
The Unaddressed 'I' of Ideology Critique

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ABSTRACT Power and ideology, from different standpoints, claim and reject each other, with different – and sometimes new – constructions of power built upon the rubble of past ideologies. This article takes as its starting point Michael F.D. Young's *Bringing Knowledge Back In* to address the links between education and power as they are played out and played with in sociologies of knowledge and education. Power acts on subjects but so too does it call the subject into being. Hiding this quixotic other of ideology critique – that is, 'I' the critic – enables the concealment of power. It is not enough, then, to recognize the production and reproduction of power operating externally: the power within us, the ability to imagine resistance against ourselves and others, must be acknowledged.

Introduction

[I]t is power, not knowledge, that counts in education. (Young, 2008, p. 94)

In his *Bringing Knowledge Back In*, Michael F.D. Young asks: 'what went wrong with the sociology of knowledge in educational studies and the social constructivist approach with which it was associated?' (2008, p. 199). Among the answers he provides is the field's reduction of curriculum to the interests of those in power (2008, pp. 26, 29, 164). '[K]nowledge', Young reminds, 'cannot be reduced to the activities and interests of those who produce or transmit it' (p. 94). Social constructivism is to blame, he concludes (p. 164); it 'can do little more than expose the way that curriculum policies always mask power relations' (p. 22). While four decades ago the association of knowledge with power represented an advance over earlier apolitical conceptions (see p. 200), Young acknowledges that:

In arguing that all knowledge is social (an inescapable truth, if you do not give authority to divine revelation), it [the 'new' or 'critical' sociology of education [1]] led to the position that curricula were no more than a reflection of the interests of those in power. (2008, p. 94)

In depicting the school as primarily political, ideology critique installed power as a primary concept, until it splintered into identity politics (Young, 2008, p. 164).[2]

In part because the concept is expansive, 'power' has proved elastic, adaptable to changing circumstances. In its elasticity, does 'power' risk becoming an empty signifier, a 'decoy-concept' (Pasolini, [1972] 2005, p. 125) masking more historically specific configurations of causes, concomitants and effects?[3] Even if some core of the concept remains, if the 'forms' that power assumes have shifted, would not the relationship (e.g. reproduction) between power and education (as one of its forms) change as well? If 'power' is not only economic, political and cultural (if it is also, for instance, semiotic and psychic), is its medium of hegemony – ideology – likewise recast? If ideology represents a pervasive 'misrecognition' (Wexler, 2007, p. 47) of reality, how do those who conduct ideological critique escape misrecognition of themselves and others?

In a collection celebrating the legacy of Michael W. Apple, Greg Dimitriadis, Lois Weis & Cameron McCarthy testify to power's mutability: 'Although Apple urges scholars to explore the

links between education and power, such forms of power as linked to broader economic, ideological, and social structures have changed markedly over time, space, and place' (Dimitriadis et al, 2006, p. 7). Dimitriadis et al cite globalization, electronic media and economics as examples of changing forms. In the same collection Allan Luke focuses entirely on globalization, specifying its implications for teachers' work, among them 'intensification' and a 'retrograde recommodification of knowledge' (2006, p. 123). Luke calls for a conception of teaching as 'cosmopolitan work', invoking a metaphor of 'craft' to underscore academic freedom, 'one's right to select and work with [varied] materials ... rather than uniform products' (pp. 124, 126). It becomes, he suggests, our professional obligation to 'learn beyond the nation' (p. 138).[4]

Globalization has produced 'changes in the U.S. economy' that, Jean Anyon asserts, 'require that we rethink the hypothesis that schooling reproduces social class position' (2006, p. 37). One change Anyon notes is the 'bifurcation of incomes and class structure' (p. 37), consequence of the massive relocation of manufacturing jobs to sites of less expensive labor. Given that the forms of power have changed, Anyon suggests, the reproductive relation between ideology and curriculum has also changed.[5] As early as 1980 Anyon had argued that 'schools ... had the potential for nonreproductive effects' (2006, p. 44). The shift from reproduction to resistance during the 1980s was apparent only (see Pinar et al, 1995, pp. 252ff). Like a sponge, the totalizing concept of 'reproduction' absorbs resistance to it. Acknowledging the expansiveness of 'reproduction', Carlson asks, 'how can one effectively distinguish ideological from nonideological texts?' (2006, p. 96). If reproduction is pervasive, and ideology totalizing, how does one distinguish between ideology and ideological critique?

As 'a book of its time' (Arnot, 2006, p. 22), Apple's *Ideology and Curriculum* – the canonical text of ideology critique in US curriculum studies – was 'somewhat functionalist' (Whitty, 2006, p. viii). Moreover, it lacked empirical evidence (see the critique reported in Pinar et al, 1995, p. 266), including evidence supporting 'resistance' and 'contestation' (Whitty, 2006, p. ix; see Gandin, 2006, p. 196).[6] Arnot charges that 'Apple was all too aware of the contradictions of a rather deterministic neo-Marxist tradition and the liberatory politics he espoused – a theme that shaped his work for the next 30 years' (2006, p. 24). This 30-year repetition of the same conveys a different sense of 'reproduction' than Apple perhaps intended. If the material forms of power have shifted, how could Apple's 'contradictions' remain? Is there a radical 'disconnect' between reproduction theory and the reality it purports to represent?

Displaced Imitations

Too much supposed critical scholarship assumes ... that critical concepts have a radical effectivity regardless of the context in which they are generated and circulated. (Whitty, 1985, p. 168)

In the United States the 'new' sociology of education was a British import, as is widely acknowledged (see Dimitriadis et al, 2006, pp. 1, 2, 4; Arnot, 2006, pp. 19, 22; Anyon, 2006, p. 38; Luke, 2006, p. 129). There are risks in importation, of course: the local and specific conditions associated with the original fade. While 1968 was a decisive historical moment across the West, its traumatic repercussions (the 'Great Depression' [quoted in Pinar, 1994, p. 193]) were experienced differently given the distinctiveness of national history and culture. Philip Wexler argued that the 'new' sociology of education represented a re-enactment of that lost political struggle: it 'recapitulates that defeat, restating it abstractly and obsessively' (1987, pp. 4, 27), devolving into 'a displaced imitation of it [1968], an attempt culturally to recapitulate the practical historical course of the movement, *in theory*' (Wexler, 1987, p. 26). Such a 'displaced imitation' occurred in an imaginary realm characterized by ritualistic – indeed 'simplistic' (Anyon, 2006, p. 40) – reiterations of reproduction and resistance.

Michael F.D. Young likens these North American reproductions of British scholarship to 'muckraking journalism rather than social science' (2008, p. 199). Young references Apple's work as 'the most sophisticated and influential example of this genre' (2008, p. 226, n. 3). Admirers revalorize the simplicity of Apple's prose as 'accessibility' (Dimitriadis et al, 2006, p. 7). Perhaps to an extent not the case in the United Kingdom, there have been, in the United States, charges of 'elitism' directed at Leftist education professors from within their own camp (see, for instance,

Stanley, 2007, p. 385), leading to a perceived 'necessity of making it simple' (Huerta-Charles, 2007, p. 258), the success of which is evidently measured by sales figures (see Apple, 2009, p. 9).

Given his 1987 critique that the educational Left was re-enacting the trauma of 1968 in an imaginary sphere, Wexler's recent recommendation for 'resistance' seems strangely 'reproductive'. While Wexler continues to dismiss 'the Durkheimian structuralist-functionalist and Marxist labor theories of reproduction and resistance' (2007, p. 46), he has settled on a new scenario of social change. '[T]he sacred is pushed back onto the social stage', Wexler (2007, p. 44) asserts, 'we have the possibility of a new dialectic; where religion is not only a soporific, ideological opiate, but also an Archimedes point, and a powerful source of social mobilization and critical thought.'

Certainly the Taliban and conservative Christianity have served as sources of 'social mobilization', but of 'critical thought'? Wexler is thinking of neither of those, but of 'Jewish mysticism, in Hasidism and Kabbalah'; these, he suggests, provide a 'resource' for 'critique' and for the 'envisioning of alternative forms of social life' (2007, p. 45). While I share his preference for immanence over transcendence (see Wexler, 2007, p. 46; Pinar, 2009, pp. 29, 146), I do look forward to Wexler's specification of how 'archaic practices of shamanism and magical prophesy' (2007, p. 53) – as he acknowledges, the old 'opium of the people' – provide 'resources' for 'critical thought'.

No longer regarded as radical [7] – 'Apple is himself part of the educational establishment' (Whitty, 2006, p. viii) – ideology critique is (Young recommends) to be replaced not with religion but with its contrary, what he terms a 'socialist realist approach'. Young 'seeks to identify the social conditions that might be necessary if objective knowledge is to be acquired' (2008, p. 164). After positing knowledge as central (2008, p. 95), he quickly abandons it, substituting for it 'the conditions for the acquisition of knowledge as the central educational research issue' (2008, p. 94, emphasis added). He associates this view (e.g. 'social realism' [2008, p. 95]) with 'the question of knowledge'; that is, 'what is it that people need to have the opportunity to learn or know'. Who, one wonders, determines the people's 'need'?

It is not the state, at least not the British state. Young endorses 'less direct state intervention and regulation and more self-regulation' (2008, p. 102). Both can quickly devolve into assessments (of 'opportunities' and 'needs') made by bureaucrats working in ministries of education or, worse, by politicians exploiting education as a political issue. In our time, too rarely (it seems to me) does the classic curriculum question ('what knowledge is of most worth?') remain located within the ongoing professional judgments of individual teachers.[8] Indeed, in the United Kingdom teachers' academic freedom seems to have disappeared along with 'phenomenological sociology' (Whitty, 1985, p. 16; see also p. 162), marked by the appearance of the National Curriculum and the political weakening of teachers' unions (Arnot, 2006, p. 18). (In the USA, teacher unions themselves betrayed the profession: see Pinar, 2004, p. 232.)

While I doubt Young has brought academic knowledge back (instead he emphasizes the 'conditions' for its 'acquisition'), it is to his considerable credit to notice that it has gone missing, and not only in the United Kingdom. In the United States the curricular question of 'what knowledge is of most worth?' has been degraded to 'whose knowledge is of most worth?' (Buras & Apple, 2006, pp. 3, 18, emphasis added), collapsing curriculum into identity politics, as *who* creates knowledge is more important than the disciplinary and educational significance of the knowledge itself. This is, in Young's terms, a version of the genetic fallacy (see 2008, p. 26). Such reductionism is not, however, the exclusive property of the neo-Marxist Left.

The Problem with Postmodernism

[T]he risk, the chance of the political, is undertaken without guarantees, without opposition, without resolution, truly temporal, unprogrammable, necessary, and inevitable: an impossible praxis. (Lather, 2007, p. 15)

Not only those hierarchies of determination associated with the 'new' sociology of education are responsible for the reduction of knowledge to the forces of (or persons associated with) its production. So is postmodern theory. Such theory is often 'French theory', like the British 'new' sociology of education exported for resale in America. François Cusset (2008, p. 279) observes that Foucault functioned in the United States as theoretical support for condemnations of universalism,

rationalism, and humanism. Foucault also fueled allegations that practices of exclusion (of the insane, of criminals, of homosexuals) produced the norm (reason, justice, heterosexuality), reducing reality to a set of impugned binaries. 'This interpretation of Foucault', he continues:

provided his American readers with a veritable *conspiracy theory*, in the name of which they scoured society to uncover its aggressors and victims. American cultural studies or minority studies texts inspired by Foucault consistently focus on the notion of 'unmasking' or 'delegitimizing' some form of power that is 'stifling' or 'marginalizing' one oppressed minority group or another – an approach that stands in direct opposition to Foucault's genealogical method. (Cusset, 2008, p. 280)

Conspiracy theories require perpetrators, of course. For those embracing identity politics (see Alcoff et al, 2006), power becomes personified in restated stereotypes (e.g. 'whitestream thinkers' [Grande, 2004, p. 33]).

This splintering of the social into separate (if collective) identities results, for Young, in 'relativism' (2008, p. 25). If all points of view are relatively right (or incommensurate, located in self-contained ethnic or gendered or classed subject positions), if all there is is ideology (Carlson, 2006, p. 96), the task becomes not ideology critique but jostling for power within hegemonic power, recasting education as 'countersocialization' (Stanley, 2007, p. 371). Split-off from *realpolitik*, 'resistance' becomes the quixotic cry of self-appointed representatives of victimized groups and of those jostling for leadership of a (never materializing) unified opposition.

Among critical pedagogues [9] postmodernism is sometimes targeted as Delilah. In one dramatic critique, the academic Left is said to have deteriorated to the 'lowest level' of 'degeneracy' (Martin, 2007, p. 337). '[I]n crisis', critical pedagogy has been 'scrubbed clean' of any 'social consciousness [and is] no longer a material force for social change' (Martin, 2007, pp. 337-338). While the epigraph makes clear that, at least for Lather, a postmodern praxis is in principle 'impossible' [10], one wonders where and when critical pedagogy had ever been a '*material force*'. Now only a 'shopping basket' of 'skills susceptible to the private profit needs of big business', critical pedagogy is, Gregory Martin laments, 'like visiting a familiar town where all the street signs have been renamed' (2007, p. 339).

As that image conveys, for Martin it is postmodernism (evidently its emphasis upon signification) that is to blame for the current crisis of critical pedagogy (2007, p. 339). Martin is not alone in targeting postmodernism; Peter McLaren blames the 'flat-lined anti-politics of postmodernism' for rewriting 'class struggle ... in the aerosol terminology of the politics of difference' (2008, p. 47). Not everyone on the Left agrees that postmodernism (and its theoretical subsidiary, post-structuralism [11]) is to blame; Dennis Carlson suggests: 'To get beyond the current "stuck point" in progressive cultural politics, I believe poststructural perspectives can be particularly useful' (2006, p. 110). If education is the reproduction of power, the resounding defeat of 1968 would seem to be to blame, not efforts to challenge hegemonic forms of representation. Is postmodernism a convenient and distracting scapegoat?

In their formulations of reproduction and resistance, note that both 'critical' scholarship and postmodernism efface subjectivity and the embodied individual, each pronounced, respectively, as only complicit with capitalism (the so-called 'possessive' individual) or, simply, 'dead' (as in the death of the subject/author). Both 'critical' scholarship and postmodernism (as imported in US curriculum discourses) foreclose agency, resulting, as Lather poignantly puts it, in an 'impossible praxis'. Unable to appreciate that the 'individual' and 'structural determinations' (McLaren, 2007, p. 292) are reciprocally related, indeed mutually constitutive, 'critical scholarship' spins its own wheels, crying 'crisis' and conspiracy. Ranting does not activism make. Nor does it dispense with relativism.

The Unaddressed 'I'

What else can the loss of self-transcendence breed but a profound narcissism?
(Grande, 2004, p. 322)

To remedy relativism, Young asserts that 'the social character of knowledge is an indispensable basis for its objectivity' (2008, p. 30). Young's assertion of the social as the 'basis' of knowledge

seems strange; after all, given its self-constitutive dissensus (see Ziarek, 2001), how can 'the social' in principle ever provide 'objectivity', itself a long-buried casualty of epistemological critique (Rorty, 1979)? If the social is primary, and subjectivity is epiphenomenal (see Kincheloe, 2007, pp. 26, 31, 36; McLaren, 2007, p. 311) the individual is rendered inactive. Only as the subjective and the social are acknowledged as embedded in and constitutive of the other, can the 'I' – alone and in solidarity with others – undertake political action in the world.

Is the failure of resistance due to its dissociation from subjectivity? As Leigh Gilmore notes (in a different but pertinent context): 'the author as the person who writes (the I who writes I) is left precariously unaddressed' (1994, p. 85). Unaddressed, the 'I' becomes the 'other' of ideology critique. Unaddressed yes, but not gone: in 'critical scholarship' subjectivity gets smuggled back in as that detached omniscient observer that the primacy of 'the social' disallows. Geoff Whitty admitted: 'The temptation to explain developments in terms of all-embracing, but uni-dimensional, theories of education is, not, however, one from which I have been entirely immune myself' (1985, p. 137). As Gilmore notes (substitute 'critical scholarship' for 'male autobiographies'): 'The male autobiographies that many feminist critics have claimed as models of unity and coherence ... evidence the discursive and ideological tensions of the models of personhood they invoke' (1994, p. 11). Judith Butler summarizes these tensions:

Power not only *acts on* a subject but, in a transitive sense, *enacts* the subject into being. As a condition, power precedes the subject. Power loses its appearance of priority, however, when it is wielded by the subject, a situation that gives rise to the reverse perspective that power is the effect of the subject, and that power is what the subject effects. (1997, p. 13)

Simultaneously interpellated and self-constituting, the subject acts after – and in the midst of – being acted upon. Butler emphasizes this point: '[t]he subject is itself a site of this ambivalence in which the subject emerges both as the *effect* of a prior power and as the *condition of possibility* for a radically conditioned form of agency' (1997, pp. 14-15). The subject cannot act as if outside power, but through it: 'Thus resistance appears as the effect of power, as a part of power, its self-subversion' (Butler, 1997, p. 93).

Does resistance positioned as outside power devolve into a form of deferred obedience (see Santner, 2006, p. 70)? Does seduction suggest the 'subversion' implied by resistance within power? If so, what stultifies the educational Left is not only the reproduction of power 'outside' but also within us, the incapacity to imagine resistance against ourselves and with others. As Butler asserts: 'What makes us think that the unconscious is any less structured by the power relations that pervade cultural signifiers than is the language of the subject? If we find an attachment to subjection at the level of the unconscious, what kind of resistance is to be wrought from that?' (1997, p. 88). What kind, indeed?

Without subjective reconstruction of one's own ideological interpellation (subjugation in Butler's parlance), the split-off 'I' asserts itself as a unitary context-free cohesive self, reserving for itself the agency evidently eluding everyone else. '[T]eachers especially', McLaren tells us, 'become an easily breached conduit for the official narratives of the state' (2007, p. 299). Such a (gendered [12]) pronouncement is possible only from a subject position somehow safely located outside ideological interpellation. McLaren is hardly alone; at one point Henry Giroux warns teachers against becoming 'the instrument of a safely approved and officially sanctioned worldview' (2007, p. 3). How can McLaren and Giroux imagine teachers as 'conduits' and 'instruments' while reserving ideology-free insight for themselves? As Jansen appreciates: 'by dividing the world neatly into rival camps – the oppressor and the oppressed – a self-righteous stance is assumed that absolves the teacher/liberator or the critical theorist from critically engaging their own place in the state of oppression' (2009, p. 259).

Somehow 'floating above the emotional and political divides that separate those in the classroom' (Jansen, 2009, p. 269), the critics of ideology see all (see Kincheloe, 2007, pp. 21ff.)^[13] Somehow insulated from the power evidently flowing everywhere else (especially through those 'conduits' posing as teachers working in schools), 'the revolutionary subject of Marxism has both atrophied and multiplied' (Mowitt, 1988, p. xiii). Critical pedagogy may be 'wedged between an ideological rock and a hegemonic hard place with a relatively small audience' (Kincheloe, 2007, p. 40) but it is also clear that it suffers from delusions of grandeur. Split off from subjectivity, severed from historical actuality, in its frustration (or gloating over being 'right'), 'critical

scholarship' enacts a repetition compulsion.[14] After almost 40 years the 'insight' remains essentially the same: schools reproduce reality (see, for instance, Carlson, 2006, p. 108; Torres, 2006, p. 50; McLaren, 2007, p. 294; Wexler, 2007, p. 47). Reproduction theory reproduces itself.

The giants represented the scale but not the specificity of what Don Quixote saw. The question of representation becomes, E. San Juan, Jr notes, 'How can one recognize the Other not just as a distorted projection of all the negativity and lack in one's self?' (1995, p. 213). How can we claim to know what is there without examining the subjective 'apparatus' by which we apprehend the 'there'? By reducing reality to the social (or to gender, race, even religion), 'critical' scholars position themselves as the ideology-free individuals their theory excludes.[15] In concocting abstractions with vague referents (e.g. reproduction and resistance), 'criticalists' (Kincheloe, 2007, p. 22) instantiate a 'capitalism' completely independent of them, as if their own utterances and the academic system in which they circulate were not always already commodities circulating in systems of exchange. Despite the rhetoric of 'social justice', what is revealed in professional practice is the "'full Monty" opportunism of careerist academics' (Martin, 2007, p. 337). Without subjective knowledge of the 'historicity of experience' (Cusset, 2008, p. 156), agency becomes dispersed over the social surface where it is replaced – parodied – by what might more accurately be called 'image activism'. In such an 'impossible praxis', the conspicuous 'criticalist' (like conspicuous consumption [16]) becomes commodified as a 'metasubject' (Jay, 1993b, pp. 52, 136) then sold to students as reproductions of heroic individuals such as 'Ché' or 'Paulo' (McLaren, 1997, p. 105; 2007, p. 306).

While subjectivity does appear in lists of categories relevant to 'resistance' – in addition to Kincheloe's (2007, pp. 21ff.) see also Grande (2004, p. 320), Martin (2007, p. 344) and McLaren (2007, pp. 308, 310, 311) – it remains unelaborated theoretically, split off from 'the social' and from history. Unaddressed is Paul Smith's allegation that 'critical scholarship' is 'too inflexibly abstract in relation to the question of individual experience' (1998, p. 66) and that Giroux's work in particular is insufficiently attentive to ideology's 'reach' into the 'subject', e.g. the unconscious, and specifically 'the agent's individual history' (1988, p. 67).

It would seem that autobiography is key to ideology critique, as autobiography enables self-understanding of interpellation (see Whitty, 1985, p. 27), sedimentation, and those singular tasks constituting social and subjective reconstruction. Unaddressed, the interpellated 'I' re-enters 'critical scholarship' as an unproblematic, commonsensical self, an 'I' evidently unencumbered by the political forces reproduction and resistance theories depict as omnipresent and determinative.

Reincorporating subjectivity in ideology critique involves abandoning the idea of an area of fully conscious and knowledgeable activity discrete from the unconscious. Only armed with such a theoretical notion will social theory be able to account for the complexity of individual receptions of ideology and ideological formations, and thus be in a position to construct more than merely rhetorical notions of resistance. (Smith, 1988, p. 68)

When 'the social' predominates, agency fades, the victim of the epiphenomenal status 'the social' assigns to the individual. But the repressed returns. When subjectivity gets smuggled back in as an ideology-free individual, also reincorporated are bourgeois distinctions between mental and manual labor: Apple characterizes 'work' as 'getting our hands a little more dirty' (2006, p. 215), a peculiarly patrician phrase for the self-described activist (Apple, 2009, p. 1).

Joe L. Kincheloe [17] juxtaposes the social constructedness of the individual alongside the 'individual's responsibility' for one's 'actions' (2007, p. 27). If constructed by the social, how can one be held responsible for actions that are not, in principle, 'individual'; that cannot, therefore, be one's own? Without the agency of subjectivity, the critical pedagogue is paralyzed by reproduction, left to cry 'resistance' without the subjective means to enact it (see Whitty, 1985, p. 88). Mowitt observed that the political Right 'capitalized' on this 'paralysis' of the Left, 'recasting political discourse in its terms and appearing to address the need for revolutionary subjectivity by empowering people to unleash the economic forces that actually enslave them' (1988, p. xiii). Agency was recast as entrepreneurialism, the reward for which was not ethical satisfaction or political transformation, but wealth (Taubman, 2009).

The political power of subjectivity – including its centrality in decolonization (Pinar, 2008; De Lissovoy, 2007, p. 366) – remains lost on the Left in education. It was not lost on Barack Obama, as the US presidential candidate personified agency through the endless reiteration of his simple but effective affirmation: 'Yes We Can'. Omniscient observation may resist, but embodied subjectivity

acts, alone and in solidarity with others. The mistake of the Left has been the bifurcation of the two: '[c]ollective struggle, rather than the individual exercise of supposedly free choice in an unequal society', Whitty proclaimed, 'can produce human betterment' (1985, p. 180). As the Obama campaign testifies, the two are reciprocally related.

In its construction of a split-off sutured subjectivity, reproduction theory renders agency quixotic, 'sloganistic' (Whitty, 1985, p. 82) gestures of doomed defiance. What has been splintered socially cannot be easily put back together again. In calling for 'intense efforts in the coming years to bring more diversity into our ranks', Kincheloe offers two reasons for critical pedagogy's appeal (2007, p. 11). One is that critical pedagogy has much to teach; second is that it has much to learn from subjugated peoples. Neither reason acknowledges that the knowledge of 'others' might be important in its own right. Instead, the importance of diversity is its utility for critical pedagogy, a point Kincheloe underscores when he calls for a 'humble' critical pedagogy that 'listens' to the subaltern and makes 'use' of that knowledge (2007, p. 17). After all, he continues, 'indigenous knowledge is a rich social resource' (2007, p. 17). The distinctive labors and accomplishments of such disparate and heroic individuals as Du Bois, Wells, Woodson, and Horace Mann Bond become reduced to a 'compendium of critical theoretical data' (2007, p. 20). And critical pedagogues wonder why there isn't more 'diversity' in 'our ranks'.

Conclusion

[W]hat holds us back are resistances whose origin is to be sought in the archaic layers of our personal history. (Sartre, 1981, p. 110)

What is remarkable is not only the political ineffectiveness of critical scholarship (a criterion of judgment it itself insists upon), but its compulsive repetition of the same concepts (reproduction and resistance) with which it inaugurated itself (four decades ago) as 'new'. Like the commodity it decries, reproduction theory presents the always-the-same as 'new' (Santner, 2006, p. 65, n. 26). '[W]hat [Walter] Benjamin refers to as petrified unrest', Eric L. Santner points out, 'pertains to the dynamic of the *repetition compulsion*, the psychic aspect of the eternal recurrence of the same that for Benjamin defined the world of commodity production and consumption' (2006, p. 81). In the reiterations of reproduction and resistance we witness such 'petrified unrest', although resistance is now perhaps pointless, as (we are told) 'the classroom [has] lost its power as the site for critical intervention and advocacy research' (Arnot, 2006, p. 30). Be that as it may, there are those (see Torres, 2006, p. 52) who proudly proclaim that nothing has changed: 'Theories of social reproduction and resistance *continue* to inform the analyses of critical sociologies of education' (Torres, 2006, p. 52, emphasis added). How can we understand this endless reiteration of the same?

A dysfunctional response to trauma (including the loss of power in 1968), the *repetition compulsion* substitutes fantasy for reality, as in the 'fort-da' phenomenon. In 'fort-da' 'the child gains mastery over loss: the wooden reel or favourite toy stands for the mother whose absence and then presence the child enacts and controls via the toy' (Clark, 2005; verb tense change is mine). Pertinent here is the solace (Taubman emphasizes pleasure: see note 14) achieved by relocating what is lost (the mother for the child, power for us adults on the Left) into a substitute object ('power' and the story of its loss: 'ideology') where it can be controlled (observed and resisted). In this substitute imaginary realm agency is illusory; it devolves into rhetorical reiteration, to rant. Inadvertently self-referential, Apple's critique of critical pedagogy makes this point precisely: 'The often mostly rhetorical material of critical pedagogy simply is unable to cope with what has happened' (2009, p. 8). Reproducing the same projection, McLaren declares: 'We need more than powerful exhortations' (2007, p. 311). What we need is reality.

Dissociated from reality, absent a self-critical subjectivity, there is in 'critical' scholarship no new insight, no accumulated knowledge or intellectual advancement (Pinar, 2007). There is, simply, reproduction. The political struggle that was lost in history – 1968 – was relocated to an imaginary sphere where its lost materiality and historicity became reclaimed obsessively in a symbiotic rhetoric of reproduction/resistance. Various elements were in turn reified into the 'base' *du jour*, sometimes 'economic', sometimes 'cultural', now, for Michael F.D. Young, 'the social'. Reifications of a historical reality no longer actual, do these 'toys' provide solace in an evidently never-ending game of substitutes?

The unaddressed 'I' of ideology critique is the individual person 'constructed at different moments as the place where agency and structure are fused' (Smith, 1988, p. 22). Key to ideological critique is self-reflexively grasping the reciprocal relations between one's own ideological interpellation, social positioning, and historical conjuncture. Such an autobiographical undertaking animates as it structures the specificity of subjective and social reconstruction. In so-called 'critical' scholarship subjectivity is de-fused from structure, split off and rendered epiphenomenal, construing it as incapable of agency. Agency and structure become separate satellites orbiting around an unaddressed 'I' [18] left pondering how to resist the reality it itself has concocted.

'In political thinking', Jessica Benjamin points out, 'the move to locate what is harmful in that which constructs the subject ... tends not so much to foster awareness of subjection as to heighten the tendency to split, projecting outward what properly belongs to self' (1998, p. 99). Projection refuses in fantasy what was intolerable in reality by banishing the obstacles to resistance from inside subjectivity to society seen as wholly outside, even 'objective'. The critic sees that something is 'there' – Don Quixote sees giants where windmills stand – but its representation in abstractions (reproduction and resistance) without concrete referents (see Whitty, 2006, p. ix) registers its narcissism.

'I do not encounter myself on the outside', Deleuze (1986, p. 98) asserts (too dramatically), 'I find the other in me' (no qualification needed here). While the latter phrase conveys the social character of subjectivity, I would remove the negative in the first in order to acknowledge the inextricably interwoven relations among ideology, sociality, and subjectivity. Because it is unable to acknowledge its complicity with the reality it discerns, ideology critique in education is split off from historical actuality. Spinning their own wheels, the critics of ideology cannot resist the compulsion to reiterate reproduction. In so doing, ideology critique established 'an indissoluble position of identity from which to attack exclusion and unmask power, as if it were free of it' (Benjamin, 1998, p. 103). Is the knowledge that needs to be brought back in self-knowledge?

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Notes

- [1] Whitty acknowledged that 'the newness of the new sociology of education is misleading' (1985, p. 8). In its assertion of power as primary and in its avowedly Leftist political commitments, however, the 'new sociology' did distinguish itself from positivist or phenomenological versions. Regarding the issue of culpability, Young confesses to his role in the present state of things, acknowledging that it was his own scholarship (with Geoff Whitty) that was responsible (see 2008, p. 164).
- [2] When 'identity' first preoccupied academic debates over three decades ago, it was a welcome challenge to a patriarchal Eurocentrism, demanding and receiving recognition and inclusion of what before had been excluded knowledge: race-class-gender. In recent years, the triumvirate has become catechismal; strong tendencies toward a strategically dysfunctional essentialism now vitiate the labor of recognition, inclusion and comprehensiveness (see Posnock, 1998, p. 25). Rather than emphasizing the heterogeneity of the social, multiculturalism has devolved into 'the balkanized domain of identity politics' (Cusset, 2008, p. 157).
- [3] In her magisterial *In Perpetual Motion* (2001), Bernadette Baker shows how dependent the humanities and social sciences have become on 'power'. In the research on lynching, 'power' was discarded as insufficiently specific a concept for understanding the peculiar phenomenon (see Pinar, 2006, p. 104).
- [4] While sharing Luke's endorsement of cosmopolitanism (Pinar, 2009), I suspect that 'learning beyond the nation' must occur by learning *through* the nation, as national history and culture provide the context through which especially educational expressions of globalization are materialized (Pinar, in press).
- [5] Changed or simply disappeared? Carlson (2006, p. 96) reports that 'ideology is missing entirely' from Apple's 2001 *Educating the 'Right' Way*.
- [6] Apple acknowledges the genesis of his work in reproduction but insists that his journey has been one toward agency: '[t]his was a path that took me from neo-Marxist analyses of social and cultural

- reproduction, to an (unromantic) emphasis on agency' (2006, p. 203). Arnot seems to disagree, asserting (see 2006, p. 24 above) that Apple glossed the contradiction between reproduction and agency from the outset.
- [7] Understanding curriculum as primarily political was discredited as 'radical' over 20 years ago, decried as liberal (Liston, Bowers, Strike), even reactionary (Wexler), voyeuristic (Ellsworth), and as lacking a moral foundation (Beyer & Woods). For a summary of these charges with specific references, see Pinar *et al.*, 1995, pp. 266ff. 'Critical' scholarship demonstrated a remarkable resistance to these devastating criticisms by disavowing dialogue and avoiding self-critique. Instead, it defensively devoted itself to reproduction (of itself). This lack of intellectual advancement, this reiteration of the same, its decidedly overdetermined quality, are what suggest to me that psychological mechanisms (specifically the 'fort-da' phenomenon) are at work, as I will suggest later.
- [8] Young allows that 'instrumentalism ... necessarily reduces the space and autonomy for the work of specialist professionals, both teachers and researchers' (2008, p. 93). He suggests that '[r]eal improvement will only be possible if the knowledge base of the new curriculum is expressed in syllabuses generated in association with the specialist knowledge producing communities in the universities and the professional bodies' (2008, p. 194). I would supplement this 'knowledge base' with the judgments of individual teachers, as not only academic freedom is served when the individuals' intellectual interests and ethical commitments animate their reconstruction of recommendations proffered by various professional 'communities' (see Pinar, 2009, pp. 14, 51).
- [9] The boundaries between 'critical pedagogy' (Kincheloe, 2004) and the 'new' sociology of education blur, at least for many younger US scholars: see, for instance, Hill (2009, p. 5). In the most recent collection on critical pedagogy (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2007), sociologists like Wexler are included (Wexler's PhD is in sociology, not education). Apple is conspicuously absent, perhaps because he has dismissed critical pedagogy as amounting to 'romantic possibilitarian rhetoric' insufficiently 'based on a tactical or strategic analysis of the current situation' (2009, p. 8), a criticism curiously self-referential as well.
- [10] Mixing phenomenological ('temporal'), pragmatist ('experience') and psychoanalytic ('working through') language with postmodern concepts ('aporias'), Lather recasts the 'impossible' as opportunity: 'That is precisely the task: to situate the experience of impossibility as an enabling site for working through aporias' (2007, p. 16; see also 2001, p. 189). On at least one occasion, such 'ontological stammering' (Lather, 2001, p. 189) morphed into 'straight talk' when Lather stripped naked in a hot tub to discuss her research with colleagues. No 'modernist metaphysics of presence' (or, God-forbid, 'subject-centered agency' [Lather, 2001, p. 189]) here: 'an apparent nakedness is but a mask that conceals a will to power' (Lather, 2007, p. 17).
- [11] Postmodernism is the broader (sometimes summary) term for a series of post-Marxist theoretical developments in the West, prominent among them post-structuralism (see Pinar *et al.*, 1995, pp. 450ff.)
- [12] Lather (2001, p. 184) critiques critical pedagogy as a 'boy thing', a reference less to anatomy (although it is that, evident in the essentializing title of the collection in which her chapter appears) than it is to the 'masculinist voice' of 'abstraction, universalization, and the rhetorical position of "the one who knows"'. This (de-individuated) one who knows is the unaddressed 'I'. These in fact non-anatomically associated qualities are everywhere evident in Lather's exuberant embrace of undecidability and contingency.
- [13] The hegemony of ocularcentrism in those epistemologies associated with modernity is well documented: Descartes saw truth in clear and distinct ideas requiring a 'steadfast mental gaze' (quoted in Warnke, 1993, p. 287), while Bacon posited observation as the prerequisite for objectivity, linking knowledge itself with sight. Such a privileging of the visual has hardly gone unremarked, as evident in the work of Bergson, Nietzsche, and Heidegger (Levin, 1993; Jay, 1993a). In Lather's version of postmodernity, space replaces sight as sensory metaphor as we 'move' toward what is 'unforeseeable' (2001, p. 192; see Pinar *et al.*, 1995, p. 463).
- [14] Taubman (2009) notes that the repetition compulsion mechanism provides a particular pleasure 'beyond the pleasure principle, and here *jouissance* is an appropriate word – the pleasure in suffering'. Taubman also notes that 'while the fort-da game [which I invoke momentarily] provides some control it also sustains the pain/pleasure of the mother's leaving. Critical pedagogues, it has always seemed to me, derive not only their identity but also pleasure from finding horrors 'out there' which they can then fantasize fighting. They reproduce what they resist, which is not, of course, to say that

there aren't horrors in the world, but the ones they tend to reproduce and resist are ghosts and abstractions and transcendental forces haunting schools, the curriculum, the nation. I actually think they engage in very little muckraking journalism as one critic mentioned. I would prefer that to what they do write. At least it would be specific'.

- [15] A glaring example of this contradiction is Apple's exhibitionistic invocation of an apparently ideology-free individual – himself! (see Apple, 2004, pp. 159ff.; also 2006, pp. 205ff.) In this contradiction Apple is not alone (see Whitty, 1985, p. 2; Anyon, 2006, p. 40).
- [16] Likewise, Bill Green (2009) associates conspicuous consumption with critical literacy.
- [17] Joe L. Kincheloe died suddenly on December 19, 2008. To my astonishment, he was memorialized as a fun-loving family man who played music and had a great sense of humor. While that characterization is no doubt accurate, the Joe I knew (Kincheloe & Pinar, 1991; Kincheloe et al, 1994) positioned his professional life as primary. As such, his work deserves to be forefronted. No doubt my criticism here will be seen by some as in bad taste rather than the tribute that even critical citation implies.
- [18] The 'unexamined I' is no recent lapse of those on the Left; recall that Elizabeth Ellsworth alleged that 'the desire by the mostly White, middle-class men who write the literature on critical pedagogy to elicit 'full expression' of student voices ... becomes voyeuristic when the voice of the pedagogue himself goes unexamined' (1989, p. 312).

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