of the dominant classes in U.S. society, with the purpose to inculcate the values, attitudes, and skills required by the capitalist organization of work and commensurate with the immediate needs of industrial and corporate capitalism. By the same token, the production Marxists, unlike the reproduction Marxist thinkers, reject the notion of

education and educational policies as being a mere mirror image of the economic domain. They argue that education is a component not only of the economic structure but of the state apparatus as well. Such beliefs of the state and economics thus lie at the heart of many current critical analyses of schooling (Shapiro, 1982).

African-American reproduction Marxist thinkers, as James Cone, Angela Davis, and Joseph Himes, though, believe that most--if not all--aspects of social policy tend to reflect the interests of big business groups and multi-national corporations in American culture (Washington, 1981). As a result, the role of the state and of its relative institutions and policies, including education, is viewed as representing an instrument for meeting the needs of the dominant class, where school metaphorically becomes a factory for turning out students for the labor force as factories manufacture processed goods.

In addition, African-American reproduction Marxists have often failed to see any viable dichotomy between the state and its economic, political, and social superstructures--schools, churches, and welfare organizations (Davidson, 1983). They tend instead to view agencies of the state as representing the state itself and as being centered around the realities of politico-economics. Their rationale underlying such "economocentricity" underscores the capitalist metaphor and

employs the concept that African-Americans as a race over the years have been thoroughly indoctrinated to perceive most things as being for sale, even human life. Remembering their ancestors' enslavement, African-Americans consequently can equate life, with its basic moral and ethical decencies, with a dollar amount in the capitalist buy-and-sell arenas, even in terms of their perceptions of schooling. African-Americans, who have been subjected to a history of prejudice and denigration and were brought involuntarily to American shores, tend to believe that the system works for Whites and not necessarily for them. They furthermore view education as being a prerequisite for viable employment but are simultaneously doubtful that they will have the chance to be well educated (Gibson & Ogbu, 1991). Thus, success is vital to them in terms of wealth, material objects, and education, and although realistic about the cultural pitfalls awaiting them (Slaughter-Defoe, Nakagawa, Takanishi, & Johnson, 1990), many still strive to achieve the so-called American dream in order to rise in their class level (Bowles & Gintis, 1977) and thereby profit materially.

Reproduction and production Marxist analytical orientations are important to a discussion of African-Americans in American education, for they represent major ways of viewing the connections among schools, culture, and class structures. Ignoring such perspectives results in a biased, one-sided approach to the issue of African-Americans

and schools rather than a more holistic perspective. Yet, to gain such a picture also entails knowledge of three other dominant African-American strands of thought--the liberal-integrationist, the Afro-Marxist, and the Pan-Africanist philosophies--all of which have differing beliefs about African-Americans, society, and education.

Section 2

The Liberal-Integrationist View

Believing African-Americans to be suppressed since they set foot on American soil, liberal-integrationists, an African-American intellectual faction, want to end White supremacy while they, at the same time, are assimilated into American culture. Their ideas center around the use of passive and legal means to achieve African-American equity and self-determination and thereby alter the present social structures. Furthermore, they believe that the government's main focus should be the eradication of racism through positive governmental programs and education to counter discrimination. While advocating measures as giving tax credits to people and programs working to end racial tension, liberal integrationists acknowledge the somewhat utopian nature of their philosophy (Berry, 1971). Still, they uphold that if their passive methods do not succeed in accomplishing their primary goal of equality, then African-Americans must lead a revolution to achieve their equal rights (Berry, 1971).

Additionally, African-American liberal-integrationists see American schools as a semi-autonomous institution. Although they perceive education as essential for democracy, preparation for jobs and for life in a changing society is an important additional feature of their approach to African-American education. Demonstrated by the work of Mary Francis Berry (1982), one of the most renowned African-American liberal-integrationists, the U.S. politico-economic system has some sound elements, although it often requires federal intervention for smooth operation. She and her liberal group generally support federal compensatory programs that fight against inequality based on race, gender, religion, and ethnicity and support programs of academic educational pluralism and of exposure to non-Western cultures. The latter ideals notwithstanding, Berry posits that the number of African-American high school graduates attending college is proportionate to the number of Whites attending college, taking into account their respective population sizes. Yet, she points to the drop-out rates of African-Americans from high school, which reduce the pool of those who could attend college, as a serious problem which must be addressed to further the liberal-integrationists' goal of an educated African-American populace (Gage, 1990). Additionally, liberal-integrationists paint a depressing picture for an African-American graduate seeking employment, for they hold that

market conditions in the 1990s will make jobs increasingly difficult for him or her to find (Gage, 1990).

Most African-American undergraduates are not enrolled in professional fields as management, administration, science, or technology, where growing opportunities are projected in the next twenty years. In other words, African-American under-representation is most acute in those areas which offer the best opportunities for the future (Gage, 1990), whereas African-American representation is most significant in those fields in which prospects are reduced (Berry, 1981). Similarly, because of recent government decisions to delay the issuance of eligibility information for student aid programs, the number of students, especially African-American ones involved in higher education, will likely decline. The probability of a decline is further increased if the proposed 1990s budget cuts in education are adopted (Boyd, 1990).

Consequently, the 1990s' cuts in the budget projected for graduate and professional education for minority students will likely mean that the percentage of African-American professionals will not increase at all in the next decade. If the elementary and secondary education budget is cut as proposed and given to states and local governments as block grants, compensatory education furthermore will be even less available, while high school drop-out rates will probably increase over the next ten years (Gage, 1990). The

meaning of such actions, according to the liberal-integrationists, is that even if the supply-side of the economic policy works, and even assuming that there were no racism and racial discrimination, few African-Americans would be educated to take advantage of the available opportunities (Berry, cited in Washington, 1981). Still, the liberal-integrationists propose to achieve equity and parity for African-Americans by the year 2000 through pressure for governmental and educational changes and improvements, even in view of these realities.

Berry (1982) has also admonished African-Americans that liberal-integrationists' goals cannot be achieved unless some solution to the economic plight of African-American individuals emerges. Because many African-Americans have learned that the answer is not in laws which go unenforced, in court decisions that are not implemented, or in court decisions which can be reversed, they have sought political participation and power. Yet, such a practice, with African-Americans believing that political participation alone will lead to freedom from their oppression and racial prejudice, results in a narrow-minded approach that overlooks other economic, social, and educational modes of degradation. They have learned, though, that through political participation they can be rewarded with patronage (what used to be called Negro jobs in government) or with access to decision-makers. This experiential truth has

taught African-Americans, as well, the limits of political participation in that "a minority in a democratic society cannot vote its community economic equality when it requires sacrifices on the part of the majority" (Berry, cited in Washington, 1981, p. 6).

Hence, Berry, representing the liberal-integrationists' perspective, shows that as African-Americans struggle to find a way to achieve equity and parity, they must remember their history and its figures, men as Martin Delany, Frederick Douglas, Booker T. Washington, Marcus Garvey, W. E. B. Dubois, Malcolm X, Martin Luther King, Jesse Jackson, Vernon Jordon, Benjamin Hooks, Joseph Lowery, and Walter Williams. African-Americans, by modelling their behavior on the basis of such figures, can, as a result, distill wisdom gained from a remembrance of things past, muster the courage and insight to abandon what has failed, and pursue the work that must be done in order to achieve complete equality. Berry and the liberal-integrationists strongly agree upon the fashioning of African-Americans from the molding of these forces.

Section 3

The Afro-Marxist View

Afro-Marxists, upholding some tenets of orthodox Marxism, believe that cultural analysis is based on economics in a conflict between owners and workers, just as they advocate that the state's primary support is of the

wealthy (Roussopoulos, 1986). In contrast, though, they think that complete support of traditional Marxism is wrong because it has not significantly altered the course of history. They support instead radical transformations within society by calling for an African-American revolution and the formation of a separate African-American state. To achieve these purposes, they propose to identify first with the existing American culture in order to understand it and its basic assumptions. Then, with this knowledge, they will know how to combat most effectively and successfully the present culture and ultimately separate from it (Roussopoulos, 1986).

Afro-Marxists moreover offer us a critique of capitalism. Like orthodox Marxism, their philosophy almost completely subordinates educational change to the work place and economic struggles, much less the dilemma of American schools' failure towards African-Americans, and views education as a totally dependent institution. They argue that schools can do little more than reproduce the inequalities in the social order because schools operate within the framework of economic and cultural reproduction. The only real changes in society, hence, are to be accomplished through a transformation in the social relations of production in the work place.

Perkins, exemplifying the Afro-Marxists' position, sees educational mobility as an entity which is often utilized in

the United States to measure socioeconomic mobility. In spite of this, he predicts that the future holds some ominous patterns which cannot be ignored. There has been, for example, an alarming number of African-American high school dropouts and a decline in African-American male high school and college enrollment. Between 1970 and 1984 African-American dropout rates declined from 22.2 percent to 13.2 percent in the 16 to 24 age group, although in some urban cities the dropout rate neared 60 percent for African-Americans in 1988. For Whites, comparable figures for dropouts between 1970 and 1984 remained constant at 10.8 percent (Ballantine, 1989). From these figures, Perkins laments that one can easily conclude the effects of this data upon the continuing healthy growth of an African-American professional class and intelligentsia. More specifically, he believes that the African-American working class and petite-bourgeois economic forecast bespeaks misery, poverty, under-education, shattered aspirations, and downward mobility (Perkins, cited in Washington, 1981).

In view of the above realities, Perkins insists that the growth of the African-American underclass should be the subject of considerable attention to policy making and intellectual circles. He and his fellow Afro-Marxists hold that African-Americans who have been declassed and unemployed occupy an unusual relationship to the capitalist economy, for their exclusion and retreat from the labor

market allows an employer strategically to utilize their labor power in periods of economic expansion and to discard callously their labor power in periods of economic contraction. Thus, African-Americans can be viewed only as a "reserve army of labor" (Perkins, cited in Washington, p. 12), which in turn reacts collectively and sometimes violently to mounting African-American exclusion. On the other hand, members of this class have resorted to constructing an underground economy, thriving on narcotics, gambling, stolen merchandise, and the like, over and within the capitalist economy. This economy, which follows the logic of the capitalist enterprise, threatens to subvert and destroy ultimately cultural values, traditions, and laws. For this reason, Perkins suggests that the function, organization, and marketing apparatus of the subversive economy deserve more serious intellectual and political attention. The African-American underclass, otherwise, can reveal the major contradictions in the capitalist society to shatter the ideas of free market, competition, success ethic, and rewards for achievement. If those who work in the underground economy fuse with the organized and articulate African-American mass movement, a situation of potential social dynamite will emerge (Perkins, cited in Washington, 1981).

Section 4

The Pan-Africanist View

Pan-Africanism, another dominant African-American way of thought, focuses on the unity of African-American peoples in America and the West Indies with Africans. It supports their mobilization in order to bring African-Americans into closer contact with one another and to help with Africa's efforts to escape from colonialism (Ajala, 1974). Headed by African leaders as Leopold Senghor of Senegal, Kwame N'Krumah of Ghana, and Sekou Toure of Guinea, Pan-Africanists want to encourage the return of African-Americans to Africa to cement racial solidarity and, as a result, to promote business interests in Africa and the attainment of human rights. Overall, in Pan-Africanism, Africans proposed to join with African-Americans and West Indian Blacks in a loose federation celebrating their common heritage and the equality of African-Americans with other races (N'Krumah, 1963).

A Pan-Africanist's perspective remains in a category different from that of the liberal-integrationists and the Afro-Marxists because it does not need to be totally exclusive. In other words, one can be a liberal-integrationist or an Afro-Marxist and still be a Pan-Africanist. Dubois' evolution is instructive on this score, for he moved from a liberal-integrationist position during the first decade of this century to an African-American

nationalist viewpoint during the 1930s and then to a Marxist posture by the late 1940s. Still, Dubois remained a committed Pan-Africanist throughout his philosophical changes (Davidson, 1983). Pan-Africanists hold that ideological differences within the African/African-American cultures, consequently, do not necessitate a barrier to seeking or even reaching agreement on some fundamental requirements of development and liberation of the African/African-American world at large. Rather, the different philosophical streams and ideological camps can seek instead to identify those areas in which commonalities exist and hopefully to maximize such links to unify the race (Washington, 1981).

In addition, Pan-Africanists see the role of African-American educators and education as vital to the process of social change and development in America, analogous to late Kwame N'Krumah's thought that functional to an African-American or Third World liberation process is the need for thinkers as men and women of action and political actors as individuals of thought (Davidson, 1983). Even so, Pan-Africanists realize that not all scholars or African-American intellectuals are equipped to play active political roles, although they can perform other roles relevant to the process of social change. African-American political activists, likewise, are not necessarily equipped to play formal or informal educational roles; yet, such individuals

should continue to strive to be informed of pertinent knowledge and to bring disciplined thought to bear on political situations. Against this backdrop, two Pan-Africanists' critical considerations arise, where:

- (i) Educational activity and research to be on the side of justice must strive to be genuinely informed, relative and committed,
- (ii) Especially in the late twentieth century conditions of a high interdependent international system and more so a system like the United States whose actions or non-actions have such profound effects in the world, knowledge being sought or generated should whenever possible ideally move beyond purely parochial (localized) concerns to genuinely internationalized ones. (Edmondson, cited in Washington, 1981, p. 25)

It is thus relative to the thrust of Pan-Africanists' viewpoint that the role of African-American educators be known:

If academicians here and elsewhere are deliberating on the future of world order a little time could well be devoted to the role of Black academia in the future. Any serious attempt to probe the likely (or ideal) shape of the world by the next decade should embrace considerations on the likely (or ideal) role or non-role of Black academicians in the process of international change. (Edmondson, cited in Washington, 1981, p. 25)

Pan-Africanists furthermore strongly believe that it would be ideal if African-Americans were, first, to help remedy deficiencies in the U. S. educational system, which with its parochial concerns and in-built biases under-prepares African-Americans for coping with their international responsibilities. If African-Americans are to

become informed about--and to develop sympathy for--the aims of the New International Economic order sought after by the Third World, Pan-Africanists perceive that all people will stand to benefit when the traditionally dominant economic systems are humanized. By becoming cognizant of and seeking to build relevant trans-national links between African-Americans and Third World cultures, the construction of a coalition among the traditionally oppressed would heighten the liberation of all parties concerned (Edmondson, cited in Washington, 1981).

Conclusion

In summary, Pan-Africanist philosophy can merge with the Afro-Marxist and liberal-integrationist positions, for it seeks to provide a general overlay for perceiving the problems of African-Americans in American culture. While it is not as politically stratified as liberal integrationism, Afro-Marxism, reproduction Marxism, or production Marxism, it does concern the ultimate liberation of all African-Americans from forms of cultural oppression and highlights the connection of African-American with their Third World brethren. Liberal-integrationists and Afro-Marxists, however, are more centered around African-American performance in schools, in higher education, and in professional careers, with a definite tie between African-Americans and politico-economic participation. All of the orientations, though, strive to provide a picture of

problems confronting African-Americans, while none provides concrete reform practices for remedying or augmenting the African-American position in education.

This chapter thus reveals the confusion that exists among several interpretations of African-American school failures, whereby education becomes a facet of culture, politics, economics, or politico-economics. All of its orientations moreover enhance the difficulties confronting African-Americans in education and provide a foundation for chapter two, which outlines some of the pedagogical problems facing African-Americans in traditional American schools.

CHAPTER II
PEDAGOGICAL PROBLEMS FOR AFRICAN-AMERICAN STUDENTS

Introduction

African-American students attending American schools are faced with difficulties, in part because of their minority status. They must come to grips with a curriculum reflecting the stance of a White majority in a quest to improve the quality of their education and, ultimately, of their livelihoods. The academic hurdles and challenges facing most African-Americans, thus, are not easy conquests or undertakings, particularly when we consider a student's subjective interpretations of the curriculum, as well as arguments for and against possible African-American genetic inferiority, the distinctive nature of the African-American culture, and the formal curriculum's distortion of reality. All of these difficulties, in the end, compose or flavor aspects of a school's curriculum which African-American students must master.

Moreover, confronted by curriculum impediments, many African-Americans search for ways to improve the academic effectiveness of schools. They look at present school experiences, curriculum, research, and reforms and want an education better connected to their realities and to the

possibility of rewarding employment. They want to improve their lives, as much as possible. Consequently, such factors constitute pedagogical challenges and interests, even possible stumbling blocks, for many minority students.

Section 1

The Nature of the Curriculum for an African-American Student:

Types of Cause-Belief Statements and Analyses

Curriculum, generally defined as what is taught in schools, refers mainly to content. In a broader sense, though, curriculum is not only content, but how the material is taught and how it is administered. In other words African-American students learn as much from what the teacher says or how the teacher says it, in addition to how the administrator organizes them to mediate over what is being taught. Content, methodology, and administration are thus influenced by how a student interprets the material (Floden, 1991). His or her analysis of the subject matter determines to a large extent the substance of the school experience. Such subjective interpretations compose the student's cause-belief statements, his or her own analysis of school content in terms of his or her personal beliefs (Holtz, Marcus, Dougherty, Michaels, & Peduzzi, 1989). A student's or teacher's cause-belief statements consequently affect what occurs in the classroom. For instance, when examining the impact of racial and class issues on

curriculum, cause-belief statements are very important because they guide practice, generate hypotheses, and create indicators and predictors. Moreover, they develop from values people hold dear and which have worth for an individual, as beliefs in equality, rationality, freedom, capitalism, and honesty. Such values, or cause-belief statements, season what we teach and what we think about people (Sizemore, 1989).

In view of the above analysis, cause-belief statements about African-American abilities to learn tend to fall into five categories (Holtz, Marcus, Dougherty, Michaels, & Peduzzi, 1989). The first argues that African-Americans are genetically inferior in intelligence; the second asserts that African-Americans are culturally deprived or their cultural artifacts prevent learning; a third holds that African-American families, homes, communities, and environments are deficient, indifferent, unstimulating, and immoral; and the fourth stresses that the school or the school system is inefficient, under-funded, and ineffective. The fifth category looks at how the larger social order dictates, through its value system, a racial class or caste system which perpetuates itself through the schools and curriculum. In sum, the degree to which any of these cause-belief statements is embraced determines the behavior manifested in relationships with African-American students and others (Sizemore, 1989).

A type of cause-belief statement, the controversy over the genetic inferiority of African-American students is not new, as it was shown and fueled by the work of Arthur Jensen (1969) of Harvard University when he defined intelligence as whatever intelligence tests measured. Armed with this operational definition, Jensen set out to demonstrate that African-Americans as a population scored significantly lower on I.Q. tests than White populations. He attributed these lower scores to the genetic heritages of African-Americans. Some scientists argued that Jensen's propositions were scientifically sound, but according to Sizemore's (1989) investigations, there are other findings which show the hypocrisy of this claim. She noted in a parallel case that few individuals assumed that White Europeans were genetically inferior to Jews, although Jews tend to score consistently higher than White Europeans on I.Q. tests. She, likewise, upholds that when a student--African-Americans not withstanding--fails to learn, the system in which he or she learns is at fault. The environmental changes, therefore, make it possible for every developing human being to change and become more intelligent. If a system does not educate all of its people, then it is because the system does not know how to do so. Such an environmental approach does not shift the blame onto the victim but, rather, means that if the individuals who shape American policy do not address the problems of African-

American performance and development, then all Americans will face the consequences in one way or another (Sizemore, 1989).

Similarly, a teacher who believes African-American students are genetically inferior tends to resent an African-American who is bright and competent, because such a student violates the teacher's cause-belief statement (Sizemore, 1989). The student therefore proves the teacher to be biased and wrong, and the teacher, in turn, resents being proven incorrect and holds his/her sentiment against the student. Thus, the African-American student finds himself or herself in a catch-22 situation, damned if he or she does and damned if he or she does not. In either case, the teacher reacts negatively to the student, regardless of the quality of the student's work (Sizemore, 1989) and, consequently, affects the student's curriculum.

Still another cause-belief statement affecting African-Americans' curriculum is their culture. Because they are of possible American slave descent, they tend to come from a background that has low school and occupational expectations, held by both parents and children (Gibson, 1991). Similarly, they believe that they live within a system where most problems they encounter within education result from discrimination and prejudice. These beliefs, along with the common single-parent family, mean that some individuals may perceive a distinctiveness about the

African-American culture (Gibson, 1991). Some people may even perceive that its uniqueness is the greatest barrier to the progress of the African-American underclass (Holtz, Marcus, Dougherty, Michaels, & Peduzzi, 1989).

As a potential obstacle, this cultural distinctiveness was further heightened by the two massive migrations within the African-American community. With the first migration being from the South to the North, the second is in progress now from the ghetto to the suburbs. Consequently, there is an increasing isolation of the underclass due to the considerable population loss of the ghettos (Holtz, Marcus, Dougherty, Michaels, & Peduzzi, 1989). Despite the flourishing of the underclass during the 1970s when it was completely disengaged from the rest of society, current times have seen an increase in the indexes of disorganization within the underclass—crime, teenage pregnancy, divorce, marital separation, and school drop-outs. Moreover, welfare and unemployment signal rising disorganization within the African-American community and family (Slaughter-Defoe, Nakagawa, Takanishi, Johnson, 1990), just as the rapid urbanization of most African-American communities entails a greater isolation of the urban African-American lower class from the respective middle class. All together, a large portion of the African-American middle class has not been acting as role models for the African-American poor and giving them hopes of

assimilation into the American mainstream, a major influence on the cultural milieu (Holtz, Marcus, Dougherty, Michaels, & Peduzzi, 1989).

These cultural factors consequently influence the student and his/her perception of cause-belief analyses of school content because they affect his or her experiences. Being raised in poverty, being pregnant, or being on welfare, for instance, constitutes a different reality from that of a student who is from the middle class and not lacking in resources. Because of the variance in experiences, African-Americans thus tend to formulate different cause-belief statements and interpret a curriculum differently from other ethnicities (Floden, 1991).

Additionally, the formal curriculum's content distorts the picture of reality that African-American students receive, as well as experience. Usually, the disciplines are extremely male-centered and limited in their presentations of material (Freire, 1987). For example, in the United States' history the African-American experience in America before slavery is typically omitted, when African-Americans were born free people, so that students learn through omission that African-Americans were usually slaves. The African-American experience in the New World, though, began in 700 or 800 B.C. when the Nubians came to the New World and settled in Central America in what we now call the Olmec culture (Van Sertima, 1977). Stone heads,

nine-foot tall and with definite African features, have been excavated, demonstrating that the Nubian culture had been established here long before Columbus' arrival.

African-American students are furthermore frequently taught that Columbus discovered the New World, but such material is limited in that Native Americans were already residents on American soil. Hence, in one sense, Columbus only met the true discoverers of America in his search for India. These kinds of distortions in the U.S. curriculum promote the notion of White supremacy and superiority-- Columbus was European--and, at the same time, present an inaccurate history of the country.

Another case in point lies in the decision of which material to teach in the classroom and which information to omit from the curriculum. For instance, most African-American students do not know about Abubakari II of Mali who sailed west in 1310 A.D. with two hundred ships. Although it is unknown what happened to him, some evidence points to his landing in the New World (Van Sertima, 1977). In addition, the European explorers themselves had Africans with them, and the European diaries provide data on encounters with Africans already in the New World. Yet, many classroom teachers fail to instruct such content. Distortions of this nature, consequently, lead to a miseducation of the African-American and to a lack of knowledge about his or her history.

As a result, African-American students are obtaining curricula in the classrooms that are very different from curricula Whites are getting. Because of the different home environments, teacher perceptions, myths about intelligence, and formal content taught, African-Americans interpret the classroom materials differently from Whites, in addition to interpreting them differently from each other (Floden, 1991). Their experiences, in a hermeneutic fashion, flavor what they remember about material taught and instructional methodology.

Section 2

Effective School Research and Reforms

More and more people seem to be looking at schools for some type of contribution to the solution of problems confronting the African-American community, to remedy the conflicts that an African-American faces in his/her efforts to succeed in a society dominated and ruled by a White majority. They want effectiveness within the educational system in order to narrow the achievement gap between White and African-American students and look to research for the answers.

Commissioned by section 402 of the Civil Rights Act, James Coleman's (1966) extensive study centered on the degree of equality of educational opportunity for students. His predominant finding concluded that public schools did not greatly affect learning, for, instead, the most

important variable influencing student success was his/her family background. Still, the achievement of minority students depended more on the schools they attended than did the achievement of majority pupils, as schools impacted more on the achievement of poor and minority group students. Particularly relevant for African-American students were five correlates of an effective school, namely strong building leadership, high expectations for student achievement, a positive school climate, an intense instructional focus, and some kind of assessment measurements (Coleman, 1966).

Sizemore (1989) postulated that, in trying to improve the quality of education for African-Americans, the first thing one must do is to correct the cause-belief statements of educators about the students' ability to learn. Next, teachers and administrators must be helped to understand the difference between standards of distinction and standards of common adequacy. Because some teachers may believe African-Americans are inferior, they also will perceive incorrectly that standards of common adequacy are standards of distinction for African-Americans, a lowering of expectations of student performance and, hence, of actual abilities received through instruction.

A case in point, Newman and Kelly (1983) formulated two kinds of standards of excellence. The standards of distinction, which are those which assess exceptional human

accomplishments, are beyond the average, and standards of common adequacy are those which assess achievement considered appropriate for large portions of the population, otherwise "normal" abilities. Learning how to walk exemplifies a standard of common adequacy, even though some people may learn how to walk earlier than others. Few individuals consider walking a characteristic of intelligence, though, because it is a standard of common adequacy, expected by a majority of people for an individual to learn to accomplish. Hence, reading, writing, and mathematical computation can be seen as standards of common adequacy, although some teachers and administrators see African-Americans who master the skills of reading, writing, and computation early as exceptional students who have accomplished standards of distinction rather than standards of common adequacy (Holtz, Marcus, Dougherty, Michaels, & Peduzzi, 1989).

Implicit in the above example is the truism that to make a school an excellent school one must begin by making it effective, especially in the areas of curriculum and content, which include what and how materials are taught. African-American students, for instance, have much trouble with integers and negative numbers in algebra (Floden, 1991). This problem, though, could perhaps be corrected if primary teachers began teaching the concepts of positive and negative numbers earlier. In kindergarten or first grade an

African-American child introduced to the opposition of positive and negative would, therefore, have the foundation and experiences for later higher mathematical ideas (Floden, 1991). Sizemore (1989) contends however that teachers themselves are not secure about mathematics and do not understand the field and its language. Rather, they begin by teaching the concepts on the basis of their own understanding, as by making statements like five goes into twenty-five five times. An African-American student may think that such language means to add because when he or she goes into a room, he or she is added to the room. Since division is successive subtraction, where five comes out of twenty-five five times, teachers may use the wrong language to teach the concept--that which does not relate to the students' experiences--and possibly confuse the learners (Floden, 1991).

Staff development--measures to improve the effectiveness of teachers and principals--consequently presents a major difficulty for African-American students, especially if the minority group speaks a different language or dialect from the majority group. African-American students often engage in the use of African-American dialect, with a separate form of colloquialisms, to show their distinctiveness from Whites and other races. In order to facilitate the education of such students, teachers must therefore be trained to work with them. They must

understand the environments of the students and have some idea of the students' perception of reality to communicate with the students (Kennedy, 1991). It makes little sense to hire a teacher who is alienated from the African-American world when African-American students form a proportion of the American classroom.

In a like fashion, the concept of miseducation of African-Americans, first espoused by Carter Woodson, historian and founder of Black History Month, still exists today, due in part to teachers themselves who are fostering a new form of miseducation (Dickens, 1989). In 1933 Woodson accused White academicians of propagating pernicious myths about the African-American by systematically denying any historically constructive contributions African-Americans had made in building and strengthening America. Woodson maintained that by espousing stereotyped myths to both White and African-American school children, teachers reinforced the development of a distorted learning process and miseducation. The anomaly that exists today, however, is that years after the Woodson polemic was introduced, learning gaps, or a cognitive deficit between African-American and White students, continually persist in measurements by standardized achievement tests for elementary, secondary, and college-bound high school students (Dickens, 1989).

A cognitive deficit, much like any type of deficit in America, carries the connotation of something socially undesirable. A fundamental question, hence, must be raised of why this cognitive deficit for African-Americans exists and persists over time. One obvious explanation is low incomes among African-American families, yet Dickens (1989) maintains that the low income levels cannot be accepted as a plausible explanation because the cognitive deficit actually widens as incomes for African-Americans and Whites increase. Another plausible rationale lies in racism; however, many African-American high school and college students matriculate at largely African-American institutions, where seemingly racism would not be an obstacle. Yet, one cannot be totally certain of the accuracy of this assumption, as exemplified by the story of a young African-American who attended such a college and learns that:

It came upon me slowly, like that strange disease that affects those black men whom you see turning slowly from black to albino, their pigment disappearing as under the radiation of some cruel, invisible ray. You go along for years knowing something is wrong, then suddenly you discover that you're as transparent as air. At first you tell yourself that it's all a dirty joke, or that it's due to the "political situation...." Whence all this passion toward conformity anyway?-- diversity is the word. Why, if they follow this conformity business they'll end up by forcing me, an invisible man, to become white, which is not a color but the lack of one. Must I strive toward colorlessness? (Ellison, 1952, pp. 498-499)

Thus, although income differentials and race-conscious practices may indeed impact on the African-American

cognitive deficit by widening it over time, the deficit probably persists due to curriculum content and the absence of a critical liberal arts orientation within U.S. instruction. This point is more germane to the cognitive deficit as it appears at the collegiate level but also holds true for the high school level as well (Dickens, 1989).

For some theorists an analysis of African-American education aligns to the substitution of a liberal arts education with more pragmatic learning or a vocational-skills training (Dickens, 1989). For the aspiring young African-American lawyer, chemist, economist, physician, accountant, or engineer, though, entry into these professions is contingent upon the individual exhibiting some form of intellectual sophistication with respect to analytical or problem-solving skills, abstract or logical thinking, and a large and diversified reading-comprehension background--a broad liberal arts foundation. Thus, the retreat from a liberal arts orientation in African-American school districts and historically African-American colleges can in no way equip or prepare minority students to excel on the analytical, verbal, or quantitative sections of the Graduate Record Examination, Law School Achievement Test, or Graduate Math Achievement Test, standardized examinations often used by colleges and universities for student admissions (Dickens, 1989).

Yet, one of the assumed objectives of higher education is to prepare committed and talented individuals to undertake leadership responsibilities. If one is training individuals to become leaders in government, business, medicine, science, and art, one must re-evaluate the curriculum programs critically to ensure that baccalaureate degree holders are not being short-changed. Failure to do so is dangerous if one wants to narrow the cognitive deficit (Dickens, 1989). Now seems to be the time for serious thinking individuals, professionals, and lay African-Americans alike to accept a critical stance to what is occurring and implement activities, as developing a voracious appetite for reading different materials, improving the level of articulation in matters pertaining to foreign policy or international affairs, and exhibiting sociopolitical sophistication through community-directed action programs to improve any miseducation.

Of course, African-American thinkers, educators, writers, and the like will debate the nature of African-American education problems and cures within the context of critical intellectual circles. Regardless of what one does, there is no doubt that the time has come for specific action to be taken if Americans, particularly African-Americans, are serious about closing the cognitive deficit. Inaction may well result in psychological scars as the mythical ineptitude, inertness, or inertia that have already been

attributed to African-American human behavior in America since, during, and after slavery. In spite of the latter attributes, it would indeed be an irony of ironies to learn that the African-American elite is chiefly to blame this time for the miseducation of his/her brothers and sisters and that miseducation is not the fault of traditional, ideological intellectuals of another race, as is usually presumed. Such knowledge is not known, along with the lack of a truly valid solution for miseducation, although one's assumption that many facets interact to impact on the present African-American situation is probably accurate.

Conclusion

Thus, the picture for African-Americans in American schools is shrouded in uncertainty. There always is the possibility of failure in the classroom and student drop-out from the classroom milieu. With this potentiality, African-American students are faced with curriculum difficulties and reform attempts, while simultaneously their race becomes a possible hindering factor and mode of social stratification. They must therefore deal with the meaning of being an African-American in a White majority country.

With its social stratification of racial, class, political, and socioeconomic divisions, America has the need for change in its instructional practices. Therefore, I have employed the critical pedagogies of several dominant reconstructionist theorists--Paulo Freire, Stanley

Aronowitz, Michael Apple, and David Purpel--in an effort to highlight some of their major themes in the next chapter. It will present an interpretation of their ideas which I see as needed for an amelioration of the potential African-American educational crisis.

CHAPTER III
CRITICAL PEDAGOGICAL THEORIES

Introduction

This chapter involves an in-depth review of the theories and methodologies for the critical education of oppressed people, especially African-Americans, and is based on the conviction that every human being, no matter how ignorant or submerged in the culture of silence, is capable of looking critically at his or her world in a dialogical encounter with others. Provided with the tools for such an encounter, he or she can gradually perceive his or her personal and social reality and deal critically with it. My hope, therefore, is that when a dispossessed African-American can participate in this sort of educational experience, he or she can come to a new awareness of self--a new sense of African-American dignity and pride--and be stirred by new hope, as these statements indicate:

I now realize I am a man or woman, an educated man or woman. We were blind, now our eyes have been opened. Before this, words meant nothing to me; now they speak to me and I can make them speak. I work, and working I transform America (or the world). (Freire, 1987, p. 13)

I, furthermore, hope that as a functionally illiterate African-American learns and is able to make such statements

as above with belief, his or her world will become radically transformed. He or she then will no longer be a mere object responding to social changes around him or her. Rather, he or she is more likely to decide to take upon himself or herself, with his or her fellow African-Americans, the struggle to change the politico-socioeconomic structures of U.S. society that until now have served to oppress him or her. This radical self-awareness, however, is not only the sole task of African-Americans in the First World but of all dispossessed minorities, including those who have been or are being equally programmed into resistance-conformity and are thus essentially part of the culture of silence and hegemonic process.

For these reasons, I have carefully investigated critical pedagogies, theories, and praxis of the most penetrating methodologies and educational philosophies of Paulo Freire and others. Their thoughts represent the responses of creative minds and sensitive consciousness to the extraordinary misery and suffering of the oppressed around them. On a more personal note, I have found a dialogue with the thoughts of thinkers as Paulo Freire an exciting adventure. Disturbed by the abstractness and sterility of intellectualism, false consciousness, and African-American activism, I am excited by a process of reflection which is set in a thoroughly historical context, carried on in the midst of a struggle to create a new social

order and a new unity of theory and praxis. I am also encouraged when an individual as Freire begins a discovery of humanization and demonstrates the power of thought to negate accepted limits and to open the way to a new future.

To show glimpses of a new future for African-American America, I will look at some pedagogical contributions, first with Freire's imaginative theories of the oppressed. I will then consider the educational philosophies of two of America's leading radical thinkers Henry Giroux and Stanley Aronowitz in terms of their epistemology and methods for transformative educational and social change. I will also deal with the critical ideas of Michael Apple, with his philosophy of education, power, and political economy; and with the work of David Purpel, with his moral and spiritual dimensions of education based on the religious, critical perspective and hermeneutical methodologies. This chapter, hopefully, will come to serve as an instrument for unveiling the chronically existing anti-dialogical theories of oppressive U.S. actions toward the creation of dialogical theories of African-American liberatory actions.

Section 1

Paulo Freire's Critical Pedagogy and Methodology

A review of Freire's pedagogy and methodology inevitably spans the academic and professional range of his work and writings, such as Pedagogy of the Oppressed (1987), Education for Critical Consciousness (1978), Cultural Action

for Freedom (1970), other collaborative writings, and numerous lectures throughout the world. Writing from the perspective of Latin American culture beset by enormous inequalities and colonial oppression, he has vividly demonstrated the connections among human liberation, self-actualization, and critical literacy. Indeed, Freire, perhaps the most widely known of all existing critical production theorists of education, maintains that attempts to prevent people as African-Americans and other dispossessed minorities from acquiring these transformative skills equate with an abuse of their human rights and, hence, are acts of violence (Freire, 1987).

In weaving Freire's thoughts into the scope of my dissertation, I turn to a fundamental issue which has caught his analytical thinking, namely, the need for a transformative education. He deals with the question and roles of the oppressed in terms of their function in society.

Freire considers the role of education to be a sociopolitical factor. Education for him extends beyond the process of schooling and encompasses learning inside, as well as outside, the traditional classroom walls. Because a large part of Freire's work involves adult literacy, he sees education in a broad context. Words as teacher and student stand for both the usual roles in school, in addition to the giving or sharing of knowledge in society as a whole. The

relationships which result between a teacher and student (or oppressor and oppressed) are now occurring in our everyday life, where schooling parallels our society.

Writing about landowners, the plutocracy-planter class, and peasants, the impoverished majority, in his homeland of Brazil, Paulo Freire concerns himself with showing how some people are dehumanized in the dual states of oppressors and oppressed. The oppressors use and manipulate other people; they deny the oppressed a full expression of their inalienable rights as sacred human beings. Similarly, the oppressed, through their ignorance, lethargy, and passivity, support the oppressors and even go so far as to buttress the curtailment of their civil and economic liberty. The latter situation persists owing to the tendencies of the oppressed to think of themselves as objects below the subject-oppressors, within a metaphor of hierarchy. Put another way, the oppressed work for the oppressors; the peasants serve the landed gentry or squires.

The landowners perceive the variation in power as naturalized and, to maintain the status quo, promote responses and actions which will undergird their privileged positions. They were taught from birth and will pass on to their offspring that the poor and powerless--African-Americans and other minorities--do not have the same ability "to think, to want, and to know" (Freire, 1987, p. 46) which the oppressors supposedly possess. Consequently, the

oppressors have prejudices and beliefs about the oppressed which must be overcome if true and meaningful liberation is to materialize. Both the dominant and the dominated have, paradoxically, internalized the hegemonic ideology which wards off change and keeps the society as it is, freezing the permanence-change dialectics or power relationships in a position of stasis. The power variations of the oppressors and oppressed, likewise, exemplify ideological hegemony at work.

Hegemony rests, inevitably, on how the state and the dominant class in a society establish their so-called moral values and beliefs as cultural norms and aesthetics (Gramsci, 1971). A type of social control, it manifests itself in certain ways both externally and internally, as we are rewarded and punished in our daily experiences in a molding and fashioning of our personalities and sensibilities. Then, certain moral values and beliefs of the state and of the more powerful interest groups are introduced into our consciousness, so that our thought processes legitimate as natural the existence of the bourgeois, or upper class, and the chasm separating the power and income levels. Hence, by influencing both the internal and external, hegemony becomes a type of ideological process largely in the interest of perpetuating the existence and survival of the upper echelons in society. One accepts partly through his/her ancestors, the

inequitable relation of the capitalist means of production and exchange with the dominant class. For example, one learns from birth how money and other material resources connote power and that only a few persons have access to such wealth. One does not inquire into the unequal distribution of such goods and services where the rich gets richer and the poor gets poorer. Instead, one tends to take for granted the class structures which are subsequently reinforced by the hegemonic ideology.

Analogously, teachers and students illustrate the hegemonic positions of the subjugated and subjugators, because the instructor is the dominant figure in a classroom most of the time. He/she usually has control over the plan and method of instruction, in addition to the execution of the parcelling out of knowledge as a commodity to the students. A teacher can decide when and to whom to dole out the precious gift of information to the anxiously waiting students. They, in turn, tend not to question the distribution of power but, instead, do uncritically as instructed. The teacher plays the role of authoritarian and the students, in general, support, encourage, and even expect to be under his/her control, so that when we speak of oppressor-oppressed, we can frequently substitute teacher-student.

Some of the oppressed, as a result, have incorporated the ideals and moral values of the hegemonic ideology to a

degree where they do not realize their manipulation, subordination, and oppression. They may not clearly see how the interests of the dominant class are served by them and their actions (Freire, 1987). Instead of resisting the subjugation and struggling for community with others, the oppressed are encapsulated by a false sense of freedom that gives them an illusion of security. In short, they neither query their position in life nor do they critically reflect on the transpiration around them. They simply conform to the cultural and aesthetic norms and, in return, foresee a type of pragmatic exchange of rewards and benefits (Femia, 1981). For instance, the oppressed conform in order to gain particular goals, needs, and wants and, in several cases, to bypass the unemployment lines. As no other workable alternative promises satisfaction to the oppressed, it is often wise for the normalized to behave in socially acceptable ways for the plutocracy, even though a habitual lack of critical reflection tends to conceal and deny the existence of such actual exploitation.

Like the power, authority, and resource bases (wealth) vary for the producers and landowners, their knowledge comes from different sociopolitical positions and, hence, leads to dichotomous ways of perceiving life and lived reality. The patricians, or oppressors, due to their power and advantage, tend to go more towards a standard, official type of knowledge, or epistemology (Foucault, 1980). After all,

part of the hegemony passed to the laboring classes is derived from the oppressor class. The oppressed, on the other hand, often feel that the knowledge they have is irrelevant and ought to be trivialized (Freire, 1970). This knowledge is considered a deviation from what is considered the standard and, because of such variance, becomes invalidated or suppressed. As a result, the subjugated knowledge comes to belong totally and solely to the life experiences of the oppressed, although their historical reality is frequently deemed inconsequential and, above all, inferior (Welch, 1985).

Freire maintains that a large part of the subordination and domination which one experiences may well have originated from the power and powerlessness continuum manifested in the schools and colleges. The teacher strives mainly to fill the empty vessel-like students with facts and figures (Freire, 1987). The students are disconnected from their political and economic material reality, to which they can no longer relate, much less identify with. Hence, they learn only a static social reality as opposed to a temporal one and experience an authoritarian or oppressive curriculum that generally shapes their political and subjective or identities as powerless beings. Because the instructor does not emphasize enough (or hardly ever) in his/her lessons that historical reality is actually a multi-faceted and

continually changing process, the learning procedure steers the students toward an ideological distortion:

The teacher talks about reality as if it were motionless, static, compartmentalized, and predictable. Or else he expounds on a topic completely alien to the existential experience of the students. His task is to "fill" the students with the contents of his narration—contents which are detached from reality, disconnected from the totality that engendered them and could give them significance. Words are emptied of their concreteness and become a hollow, alienated, and alienating verbosity. (Freire, 1987, p. 57)

As a means of power, knowledge belongs to the educator. It is allocated to the students through disconnected and alienating discourses:

The banking concept (with its tendency to dichotomize everything) distinguishes two stages in the action of the educator. During the first, he cognizes a cognizable object while he prepares his lessons in his study or laboratory; during the second, he expounds to his students about that object. The students are not called upon to know, but to memorize the contents narrated by the teacher. Nor do the students practice any act of cognition, since the object towards which that act should be directed is the property of the teacher rather than a medium evoking the critical reflection of both teacher and students. Hence in the name of the "preservation of culture and knowledge" we have a system which achieves neither true knowledge nor true culture. (Freire, 1987, pp. 67-68)

All in all, the picture of reality about which students learn in school is only a distortion. The everyday world they live in is not like the still-life photographs in a geography book; neither do farmers produce crops smilingly and confidently, as the textbooks portray them, without anxieties of drought, falling prices, and bankruptcy. The

citizens of the world are not all honest, upright, and just, and more and more children, especially African-American ones, are being raised in single-parent homes. The Dick-and-Jane stories, with dog Spot and a mother-and-father couple, are no longer applicable to many students. The official school knowledge does not totally connect with the experiences of the oppressed students, particularly African-Americans, dominated by the oppressor school.

Proposing another method of education, Freire supports a problem-posing alternative. It centers around dialogue between the teacher and students, where one meets the other as subject with subject sharing in knowledge. The teacher can become a student, and the student, a teacher, for each has some knowledge to contribute to the encounter. Furthermore, the problem-posing approach stimulates deep reflection about acting upon reality and promotes inquiry into the present injustices around the teacher and student (Freire, 1970). Reality, not present in a static manner, is continually reshaped by praxis, as critical consciousness and action are united in an effort for empowerment and transformative liberation.

Certain components are necessary for Freire's dialogue to ensure that it does not modify into an anti-dialogical and oppressive encounter. First, all participants must have the right to speak their word, to humanize and change the world, and to name the transformation (Freire, 1987). From

the naming procedure, the dialoguers acknowledge their connection to the world and of the world to them. They can, consequently, gain importance as people existing in the present moment. They must also live with a love of the world and of the people in it, for love acknowledges the responsibility and commitment of the subjects for each other. Love cannot exist with domination and oppression; it is an act of freedom (Freire, 1987). Humility comes with love, because arrogance and domination lead to a subject-object relation. The people must address their mortality with humility; yet, simultaneously, they must believe in and hope for their power to re-create the world more humanely. This faith, combined with a critical consciousness, cannot be blind or naive, for within it lies the possibility for rebirth in the struggle for freedom. As a result, dialogue holds the key to a genuine education, where both teacher and student learn from each other in a liberatory mode of pedagogy:

Authentic education is not carried on by "A" for "B" or by "A" about "B" but rather by "A" with "B," mediated by the world--a world which impresses and challenges both parties, giving rise to views or opinions about it. (Freire, 1987, p. 82)

Freire's concept of with-ness suggests that people must work together, each with the other. The domination-subordination relationship fades away, for as long as a hierarchy of power exists, men and women cannot be authentic

people with a critical recognition of social reality alone. A transformation not only occurs with the oppressed; it can also include the oppressors, a combination of both working to modify the nature of the hegemonic process:

The revolution is made neither by the leaders for the people, nor by the people for the leaders, but by both acting together in unshakable solidarity. This solidarity is born only when the leaders witness to it by their humble, loving, and courageous encounter with the people. (Freire, 1987, p. 124)

Hence, hegemonic power must be altered to encompass each individual as equal and without the subordination of the oppressed working class to define the oppressor. The oppressed must rise socially to a medium comparable to the higher, a recognition as well as practice of equality.

With a realization of their oppression, the powerless must learn to think critically of the world around them. It is not filled with forces or knowledge beyond their intellects but, rather, comprises their social reality. They must perceive their own power to transform their socio-historical reality, to name the world (Freire, 1987), instead of accepting their oppression as it is. They, by reflecting about themselves and their lives in the world, cultivate the range of their perception and, therefore:

. . . develop their power to perceive critically the way they exist in the world with which and in which they find themselves; they come to see the world not as a static reality, but as a reality in process, in transformation. (Freire, 1987, pp. 70-71)

Attempting to establish a personal link between material for study and the immediate, emotional experience of his students, Freire opens areas of inquiry purposely sealed off by the pre-established boundaries of the normal, usual education methods. He strongly affirms the necessity of practical action as the indispensable complement of education for critical consciousness. The testing action he recommends is intended ultimately to change the underlying system, rather than to grease the wheels of efficiency (Rivage-Seul, 1987).

In addition, Freire incorporates immense compassion for others in his concept of moral imagination. He insists, however, that the crucial insight capable of initiating change that would de-escalate the arms race is to be found by looking into the eyes of the world's poor and starving, many of whom are African-Americans. These eyes most acutely perceive the malignancy of the global status quo because of their immediate contact with its cancerous march. Moreover, those living on the periphery of the superpower's East-West axis have no stake in the maintenance of an order from which they receive no benefit. They are, consequently, free in a critical sense from the developed world's blinding allegiance to an "economia" insured by nuclear weapons (Rivage-Seul, 1987).

Thus, Freire's writings and life have had a profound influence. They represent an attempt to focus more sharply

on the concepts of conscientization and dialogical analysis to the specifics of American culture and education. For these reasons, one must remember that Freire "is not merely a theorist but a brilliant practitioner and curriculum developer" (Purpel, 1989, p. 156). In other words, Freire's works are social, political, and economic critiques, in addition to being unification of ideas and practice. By making human subjectivity the measure of the moral, Freire's pedagogical approach humanizes what is currently treated as a predominantly technical matter. Its well-defined, non-mainstream viewpoint, moreover, shifts educational studies to a new and potentially productive plane. His approach insists on initiating the educational process by confrontation with the working of the real world. His purpose, however, is not that of information transfer; it is the critical probing of historical reality and the unveiling of its contradictions.

Exercise of moral and educational imagination, thus, implies recognizing, understanding, and adopting a critical viewpoint on sexism, racism, discrimination, and oppression. Guided by an allegiance to human life rather than to existing institutions, it means making decisions about the general world order. The exercise of critical education, in short, means opening our curricula to what the world's poor have to teach. This is the most important meaning of Freire's pedagogy for the oppressed (Rivage-Seul, 1987), for

his works, as studies of wisdom, are classics of applied educational theory and offer well-developed maps for action and ideas that are grounded in moral and social principles (Purpel, 1989). Yet, there are other perhaps equally eloquent writers, theorists, and practitioners who have proposed similar syntheses of educational theory and praxis and who are concerned about the state of education and the fashioning of a more just, responsible, and equitable world. These theorists include Henry Giroux and Stanley Aronowitz.

Section 2

The Contributions of Henry Giroux and Stanley Aronowitz

Henry Giroux and Stanley Aronowitz (1985) deal with the increasing strictures placed on teacher autonomy and the limitations of freedom in the classrooms. They hold that there are mandates, rulings, and pressures that decrease teachers' importance and increase administration's grip on the reins of control. Using procedures as standardized curriculum materials and competency testings, teachers are directed towards a more technical instructional orientation:

Teachers are not simply being proletarianized; the changing nature of their roles and functions signifies the disappearance of a form of intellectual labor central to the nature of critical pedagogy itself. Moreover, the tendency to reduce teachers to either high-level clerks implementing the orders of others within the college\school bureaucracy or to specialized technicians is part of a much larger problem within Western societies, a problem marked by the increasing division of intellectual and social labor and the increasing trend toward the oppressive management and administration of every life. (Giroux & Aronowitz, 1985, p. 24)

Furthermore, Aronowitz and Giroux discern between different forms of intellectualism, from technically oriented instruction to rigorous intellectual inquiry. Teachers who engage in thought with rigor tend to be devoted to exact, reflective thinking and reflexive activity, entertain skepticism, and have a humility about their capacities (Purpel, 1989). In other words, they are clearly committed to their profession and to critical, fair, and sensitive education. They, hence, as critical thinkers are a type of transformative intellectual:

Central to the category of transformative intellectuals is the task of making the pedagogical more political and the political more pedagogical. In the first instance, this means inserting education directly into the political sphere by arguing that schooling represents both a struggle for meaning and a struggle over power relations. Thus, schooling becomes a central terrain where power and politics operate out of a dialectical relationship between individuals and groups, who function within specific historical conditions and structural constraints as well as within cultural forms and ideologies that are the basis for contradictions and struggles. Within this view of schooling, critical reflections and actions become part of a fundamental social project to help students develop a deep and abiding faith in the struggle to overcome injustice and to change themselves. (Aronowitz & Giroux, 1985, p. 36)

The upper levels of power and administration, though, may not consider moral and critical intellectualism to be in their best interests, although some teachers, who feel disempowered by the increased boundaries around their autonomy, may still have the best interests of students at heart. Similarly, there are educators who envision a world

of joy, love, and liberation and who are willing to struggle for it (Purpel, 1989). In fact, these educators may perceive that it is their responsibility to fight for a betterment of conditions as an essential component of their careers. They may seek, as a result, for their own meaning in terms of their educational professions, a search for the noblest of human interests and not necessarily those of administrators, government agencies, school boards, and departments of education.

In the vanguards of critical education stand creativity and imagination, traits essential for coping with the ups and downs of a transformative or liberatory education (Giroux, 1983). An individual, to transcend the daily grind, practicalities, and technicalities of reality, must engage in the imaginary, or some form of play:

We learn as much by assimilating the world to the dictates of the sphere we call "imaginary" (which cannot always be adjusted to practical tasks) as we do in the so-called socialization process, one that is increasingly technologically directed. By imaginary we mean the proclivities toward creating an alternative world, not representing that which is. The imaginary is the foundation of play; it is the way we make a new world as well as achieve self-hood. . . . The relationship between education as socialization, which is directed toward suppressing the imaginary, and learning as a means by which the imaginary takes control of the ego is inevitable in any society that wishes to insure the adaptation of its young to prevailing norms. The point of technological directions is to make the imaginary into an instrument of the prevailing order. (Aronowitz & Giroux, 1985, pp. 18-19)

Yet, such play is not necessarily defined as cultural amusements, for they can become an avenue for escape from critical thought (Giroux, 1983). One can be tempted away from serious reflection by the pulls of television, movies, sports, and the like, although a thin distinction sometimes exists between what can aid reflection and what can hinder it. Hence, an educator must be cognizant of the need for imagination and play in liberatory education, besides the inherent dangers they hold.

Educators as liberatory intellectuals will certainly be critical of the reflective and imaginative process and products as a format for a liberatory agenda. (Aronowitz & Giroux, 1985). One cannot, however, be completely content with his or her efforts so far, for the world is filled with hunger, poverty, misery, oppression, and war. Therefore, educators must become critics, differentiate between spiritual beauty and ugliness, and then teach their students to make these discernments (Purpel, 1989). Underscoring this rationale, liberatory teachers continue to make extraordinary efforts and creations to build bits and pieces of a more caring and just educational system (Aronowitz & Giroux, 1985). They still ponder, though, pertinent rhetorical questions that continually plague humanity:

Do we need to gather any more evidence of this oppression? How many more wars, genocides, apartheid, famines, depressions, plagues, epidemics, and suicides do we need to convince us that we require radically new age thinking (as Mathew Fox calls it), new visions and

new paradigms if we are to survive, much less prevail?
(Purpel, 1989, p. 135)

All in all, Aronowitz's and Giroux's work has provided a critical analysis of educational practice and pedagogy. In Giroux's writings, particularly, there is an attempt to apply Marxist critical theory to the question of schooling in liberal capitalism and to clarify and expand the concepts of ideology, resistance, and hegemony. His particular focus is, thus, to demonstrate the dialectical nature of social reality, in particular what has been called the "structuration of the structure" (Giddens, 1979, p. 132). This concern with structuration reflects a belief in the agency of individuals to react to and act upon the social world they inhabit and insists upon the responsibility of social transformation through political action or praxis.

According to Giroux (1983), man or woman is a phenomenological being engaged in the active daily construction of his or her social reality, unlike the passive and uncreative puppet that the traditional functionalist theorists have deemed him or her to be. In this respect, education is something more than a realm which ensures social control and suggests the passive accommodation of individuals to the normative and aesthetic demands of capitalist society. The state and all its ideological apparatuses, in other words, still maintain their individual relative autonomies from one another.

This, in turn, means that the lived relationships within the schools and colleges themselves are one of a terrain on which competing world views are fought and won or lost, or alternative, oppositional ideologies are constituted.

Finally, Giroux (1983) argues that the concept of resistance, especially within the classroom context, emphasizes that individuals are not simply acted upon by abstract structures but that they, instead, negotiate, struggle, and create meaning of their own. The political content of their actions opposing established authority can be ignored, or virtually any act of opposition can be labelled and construed or misconstrued as resistance, without considering the quality of that resistance or the implications of these actions. Many teachers, though, do resist despite the structures in place prohibiting such behavior.

Giroux and Aronowitz, thus, present another view of education, with an emphasis on the disappearance of passive intellectualism within traditional teaching. They, as Freire, uphold critical, reflective activity within the classrooms and stress the political nature of the struggle for meaning. Going further to explore teacher resistance and social change through praxis, Giroux adds to his work with Aronowitz to introduce other concepts which build upon the necessity in education for positive reform. Both

contribute significant perspectives to the area of critical pedagogy.

Section 3

The Critical Thought of Michael Apple

Next, I wish to consider the contributions of Michael Apple to critical pedagogy, politics, power, and education in liberal capitalism and industrialized U.S. society. Apple (1979) is one of the noted American theorists most concerned with creating a critical theory of education which can go beyond resistance and reproduction theorists. He has appropriated the concepts of ideological hegemony solely as a movement of domination to illuminate mechanisms within the context of educational institutions. Hence, in dealing with the ambiguities of traditional Marxist theory, Apple, like Gramsci (1971), rejects the traditional functionalist obsession with the analysis of the relationship between the "base-superstructure" model. Such a perspective for Apple is too reductionistic, mechanistic, and vulgar, for it plainly refuses to "hold the chain at both ends" (Apple, 1979, p. 6), to look for a more holistic perspective encompassing contrasting views.

To further explicate, Apple (1979) believes that the traditional functionalist theorists' perspectives on generative themes--the role of the state on schooling, cultural production, subjectivity, resistance, and hegemony in a liberal capitalist society--ought to be re-examined and

thus modified. He argues that the state in a liberal capitalist society appears as a neutral body arbitrating between social, economic, and political interests (Apple & Weis, 1983). The state appears, not as an instrument of certain dominant groups but as the representative of the "general will" of the people, where "by means of a whole complex functioning of the ideological, the capitalist state systematically conceals its political class character" (Apple, cited in Shapiro, 1982, p. 522). The state, ipso facto, presents itself as the incarnation of the popular will of the people and nation.

Knowledge, a form of cultural capital, therefore, is produced, reproduced, and propagated in our schools and colleges, and we need to examine critically how a student can acquire more knowledge--the dominant question in our efficiency-minded field--and why and how particular aspects of the collective culture are presented in colleges and schools as objective, factual, scientific knowledge. For instance, how concretely may official knowledge represent ideological configurations of the dominant interests in society? How do colleges and schools legitimate these limited and partial standards of knowing as unquestioned truths? Such questions must be asked of at least three areas of college and school life:

- 1) how the basic day-to day regularities of colleges or schools contribute to students learning these ideologies;

- 2) how the specific forms of curricular knowledge. . . reflect these configurations;
- 3) how these ideologies are reflected in the fundamental perspectives educators themselves employ to order, guide and give meaning to their own activity. (Apple, 1979, p. 18)

The first of the above questions refers to the hidden curriculum in schools and colleges, the tacit teaching to students of norms, aesthetics, values, and dispositions that exist simply by the student living in and coping with the institutional expectations and routines of schools and colleges. The second question wants to make educational knowledge problematic, to pay much greater attention to the material of the curriculum and pedagogy where knowledge comes from, and to investigate whose knowledge it is being learned and what social groups it supports. The final query seeks to make educators more aware of the ideological and epistemological commitments they tacitly or surreptitiously accept and promote by using certain morals and traditions--a vulgar positivism, system management, structural functionalism, a process of social labelling, or behavior modification--in their work.

Against this backdrop, Apple contends that without an understanding of these aspects of college and school life, an individual has difficulty connecting seriously to the distribution, quality, and control of work, power, ideology, and cultural knowledge outside his or her educational institutions (Apple & Weis, 1983). Cultural and economic

reproductions, insofar as they occur in schools and colleges, are, therefore, a complex and tentative process. Reproductive and non-reproductive tendencies occur in all cultures, but few procedures are totally reproductive, regardless of their intent. Consequently, ideological hegemony is not and cannot be fully secured to a single factor working by itself but rather to a mixture of differing ones influencing each other (Apple & Weis, 1983).

Apple, like many of his critical production Marxist theorists, tends to deal with social reality by emphasizing the importance of structural and institutional forces responsible for shaping our ideological and material conditions, or the way we organize our lives. He, too, sees schools and colleges as places contributing to the production of particular kinds of sociopolitical identities and subjectivities which are embedded in the contradictory consciousness and experiences of teachers and students. The process leads to an ongoing struggle between limiting social forms and enabling individual capacities. In other words, Apple's theories of production are equally concerned with the ways in which both individuals and classes exert their own experiences and resist or contest the ideological and material forces imposed upon them in a variety of settings. His analysis focuses on the ways in which both teacher and student in school and colleges produce meaning and culture

through their own resistance and their own individual and collective consciousness.

Apple (1979), in essence, is concerned in varying degrees with the social construction of knowledge and the ways in which dominant forms of discourse and knowledge can be critiqued and made problematic, especially within the ideological nature of capitalist democratic schooling. His work, to this end, remains acutely aware of Marx's notation, "while men (sic) make their own history, they do not make it just as they please" (Marx, cited in Adamson, 1971, p. 437). Instead, people must contend with the tensions of the self within a cultural ideology.

Section 4

The Pedagogical Methodology of David Purpel

David Purpel's writings present a powerful and convincing analysis of a critical pedagogy with intellectual, moral, and spiritual overtones. Foremost, he argues that a crucial problem of a pedagogy for liberation relates to the perceived value of education, especially if its power can be used to challenge existing institutions and power arrangements (Purpel, 1989). He contends too that education has the ability to induce a range of emotional experiences, from joy and contentment to frustration and anxiety, and for causing cultural change. It can even become a complicated process that revolves around a plethora of dichotomies. An individual consequently shifts along a

continuum of knowledge and discovery in an attempt to reach some goal of knowing. He or she goes from material known to that unknown and from cultural values taught and reinforced to those modified in a back and forth process.

Purpel (1989) argues that the power of education, influenced by cultural perspectives, is exemplified by the trial of Socrates. Athenians voted for Socrates' execution because he challenged their status quo, and he, by singling out questioning and reflection as pathways to knowledge, became a threat to the ingrained cultural mores. Socrates, thus, by upholding his educational ideas chose to die rather than alter his mode of instruction. Although his trial encompasses many layers of meaning, it particularly brings to mind the way that culture affects education, for the Athenians implicitly stated their disapproval of his educational practices by their fatal decision. At the same time, they proposed a moral position of what they construed to be good and evil, or right and wrong. These interrelations of education, culture, and morals can be more succinctly stated, for "when we talk of education we are simultaneously talking about culture; when we propose changes in education, or when we propose not making changes, we are making moral statements" (Purpel, 1989, p. 8).

Yet, when an individual contradicts cultural hegemony, he or she may be viewed with condemnation, dismay, or even fear. Change connotes the unknown, and people may opt for

the safe and known over the vulnerability of the unknown. Individuals as Ghandi, Abraham Lincoln, and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. evince the wariness which change evokes (Purpel, 1989) and were assassinated in part because of the threats they posed to the status quo.

The present educational system, likewise, advocates the status quo, despite the fact that school reform is on the lips of many educators. Suggestions as standardized testing, grading, longer school days, and longer school program years represent only superficial alterations to the educational system. They do not entail serious confrontation with the hegemony in place or to the morals inherent within education (Purpel, 1989). They surely do not encourage critical, earnest reflection about what is taught overtly and covertly; consequently, one is left with efforts to improve education's supposed quality and to strive for excellence:

Give students and teachers a test, teach them how to pass the test, and Eureka! the test scores go up--which the public is told means that excellence has been achieved. What is particularly painful about this cynical travesty is the degree to which professionals in education, sociology, and psychology participate in such nonsense even when they know or should know better. (Purpel, 1989, pp. 17-18)

In addition, education is fragmented, alienated, and isolated (Purpel, 1989), particulary because it camouflages moral questions in issues like classroom tracking, income levels, course requirements, and segregation. Culture, too,

sidesteps moral issues when it attempts to ban morals from the classroom or labels them with euphemisms. For instance, grading involves one person scoring the work of another by some arbitrary criteria. Grading is not necessarily synonymous with evaluation (Purpel, 1989) and frequently concerns using measuring instruments of the nature of true-false questions and multiple-choice items to determine the amount of material that was supposedly learned. Overall, some students come to care more about the grade they make than the material's meaning, while society tends to perceive grades and grade-point averages as levels of success and achievement rather than investigating the learning which has occurred (Purpel, 1989).

As another pertinent issue, the usage of power and who has it become essential to the quality of education. One must continually keep in mind the socio-political question of who benefits from power, for usually those with it or with extensive resources will clearly benefit from the manner in which power is utilized (Purpel, 1989). It, without doubt, greatly flavors decisions made, issues proposed, and programs designed, and while educators have some power, they also often dread the possibility of losing it by advocating major changes. Thus, some of them will conform to existing instructional practices to safeguard their current positions rather than to take a chance for change.

Furthermore, Purpel (1989) maintains that educators are inordinately occupied with equal educational opportunity allowing access to education. Their research focuses on discrimination in educational opportunity for individuals and groups, just as organizations as Head Start and NAACP are organized to respond to problems which have arisen. Still, such programs additionally entail controversies, as well as a more fundamental issue of "who should and can be truly educated, who deserves the full development of their reflective and creative potential" (Purpel, 1989, pp. 9-10). Regardless of who gets what, educators must come to terms with this matter and deal with individuals who believe that all people are capable of learning to live a responsible, free, and meaningful life and others who feel that only a select portion of the populace should be educated. The answer to the question of who should be educated is basic to the American ideals of democracy and equality, for allowing, or tacitly supporting, a system where one group receives an education that is denied to another group furthers inequality and discrimination.

Apparently, many people perceive the function of education and pedagogy as the transference of culture and the preservation of its values and beliefs (Purpel, 1989). However, numerous subcultures, each one with its own belief structure, comprise American culture, so to determine which system to teach is in itself problematic. On the other

hand, to believe that there is only one overall American culture suggests a sense of stability and sameness (Purpel, 1989), criteria for building a sense of maintaining the status quo.

With education's morals and beliefs, teachers, therefore, occupy a central role to the instructional process. They can become like prophets working to strengthen liberatory education, to summon the highest ideals of equality and democracy, to pinpoint cultural strengths and weaknesses, and to suggest improvements:

The educator as prophet does more than re-mind, re-answer, and re-invigorate--the prophet-educator conducts re-search and joins students in continually developing skills and knowledge that enhance the possibility of justice, community, and joy. His (sic) concern is with the search for meaning and through the process of criticism, imagination, and creativity. (Purpel, 1989, p. 105)

Similarly, education can be described as a webbed net, interwoven with strands of cultures, morals, beliefs, status quo, oppression, liberation, and transformation. Purpel depicts this meshwork as a field of contradictions and portrays the moral, political, and cultural perspective of education as shown by its practice, policy, and theory. Educators, as public servants and leaders, consequently, owe it to the public to reveal their theoretical and ideological perspectives as a part of their professional ethic and as a way of enriching the quality of public dialogue on education

and issues of critical pedagogy. They are, after all, vital agents in the struggle for educational liberation.

Conclusion

Educational scholars, such as Freire, Giroux, Aronowitz, Apple, and Purpel, show the brilliancy of current theoretical critiques of American education. They propose that:

- 1) the schools and colleges represent a powerful force of social, intellectual, and personal oppression;
- 2) the reasons for such oppression are rooted in the culture's history;
- 3) they [schools and colleges] represent a number of deeply held cultural values and beliefs--hierarchy, conformity, success, materialism, control; and
- 4) what is required for significant changes in the colleges and schools amounts to a fundamental transformation of the culture's consciousness. (Purpel, 1989, pp. 19-20)

By playing a role in reproducing or producing the U.S. culture, colleges and schools, thus, often want students to learn to be obedient and passive, to defer immediate gratification, to value achievement and competition, and to please and respect authority figures. They perpetuate sexism, racism, and elitism by engaging in such activities. Critical pedagogy, however, demands that teachers and students acknowledge the existence of their values, beliefs, and assumptions affecting educational policies, human relationships, and learning, and then work to promote much needed transformation within our educational system. A summary of some of the main points of the above theorists

shows us a way toward the establishment of a new pedagogy.

To recapitulate, Freire differentiates between groups of people on the basis of power and wealth, the dominant elite over the subjugated lower classes. By encouraging the conscious realization of their subjugation, he supports the breaking of the shackles of the oppressed so that they can experience another way of viewing reality, one that is not limited by their sociopolitical subservience. As the oppressed become transformed, they consequently alter the reality around them. Liberatory education, where teacher and student become equals engaging in the learning process, can serve as a key to their transformations, although it entails radical changes from the present, teacher-dominant pedagogies.

From other perspectives, Giroux, Aronowitz, and Apple center on teachers within the school system and the influence of the state. Giroux and Aronowitz depict the loss of teacher autonomy and call for the emergence of teachers as reflective intellectuals, active within education reform. By becoming autonomous thinkers, teachers can hence search out their own meanings in a quest for critical inquiry and humility and, resultingly, begin to modify their perception of themselves and of the world. Apple, likewise, sees the state as reflecting the popular will of the nation, while institutional forces shape individuals' perceptions of reality and construct knowledge.

People are molded by forces, many of which are beyond their control, just as institutions, like the educational system, produce and reproduce knowledge. Internalizing this knowledge and manner of thinking, students must overall examine critically how schools contribute to the hegemony in place, as well as to the teachers and curriculum which tend to reflect these ideologies.

Purpel, on the other hand, draws attention to the moral and spiritual dimensions of education and to its dichotomies, where people value education and yet fear it. He upholds that students should question who benefits from pedagogical practices and movements. Besides conveying cultural mores, morals, and values, education too transmits the complexities and even contradictions within different value systems. It functions to reflect the will of the state, in addition to the will of the people, and in the end helps to preserve and modify society.

Thus, we are faced with a plethora of critical suggestions for educational reforms. With the purpose of bettering the learning process, they furnish insight into some of schooling's present pitfalls and promise that through critical reflection and actions, we can change education. Yet, by modifying education we simultaneously change individuals, for each is connected to the other. An African-American, as a result, can benefit from the work of critical education theorists, as it contains knowledge which

can serve as building blocks for a different pedagogy, one grounded in efforts to think critically, to inquire perceptively, and to develop fully.

CHAPTER IV
CONSTITUTIVE ELEMENTS OF AN AFRICAN-AMERICAN PEDAGOGY
OF LIBERATION

Introduction

This chapter points to the need for an African-American critical pedagogy that is predominantly undergirded by a Freirean agenda. As we have seen, the kind of pedagogy that currently dominates schools in America is clearly an Eurocentric one that omits and distorts the curriculum so as to protect and preserve the values of White Europeans and their descendants-White Americans along with their male superiority and the superiority of others with money or resources (Holtz, Marcus, Dougherty, Michaels, & Peduzzi, 1989). Education predicated on this type of supremacy emphasizes clearly that African-American people need a pedagogy or curriculum which enlightens and takes into consideration all people and their need for sociopolitical freedom, cultural integrity, and equality in beauty and intellectual capacity. In other words:

Some way must be found for freedom and affluence to live together. The seeds of the destruction of our civilization have already been sown. They are racism, sexism, unequal education, and poverty. Surely we have the intelligence to prevent this. (Sizemore, 1989, p.90)

Implicit in the above quotation is the reality that any African-American pedagogical discourse must entail a critical examination of the impact of racial and class issues on the U.S. curriculum. In this endeavor it is absolutely imperative to isolate cause-belief statements which usually, if not always, develop from the moral and spiritual values people hold dear. For example, the American-European values of White supremacy, male superiority, and the superiority of persons with money influence what teachers teach and what teachers think about students in the United States. All of these concepts are cause-belief statements. Within this anti-dialogical situation, serious education and teacher-student relationships cannot deal responsibly with the ambiguities and sophistication of rigorous learning, much less offering African-Americans an emancipatory kind of education.

Hence, this chapter attempts to create a new African-American critical pedagogy which is to define a type of "desocializing" model for African-American teacher education. I strongly affirm, like Freire, the necessity of practical action as the indispensable component of both African-American teacher and student education for critical consciousness. Furthermore, I posit that the education of an oppressed people as African-Americans must, from the first, be sociopolitical and ethically non-neutral--or it will never succeed (Freire, 1978). This newly proposed

African-American pedagogy will seek to empower African-American teachers, students, and educators to understand how the U. S. liberal-capitalist process of schooling works. Put another way, it will help to enhance the role of people working to replace and transform the authoritarian system of education through dialogic teaching relationships. One must note, however, that this process of bringing about change in U. S. curriculum is not new and involves criticisms of the existing authoritarian pedagogy:

White "outside educators" and Black "inside educators" who have grown up, lived and studied in a privileged situation must first "die as a class" and be reborn in consciousness--i.e., learning always even while they teach and working always "with" (not "on") the ethnic minority cultures or students that invite the reasons why such schooling programs exist, thus making it possible for such educators to earn their living. (Freire, 1978, p. 3)

I will begin first with the Freirean theme of dialogic teaching, which can be affected by one's race, and then discuss the factor of critical literacy. Thirdly, I will deal with the concept of situated pedagogy, followed by the program of militancy in liberatory education. It is my hope that a consideration of such issues will lead to a serious discussion, even debate, about them in an effort to seek reform for the current educational system.

Section 1

Dialogic Teaching and Race

The dialogue-related method discussed by Freire (1970, 1978, 1983, 1987) is one way to reduce African-American student withdrawal as a pervasive problem in American classrooms. Hence, one needs to investigate and understand how race can actually constitute a learning disability in the traditional U.S. classrooms. From the standpoint of an African-American educator, Fordham (1988) upholds that at the heart of traditional education is the struggle that many African-American adolescents face in having to choose between the White individualistic ethos of school and college--which generally reflects the ethos of the dominant U. S. culture--and the collective ethos of African-American communities. She argues that African-American children who mostly grow up in predominantly African-American neighborhoods then are raised in the collective view of success, an ethos that is primarily concerned with many African-Americans succeeding as a group as opposed to African-Americans achieving alone. Since an individualistic rather than so-called collective ethic is sanctioned in the national school and college contexts, many African-American children enter American schools and colleges having to unlearn or at least to modify their own culturally sanctioned interactional and behavioral styles and adopt or succumb to those styles rewarded in the authoritarian and

individualistic school and college arenas. The modification applies particularly to the poor, working, and underclass children of America if they wish to achieve academic success (Fordham, 1988).

Thus another hidden reality exists in which most middle and upper class children, regardless of their ethnicity, do not frequently and necessarily have to modify their own home-oriented bourgeois behavior in order to succeed academically. The main ideological orientations of these children tend to reflect the experiences of the bourgeois classes. In other words, education in America was and is still synonymous with its culture (Purpel, 1989).

Yet, dialogical teaching centers around a type of relationship between a teacher and a student, whereby each can take the position of the other. The student sometimes becomes the teacher and the teacher, the student. Part of the interchangeableness rests in knowledge of one's self and pride in one's race, for by maintaining a racial identity one enhances a possible sense of belonging.

African-American students, though, are confronted with a sense of "racelessness," part of the complex relationship among African-American students' racial identity, their performance in schools or colleges, and the role that the larger social structure plays:

In an effort to minimize the effects of race on their aspirations, some Black Americans have begun to take on attitudes, behaviors, and characteristics that may not

generally be attributed to Black Americans. Out of their desire to secure jobs and positions that are above the employment ceiling typically placed on Blacks, they have adopted personae that indicate a lack of identification with, or a strong relationship to, the Black community in response to an implicit institutional mandate: Become "un-Black." (Fordham, 1988, p. 58)

Racelessness, thus, becomes a pragmatic strategy on the part of African-Americans for vertical mobility and arises a conflict about academic performance and ambivalence. African-American students, especially higher achievers, tend to conform to a type of racelessness, whereby they dress, talk, and seemingly accept the mores and behaviors of their White counterparts (Fordham, 1988). By not talking, walking, dressing, or behaving like their White ideological peers, African-American students may adopt a type of anti-achievement strategy where they tend, as an unfortunate consequence, to fare poorly in academic performance (Gibson, 1991). Still, ones who adopt a raceless persona do so with some risk of losing their cultural feelings or sensibilities of belonging and of being a group member. A dichotomy exists where African-Americans can succeed academically but chance losing their African-American heritage, or they can maintain a close identification with Africanism and chance failing academically. One African-American teenager states the conflict in this way:

A Black teenager in Prince George's County (a suburban community outside Washington, D. C.) says many Black kids "think if you succeed, you're betraying your

color." Adds a friend: "The higher you get, the fewer Blacks there are. You can succeed, but you feel like an outcast." (Fordham, 1988, p. 61)

Despite the growing acceptance of ethnicity and strong ethnic identification in the larger American society, American schools and college officials appear to disapprove of a strong ethnic identity among African-American students, their disfavor working against dialogical teaching and the acceptance of another individual as he or she is. A case in point, that of Sylvester Monroe, illustrates the intricate connectedness between the culture and the schools. Monroe, a high-achieving prep school student, describes the attempts made by his school to separate and isolate him from his peers and indigenous community and to transform him from a group-oriented African-American person to a raceless "American:"

One of the greatest frustrations of my three years at St. George's (a predominantly White private school in New England) was that people were always trying to separate me from other Black people in a manner strangely reminiscent of a time when slave owners divided Blacks into "good Negroes" and "bad Negroes." Somehow attending St. George's made me a good Negro in their eyes, while those left in Robert Taylor (the housing project where he and his parents lived in Chicago) were bad Negroes or, at the very least, inferior ones. . . . Another St. George's teacher was surprised at my reaction when he implied that I should be grateful for the opportunity to attend St. George's, far away from a place like the Robert Taylors. How could it be, I snapped back, when my family, everyone that I cared most about were still there? But you're different, he continued. That's why you got out. . . . I'm different, I insisted. I'm just lucky enough to have been in the right place at the right time. (Monroe, cited in Fordham, 1988, p.61)

This testimony is apparently an illustration of the painful consequences of being a successful African-American student within the context of an educational system that has generally failed African-Americans as a people or group in a so-called melting-pot society. Hence, these contradictions frequently produce conflict and ambivalence in African-American students toward developing strong racial and ethnic identities and toward performing well in school or college. Racelessness among African-American students, therefore, represents a strategy for social mobility both in and out of school contexts. Because these young African-American students tend to internalize the official, societal, or hidden curriculum taught and learned in school and college, they make the values, beliefs, and ideas a part of their behavior at home, with their families, and in their communities. Racelessness, by becoming a definite part of the students' lives, creates enormous stress and anxiety which often lead to student withdrawal in traditional classrooms. Yet, at the same time, the duality of African-American student existence puts social distance between them and their less successful peers.

Thus, being African-American in itself becomes a factor for the creation or failure of a dialogic relationship. In practice a dialogic class begins with problem-posing discussion and sends powerful signals to African-American students that their participation in class is important,

expected, and needed. A discussion results which entails either the problem-posing or banking methods of education (Freire, 1983). African-American students in problem-posing education develop their power to perceive critically the way they exist in American society--the poverty and oppression with which and in which they find themselves. Though they endure higher rates of miseducation, alienation, and inequality, they come to see America as a reality in process and in transformation and not as a static reality. Although dialectical relations of African-American students with America exist independently of how these relations are perceived (or whether they are perceived at all), the form of action African-American students adopt is to a large extent a function of how they perceive themselves in America. Thus, the African-American teacher-student and the African-American student-teacher reflect simultaneously on themselves and America without dichotomizing their reflection from action and, thereby, establish an authentic form of thought and action. It is precisely at this point where the aforementioned educational concepts of race and practices usually come into conflict.

Although Freire (1987) proposes that much of schooling is a banking of knowledge that, for obvious reasons, attempts to conceal or distort certain curriculum facts, problem-posing education tries to expound critically on social reality beyond interpreted or received wisdom.

Additionally, banking education resists dialogue (Freire, 1987), whereas problem-posing education regards dialogue as indispensable to the act of cognition which unveils reality. Banking education treats African-American students as objects of assistance; problem-posing education makes them critical thinkers. Banking education inhibits creativity and domesticates--although it does not completely destroy--the intentionality of human consciousness by isolating African-American humanity from American society, thereby denying African-American students their ontological and historical vocation of becoming more fully human. Problem-posing education bases itself on African-American creativity and stimulates true reflection and action upon reality, responding to the vocation of African-American students as beings who are authentic only when engaged in inquiry and creative transformation. Consequently, banking theory and practice, as immobilizing and fixating forces, fail to acknowledge African-American students as historical beings; problem-posing theory and practice take African-American students' history as their starting point (Freire, 1987).

Thus, it is extremely important to understand that dialogic teaching essentially calls for an African-American teacher's act of intervention and art of restraint so that the verbal agility of a trained intellectual, for instance, does not silence the verbal styles of unscholastic African-American students. Obviously, the routine spirit of the

classroom has the teacher, regardless of race, speaking very loudly in standard English about official subjects marginally interesting to African-American students. In other words, the remote curriculum and the authoritarian relations of the classroom require the teacher to speak loudly and frequently, to command some attention in the face of African-American student resistance. If teachers, on the other hand, are used to speaking a great deal very loudly, African-American students especially are used to saying very little (Shor & Freire, 1987). Besides entering the classroom with much to say, the teacher enunciates his or her words clearly to make it easier to take notes. He or she speaks from the front of the room, barricaded behind a desk or podium, and verbally emphasizes the key words in his or her sentences which he or she wants the African-American students to memorize in preparation for a short-answer examination coming up. By contrast, if one is an African-American student, he or she enters the classroom and sits as far from the teacher as he or she possibly can, preferably at the back row. The African-American student speaks as little as possible in as low a voice as possible, slurring his or her words while at the same time inserting "Black English" idioms as "you know" at the end of his or her sentences. No one is really listening to him or her, or taking notes from what he or she has to say, or worrying about a test based on his or her words. The whole discourse

seems to be aimed at getting the correct short answers (Shor & Freire, 1987).

My interpretation of liberating African-American teachers though is embodied in the critical concept of African-American teacher as an artist in dialogic teaching (Freire, 1987). They begin their class by sometimes reversing the speaking moments, modulating their voices to conversational rhythms rather than didactic lecturing tones. They listen intently to every student's utterance and ask other students to listen when one of their peers speaks. Asking more people to speak first, they delay their replies after a student ends his or her first sentence, whether they agree or not. If they do not have a reply to what an African-American student says, or do not understand a series of African-American student comments, and cannot invent on the spot questions to reveal the issue, they go home and think about the instance and start the next class from what a student said before in order to keep signaling to the students the importance of student contributions (Shor & Freire, 1987). These small interventions conflict or contradict with the verbal domination which has driven African-American students in particular into resisting dialogue passively. Therefore, if teachers are playing the roles of speaker and listener, then they must also invite African-American students to create themselves as listeners and speakers in a new classroom script. I believe that the

art here is verbal re-invention, a type of vocal recreation through dialogue, and that education from a liberatory and dialogical perspective is an act of knowing and listening which confronts others with a number of questions of what, whom, how, and why to know. These are fundamental questions in dynamic relationship to students in the act of learning about education's possibilities, legitimacy, objectives, agents, methods, and content.

Furthermore, knowledge can serve as a freedom-oriented objective in dialogic teaching. As a process, knowledge results from the rigorously conscious actions of human beings on the perceived reality which, in turn, conditions them. Yet, because American schools are undergirded by the hegemonic ideology of White supremacy and ethnic minority subordination, African-Americans and other minorities consciously or unconsciously contribute to the hegemonic process, and the knowledge utilized in schools represents the hegemony in place. As a result, all social reality is not predicated on deterministic objectivism and all human consciousness must be perceived as "strangely composite" (Gramsci, 1971, p. 156). Teachers have thus bought into the operating hegemonic ideology, which affects what they teach and how they teach. One cannot excuse any African-American teacher from responsibility; he or she is clearly in charge of the knowledge presented and held accountable if there is no dialogic teaching transpiring in his or her classroom.

In conclusion, practice in dialogic education at the classroom level centers around inquiries in a group dynamic situation. People are interacting with others in the social relations of discourse, even in the sociolinguistic habits of African-American students speaking their community languages. Aware of the presence of the operating hegemony, as well as the possible conflicts facing African-Americans, a teacher must be particularly sensitive to his or her profession of teaching others to think and to solve problems critically. Overall, dialogic teaching is not an easy feat.

Section 2

Critical Literacy

As a program for African-American student transformation, critical literacy is a creative act in which undisciplined knowing gives way to a form of knowledge that emerges from rigorous reflection, thought-provoking inquiries, and passionate commitment on the part of both African-American teachers and students. It is an act of liberatory education which cannot be predicated on unethical neutrality, ambivalence, and ambiguity in deciding which side of the pedagogical battle one is on--traditional or transformative. Yet, it is not a movement of formal learning with just reading and writing; neither is it a kind of treatment to be applied to those students who need it in order that they may be cured of their infirmities (Freire,

1978). Instead, it is in itself a complete persona of reflection, behavior, and perspective.

African-Americans, as a result, cannot consider cultural literacy without some sense of the civil rights movement of the 1960s as a significant moment in their history. During that epoch African-American students throughout America demanded that U. S. institutionalized discrimination on the basis of race, color, or ethnic origin in both the schooling process and societal activities be immediately abolished. The sociopolitical demands came with hard won gains in legal statutes, as Title VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, and other pertinent regulations issued thereunder.

Additionally, African-Americans must evaluate their mode of instruction, liberatory or traditionally banking education (Freire, 1987). Banking education, as mentioned previously, is used in many classrooms where students are presented with knowledge to be stored for later recall. Knowledge is seen as a gift bestowed by those teachers who consider themselves knowledgeable to those African-American students whom they perceive to know little. Projecting an absolute ignorance onto others, a characteristic of the ideology of oppressive schooling in democratic America, negates education and knowledge as a process of inquiry (Freire, 1970). The trained teacher in this society still

presents himself or herself to his or her students as their necessary opposite; by considering their ignorance to be absolute, he or she justifies his or her own existence. The African-American students, alienated like the slave in the Hegelian dialectic, accept their ignorance as justifying the African-American teacher's existence, but unlike the slave, they never discover that they educate the teacher as well. A more typical example of such a scenario in the context of African-American community schools is the New Jersey School, predominantly Black, where Joe Clark as principal terrorizes students, teacher, administrators, and parents in the name of trying to return that school to its academically excellent status in the community (Avildsen, 1989). Paradoxically, the main reason for an African-American liberating education lies in its drive toward reconciliation and not academic excellence predicated on total technical rationality. Thus, education for African-American emancipation must always begin with the solution of the African-American teacher-student contradiction so that both are simultaneously teachers and students. This solution is not, nor can it be, found in the banking concept or Joe Clark's concept of education. On the contrary, banking education maintains and even stimulates the contradiction through the following attitudes and practices, which mirror oppressive society and African-American communities as a

whole. Freire further describes such counter-productive and oppressive attitudes this way:

- the [Black] teacher teaches and the [Black] students are taught;
- the [Black] teacher knows everything and the [Black] students know nothing;
- the [Black] teacher thinks and the [Black] students are thought about;
- the [Black] teacher confuses the authority of knowledge with his or her own professional authority, which he or she sets in opposition to the freedom of the [Black] students;
- the [Black] teacher is the subject of the learning process, while the [Black] pupils are mere objects.

(Freire, 1987, pp. 58-59)

African-American critical literacy cannot be thought of in isolation but always in relation to dialogic teaching and other aspects of cultural action. To discuss critical literacy means also to discuss the social, economic, political, and cultural norms of a people and society (Freire, 1978). An illustration lies in the instance of Anilcar Cabral's analysis of the role of political culture in his country's struggle for freedom from Portuguese colonial domination. The struggle of Guinea-Bissau's citizens for freedom involved "a cultural fact and a factor of culture" (Cabral, cited in Freire, 1983, p. 72), for one cannot separate critical literacy from one's culture. To struggle for freedom therefore also means a fight for a critical awareness and desocialization, aspects of critical literacy. In other words, when one can read and write

critically, the skills will influence his or her thoughts, actions, and world.

As a result, critical literacy education entails a provision of activism, as well as a critical literacy curriculum across the curriculum requiring all courses or programs to develop reading, writing, thinking, speaking, or listening habits. Critical literacy additionally provokes conceptual inquiry into African-American self-image, self-determination, society, and the discipline under study, as the history, aesthetic mores, and cultural norms of African antiquity. In this sense, critical literacy education for African-American students is a working "with" these students and not "on" them. It necessitates that active lower-class learners--and not only the privileged--be reinforced to participate in the organization of the program of study. As such, the lower-class group can challenge and eventually penetrate the imposed elitist curriculum in place (Willis, 1977). Critical literacy education thus invites African-American students, educators, and teachers to problematize and critique all subjects of study, that is, to understand existing knowledge as a sociohistorical product deeply invested with the moral values, beliefs, and cause-belief statements of those who develop such knowledge.

A critically literate African-American consequently cannot stay at the level of dominant, universal myths of the public culture--the supremacy of the White race and the

stereotype of African-American inferiority. Rather such an individual must go beneath the superficial to understand the origin, structure, and consequences of whatever body of knowledge, technical or scientific rationality, or object under study. A model of critical literacy education somehow establishes teaching as forms of research and experimentation, testing hypotheses, examining items, and questioning what one claims to know. Additionally, teaching and learning as research suggest that African-American teachers and educators constantly work to help African-American students learn to make political-pedagogical decisions based on the politics of education and the element of educability in politics. While the African-American students research their language's ability to convey thoughts, social status, and the myth of their society's melting-pot nature, they can begin to learn that real life consists of a critical understanding of the life actually lived by the African-Americans (Nyerere, cited in Freire, 1978). Overall, they can learn that transformation is the key to critical literacy; only in such a manner can they begin to create a new life.

Section 3

Situated Pedagogy

Situated pedagogy is based on an education program which embodies the issues most problematic to the

perceptions of the students. For African-American students the problems often mean ones of self-image, self-determination, and equality in the context of the American society, as well as the impact of these themes on the authoritarian curriculum learned in schools and colleges. Thus, situated pedagogy presents subjective themes or issues in their larger sociocultural context to challenge the givens of our lives and the surrounding system dominating daily life (Horne, 1986).

A given influencing African-Americans' self-image and self-determination is the ways that their race is presented in the media. If one goes to a classic American movie, as Gone With the Wind representing an idea of the deep South, one is still likely to be presented with the image of the African-American male as field slave, horse trainer, or carriage driver and the African-American female as field slave, food gatherer, nanny, maid, or cook. Ironically, such examples can still be seen on television advertisements as the one about colonial Williamsburg, which is continuously purported to be a place in which traditions never die. This may well be the case for such a tinsel town or city, but the reality remains—when young African-American students see such a distinction demonstrated to them on television, videos, and movies, the portrayal will most likely have devastating psychological and sociocultural consequences on the self-image and self-determination of

these students. They may begin to accept and internalize the mythical notions embedded in the symbols, although the critically predisposed African-American may perceive such roles as reinforcing the hegemonic efforts to keep African-Americans and other minorities in their social place.

Hence, the idea of situated pedagogy can invest African-American teachers with the competencies to participate in a process leading to educational emancipation of African-American students. Situated pedagogy can moreover be seen as a route to African-American student classroom participation, for it asks African-American teachers to situate learning particularly in the African-American students' cultural heritage, experiences, and integrity. It incorporates the goal of integration of their experiences with conceptual, abstract methods and academic subjects. It also means that teachers must learn to distinguish between the lecture-socratic methods, where knowledge is fixed at the beginning, and the liberating dialogic, where knowledge brought to the course or classroom is always challenged and re-learned (Freire, 1987). Therefore, for a situated pedagogy to succeed African-American teachers must aim for the latter alternative and ground the curriculum in the African-American students' lives (Gibson, 1991). The teachers must realize too the interrelatedness of situated pedagogy with dialogic

teaching, as situated pedagogy can function as a mode of a dialogic encounter.

Materials do exist, however, which can heighten African-American critical awareness if they are used appropriately. Spike Lee (1989, 1991) has created movies as Doing the Right Thing and Jungle Fever which have embedded in them certain moral and spiritual meanings and purport to make sense of African-American student lives and experiences. Although such movies tend to be watched by many African-Americans, situated pedagogy does not mean that one must use familiar materials only because they are popular or in vogue. Rather, they must connect with the students' experiences and critical thought and show that African-American intellectual work has a tangible purpose in African-American existence, connecting the people to the habits of their communities.

Thus, situated pedagogy is defined by the object of study, as well as located in the authentic levels of development and intellectual maturity of African-American students. The African-American teacher must research his or her students' cognitive and political-pedagogical levels at the start of a course to see what kinds of thinking, literacy, and sociopolitical ideas are operating. He or she must somehow positively eavesdrop on his or her students' conversations, play, or even their formal activities, such as their dispositions in the classroom, cafeteria, and

library (Shor & Freire, 1987). By engaging in these activities, teachers can be sensitive to the daily lives of their students and attempt to reinforce critical participation of African-American students in the classroom. Situated pedagogy, therefore, can bring critical study to bear on concrete circumstances of African-American students' living, the immediate conditions of their existence that rigorous learning may inevitably help to recreate.

Section 4

Militancy in Liberatory Education

African-American critical pedagogy is not merely the transfer of technical rationality or packaged knowledge from a talking African-American teacher or educator to a body of passive African-American students. Education, particularly that of transformative or critical consciousness, is different from narrow training in either African-American or White business and technically efficient careers. Rather, an educational plan or a rigorous pedagogy presupposes correct thinking based on true militancy, a willingness to proceed with a strong commitment, and not anti-dialogical disunity between theory and practice. True militancy teaches that pedagogical problems are, first of all, sociopolitical and ideological, no matter how unpalatable such an interpretation is to some educators (Freire, 1987). Therefore, the critical African-American male and female

students will be instructed in new social practices that engage in praxis, the application of theory to reality.

Militancy thus demands the dialectical unity between practice and theory, action and reflection. This unity, furthermore, stimulates creativity and imagination as the best protection against the dangers of educational bureaucratization (Freire, 1978) and involves hope. Because hope is true and well-founded only when it grows out of praxis, hope can transform the world and critical reflection regarding the meaning of African-American action (Freire, 1987). An African-American educator must therefore grow from the spacious hope and imagination of being much more than a talking textbook, more than a mere functionary who implements tests and mandated syllabi, just as teaching for serious social change in America should offer an illumination of sociopolitical reality which helps African-American teachers and students examine the social limits constraining all of them. Put another way, one must come to grips with the rigorous understanding that the "reading" or "re-reading" of reality as it is being transformed is the primary consideration, taking precedence over the mere learning of the written language. Teaching, consequently, is a social and political process which includes learning how to "read the world" (Freire, 1978, p. 160).

Yet, in order for African-American teachers to read the world, they must study and understand how classroom learning

activities model key community issues, or knowing the students and their environments. Such knowledge allows teachers to connect their instruction to the neighborhoods of their students, while such ignorance limits teachers' effectiveness in classrooms and can form unnecessary barriers among the students, the teachers, and the content. When teachers distance what they are teaching from whom they are teaching, they, as a result, alienate their students from classroom content. They engage in a banking mode of instruction. Overall, community knowledge is essential for militancy, for dialogic teaching, and for a transformation within African-American pedagogy.

However, it is not always necessary that the reading of political reality be a parallel process with learning to read sociolinguistic symbols, this is, with literacy as it is generally understood. In certain circumstances a community can possibly engage for a period of time in a series of practical reflections on their own reality, discussing generative themes. Through such critical reflection on their own situation, they can be impelled to begin the process of learning to deal with written words. Either way, spacious learning does not and cannot define African-American students as empty vessels to be filled with dead-weight information or mere facts and figures (Freire, 1987). Spacious learning or critical education opposes the mechanistic, reductionistic, dominant pedagogy and the

unequal racial tracking that takes some African-American students to success and most others to cheap and unsuccessful labor, under-employment, unemployment, caste-like statuses, or African-American anti-intellectualism.

Consequently, learning for freedom and serious social change is more than mere job training or socialization into subordinated lives; it seeks the most critical inquiry of society, history, and culture. Because it is learning which is able to resolve the contradiction between African-American teachers and students, it takes place in a dialogic situation. The dialogical character of education or learning, as the practice of freedom, does not begin when the African-American teachers-students meet with the African-American students-teachers in a pedagogical situation. Rather, preoccupation with the content of dialogue is really preoccupation with the program content of learning or education (Freire, 1970). For the authoritarian teacher, the question of content simply concerns the program about which he or she will discourse to his or her African-American students; he or she answers his or her own questions by organizing his or her own program. Nonetheless, for the dialogical problem-posing African-American teacher-student, the program content of learning is "neither a gift nor an imposition but rather the organized, systematized, and developed representation to individuals of

the things about which they want to know more" (Freire, 1987, p. 82).

Conclusion

I hold that the aforementioned analysis of learning for freedom is like that of a dominated consciousness which has not yet perceived its limitations but later undergoes a transformation to realize its domination. The conscious realization is vital for a concurrent recognition of power by that individual. Yet, for many African-American students who lack a critical understanding of their oppressive reality, apprehending fragments of their existence cannot lead to a true understanding of the whole. These students must reverse their starting points; they need to have a total social vision of the larger context in order subsequently to separate and isolate its constitutive elements and to achieve a clear holistic perception (Freire, 1987). In any case, such learning is a serious utopian challenge to Black educational inequality, oppression, and authoritarian methods.

Overall, it is my hope that this chapter will be of some aid to African-American teachers and students who want to experiment with liberatory, transformative education. Our society, so rich in domestic budget cuts, social neglect, sophisticated racism, official indifference, and accusations of Black teacher-student mediocrity, seemingly is so poor in egalitarianism, democratic ideas, and

resources directed to African-American programs and classrooms. Hopefully, this age will give way to progressive politics and forward-looking rewards, or it may decline even further in oppression for African-Americans. No one can predict the future or solve all the day-to-day challenges of classroom life, although African-Americans, like other minorities, must decide upon and work for the future they want.

In spite of many obstacles in our society, the constitutive elements of an African-American critical pedagogy are centered around liberating African-American education, cultural action for freedom, and mobilization to address the residually apartheid problems of American society. Dialogic teaching, critical literacy, situated pedagogy, and militancy in liberatory education are all starting points and glimpses of what is possible even under trying and pessimistic circumstances for African-American students. These themes are not final words or prescriptions, though they can be helpful suggestions for the attainment of critical consciousness for African-Americans. Many committed African-American hands and voices in classrooms, neighborhoods, and African-American-populated city schools throughout America, as a result, must participate if we are to witness a modicum of success for a people's educational system.

CHAPTER V

TOWARD A NEW MODE OF EXPERIENCE

Introduction

. . . (T)he view that the schools can build a new society is akin to the idea that the world will be redeemed by children or that the children will somehow save us adults. I believe that both those ideas are incorrect. We cannot give our children the responsibility for redeeming the world we either messed up or at least witnessed being destroyed. . . . I don't believe a new social order can be built through the schools. I do believe that schools will be an essential part of a new order that is built through the cooperative effort of all of us: teachers, miners, factory-workers, professionals--all the people who believe in the social and moral imperative of struggling toward a new order. Thus I find that the crucial question should not be, "Do the schools have the power to change society?" so much as, "What small power can we use in working with others to change society?" And if we do begin to change society what will be the role of us as teachers in building a lasting new order? (Kohl, cited in Giroux, 1983, p. 234)

The above quotation is pertinent to my dissertation topic and important because it raises significant questions about the nature of American schooling and the role that African-American educators must play in the building of a more just, equitable, and democratic society. The quotation also implies that within these schools and colleges we have contradictions and struggles which primarily serve the logic of domination-subordination yet also contain the possibilities for emancipatory education. These roles, though, can only be understood within the broader

historical, social, and politico-economic conditions characteristic of the entire U.S. society.

Furthermore, because schools and colleges cannot by themselves change our society, teachers thus have a dual role to play in the struggle for a new educational vision. First, they must work within the realms of the schools and colleges, and secondly, outside of the school walls into the community, to help illuminate both the value and the possibilities of critical learning, teaching, and education. Within these dialectics of domination-subordination and resistance-conformity, a gap continues to exist regarding the value of a critical pedagogy, whose aim is the transformation of U.S. society, and the everyday life for African-Americans, who in many cases are struggling to survive.

The answers, however, to the questions in the introductory quotation are not easily found in theoretical legacies of either dominant or radical discourses on schooling. Although radical, traditional Marxist theorists have made important contributions to unveiling the relations between schools and the dominant society, in the long run they have failed to escape from a crushing pessimism. That is, radical theorists have established the groundwork for a pedagogy which often disables rather than enables emancipatory hopes and strategies for African-American students. Thus, it is particularly essential for the

development of radical theories of schooling to move from questions of social and cultural reproduction to issues of sociocultural production, from the question of how U.S. society gets reproduced in the interests of capital and its institutions to the question of how excluded African-Americans and other minorities have and can develop institutions, moral and spiritual values, and ethical beliefs. It is therefore crucial that a critical discourse be established around the distinction between radical forms of schooling and radical modes of education, both of which are essential to the development of "civic courage and public sphere" (Giroux, 1983, p. 235). The starting point for such a discourse, I believe, centers around the notions of African-American critical pedagogy predicated on Freirean themes and around a new mode of African-American experience beyond political and socio-economic oppression. Such a new experience lies within alternative public spheres.

Section 1

The Public Sphere

The public sphere equates with the critical discussion and interpretation of political policies and of the state by individuals. It is not a new concept (Habermas, 1974) but represents both an ideal and a referent for critique and social transformation. As an ideal, it posits the need for the ideological and cultural conditions necessary for active citizenship. It signifies too the need for an enlightened

citizenry able to rationalize all forms of power through the medium of public discussion under conditions free from domination-subordination. As a referent for critique, it calls into question the gap between the promise and the reality of the existing liberal public spheres. The concept of public sphere thus reveals in one sense the degree to which culture has become a commodity to be consumed and reproduced as part of the logic of reification and distortion rather than in the interest of enlightenment and self-determination (Giroux, 1983). Rooted in market interests and benefiting the process of corporate capital accumulation, American culture no longer serves as the object of discussion for individual and social critique. Instead:

. . . it has become a commodity and is consumed accordingly as a leisure-time activity--for example, Black student athletes entertaining America, year round without considering their graduation rates and quality of education received. Its goal is to reproduce labor power. (Hohendahl, cited in Giroux, 1983, p. 237)

Such an interpretation of American culture consequently exemplifies the public sphere at work, where one investigates the potential for change.

As a referent for social transformation, the public sphere provides new opportunities for reformulating the dialectical relationship between the sociocultural realms and the power manifested in the state and the control of the means of production. It constitutes the sociocultural realm

of U.S. society as an important panorama in the ideological battle for the appropriation of the political state, the economy, and the transformation of everyday life (Giroux, 1983).

Thus, a means for African-Americans to begin to realize a critical pedagogy equates, in part, with active participation in the public sphere. As an ideal it can provide hope for coming change, and as a referent for social change, it can provide an understanding of the state and its manners of production. All in all, it can lead to a radical pedagogy if African-American educators assume the struggle for transformation.

Section 2

A Radical Pedagogy

If a radical pedagogy is to become conscious of its own limitations and strengths in the midst of the existing American society, it must be viewed as having an important but limited role in the struggle for oppressed African-American groups to reclaim the ideological and material conditions for organizing their own experiences (Giroux, 1983). Consequently, schools and colleges will have to be seen as only one significant site providing an opening for revealing oppressive ideologies and reconstructing more emancipatory relations. For African-American educators this suggests developing a critical understanding of socioeconomic and political interests outside of the

classroom walls and within the community (Freire, 1987). Struggle within schools and colleges must be understood and linked to alliances as the N.A.A.C.P., African-American enterprises and churches, and the United Negro College Fund, as well as to the African-American intelligentsia which can effect policy decisions relating to the control and content of schooling (Fordham, 1988). In effect, radical African-American teachers will have to establish articulated and mutually reinforcing connections with those excluded African-Americans and other minority students who inhabit the ghetto neighborhoods, rural towns, and urban centers in which schools and colleges are located. On the other hand, such an alliance among African-Americans points to the need to get working-class parents and minority women groups actively involved in the shaping of school and college policies and experiences--just as we saw in the movie Lean on Me (Avildsen, 1989). Rather than being the object of school and college policy, these groups must become the subject of such policy making. Moreover, although a view runs counter to the political conservative logic of dominant teacher professionalism and expertise, it provides new opportunities and possibilities for democratizing the schools or colleges and broadening the opportunities for African-American community support of African-American teacher struggles. Yet, radical African-American teachers must be deeply involved in struggles outside of the

traditional hegemonic structure to develop alternative public spheres and counter-educational institutions to provide the conditions and issues around which African-Americans could organize and reflect their needs, self-images, self-determination, and experiences. This radical strategy hinges on:

Being actively educative is not just a question of "carrying a policy to the public" or destroying myths about education. It involves learning too. It involves really listening to popular experiences of formal education. It involves research, centering around particular struggle and local issues. It involves making links with other local agencies--researchers, community activists, Black groups, women's groups--not to take them over, to learn from their experiences and practices. It involves creating a real branch life at the level of ward and constituency, something actively to look forward to, energizing rather than deadening, developing socialist understandings and commitment. It involves extending this activity beyond a narrow local membership, organizing events and activities on a more open basis, not requiring immediate political commitment from those attending. (Johnson, 1981, p. 8)

As part of this perspective, radical pedagogues will have to abandon the traditional policies of overlooking or shortchanging the oppressed. They must take seriously the everyday concerns of African-American life, with the point of linking the personal and the sociopolitical to understand how power is reproduced, mediated, and resisted at the level of daily African-American experience. As a result, they must establish the conditions for alternative public spheres (Johnson, 1981).

For radical, neo-Marxists pedagogues, some distinction must be made between schooling and education. This distinction in effect speaks not only to different regions or spheres of struggle but also points to different methods of inquiry and social practices. Schooling, for instance, occurs within classroom walls and involves institutions as public and private schools, colleges, and universities. It focuses on teacher-students relations supposedly engaged in learning in a formal setting, a type of education. By contrast, education moreover has a direct link to the creation of alternative public spheres for African-American students, and it represents both an ideal and a strategy in the service of African-Americans struggling for equitable social and economic democracy in America. As the ideal, it refers to critical forms of learning and action based on passionate commitment to the elimination of authoritarian forms of class, racial, and gender oppression of African-Americans and other minorities (Giroux, 1983). Its focus is politico-socioeconomic in the broadest sense, for education deals with needs and issues that arise from the minority groups involved (Freire, 1987). While simultaneously drawing upon critical theoretical constructs that allow the African-American participants to situate issues as racelessness and academic success within a wider historical, social, and politico-economic context, education, as used in this critical context, takes place inside and outside of

established institutions and spheres (Purpel, 1989). Moreover, it represents a collectively produced set of experiences organized around issues and concerns that allow for a critical understanding of everyday oppression while at the same time providing the knowledge and social relations which become the groundwork for struggling against such oppression. Hence, this concept of education is analogous to both Purpel's (1989) and Freire's (1970, 1978, 1983, 1987) understandings of education as related to culture and politics respectively. In effect, education represents the central category in the development of alternative public spheres. Restructuring the social experiences based on new forms of communicative interaction, education thus "combats the influence of the school and college, the work place, and mass culture in destroying critical sensibilities" (Aronowitz, 1973, p.83).

For African-American teachers, education points to the need to work with African-American children, adolescents, and adults around issues directly related to their lives. It means acting not simply as African-American teachers but as critically informed citizens struggling to establish a social and economic democracy. As radical, critical educators, we can therefore help destroy the myths that education and schooling are the same phenomena. We can debunk the notion that expertise and academic credentials are the primary qualifications of the African-American

intellectual. Equally important, we can provide, discuss, and learn from historical and contemporary examples in which working-class and underclass minorities have come together to create alternative public spheres. Needless to say, such educational work will also promote critical analyses of schooling itself and its relations to other institutions.

The concept of African-American radical educator also points to a view of theory and practice in a mode of praxis. Both theory and practice must be redefined and restructured if the goal of creating alternative public spheres or new ways of African-American experience is to be taken seriously (Giroux, 1983). All too often a gap exists between the two, so that the concept is separated from the execution (Habermas, 1974). African-American teachers and intellectuals are seen as theorists, and African-American students who are alleged to benefit from such theorizing are the objects and agents of practice, thus creating an I-it relationship (Buber, 1970) and an anti-dialogic situation. This view is demeaning to the concept of critical, radical pedagogy and struggle, and it shows a lack of understanding about how humans as African-American students encounter the social reality (Ogbu, 1978). In effect, it misconstrues the fact that people can be at different levels of development and of social positions and can theorize with varying degrees of abstractness.

Hence, praxis is not at the point where African-American radicals provide proposals and then African-American students, parents, and other oppressed individuals receive and carry out the plans. Instead, it is at the point where various groups assimilate and discuss how they may help to enlighten each other and how from a discussion of their theoretical stances, practice can emerge (Buber, 1965). Central to such a process are the fundamental notions of dialogue and critique in order to inform exchanges and procedures. Yet, to be more in line with African-American experience, dialogue and critique should be organized around African-American historical and sociological modes of analyses (Schultz & Lavenda, 1987). That is, the African-American individual and the U.S. society must be understood as socially constructed and historically constituted through social practices that may be contradictory in nature but are anchored in a totality of cultural relations. After all, African-Americans, like other ethnicities, form the human race and help establish the existing cultures.

All in all, African-American radical, critical educators must strive to make democracy possible in schools and colleges. This is particularly important when it comes to working with African-American parents and other minority groups outside of the school, so as to give these individuals a voice in the control and sharing of curriculum

and school/college policy (Freire, 1987). Moreover, the democratization of schooling calls for African-American teachers to build alliances with other professionals, especially critical academicians. Such alliances promote new forms of social relations and modes of pedagogy, both of which are essential for liberatory education.

Section 3

Where Are We Going from Here?

African-American critical pedagogy inside, as well as outside, of schools and colleges involves linking critique to social transformation and, as such, means taking risks. To be committed to serious social transformation always places the African-American individual or group in the position of losing employment, security, and, in some cases, friends. We must fight, though, for the amelioration of human wrongs and the end of oppression. To do otherwise places us in the dilemma of forgetting our obligations to our fellow human beings, and as a consequence we as a society become less human.

With widespread recognition of the need for educational change, the time seems right to start the process for a more just and equitable system. In any case, we must be passionately committed to the struggle to create a better world, particularly for African-Americans and other minority groups. Without such faith and social vision, we cannot celebrate what could be, to look beyond the immediate to the

future and link the African-American struggle to a new set of human possibilities. This may be a call for a type of utopia, but still we must work to achieve alternative modes of African-American experience and public spheres which affirm one's faith in the possibilities of critical thinking, in engaging in an enrichment of life, and in forging in place an African-American critical pedagogy. This is the path for us as African-American intellectuals, parents, students, and workers. To go from the point we are at means facing a seemingly monumental task of piecing together a society we would want our children and our children's children to enjoy.

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