OUT OF THE RUINS

The Emergence of
Radical Informal Learning Spaces

Edited by Robert H. Haworth & John M. Elmore

Section 3 **The Emergence of Radical Informal Learning Spaces "Using the Institutional Space without Being of the Institution"**

CHAPTER 6 What Do We Mean When We Say "Democracy"? Learning towards a Common Future through Popular Higher Education 106
Sarah Amsler

CHAPTER 7 The Space Project: Creating Cracks within, against, and beyond Academic-Capitalism 126
Andre Pusey

CHAPTER 8 Anarchists against (and within) the Edu-Factory: The Critical Criminology Working Group 139
Jeff Shantz

CHAPTER 9 Teaching Anarchism by Practicing Anarchy: Reflections on Facilitating the Student-Creation of a College Course 153
Dana Williams

Section 4 **Of the Streets and the Coming Educational Communities**

CHAPTER 10 Toward an Anti- and Alter-University: Thriving in the Mess of Studying, Organizing, and Relating with ExCo of the Twin Cities 174
Erin Dyke and Eli Meyerhoff

CHAPTER 11 What Is Horizontal Pedagogy? A Discussion on Dandelions 195
Authors: David I. Backer, Matthew Bissen, Jacques Laroche, Aleksandra Perisic, and Jason Wozniak.
Participants: Christopher Casuccio ("Winter"), Zane D.R. Mackin, Joe North, and Chelsea Szendi Schieder.

CHAPTER 12 Street Theory: Grassroots Activist Interventions in Regimes of Knowledge 223
Sandra Jeppesen and Joanna Adamiak

CHAPTER 13 Theory Meet Practice: Evolving Ideas and Actions in Anarchist Free Schools 245
Jeff Shantz

CONTRIBUTORS 261

INDEX 266

INTRODUCTION

Thoughts on Radical Informal Learning Spaces

Robert H. Haworth

For most of my life, I have gravitated toward reading, writing, listening, and acting outside of traditional lines. Although I have been educated to operate within the confines of our current structures and cultural norms, I look at how and what I have "learned" from quite a different perspective. In other words, my learning and my education are in stark contrast.

By the time I was ten, I knew I was in deep conflict between my learning, outside of school, and my education, within public schools. At that time, the Cold War was still a dominant debate within the United States. Although I was still in elementary school, I remember some of the drills and the films we saw that were supposed to scare us into submitting to particular U.S. policies and to demonize the Soviet Union and other places around the world that were not like us. On the other hand, I was beginning to explore and learn about contemporary political issues through a different lens, punk rock.

I had been introduced to punk early on. My older brother's bedroom always intrigued me. It was filled from floor to ceiling with the artwork (flyers, album inserts, etc.) of local and international bands that were attempting to construct a very different narrative of what was going on in the world. It was in my social studies classes where I was being educated to believe that Ronald Reagan was a heroic figure and Margaret Thatcher was the important sidekick. They were our leaders in protecting the population against communism and democratic socialism, all while opening up the world to "freedom" and "democracy" and the global marketplace.

On the flip side, punk provided me with a counter narrative to my formal education. For example, my brother had a foldout poster that was included in Crass's album *The Feeding of the 5000*. The poster was a collage that included

Reagan's face placed on a bodybuilder flexing his muscles, while Thatcher was shitting hotdogs and human skulls. As someone who was young and being introduced to the music, culture, and politics of punk, I didn't understand the nuances of what the artist, Gee Vaucher, was conveying. However, it produced a much larger shift in my learning—moving me to question how, and what, we were being taught in school and ultimately, who benefits, and who does not, from traditional and formal educational processes.

Another example of learning through punk was through reading zines. Zines were a way to disseminate information about different scenes, political movements and ideas, punk ethics, interviews with bands, and music reviews. As I mentioned in another essay (Haworth, 2010), some of these political interactions became intense and, at times, divisive, but they enabled us to see the complexities of punk and the diverse ways we interpreted our experiences. From a learning standpoint, punk has its problems and contradictions, but what I feel is important are the tensions that emerged within my own learning, particularly between how I was formally educated and how punk embraced a different way of knowing and interacting with the world. It is not that I believe everyone should go out and join a punk band, shout revolutionary slogans, or create a zine (although that would be cool), but it is important to point out that there are various learning spaces that resonate more with individuals and to question whether the statist educational institutions to which many are exposed have the capacity to create a more sustainable and critically conscious future.

Formal Education: Our Current Path

In a recent keynote address at the University of Colorado, Boulder, David Stovall (2011) noted, "There are really three paths young people are being forced to take in order to survive our current economic system—service sector employment, the military and prison. It is no doubt that this is what Giroux (2013) and others have referred to as the 'zero generation'—zero jobs, zero hope, zero possibilities, zero employment."

From an educational standpoint, the move to privatize, vocationalize, and credentialize (Brown, 2003; 2013) k–12 and higher education is not surprising. The massive commercial campaigns of for-profit universities bombard cable networks and local billboards to entice young adults to return to higher education. University of Phoenix is a perfect example, as they promise that a degree from them will lead to a choice of corporate jobs. There is quite a different story that is beginning to permeate the larger social narrative, particularly through the economic realities of students accumulating enormous amounts of debt, fraudulent for-profits extracting federal dollars from the public till, and the shrinkage of jobs within the corporate sector.

This is not a new phenomenon. The development of public education, particularly in the United States, has worked primarily in conjunction with the dominant social, political, economic, and cultural institutions to create a specific type of citizen/individual. Historically, Adam Smith believed that workers would need a particular education under the state in order to protect the economic system that exploited them. Spring (2006) argues: "Smith proposed educating workers to defend a state whose role is to protect an economic system that exploits those same workers. In other words, Smith's argument is that workers should be educated to defend their own exploitation." (p. 10)

Additionally, mainstream educators in the United States continue to champion Horace Mann's fight in the early nineteenth century for compulsory, tax-based, common schools for all citizens. What we don't discuss or even recognize is the "behind the scenes" concessions Mann and other preindustrial capitalists had made during the early part of the nineteenth century to make sure that public education created a particular type of citizenry and coincided with a particular economic order. Katz's (1971) research critiques Mann's intentions and the outcomes of the development of the common schools during that time:

> The crusade for educational reform led by Horace Mann . . . was not the simple, unambiguous good it had long been taken to be; the central aim of the movement was to establish more efficient mechanisms of social control, and its chief legacy was the principle that "education was something the better part of the community did to the others to make them orderly, moral, and tractable." (p. ix–x)

Beyond Mann's ideals and eloquent speeches and writings, which advocated for a tax-supported, compulsory education for white citizens, there were enormous compromises. In order for Mann to get wealthy businessmen and landowners to pay taxes for poor people to attend the common schools, they needed a guarantee that these schools would produce students with appropriate skills and mannerisms conducive to becoming loyal and obedient workers. Bowles and Gintis (1976) elaborate: "Mann's reforms had the intent of forestalling the development of class consciousness among the working people . . . preserving the legal and economic foundations of the society in which he had been raised" (p. 173).

Over the past century and half, Mann's work of developing an education system that would level the playing field for poor and working-class students has been embraced. Unfortunately, supporters of Mann's vision of public education in general, have not examined the ways in which these institutions have preserved an extremely oppressive order. In essence, over the past two centuries, the state and emerging capitalists have worked closely to advocate for public schools that are, as Foster (2011) describes, "less about

education than a kind of behavioral modification, preparing the vast majority of students for a life of routinization and standardization, in which most will end up employed in essentially unskilled, dead-end jobs" (p. 2).

During the early twentieth century, public education not only continued to play a role in teaching poor and working-class youth to become more obedient and efficient workers, but also left teachers with little autonomy over their work. For example, in 1912, Joseph S. Taylor, district superintendent of schools in New York City stated:

> (1) The state as employer must cooperate with the teacher as employee, for the latter does not always understand the science of education; (2) the state provides experts who supervise the teacher, and suggest the processes that are most efficacious and economical; (3) the task system obtains in the school as well as in the shop, each grade being a measured quantity of work to be accomplished in a given term; (4) every teacher who accomplishes the task receives a bonus, not in money, but in the form of a rating which may have money value; (5) those who are unable to do the work are eliminated. (quoted in Callahan, 1962; p. 103)

When I show this quote to pre-service educators in my classes, they usually smile and shake their heads in agreement because of its similarity to their own experiences of control and scientific management in schools and the classroom. They see that the standardized curriculum is not only assessing their students but also "measuring and rating" the quantity of work they have accomplished.

From an anarchist perspective, the harsh realities and outcomes of these institutions were not surprising. Anarchists believe that state run institutions are inherently corrupt and have historically upheld the values of bureaucratic and hierarchical institutions. Voltairine de Cleyre (1909) argued that there are also certain persons she describes as "statesmen," whose interest in education is purely for the "formation of good citizens to support the State, and directs education in such channels as he thinks will produce these" (p. 322). She concludes that the statesman "is not interested in the actual work of schools, in the children as persons, but in the producing of a certain type of character to serve certain subsequent ends" (p. 322).

A few years earlier, Emma Goldman (1906) wrote an article entitled "The Child and its enemies" that gives a scathing critique of educational practices. One of her main criticisms is that teachers and schools drive children to "become foreign to themselves and to each other." She highlights that "systems of education are being arranged into files, classified and numbered. . . . Instructors and teachers, with dead souls, operate with dead values. Quantity is forced to take the place of quality. The consequences thereof are inevitable" (p. 3).

In contemporary terms, Goldman's remarks on education are still a haunting reality. It's evident that education is still reduced to quantifiable outcomes and is governed by what Au (2011) argues is a new form of Taylorism. This new form of education controls the curriculum, teaching and ultimately, the learning that goes on in the classroom. Therefore, administrators and political authorities make decisions and manage what is happening at all levels of the educational process, thus forcing teachers to ultimately teach to the test and uphold a centralized and narrow subject matter and curriculum. Au argues, "Based upon research evidence from the modern day era of high-stakes testing in US public education, the fundamental logics guiding scientific management have resurfaced 100 years later, as teachers' classroom practices are increasingly standardized by high-stakes testing and scripted curriculum" (p. 25).

Let's not shy away from the important understanding that education has become a commodity. It is now a multi-billion-dollar industry that drives many corporations to shift their focus to the buying and selling of curriculum and assessable outcomes and thus forces public funding of public education over to the private sector. Even Diane Ravitch (2010), who once believed that school choice and standards could "co-exist," has become a sharp critic of the move to privatize education. Of course, state and corporate driven educational institutions have created extremely unhealthy environments for students and teachers. I say this not because of the quality of teachers, but more the institutions, curricula, and forced pedagogical practices that have been so destructive of any possibility of nurturing critical minds.

As I have highlighted above, I don't believe state driven education has ever been particularly open to developing free and creative imaginations. In fact, over the past three decades the social, political, economic, and cultural toxicity of public schools has increased. In the United States, we have seen a clear evolution from the publication of *A Nation at Risk* leading to the current Common Core State Standards Initiative across the country which has perpetuated hyper-standardization, testing, and accountability measures. This has led to teacher-, student-, and community-proofing educational practices and policies as well as cutting away any autonomy teachers may have had in the past, thus depriving students of opportunities to learn from critical and thoughtful individuals. Some have gone so far as to call this "a war on kids." Moreover, within this war on public institutions, the outcomes have been quite substantial, particularly regarding people imagining a world beyond our current mess. Graeber (2011) has described these systemic movements and relationships as a "war on the imagination." He states,

> In the terms I've been developing, what "the public," "the workforce," "consumers," "population" all have in common is that they are brought

> into being by institutionalized frames of action that are inherently bureaucratic, and therefore, profoundly alienating. Voting booths, television screens, office cubicles, hospitals, the ritual that surrounds them—one might say these are the very machinery of alienation. They are the instruments through which the human imagination is smashed and shattered. (p. 115)

Graeber is not alone in articulating how our structures, in part, are destructive and diminish imagining a world outside these powerful systems and everyday practices. Haiven (2014) also describes the warped realities and normalizing nature of living under these conditions,

> capitalism relies not only on the brutal repression of workers in factories and fields; it also relies on conscripting our imaginations. On a basic level, it relies on each of us imagining ourselves as essentially isolated, lonely, competitive economic agents. It relies on us imagining that the system is the natural expression of human nature, or that it is too powerful to be changed, or that no other systems could ever be desirable. (p. 7)

Graeber and Haiven make important arguments in that our institutions (I would add educational practices) uphold and reinforce a particular imagination: one that is restricted to thinking about particular political, economic, social, and cultural ideas and practices in society as stagnant and, yes, extremely lonely. In most cases, these institutions have no desire to support imagination outside of profiteering and consumerism. Our ability to imagine possibilities beyond the confines of market values, especially those thoughts and ideas based in possible futures outside our current practices is minimized or squashed.

Informal Learning: A Different Path?

Of course, it is a difficult task to create spaces where individuals can imagine different educational paths and processes. Does it need to take place within an institution or can it be informal? As I mentioned earlier, there are spaces that embrace more informal learning, but how are these spaces being discussed or reflected upon?

In much of the literature, informal learning is seen as a broad and multifaceted subject (Livingstone, 2006). It encompasses many areas within popular education, adult education, life-long learning, experiential learning, workplace learning, and others. However, it has been unfortunate to see that most of the research over the past few decades has focused its energies on workplace efficiency and reproducing dominant global capitalist structures (Birden, 2004; Brookfield & Holst, 2011). As Choudry points out, workplace learning has been linked to "domesticat[ing] learners, focus[ing] on strategies for self-improvement, and adjust[ing] minds to conform to a capitalist society" (Choudry, 2015, p. 82). Under these conditions, informal learning adheres to the changes in the workforce, to the individual becoming a "casualized and contractualized flex-worker" (Vandenberghe, 2008, p. 880). Because informal learning, in many cases, has become co-opted and embedded within the logic of a capitalistic economic system, it should be viewed with a critical lens. Using informal learning as a means to enhance worker productivity creates another support mechanism for the bosses, managers, and workplace overseers, not for the everyday lives and well-being of the learners (Overwien, 2000). From learning new technological innovations with colleagues or other flexi-workers, to "learning by doing" with other associates within corporate life, the dominant research on informal learning has been incorporated into restructuring labor and to build more efficient models of productivity. As Brookfield and Holst (2011) point out, the emphasis on adult learning is not on democracy and socialism (I would add anarchism)—it is "focused on 'skilling' or 'retooling' America's workforce to compete in the global market place" (p. 2). Ultimately, this operates to produce more hierarchical, authoritarian, and profitable structures all while making it seem that the bewildered worker is happier under a new specialized knowledge base and assessed through individualized performances and productivity (Haeger & Halliday, 2006, p. 18). It is not that informal learning has potential to support different communities, but there are larger political and ideological challenges that need further critique and dialogue.

Radical Informal Learning

Radical informal learning takes a significantly different approach to learning than what was stated above. For one, radical informal learning would be an ongoing process and geared toward freedom, autonomy, critical reflection, and liberation rather than supporting hierarchical, authoritarian, and economically corrupt institutions and relationships. I would argue that it coincides with Freire's (1970) notion of *radical love* or what bell hooks (2004) describes as having *radical openness*. This would mean that we begin to develop spaces that are critically reflective, dialogical, horizontal and mutual, as opposed to anti-dialogical, vertical and hyper-individualistic. Of course, this is not a simple process, particularly within the dominant and unsustainable educational practices and institutions we inhabit.

Additionally, in developing a basis for radical informal learning, it is important to question our particular desires. Similar to our lack of imagining a world outside these oppressive circumstances, our misplaced desires also need serious considerations. According to Smith (2007) desires are "constructed, assembled, and arranged in such a manner that your desire

is positively invested in the system that allows you to have this particular interest" (p. 74). Part of our struggle is questioning those processes and ideas that uphold particular systems of dominance. In other words, our internal motivations and constructs that drive us to gravitate, and in many cases, embrace particular ideologies and systems of control (micro and macro) must be recognized. There are many examples of people embracing oppressive systems happening in the U.S. ranging from working-class people voting against universal health care to supporting corporate control of public institutions. Our desires become embedded and "invested" in the choices that are already pre-packaged and digested internally.

From an educational standpoint, our desires to transform teaching and learning could take on quite a different approach. For many, transforming education more radically becomes an internal shock to an individual's beliefs and desires. I've encountered this working with pre-service teachers. Most of my students have been educated under the effects of No Child Left Behind (NCLB), inundating them with standardized curricula and high-stakes testing. Most have never experienced education outside of these norms. Although they desire another type of education, it is usually a reform or a slight tweaking of the system. Rarely do they steer outside of the confines of what has been discussed through binary mainstream media (conservative/liberal). It is when we move the conversation in class to talk about free schools and more democratic educational experiences, that most students become uncomfortable. Having young people be a part of the decision-making on what is learned, and equally important, *how* it is learned, becomes discomfiting. In many cases, my students ask, how do students learn to read if they are able to make their own choices on when and what they learn, how do they get into college if they are not tested, and maybe there is just *too* much democracy and *too* much freedom? In other words, it is completely foreign to my students because of their fixed beliefs of what teaching and learning should be. It contests their worldview and assumptions regarding the purpose of education in our society, challenges the educational system to which students are accustomed, and provokes questions about their particular desires. For many students, this discomfort brings about resistance and a defensiveness about their educational desires. Their comments repeat the conventional assumptions: students should only have limited choices, testing is necessary for successful learning, and democracy and freedom should be minimized. So, within radical informal learning spaces it is important to understand these educational desires, and how they permeate our lived realities and worldviews in the hope of transforming those desires and develop new subjectivities. At times, this can be painful. It is not an easy process because it takes into consideration the *radical openness* I mentioned earlier, which bell hooks (1989; 2004) describes as a struggling

process: "Radical openness is a margin—a profound edge. Locating oneself there is difficult yet necessary. It is not a 'safe' place. One is always at risk. One needs a community of resistance" (1989, p. 206). She not only highlights that radical openness places our learning on the "margins" and within struggle, but emphasizes that it should be done with others who are also working through these processes.

An important part of understanding these radical learning experiences is that they are not homogenous spaces, but situated in different locales. This gets back to my earlier discussion of the cultural aspects of punk. Many of us knew that the different "scenes" across the country were not all the same. Some were bigger and urban, while others were located in more suburban or even rural areas. This meant that negotiating these spaces was experientially different. Of course, there was cultural affinity but there were differences in experiences and understandings. Radical informal learning, within this context emphasizes situated knowledge of the material, cultural, and learning environments. From a pedagogical view Kitchens (2009) points out these important connections:

> A situated pedagogy attends to specific places and localities, but not merely as places for discursive analysis and academic study, but as the spaces for action, intervention, and perhaps transformation. As such, it means that education is meant to move beyond the schools and out into the world in an active, performative participation in the study and reconstruction of material spaces in and outside of their schools as well as the curricular landscapes of their education. (p. 259)

Utopianism and Education

Of course, when I discuss the potential of these radical informal learning spaces with others, a barrage of criticisms comes with it. Criticism mostly comes from the idea that they are utopian, isolated, and small experiences that can't build larger capacities or broader movements for social change. Another question I hear is, "Where is the blueprint?" The assumption is that we need a handbook for educational experiences in a post-capitalist society. I would argue that there is some validity to some of the criticisms, but they are not as realistic as one would think, considering some of the current social movements and learning spaces that have been created.

From an anarchist view, education has always been an important part of transforming society (Suissa, 2009). In fact, there has been a long history of such alternative educational practices that have not been isolated in contemporary experiences. Anywhere from the social gatherings on weekends and the development of the modernist schools during the early twentieth century to the skill sharing and free schools in contemporary movements, anarchists

have continued to believe in alternative forms of educational experiences. Suissa underlines the historical importance of education within anarchist theory and practice, stating:

> Behind these radical experimentations lay a faith in the anarchist vision—some would say utopia—of a society without injustice, without oppressive hierarchical social structures, where individual freedom and mutual aid would flourish . . . even within the authoritarian structures of the capitalist state, an alternative was possible; thus that the anarchist society, while utopian in the sense of transcending current social and political reality, was not unattainable. (p. 243)

Additionally, in Ferguson's (2011) book on Emma Goldman's political philosophy, she highlights the "sprawling" and vibrant anarchist communities emerging in New York City prior to and during the early years of the twentieth century. Ferguson recounts: "The anarchist social imaginary flourished in these micro worlds, where a few dozen, a few hundred, or a few thousand participants assembled in places they create to share or contest anarchist ideas, invent or participate in anarchist actions, and confirm or dispute anarchist identities" (p. 80).

These informal gatherings give insight into early twentieth-century radical informal learning spaces, where participants engaged in educational practices outside the confines of the state. Goldman and others understood the importance of these gathering places. From the anarchist-leaning beer halls and cafés to the Ferrer Center in New York City and other modernist schools across the country, anarchists recognized the transformative potential of these learning spaces. Ferguson points out that these spaces created a challenging atmosphere filled with ambiguity and, sometimes, ideological tensions.

Even today, we see these types of educational experiences emerging. The Occupy movement and some of the new creative free schools and mutual learning spaces have all continued along paths of radical informal learning.

So, as we move deeper into the ruin of our communities and the destruction of our planet, the questions that need further discussion are these: Is it possible to create educational alternatives within the exponential growth and expansion of capitalism into our everyday lives? Is it within our capacity to do what Holloway (2010) describes as "opening up cracks" to create non-hierarchical, voluntary, non-authoritarian, and mutual learning experiences for our communities in spite of a world that functions to alienate one another and reinforce corrupt hierarchical relationships? I believe Deleuze and Guattari (1987) make an important point that, as much as these ways of being are dominant, overwhelming, and in many cases reproduced, these systems are neither totalizing nor universal. There are holes in the capitalist

system where collective efforts are happening in different locales throughout the world. Not only are radical educational experiments emerging, but these efforts actively oppose and denounce the liberal authoritative state that has failed us. These movements challenge us to think about learning in unique ways, focusing on experiences and processes that are what Shor (1992) describes as "desocializing," thus providing us opportunities to move our sense of being beyond the driving forces of the marketplace. Moreover, it is evident from some of the current research on the dynamic learning processes within these social movements (see Hall et al., 2012) that new relationships are being forged, and that these experiments in horizontal and mutual learning environments have had important influences within different communities. Therefore, "transformative possibilities" emerge as people within these spaces attempt to meet the needs of a particular community (including anything from developing a deeper economic and political analysis to learning bicycle repair) while working to disrupt the flow and the intrusions of oppressive structures into everyday life. Moreover, education becomes more dynamic, active, and in many cases, informal.

So, how can radical informal learning spaces inform us and expand our understandings of current social movements and communities resisting neoliberal capitalism? Of equal importance, what knowledge is created/produced within those spaces? It is under these distorted and oppressive conditions that this volume was created. In no way is it all encompassing. Rather, what we envisioned with the contributors are ways to reconceptualize the purpose of education outside of the boundaries and limitations of authoritarian practices or institutional goals, particularly those that are guided by institutional and statist structures. This highlights some important questions. Is it feasible to construct learning spaces and larger movements that do not adopt the goals of the institution while simultaneously using the institution for other, more liberating purposes? Can we struggle within these spaces to transform the hierarchical and authoritarian institutions where we work, live, and learn or should we abandon these efforts and focus our energies elsewhere? From the recent actions of individuals and collectives around the world, in our universities and in the streets, the answer does not seem definitive. From my viewpoint, the struggle is much more complex than dismantling state and authoritarian structures.

There are other factors involved that are important when creating challenging learning environments with a culture of resistance in mind—one that "wages permanent struggle on our movements" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987). Consistently, the bombardments and cooptation of state, corporate, and other fascist (micro and macro) entities have been relentless in disrupting unique and potentially transformative experiments and projects. This means that local and global movements attempting to transcend their con-

ditions need to critically reflect upon their actions. This includes their own internal democratic decision-making processes where authoritarian mindsets and practices can emerge. In many cases, these difficult interactions and struggles are where the fragments of radical informal learning occur. To a certain degree, these narratives give us a much more complex picture of what is occurring within these learning environments. According to Hall, Clover, Crowther & Scandrett (2012) these spaces "give visibility to rich and varied stories of how ordinary people in literally every part of the world are resisting, organizing and learning to overcome a world that we do not like but have no recipe to change" (p. x). In part, this is where imagination and the "spontaneity of character" materialize into what Coté, Day, and de Peuter (2007) describe as "myriad teaching and learning contexts—from university classrooms to media literacy programs to community-based education to co-research—such radical pedagogy strives to draw out and examine links between the practices of everyday life and the wider structures of domination" (p. 7).

From the autonomous community education programs in the streets of Argentina (Sitrin, 2007), to the student and working-class movements in the United Kingdom, Canada, Chile, Greece, Turkey, and other parts of the world (included in this volume), the emergence of radical informal learning spaces are, in part, a response to the efforts of global capitalism and other dominant forces that are used to undermine our autonomy and reinforce a world we reject. Due to these conditions, Chatterton (2002) argues it has become a necessity for communities to "intervene in the corporate city" (p. 1). Collective spaces have emerged to "denounce" the oppressive structures that are so pervasive under capitalism, while at the same time, they are "imagining" and "announcing" new ways of becoming (Foley, 1999; Freire, 1970). Therefore, it is important to note that such learning spaces are not fixed or permanent—they are examples that emerge out of situated spaces and, at times, spontaneous circumstances (Conway, 2006; Kitchens, 2009). To learn from these experiences, we rely on the theoretical frameworks, narratives, testimonies, and dialogical encounters of individuals and collectives who inhabit those radical learning environments. Again, by no means is this volume all-encompassing, but we hope it will foster more discussion and further actions in creating more meaningful and radical learning spaces. We hope you enjoy this collection and we thank all the amazing contributors for their support of this project.

References

Au, W. (2011). Teaching under the new Taylorism: High-stakes testing and the standardization of the 21st century curriculum. *Journal of Curriculum Studies, 43*(1), 25–45.

Birden, S. (2004). Theorizing a coalition-engendered education: The case of the Boston women's health book collective's body education. *Adult Education Quarterly, 54*(4), 257–272.

Bowles, S., & Gintis, H. (1976). *Schooling in capitalist America: Educational reform and the contradictions of economic life.* New York, NY: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Brookfield, S., & Holst, J. (2011). *Radicalizing learning: Adult education for a just world.* San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Brown, P. (2003). The opportunity trap: Education and employment in a global economy. *European Educational Research Journal, 2*(1), 141–177.

Brown, P. (2013) Education, opportunity and the prospects for social mobility. *British Journal of Sociology of Education,* 34(5–6), 678–700.

Callahan, R.E. (1962). *Education and the cult of efficiency: A study of the social forces that has shaped the administration of public schools.* Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Chatterton, P. (2002). Squatting is still legal, necessary and free: A brief intervention in the corporate city. *Antipode, 34*(1), 1–7.

Choudry, A. (2015). *Learning activism: The intellectual life of contemporary social movements.* Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press.

Conway, J. (2006). *Praxis and politics: Knowledge production in social movements.* New York, NY: Routledge.

Coté, M., Day, R., & de Peuter, G. (2007). *Utopian pedagogy: Radical experiments against neoliberal globalization.* Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press.

de Cleyre, V. (1909). Modern education reform. In S. Presley & C. Sartwell (Eds.), *Exquisite rebel: The essays of Voltairine de Cleyre—Anarchist, feminist, genius.* Albany, NY: SUNY Press.

Deleuze, G., & Guattari, F. (1987). *A thousand plateaus: Capitalism and schizophrenia.* (B. Massumi, Trans.). Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.

Ferguson, K. (2011). *Emma Goldman: Political thinking in the streets.* Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.

Foley, G. (1999). *Learning in social action: A contribution to understanding informal education.* London, UK: Zed Books.

Foster, J.B. (2011). Education and the structural crisis of capital: A case study. *Monthly Review,* 63(3), 6–37. Retrieved from http://monthlyreview.org/2011/07/01/education-and-the-structural-crisis-of-capital/.

Freire, P. (1970). *Pedagogy of the oppressed.* New York, NY: Continuum.

Giroux, H.A. (2013). The politics of disimagination and the pathologies of power. Retrieved from http://www.truth-out.org/news/item/14814-the-politics-of-disimagination-and-the-pathologies-of-power.

Goldman, E. (1906). The child and its enemies. *Mother Earth,* 1(2), 7–14.

Graeber, D. (2011). *Revolutions in reverse: Essays on politics, violence, art, and imagination.* London, UK: Minor Compositions.

Haeger, P., & Halliday, J. (2006). *Recovering informal learning: Wisdom, judgement and community.* Dordrecht: Springer.

Haiven, M. (2014). *Crisis of imagination, crisis of power: Capitalism, creativity and the commons.* London, UK: Zed Books.

Hall, B., Clover, D., Crowther, J., & Scandrett, E. (2012). Introduction. In B. Hall et al. (Eds.), *Learning and education for a better world: The role of social movements.* Rotterdam: Sense Publishers.

Haworth, R. (2010). Anarcho-punk: Radical experiments in informal learning spaces. In B.J. Porfilio & P.R. Carr (Eds.), *Youth culture, education and resistance: Subverting the commercial ordering of life*. Rotterdam: Sense Publishers.
Holloway, J. (2010). *Crack capitalism*. New York, NY: Pluto Press.
hooks, b. (1989). *Yearning: Race, gender and cultural politics*. Boston, MA: South End Press.
hooks, b. (2004). *Teaching community: A pedagogy of hope*. New York, NY: Routledge.
Katz, M. (1971). *Class, bureaucracy, and schools*. New York, NY: Praeger.
Kitchens, J. (2009). Situated pedagogy and the Situationist International: Countering a pedagogy of placelessness. *Educational Studies, 45*, 240–261.
Livingstone, D.W. (2006). Informal learning: Conceptual distinctions and preliminary findings. In Z. Bekerman, N. Burbules & D. Silberman-Keller (Eds.), *Learning in places: The informal education reader*. New York, NY: Peter Lang.
Overwien, B. (2000). Informal learning and the role of social movements. *International Review of Education, 46*(6), 621–640.
Ravitch, D. (2010, March 9). Why I changed my mind about school reform. *Wall Street Journal*. Retrieved from http://www.wsj.com/articles/SB10001424052748704869304575109443305343962.
Shor, I. (1992). *Empowering education: Critical teaching for social change*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
Sitrin, M. (2007, Autumn). Ruptures in imagination: Horizontalism, autogestion and affective politics in Argentina. *Policy & Practice: A Development Education Review, 5*, 43–53.
Smith, D.W. (2007). Deleuze and the question of desire: Toward an immanent theory of ethics. *Parrhesia: A Journal of Critical Philosophy, 2*, 66–78.
Spring, J. (2006). *Wheels in the head: Educational philosophies of authority, freedom, and culture from Socrates to human rights*. Mahwah, NJ: L. Erlbaum Associates, Publishers.
Stovall, D. (2011). *Reframing the gap: Educational debt and the responsibility of socially conscious educators in troubling times* [video]. Retrieved from https://youtu.be/VOMcj7naxdg.
Suissa, J. (2009). "The space now possible": Anarchist education as utopian hope. In L. Davis & R. Kinna (Eds.) *Anarchism and utopianism*. Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press.
Vandenberghe, F. (2008). Deleuzian capitalism. *Philosophy & Social Criticism, 34*(8) 877–903.

SECTION 1

Critiques of Education

CHAPTER 1

Miseducation and the Authoritarian Mind

John M. Elmore

Historical examples of education—and more specifically, compulsory schooling that is defined and controlled by dominant political, theological, or plutocratic groups—being employed as a tool of hegemony, are numerous and well documented. As I tell my students regularly when discussing and comparing systems of education throughout history and around the globe, it can feel like identifying exemplars of liberatory education requires dedicated and detailed examination, while spotting systems of authoritarian education requires only the casual opening of one's eyes. Education has clearly proven to be an invaluable instrument in the production of despotic systems and institutions. The obvious reason for this fact is that the more rigid and domineering a social system becomes, the greater the perceived need to produce minds and personalities that are compatible, if not welcoming of control and domination. This chapter will consider this concept of authoritarianism and the ways that authoritarian personalities are reflected and fostered in traditional, compulsory schooling via traditional teaching methods, curricular materials and school structure. While I will acknowledge the other cultural institutions and socializing forces which account for a population's levels of authoritarianism (such as the existence of particular political, economic, and theological systems, and traditional family structures and parenting practices), I contend that mass schooling is in the unique social position of assembling the overwhelming majority of a society's young and influencing their development via an extended, and increasingly specific, common experience. In short, even in today's world where the young are continuously bombarded with the messaging of mass media throughout their formative years, compulsory schooling maintains a

very powerful influence over the development and validation of consciousness. Changing the nature of consciousness serves as a critical prerequisite to achieving the type of society that we, as individuals and collectively, wish to construct and support. If we seek a more just society, where freedom is sought, protected, and valued—the development of critically conscious, biophilic citizens is fundamental. Therefore, within a volume dedicated to considering alternatives to traditional forms of popular schooling, for the purpose of advancing freedom, an examination of those traditional aspects of school life and structure, which are reflective of authoritarian practices and orientations and can be tied to the development of authoritarian dispositions, seems especially pertinent. In other words, as we attempt to move *out of the ruins* of traditional schooling, it is important that we first clearly define those ruins and diagnose their failures in fostering freedom in order to produce genuine and affective alternatives.

The Tradition of Miseducation as Control

Critical educators have long challenged the structures, practices, and purposes of traditional schooling. In fact, it is fair to describe critical pedagogy itself as originating first and foremost as a rejection of popular and traditional education methods and the domineering structures and practices they demand. Declaring much of traditional education as anti-democratic, if not outright anti-human, critical educators labor to transform educational spaces into seedbeds for freedom and independent thought. In seeking to manipulate, if not outright commandeer, the role that education plays within the superstructure, we acknowledge that the maintenance of a society's base always demands the development of a specific human character and, in turn, a specific "form of social conscience"—informed by what Marx and Engels (1996) described as the "ruling ideas" that represent the "ideal expression of the dominant material relationships" (p. 61). As Erich Fromm (1941) indicated, there is a dynamic correlation between the structure of human character within a given society and the economic base of that society. In other words, the maintenance of any particular "way of life" requires a compatible, if not mirrored, version of human consciousness and character. Fromm (1941) argued that even intellectuality itself "aside from the purely logical elements that are involved in the act of thinking, [is] greatly determined by the personality structure of the person who thinks" (p. 305). This, Fromm (1941) continued, "holds true for the whole of a doctrine or of a theoretical system, as well as for a single concept, like love, justice, equality, sacrifice" (p. 306).

What Fromm (1956) suggests is that an overt structure, dedicated to the task of shaping the thoughts and beliefs of a populace, is a fundamental apparatus within authoritarian societies. This apparatus allows for an official means of indoctrinating a citizenry—shaping consciousness and

human character for the purpose of adaptation. In short, authoritarian social systems do not generate oppressive settings out of thin air but instead are slowly validated in the context of authoritarian nurturing in various social and cultural institutions and practices; they ultimately reflect the dispositions of the people. While one can point to multiple agencies well positioned to nurture the transition to authoritarian political systems, such as dogmatic and faith-based institutions, popular compulsory schooling has historically offered much potential in this regard.

Education therefore, when carefully shaped and crafted, can serve the pernicious goal of providing those in power with an invaluable tool for nurturing and shaping a particular human character, consciousness, and epistemology that is tuned to the specific needs of a respective base. Should one require further convincing, one need look no further than the desperate efforts to control education by some of the most authoritarian regimes in history, from Hitler to Stalin to Kim Jung-un. As Anton Makarenko (1955), architect of Stalin's educational system, wrote, "It was clear to me that many details of human personality and behavior could be made from dies, simply stamped out en masse . . . although of course the dies themselves had to be of the finest description, demanding scrupulous care . . . by the communist party" (pp. 267–268). Conversely, when education is conceived as an act of liberation, illuminating systems of oppression, it becomes an equally powerful threat to the dominant. For such liberatory education, as Marx (1843) contended, "our motto must be: reform of consciousness not through dogmas, but by analysing the mystical consciousness that is unintelligible to itself, whether it manifests itself in a religious or a political form" (para. 12). In short, a liberated mind has never been the outcome of dogmatic training—regardless of its source.

When there exists a deprivation in the development of criticality within a given society, in concert with other forms of socio-psychological manipulation, a "cultural hegemony" is produced that "manufactures consent," which Antonio Gramsci (1971) argued is maintained at:

> two major superstructural "levels": the one that can be called "civil society', that is, the ensemble of organisms commonly called "private", and that of "political society" or "the State". These two levels correspond on the one hand to the functions of "hegemony" which the dominant group exercises throughout society and on the other hand to that of "direct domination" or command exercised through the State and "juridical" government. The functions in question are precisely organizational and connective. The intellectuals are the dominant group's "deputies" exercising the subaltern functions of social hegemony and political government. They comprise:
>
> 1. The "spontaneous" consent given by the great masses of the population to the general direction imposed on social life by the dominant fundamental group [and] . . .
> 2. The apparatus of state coercive power which "legally" enforces discipline on those groups who do not "consent" either actively or passively. (p. 12)

As superstructural institutions fail to inspire such "spontaneous consent," the consciousness attuned to domination is disrupted. As a result, the imposed definitions of social, political, and economic life come to be viewed as mere social constructions, perspectives that can be challenged rather than merely consumed. In such a transformative period it is often the superstructure itself, rather than the base that is first brought into question. In the 1960s, for example, the political unrest in the U.S. was not due to a rebellion of the working class against bourgeois domination, but an intellectual and youth revolt against what Engels (1893) labeled "false consciousness" and a "new spirit of the age" where endless consumerism was to define the human experience (Chomsky, 2000, p. 39). From the perspective of the '60s youth movement, society was to be transformed not by directly attacking the capitalistic base, but by deconstructing the superstructural institutions producing its ideological hegemony. It can be reasonably predicted that had the youth movement been sustained it would have eventually expanded its critique from superstructure to base—and some elements within the broader movement had already begun to do so by the time of the Kent State shootings (Clancy, 2007). More recently, the Occupy movement demonstrated the potential of liberated consciousness; the taken-for-granted assumptions about the way the world has to work were replaced with the clear contradiction between democracy and capitalism. As in the case of the '60s youth movement, and of many revolutionary movements, the first gasp for freedom demands the critique and destruction, or radical transformation, of the socio-political institutions that malform the collective social conscience, via the planting of what Stirner (1842/1967) described as "wheels in the head," which produce the illusion of free choice. It is this transformation of human consciousness that is always at the core of the renovation of social, economic, or political structures. As Godwin claimed in 1783, "Let the most oppressed people under heaven once change their mode of thinking, and they are free."

The transmission model of education, or what Freire (1974) termed the "banking model," has defined education within the U.S. from the outset and it continues to the present day. This authoritarian, top-down approach to education has pervaded our society and culture, and come to be taken for granted, suppressing alternative perspectives, values, interests, and dis-

cussion about what Guttman (1987) termed "the good life." This actuality has only been exasperated in recent years with the rise of so-called core curriculum and the essentialist standardization movement. There has long been a view of traditional education, like John Stuart Mill (1951) argued, functioning as:

> a mere contrivance for moulding people to be exactly like one another; and as the mould in which it casts them is that which pleases the dominant power in the government, whether this be a monarch, an aristocracy, or a majority of the existing generation; in proportion as it is efficient and successful, it establishes a despotism over the mind, leading by a natural tendency to one over the body. (p. 88)

This tradition was clearly carried over from the "old world" in establishing mass schooling in the U.S.—and its influence reverberates to the present day. To this point, Zhao (2014) issues a warning to U.S. education policymakers about continuing to function under what he calls "the spell of authoritarianism." As Zhao (2014) argues:

> high-stakes testing is one of the many symptoms of a virus threatening America's future. That virus is the rising tide of authoritarianism in the United States. In exchange for the comfort of knowing how their children are doing academically and that their schools are being held accountable, Americans welcomed high-stakes testing into public education. Without the benefit of historical experience with these kinds of high-stakes tests, however, Americans failed to recognize those benign-looking tests as a Trojan horse—with a dangerous ghost inside. That ghost, authoritarianism, sees education as a way to instill in all students the same knowledge and skills deemed valuable by the authority. (p. 3)

The centerpiece of authoritarian education—and any societal march toward systems and structures of hegemony—is the development of a specific form of consciousness. Although sometimes lacking pre-meditated intent, traditional schooling environments have consistently fostered the development of structures, perspectives, and dispositions that are aligned with hierarchal social arrangements.

Introduction to Authoritarianism & the Authoritarian Personality

In spite of how they are often portrayed within popular culture, totalitarian societies rarely arise from the mere existence of a single despot. To the contrary, any serious analysis of the myriad of authoritarian examples throughout human history demonstrates a gradual amassing of circumstances, which eventually overwhelm any resistance or alternative narrative. Historians, sociologists, and psychologists have deliberated at length in attempting to understand and diagnose the political and social occurrences that produce authoritarian cultures. While the question of what social forces and phenomena produce a Hitler or a Kim Jong-il are relevant, most researchers have acknowledged that comprehending what circumstances produced populations desirous of and supportive of such political dictatorships is far more critical. At the core of this issue has been the question of what has been termed "the authoritarian personality," which has been seen as resulting from factors such as particular family influences, dogmatic and absolutist training (religious or otherwise), economic systems and structures, and jingoistic nationalism.

In *The Authoritarian Personality*, Adorno, Frenkel-Brunswik, Levinson, and Sanford (1950) described authoritarians as individuals who were rigid thinkers, obeyed authority, and demanded strict adherence to social rules and hierarchies. Additionally, as they reported, the authoritarian personality maintained an inflexible and fixed worldview, a strong desire to be directed by the superior, an equally strong desire to direct the inferior, and a strong tendency to view everything in absolutist, black-or-white terms. As such, authoritarian people are more likely than others to harbor prejudices against low-status groups. Adorno et al. (1950) also discovered a connection between racism/fascism and the authoritarian parenting style. His studies led him to propose a personality framework that may be described as follows:

> While finding comfort in the identification of submissive behavior towards authority, the authoritarian person directs his/her aggression towards other groups, often racial minorities. This is an attempt to relieve the feeling of personal weakness with a search for absolute answers and strengths in the outside world. (p. 12)

It is this consistent exclusion of others that has proven to be one of the most poisonous exports of the authoritarian personality. According to Fromm (1957), "What they have in common, what defines the essence of the authoritarian personality is an inability: the inability to rely on one's self, to be independent, to put it in other words: to endure freedom" (p. 3). From the lack of confidence in oneself a lack of confidence in others naturally follows, which serves as fertile ground for condemning anyone who is different from what has been deemed ideal by those in power. Such a negative view of others leads to the conclusion that harsh laws and a strong police or army are necessary. Also, it leads people to the pessimistic certainty that humans would devolve into narcissistic debauchery and be totally immoral if they were left to govern themselves free of external control. Ultimately, because they lack the confidence for self-governance, authoritarian personalities believe it is important to have a powerful leader and to be part of a powerful group.

To declare the incompatibility of such personalities with freedom broadly and social democracy specifically, is both obvious and accurate. Adorno et al. (1950) made a special effort to explain that the authoritarian personality is not a singular personality type. There are different, even contradictory, aspects of authoritarianism.

Two Types of Authoritarianism

According to Fromm (1957), there are two clear aspects of the authoritarian personality type, which can be viewed as both distinct and interconnected. The "sadistic" authoritarian is one who gauges life in degrees of domination and control. Freire (1974), using the language of Fromm, argued that such a "necrophilic" disposition ultimately manifests as a "love of death, not life" (p. 64). This aspect of the authoritarian personality, while the most common identified, is not exclusive. Fromm (1957) describes the other half of the equation:

> The passive-authoritarian, or in other words, the masochistic and submissive character aims—at least subconsciously—to become a part of a larger unit, a pendant, a particle, at least a small one, of this "great" person, this "great" institution, or this "great" idea. The person, institution, or idea may actually be significant, powerful, or just incredibly inflated by the individual believing in them. What is necessary, is that—in a subjective manner—the individual is convinced that "his" leader, party, state, or idea is all-powerful and supreme, that he himself is strong and great, that he is a part of something "greater." The paradox of this passive form of the authoritarian character is: the individual belittles himself so that he can—as part of something greater—become great himself. The individual wants to receive commands, so that he does not have the necessity to make decisions and carry responsibility. This masochistic individual looking for dependency is in his depth frightened—often only subconsciously—a feeling of inferiority, powerlessness, aloneness. Because of this, he is looking for the "leader," the great power, to feel safe and protected through participation and to overcome his own inferiority. Subconsciously, he feels his own powerlessness and needs the leader to control this feeling. This masochistic and submissive individual, who fears freedom and escapes into idolatry, is the person on which the authoritarian systems—Nazism and Stalinism—rest. (pp. 3–4)

The fact that both forms of the authoritarian personality can be tied to one final common point—the regimented inclination—demonstrates why one can find both the sadistic and masochistic component even within the same individual. The two idiosyncratic behavior patterns are submissiveness and aggressiveness—these two patterns seem to be at odds, but in fact their coexistence within the authoritarian personality is a hallmark. The authoritarian personality wants to fit into a chain of command and to be told what to do (being submissive to a superior), and by the same token, enjoys greatly the prospect of giving orders to those below them. It is always the system itself that demands allegiance—the authoritarian may climb its ranks, but shudders at the thought of climbing beyond and out of the safety certitude. In short, authoritarians like to be herded like sheep even as they enjoy commanding. So, while she or he is aggressive towards others, especially those considered to be lesser in some way (e.g., of a different faith or ethnicity, sexual orientation or socio-economic class), they are also aggressive in maintaining a pious and politically correct sense of self. Kirscht and Dillehay (1967) contend that such an individual's "judgments are governed by a punitive conventional moralism, reflecting external standards towards which he remains insecure since he has failed to make them really his own. His relations with others depend on considerations of power, success, and adjustment, in which people figure as means rather than ends, and achievement is valued competitively rather than for its own sake" (p. vii).

Unsurprisingly, given this description, bigotry and intolerance are common in the authoritarian personality type. The Hitler Youth were prime examples of this, as are children raised in dogmatic religious institutions or white supremacist organizations. While this mind-set exists across all political, economic, and religious spectra, and afflicts both genders, it is found most frequently within what Altemeyer (1988) referred to as "right-wing conservatives."

While the original F (fascism) scale, offered by Adorno et al. (1950), focused on the fascist personality in Hitler's Germany, the more recent work of Bob Altemeyer (1988) connects authoritarianism to rightist ideologies more broadly. Altemeyer introduces the term "Right-Wing Authoritarianism" in seeking to classify common connections between particular political attitudes and authoritarian dispositions. In reducing Adorno's original nine characteristics of the F-scale to three, Altemeyer establishes his RWA (right-wing authoritarianism) scale. While Altemeyer explains that "right-wing" means a "psychological sense of submitting to perceived authorities in one's life," and is not identified with a specific political ideology, the parallels are easily drawn between RWAs and contemporary social conservatives within the U.S. In his investigations, Altemeyer (1988) developed an inventory, which reliably assesses individual levels of authoritarianism and, in agreement with Adorno, concluded that authoritarians consistently favor absolute obedience and tend to stand against the value of individual freedom.

According to Altemeyer (1988), to achieve unquestioning obedience, the authoritarian "is prepared to implant fear and to punish severely in

order to produce it" and they advocate physical punishment in childhood (p. 7). In the same vein for adults, RWAs deplore leniency in the criminal justice system and believe that anything less than the harshest punishments simply encourages criminals—as such, they are strong advocates of capital punishment. The dramatic increase in incarceration within the U.S. evinces the immense RWA influence among contemporary policymakers. Because these "necrophilics" equate freedom with chaos, there is a commonality to every solution proposed to every perceived problem: more control and less freedom. What is primarily offered in exchange for submission to domination is pacification of fear: the authoritarian system relies heavily on irrational fears as a means of control. Under such Orwellian conditions doublespeak at work and in the public square is common—citizens are encouraged to see every military venture as a "defense of freedom" and any criticism of the power elite as "unpatriotic" heresy. Citizens are regularly bathed in the language of freedom, yet consistently argue on behalf of restricting political freedoms rather than expanding them. In such circumstances, as stated by Romanish (1995),

> Since true freedom is taken to be a synonym for chaos and since chaos has few defenders, the net effect is that freedom has few as well. Democracy is seen as patriotism, and patriotism can become a synonym for militarism. Freedom is restricted to abstract references during political debates and otherwise meets resistance in its liberatory form such as empowering the young or assuring equal rights for women. (p. 19)

Traditional schooling and its "banking model" of education have consistently operated in such a way that students become comfortable with such authoritarian conditions. As Bowles and Gintis (1976) point out, the domination that students learn to endure from their teachers and principals prepares them perfectly for the domination they will endure in adult life, where the workplace replaces the school and the boss replaces the teacher. Of course, such schooling is not alone in this process; organized religion has been a powerful purveyor of authoritarian dispositions and attitudes as well (Harris, 2004). In challenging authoritarianism, it is critical to consider these sites where the development of the authoritarian personality takes place.

The Development of the Authoritarian Personality

What is made clear by an even cursory examination of totalitarian systems is that education is almost always perceived as critical and a process that is best engaged as early in life as possible. This training is not only begun early, it tends to be all-encompassing, compulsory, standardized, and inflexible—the child is expected to "fit" the system and not the other way around. It is often

this early indoctrination that carries the greatest long-term effect. Paul Nash (1966) reiterates this opinion by stating that "children brought up under authoritarian influences are liable to suffer from many of the defects of the authoritarian personality, to which can be attributed some of the world's most serious ills" (p. 107). Nash's description of the authoritarian personality matches with the previously shared perspectives of Adorno and Altemeyer: one plagued by fear of life's ambiguities and uncertainties. As such, Nash (1966) continues, authoritarians favor conformity, dogmatic beliefs, and absolute doctrines, making them ideal candidates for institutions steeped in absolutist, dogmatic beliefs. The authoritarian admires strength, power, and aggressiveness and is willing to impose the rigidities of orthodoxy on others through the use of manipulation, coercion, and malice. There is a tendency to prefer concrete and fixed perspectives, favoring sharp absolutism over the doubt, uncertainty, and paradox that life often suggests. Instead of coping with ambiguities, there is an inclination to suppress them below a conscious level where they fester and cause inner chaos and fear. The result of such alienating experiences is a deep-seated need to find mechanisms that will generate a feeling completeness—effectively healing the overwhelming sense of alienation. God delusions are one such mechanism that has served this purpose within societies throughout human history.

Religion has, in fact, served as a primary source of relief for authoritarians in this regard—providing the illusion of order wherever chaos is perceived. The ideal parishioner fostered within the vast majority of religious institutions maintains characteristics compatible with authoritarianism; characteristics that are not only exclusionary and counterproductive to democratic participation, but that actually undermine the institution of democracy itself. This fact is especially vivid in the dogmatic training of children, which is fundamental within most religions, so to foster the maintenance of magical and fanatical consciousness. This is, in reality, what has proven religious dogma so dangerous to democracy: it encourages, and ultimately requires, the development and maintenance of the authoritarian personality. As Dean (2006) so accurately put it, "the vehicle despotism rides is authoritarianism" and the authoritarian personality is, and always has been, the centerpiece of every movement towards totalitarianism, both today and throughout history (p. 45). Unfortunately, rather than traditional education in the U.S. functioning as a rational, logical, and secular antidote to the dogmatic training of the mind, as Paine and Ingersoll might have imagined, it has become a co-conspirator.

It is certainly worth noting that the price we pay as a species for this absolutist-inspired "cessation of doubt and fear" is immense and goes well beyond being an impediment to liberty. In fact, as noted by Harris (2004), it is quite simply, "our most cherished beliefs about the world . . . leading us,

inexorably, to kill one another" (p. 12). If human history has proven anything conclusive, it is that through offering pacification of fear, single-minded answers for the ambiguities of life, and a sense of order where the perception of chaos persists, absolutism fashions a mind that serves as fertile ground for the weeds of intolerance, hatred, and destruction. When education is perverted for such purposes it must be challenged and destroyed.

As negative as the result of such authoritarian training is, perhaps more important for critical educators is the fact that the resulting consciousness does not operate in isolation. The central question as such is: does the development and maintenance of absolutist ideologies in one aspect of a person's mind "infect" other aspects of a person's mind? In terms of religion, for example, as Winell and Tarico (2014) stated, "over time some religious beliefs can create habitual thought patterns that actually alter brain function, making it difficult for people to heal or grow" (para. 3). Dawkins (1976) coined the term "meme" to describe these thought patterns on a macro level:

> Just as genes propagate themselves in the gene pool by leaping from body to body via sperms or eggs, so memes propagate themselves in the meme pool by leaping from brain to brain via a process which, in the broad sense, can be called imitation. (p. 192)

On a micro level, however, such patterns can take on the characteristics of what has been termed a "viral meme," which is less concerned with an idea spreading from person to person, or generation to generation, than it is about ideas that spread within and throughout the individual mind, infecting every aspect of consciousness. The most dangerous viral memes, as Benscoter (2013) argues, are those that function as "a viral memetic infection," which are essentially ideas that generate circular logic and loop through the mind, providing a singular and all-encompassing answer to all possible questions. At their worst, such viral memes foster a form of consciousness where the most absolutist definitions of "us" and "them" can take root and almost any act can be justified in their defense and advancement. Unfortunately, these viral memetic infections do not simply stay partitioned, safely tucked away in the part of a person's consciousness where she or he convenes with a god. Such viral memes, and the sectarian perspectives they spawn, spread and can have a grave impact on the prospect of developing criticality in other aspects of one's life. Stated directly, it is not a coincidence that those we encounter in our lives who are the most fundamentalist and rigid in their religiosity tend to be equally as such in their views on politics, power structures, and socio-cultural norms.

What we see in examining the multiple sources that foster the development of the authoritarian personality is that such individuals do not merely exist within formalized totalitarian states. As stated by Romanish (1995),

> A common misconception in democratic societies is that conformity and social control are features of non-democratic systems when in fact the differences can better be described in degree rather than kind. Unless a concerted effort is made to educate a population in the ways of democratic living, almost as a counter balance to the forces of authoritarianism inherent in a range of social activities and enterprises, there exists the danger of a natural drift towards anti-democratic conditions. Such inertia, if assisted by social calamity or economic dislocation, can ignite political extremism and pose an ultimate threat to democratic and constitutional freedoms. (p. 20).

It is simply not enough to recalibrate schooling to biophilic aims, when other social institutions are so clearly dedicated to generating individuals bent on submission to "higher powers." In other words, to oppose one system of domination while supporting—or turning a blind eye to—another, is to engage in intellectual hypocrisy of the highest level. We cannot condemn the corporation who exploits and controls the worker's body, while giving a wink and a nod to the clergy who exploits that same workers capacity for empathy and perverts and vilifies their capacity for logic and reason. Conformity is highly valued in authoritarian systems and social norms, which rely upon broad conformity to assist the system's control. To this end, it is critical to determine how individuals arrive at authoritarian orientations and what role social institutions, including schools, may play in that development.

Without the development of the critically conscious personality, society is left with citizens that are authoritarian, conforming, uncritical of cultural values, conservative, and intolerant of ambiguity. This, of course, is the result of psychological predispositions as well as the experiences provided by one's environment—hence the critical role of education in the development of individual and collective consciousness. When schooling is driven by fear, full human faculties are prevented from developing or made to develop in perverse and malformed ways. The use of fear, found regularly in behaviorist school environments, reduces these capacities to desires for pleasure and the avoidance of pain. Preventing learners from thinking and acting freely means to arbitrarily restrain them from organic development, which in turn equally restrains their choices and decisions. Arnstine (1971) states:

> The longer action is restrained in this way, the less likely it is that people will even think about choices or decisions. From this point it is but a short stop to the cessation of thinking altogether. People who cannot act freely may busy themselves doing efficiently the tasks they have been assigned, and they may also engage in fantasies over the

entertainments they have been given. In this way entire societies can acquire the mentality of slaves. (p. 5)

Finding alternatives to traditional schooling, as this volume seeks to highlight, is paramount if we are to achieve a society that lives up to its most profound creeds. Education as such must be engaged for the primary purpose of fostering the development of critically conscious citizens with biophilic dispositions.

Freire and the Development of Consciousness

The power and pervasiveness of authoritarianism highlights the ways in which it is universal and intertwined with the development of human consciousness. Individuals did not simply come to these belief structures spontaneously. These institutions, while growing directly out of human feeling, imagination and will, as noted by Feuerbach (1841), simultaneously inform, shape and control them. Along with other superstructural institutions, traditional schooling contributes to the development of a type of consciousness detailed by Paulo Freire in his works *Education for Critical Consciousness* (1974) and *The Politics of Education: Culture, Power and Liberation* (1985).

Throughout much of his work Freire (1974/1985) calls for specific attention to be paid to the conditioning of the human mind. Yet this conditioning is not merely the socialization that many sociological works use to describe a seemingly natural evolution, free of conscious human direction. For Freire, this conditioning, what he calls education, is shaped by social, political, and historical contexts yet also shapes social, political, and historical contexts. It is in this potential for education as a source of reflective agency that Freire's account of the development of consciousness is grounded.

Freire (1974) argued that human beings move through specific stages in the development of consciousness. We are born into what he termed "intransitive" consciousness, in which we lack the necessary skills and experience to comprehend or dialogue with our world. Over time this intransitivity gives way to the construction of very limited connections within our world, mostly in terms of rudimentary cause and effect, although within such "semi-intransitivity" we still "cannot apprehend problems outside their biological sphere of necessity. . . . [our] interests center almost totally around survival, and they lack a sense of life on a more historical plane" (Freire, 1974, p. 14). The semi-intransitive stage of consciousness, Freire (1985) contends, "is a kind of obliteration imposed by objective conditions . . . the only data the dominated consciousness grasps are the data that lie within its lived experience," and individuals in this immobile state of consciousness "lack what we call structural perception, which shapes and reshapes itself from concrete reality in the apprehension of facts and problematical situations" (p. 75).

As these rudimentary connections in the semi-intransitive stage expand, and we begin to develop simple schema from which we can enter into dialogue with our world, we develop "naive consciousness," which Freire (1974) described as the "very limited consciousness," of "men who are still almost part of a mass, in whom the developing capacity for dialogue is still fragile and capable of distortion" (p. 15). As stated by Freire (1974), this naive stage of consciousness is characterized by:

> An oversimplification of problems; by a nostalgia for the past; by underestimation of the common man . . . by a lack of interest in investigation, accompanied by an accentuated taste for fanciful explanations; by fragility of argument; by a strongly emotional style; by the practice of polemics rather than dialogue; by magical explanations. (p. 14)

Naive consciousness ultimately constricts the openness and "permeability" of the individual, which was beginning to develop. Without such openness, human beings will not be historical agents capable of reflective action, and are thus alienated from their own consciousness and humanity. Those of naive consciousness survive on circumscribed conclusions about the world and their place in it; they are dependent on definitions of the world that are not of their own determination. This is neither about the intelligence of the person nor the correctness or incorrectness of the positions such a person might take; the defining circumstance of naive consciousness is in an undeveloped capacity for rational dialogue with their world and a resulting dependency on external definitions.

From this position of naiveté, according to Freire (1974), consciousness can move in two very distinct directions depending upon the educative experiences of the individual. In one case, the "distorted," incomplete, and inaccurate interpretations of the world go unchallenged or they may even be reinforced. This leads to the development of "magical consciousness" and as Freire (1974) described, as a stunted state of consciousness in which "the possibility of dialogue diminishes markedly. Men are defeated and dominated, though they do not know it; they fear freedom, though they believe themselves to be free. They follow general prescriptions and formulas as if by their own choice. They are directed; they do not direct themselves" (p. 17)

Again, Freire (1974), via the work of Fromm (1941), argued that this is not a matter of intelligence or lack thereof, but simply the recognition that when the opportunity for the development of a consciousness born of dialogue with one's world is withheld and, instead, replaced by a consciousness born of monologue, the resulting person is deprived of the capacity to ever truly understand their conditions free of the cultural invasion of the dominant. Accurate or inaccurate, the only source of truth that is perceived as reliable becomes one that is generated externally—truth is established "magically.

As the individual becomes ever more dependent on these magical definitions of their world, the ideas cease to be viewed as separate from, or owned by, the individual—the ideas come to define the individual, they are merged into one. As Stirner (1842/1967) contended, the freeman owns his ideas, the educated-man is owned by them:

> If one awakens in men the idea of freedom, then the freemen will incessantly go on to free themselves; if, on the contrary, one only educates them, then they will at all times accommodate themselves to circumstances in the most highly educated and elegant manner and degenerate into subservient cringing souls. (p. 23)

When the person can no longer separate themselves from the ideas that have come to define them—which are not of their own creation—they devolve into a state of what Freire (1974) termed "fanaticized consciousness." The transition to fanaticized consciousness leads the person to "become even more disengaged from reality than in the semi-intransitive state," and the person now "acts more on the basis of emotionality than of reason" (p. 29). In terms of the development of full human consciousness, they devolve. In the state of fanaticized consciousness, the magical explanations and ideas become so central and necessary to the core of the person's relationship with the world, they no longer see themselves separate from them. Therefore, an attack on these ideas is, in effect, an attack on the person themselves. They no longer own the ideas; the ideas own them. They defend them passionately, often violently. "The idea is my own," Stirner (1845/1963) contended, "only when I have no misgiving about bringing it in danger of death every moment, when I do not have to fear its loss as a loss for me, a loss of me" (p. 342). Those of fanaticized consciousness are effectively puppets whose strings only await a master—they and the institutions that shape their minds exist as an impediment to individual and collective freedom alike.

Yet "whatever his state, man is an open being" and, because of this, capable of a continuous rather than predetermined development of consciousness (Freire, 1974, p. 13). In contrast to the progression from naive to magical and fanatical consciousness, when naive consciousness is encouraged to continuously question interpretations one can "amplify their power to perceive and respond to suggestions and questions arising in their context, and increase their capacity to enter into dialogue . . . they become transitive" (Freire, 1974, p. 13). Transitive-conscious persons are moving beyond merely being "in the world"; they are becoming "of the world"—they are integrating, not adapting and transforming from an "object of history" into a "subject of history." Leaving the previously stagnant state of semi-intransitivity, individuals of a transitive consciousness begin to seek answers outside of their immediate experience, ultimately opening up the possibility for the joining of agency and a critical structural perception of social, political, and historical realities or what Freire termed "critical consciousness." The critically conscious person, Freire (1974) argued, is "characterized by a depth in the interpretation of problems; by the substitution of causal principles for magical explanations; by the testing of one's 'findings' and the openness to revision; by the attempt to avoid distortion when perceiving problems and to avoid preconceived notions when analyzing them" (p. 29). This fully humanized state of critical consciousness, however, can only be developed if the individual (and society in general) engages in dialogue-centered educative practice, which, in essence, is an encounter between individuals "mediated by the world, in order to name the world" (Freire, 1972, p. 88). Without a collective capacity for critical consciousness, the societies inevitably slide into polarized sectarian camps.

Out of the Ruins: Education as an Act of Freedom

Freedom in a particular society is not assured as a result of birth. True liberation—overcoming despotism of mind and body—is an acquired status not easily achieved. If the education of youth does not prove to be consciously and actively engaged on behalf of the kind of education required for active democratic citizenship, then by default it contributes to its demise. A basic assumption of this chapter is that if the education of youth is to be in some sense a seedbed for genuine participatory democracy it should in turn exhibit characteristics and behaviors that evince this aim. Education must go beyond platitudes about "lifelong learning" and "no child left behind" and be situated within a truly democratic context. In bearing witness that education can be employed for the purpose of liberation and acknowledging the conscious political implications of the way it is organized, the way power is exercised within it, and the ways in which the young are classified, balkanized, and controlled, the authors of this volume provide hope.

As Proudhon (1851) suggested, capitalism, statism and religion represent a "trinity of absolutism [that] is as baneful in practice as it is in philosophy" (p. 44). Each of these purveyors and benefactors of the authoritarian mind must be contested as the interconnected, co-conspirators that they are, no matter how disconnected, or even opposed, they may seem. Until the institutions that generate and exploit such dehumanized consciousness are exposed, challenged, and eventually destroyed, humanity will never rid itself of their divisive and destructive impact. A critical education, aimed at the development of full and independent human consciousness, can and must play a critical and concerted role in attacking dogmatic institutions and ideologies. When education is constructed for the purpose of promoting what Freire (1974) termed "critical consciousness," and the capacities for logic and reason are made paramount, institutions that promote exclusion-

ary, egocentric ideologies will wither and fade from human society. In short, as Persinger (1987) states,

> These insights require education, and this is lethal to egocentrism. As a person becomes more educated, particularly in the behavioral sciences, he begins to realize that he is not unique. Education forces the egocentric child in each of us as equal to others in human experience. The sacred and profoundly personal experiences that once were proofs of our individual uniqueness are seen for what they are, predictable and necessary behaviors that allow us to deal with the existential terror of personal death and the horror of realizing that we are as vulnerable as everyone else. (p. 116)

It is the development of critical consciousness that serves as the universal cure for human-created systems of domination and exploitation—whether religious, economic, or statist. As Harris (2003) contended, there appears nowhere in history a case where a civilization destroyed itself through an overdependence on rationality, logic, and reasonableness. Systems of injustice are maintained, above all else, by way of the miseducation of the people who suffer within them.

The fertile soil within which every exclusionary ideology and institution takes root—whether theological, economic, statist, or otherwise—is the authoritarian personality, born of a fanatical consciousness and a fear-induced need of absolute control. As Freire (1974) explained, "sectarianism is predominantly emotional and uncritical. It is arrogant, antidialogical and thus anticommunicative" (p. 9). Lacking a reflective element—and seeing no need for one—the sectarian mind eliminates the potential for dialogue, questioning and agency, ultimately alienating individuals not only from others,but also first from themselves as historical and autonomous beings. From their absolutist position, the sectarian consistently views the "other" as an adversary because, from such a viewpoint, there can be only one truth, and that is their own. However, because the sectarian is typically formed from an anti-dialogical and authoritarian process, the absolute truth that they vehemently profess is rarely, if ever, actually their own; rather it is a truth that has been instilled by some perceived source of authority. Such a reactionary position is inherently exclusionary, and such disengagement from humanity is a necessary precondition to the development and perpetuation of discriminatory systems.

History clearly evinces that making visible the circumstances and power relations undergirding any form of hegemony, by way of the development of a critical and dialectic lens within the people, has always been the most fundamental ingredient for counter-hegemonic struggle. Authoritarians recognize this threat inherent to liberatory education and, in maintenance of its

agenda, seek to nullify and obliterate any such form of democratic resistance to the expansion of hegemonic control. In response, critical educators must revisit our missions, recommit ourselves to the ideals of democracy, citizenship, and social justice, and find ways to dedicate our pedagogical spaces to liberation. We must each find ways to turn our classrooms into laboratories of critical consciousness, to encourage the development of critical agency, to promote engagement by activist citizens and teachers, and nourish a new generation of transformative intellectuals for a participatory democracy. In short, educators must lead the way *out of the ruins*.

References

Adorno, T.W., Frenkel-Brunswik, E., Levinson, D.J., & Sanford, R.N. (1950). *The authoritarian personality*. New York, NY: Harper and Row.

Altemeyer, R. (1988). *The enemies of freedom*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Arnstine, D. (1971). Freedom and bureaucracy in the schools. In V.F. Haubrich (Ed.), *Freedom, bureaucracy, and schooling*. Washington, DC: ASCD, 1971, 3–28.

Benscoter, D. (2013). *Shoes of a servant: My unconditional devotion to a lie*. New York, NY: Lucky Bat Books.

Bowles, S., & Gintis, H. (1976). *Schooling in capitalist America: Educational reform and the contradictions of economic life*. New York, NY: Basic Books, Inc.

Chomsky, N., (2000). *Chomsky on miseducation*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.

Clancy, E. (2007). Youth, students and revolution. Democratic Socialist Perspective. Retrieved from http://www.dsp.org.au/node/168.

Dawkins, R. (1976). *The selfish gene*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Dean, J. (2005). *Conservatives without consciousness*. New York, NY: Viking Publishing.

Engels, F. (1893). Engels to Franz Mehring: London, July 14, 1893. Retrieved at: https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1893/letters/93_07_14.htm

Feuerbach, L.A. (1841). The distinction between Christianity and heathenism. Retrieved from http://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/feuerbach/works/essence/index.htm.

Freire, P. (1974). *Education for critical consciousness*. London, UK: Continuum Press.

Freire, P. (1985). *The politics of education: culture, power and liberation*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Publishing Group.

Fromm, E. (1941). *Escape from freedom*. New York, NY: Farrar & Rinehart.

Fromm, E. (1956). *The art of loving*. New York, NY: Bantam Books.

Godwin, W. (1783). *An account of the seminary that will be opened*. London: T. Cadell.

Gramsci, A. (1971). *Selections from the prison notebooks of Antonio Gramsci*. New York, NY: International Publishers.

Gutmann, A. (1987). *Democratic education*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Harris, S. (2006). *The end of faith*. New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Co.

Kirscht, J., & Dillehay, R. (1967). *Dimensions of authoritarianism: A review of research and theory*. Lexington, KY: University of Kentucky Press.

Makarenko, A. (1955). *The road to life*. Moscow, USSR: Foreign Language Press.

Marx, K., (1843). Marx to Ruge: Kreuznach, September 1843. Retrieved at: https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1843/letters/43_09.htm

Marx, K., & Engels, F. (1996). *The German ideology*. New York, NY: International Publishers.
Mill, J.S. (1951). *Utilitarianism, liberty, and representative government*. New York, NY: Dutton.
Nash, P. (1966). *Authority and freedom in education*. New York, NY: John Wiley & Sons.
Persinger, M. (1987). *Neurological bases of god beliefs*. New York, NY: Praeger Publishers.
Proudhon, J. (1851). *The general idea of revolution in the nineteenth century*. New York, NY: Cosimo Books (reprinted 2007).
Romanish, B. (1995, fall). Authority, authoritarianism, and education. *Education and Culture, XII*, 2, 17–25.
Spring, J. (1999). *Wheels in the head: Educational philosophies of authority, freedom, and culture from Socrates to human rights*. 2nd ed. New York, NY: McGraw Hill College.
Stirner, M. (1842/1967). *The false principle of our education*. Colorado Springs, CO: Ralph Myles.
Winell, M., & Tarico, V. (2014). The crazy-making in Christianity. In J. Luftus (Ed.), *Christianity is not great: How faith fails*. New York, NY: Prometheus Books, 376–401.
Zhao, Y. (2014). *Who's afraid of the big bad dragon?* San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

CHAPTER 2

Don't Act, Just Think!

David Gabbard

Introduction

Just because I am a critical educational theorist does not mean I am not an idiot. At least, I am not a moron. I don't use these terms lightly, but neither do I use them in their everyday derogatory sense. I do not intend to offend only to illuminate through provocation. I borrow the specific meanings of these words from Slavoj Žižek's book, *Less Than Nothing* (2012a) in an effort to shed light, primarily, on the predicament of critical educational theorists and also on how I view my own predicament and the trajectory of my thought on schools over the years.

When I entered graduate school immediately upon completing my enlistment contract with the U.S. Army in 1987, I was seeking a cure to the stupidity that led me to sign that contract in the first place. During the course of my enlistment, I entered into the very early stages of my evolution as a critical educational theorist, believing that my teachers had lied to me about the nature of our government and the uses to which it puts its military. They led me to believe that our military serves to defend the same democratic principles that they purported as characterizing our form of government Once in the military and from various sources, I learned this to be horrifically untrue. Had I known that the military and the government itself both function to serve corporate interests rather than democratic ones, I would have never agreed to sign that contract. Again, I believed the problem to have rested with my own teachers, as if the institutional context of the schools in which they worked existed independent from government.

On the first night of my very first graduate class, I learned that I was wrong. The problem did not lie with my teachers, but was far more systemic The state created schools, I learned, precisely in order to impose ignorance. I