

CRITICAL PEDAGOGY AND RADICAL POLITICAL ECONOMICS

PEDAGOGIA CRÍTICA E ECONOMIA POLÍTICA RADICAL

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ABSTRACT: An in-depth examination of political economy, especially the social dynamics of economic inequality, is a vital part of radical pedagogy. This essay explicates Herbert Marcuse's critique of the global political economy, U.S. militarism, and his educational philosophy. Marcuse's critical pedagogy stresses that educators at every level face the necessity of elaborating the theory and practice for a free world order today: one of racial equality, women's equality, the liberation of labor, the restoration of nature, leisure, abundance, and peace.

Keywords: Critical pedagogy; Education; Critical theory; Radical political economics.

RESUMO: Um exame aprofundado da economia política, especialmente a partir da dinâmica social da desigualdade, é componente vital da pedagogia radical. Esse ensaio discorre sobre a crítica de Herbert Marcuse em relação à economia política, o militarismo norte-americano e sua filosofia educacional. A pedagogia crítica de Marcuse assevera que a educação, em qualquer nível, confronta a necessidade de elaborar uma teoria e uma prática para uma ordem mundial livre que compreenda igualdade racial, igualdade para as mulheres, libertação do trabalho, restauração da natureza, lazer, abundância e paz.

Palavras-chave: Pedagogia crítica; Educação; Teoria crítica; Economia política radical.

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We submit to the peaceful production of the means of destruction, to the perfection of waste, to being educated for a defense which deforms the defenders and that which they defend.

Herbert Marcuse, *One-Dimensional Man* (1964)

An in-depth examination of political economy, especially the social dynamics of economic inequality, is a vital part of radical pedagogy. How well equipped are we as teachers to direct dialogue regarding the complex underlying structures of economic functioning? The basic fact of the economy, its unequal distribution of wealth and life chances, is generally overlooked (and actively suppressed) by mainstream analysts, policy makers, commentators. This chapter will attempt a critical philosophical analysis of work and the origins of wealth. Our purpose is to provide critical insights and key materials that can figure in a variety of lesson plans to help teachers and students to understand, question, and challenge the deeply-rooted origins of U.S. inequality by understanding unequal patterns of in the distribution of wealth and economic compensation. The objective of this piece is student empowerment: to develop, through fact-based observations drawn from the national income accounts and critical social analysis, a fuller awareness of objective conditions and to generate a new sensibility regarding the prospects for radical social change.

If economics is, as Aristotle held, the study and practice of improving the human material condition enabling human families and communities to flourish, the capitalist system is obviously diseconomic in its extreme inequalities of immiseration and wealth, limitations on quality of life, and undemocratic monopolization of power. In economics and ethics, Aristotle believed the chief vice was the boundless pursuit of property accumulation; the chief virtue, the pursuit of the well-being of the community (*Politics*, Chapter IX).

In the U.S. today military spending illustrates this vice of excess most vividly. Aside from the fuller costs of U.S. wars in terms of lives lost, government lies and illegalities, torture, as these are repeatedly emphasized by Marcuse (1969, 1972, 2019), the U.S. military budget is far greater than needed, and in fact could be reduced if the sole goal were national defense. In reality the military

budget does more than provide for defense, it is a major mechanism to subsidize owners of the military industrial complex and thus keep the nearly unbounded profits flowing (MELMAN, 1985). Military spending is one of the most wasteful projects in the U.S. and elsewhere around the globe. It could be substantially reduced and public welfare would not be impaired. All of this doesn't even begin to get at the fact that U.S. media are generally uncritical about the U.S. military being the largest polluter in the world. According to FAIR (Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting), "Major Media Bury Groundbreaking Studies of Pentagon's Massive Carbon Footprint," October 10, 2019, the U.S. military is the largest single source of greenhouse gasses.

MARCUSE'S CRITIQUE OF MILITARISM AND GLOBAL POLITICAL ECONOMY

In *One-Dimensional Man* (1964), Herbert Marcuse had stressed the nearly total political and intellectual paralysis of the populations of advanced industrial societies absorbed within in a completely commodified and administered cultural landscape. Ten years later, after the outbreaks of activist political radicalism highlighted in his *Essay on Liberation* (1969) and *Counterrevolution and Revolt* (1972), he emphasized the growing political opposition to U.S. militarism and global capitalism. He did so also in a series of seven newly discovered lectures delivered at Vincennes University, Paris, in 1974 (MARCUSE, 2015).

Marcuse argued in these lectures that U.S. society represented the "highest stage in the development of monopoly capitalism" (MARCUSE, 2015, p.21) in the following terms:

1. Economic ownership and political power is more highly concentrated in the U.S. than among other advanced capitalist countries.
2. U.S.-dominated multinational corporations have penetrated in a neo-imperialist fashion into the developed as well as undeveloped countries. The U.S. is exporting production itself from the metropolitan countries to other capitalist and pre-capitalist countries with lower production costs.

3. There is a fusion of political, economic, and military power in which the representatives of particular corporate interests have become key leaders in the government and administration.

4. The population, generally managed without overt force through advanced forms of political economic manipulation, is now increasingly controlled through the systematic and methodical power of law enforcement. This enforcement keeps itself within the framework of the patterns of unfreedom that pass for American democracy. Nonetheless, “You know too well, I suppose, the progress which by virtue of the electronic industry has been made in surveilling an entire population secretly, if desired” (MARCUSE, 2015, p. 23).

Marcuse’s Paris lectures ([1974] 2015) foresee the possible end of capitalism precisely at a time of its greatest productive capacities and its greatest wealth accumulations. He believed he could discern U.S. societal disintegration on the basis of what was actually happening in the process of production itself. First, there was the increasingly destructive waste of those who control the productive forces today (MARCUSE, [1974] 2015, p. 32-33). As he wrote this, he pointed out that the Pentagon was the nation’s biggest single industrial enterprise with 14.2 million workers directly or indirectly dependent on military spending. “[I]f you throw together—which as an orthodox Marxist you might well do—unemployment and employment for the military services, you arrive at the following figures: a total of over 25% of the labor force, i.e. 22.3 million, were either unemployed or dependent on military spending directly or indirectly” (MARCUSE, [1974] 2015, p. 42). This is a capitalism that has become more and more militarist and predatory; super profits are generated by wasteful war production. Likewise, any limited prosperity among war production workers is eluding masses of people whose conditions of life are becoming increasingly precarious.

Capitalism represents the irrational perfection of waste, earth degradation, profitable plastic litter, air pollution, trash (planned obsolescence), toxic dumping, air and water pollution, resource depletion, etc. We get disposable consumer goods and a society in which lives become disposable too. Today, such corporate practices underlie the full spectrum of sales, from single use plastics clogging landfills, rivers, and oceans—to such contemporary innovations as Monsanto’s

seeds that produce crops artificially made sterile, such that the seeds are under monopoly control and must always be purchased anew. The economy is dominated by the fetish with production for sale, for exchange value rather than use value. This has given us the twisted diseconomics of profit growth through planned obsolescence, waste, and advertising. Ostensibly durable goods, like automobiles, washing machines, etc., are engineered with the predictable premature breakdown built right in.

Educators at every level face the necessity of building the theory and practice for a free world order today: one of racial equality, women's equality, the liberation of labor, the restoration of nature, leisure, abundance, and peace. At its foundation is a critical understanding of human working and wealth-building activity. We want to assist in this endeavor through the following presentation and discussion of observed patterns of wealth and income distribution and other specific exhibits that can be theoretically and politically powerful aids for teachers in several interrelated disciplines — sociology, economics, history, and ethics, as well as logic and critical thinking. Our thesis is that inequality is not simply a matter of distance between rich and poor, but of the structural relationships in the economic arena of propertied and non-propertied segments of populations. We share Marcuse's critical understanding that:

To create the subjective conditions for a free society [it is] no longer sufficient to educate individuals to perform more or less happily the functions they are supposed to perform in this society or extend 'vocational' education to the 'masses.' Rather . . . [we must] . . . educate men and women who are incapable of tolerating what is going on, who have really learned what is going on, has always been going on, and why, and who are educated to resist and to fight for a new way of life (MARCUSE, [1968] 2009a, p. 35).

Like Marcuse, our aim here is to mobilize students and faculty to challenge the conditions, educational and otherwise, that serve to perpetuate increasingly alienating, unequal, and undemocratic realities in the global economy and in the political and cultural life of the U.S.A.

ACCOUNTING FOR INEQUALITY

Students—and faculty—typically have little awareness of the nature of wealth or the pattern of its distribution in society. They also lack insight into the connection of income flows to relations of property ownership. Our analytical methodology embodies a newer form of critical social science inquiry that examines the structures and dynamics of capital formation and the problematic patterns of workforce compensation in the U.S. while also projecting the possibilities derived from this analysis for radical social change in the conditions of labor. Our approach draws out implications latent in standard economic data, and arrives at certain significant findings and conclusions that have been avoided in standard economics and business textbooks.

A starkly unequal pattern of the concentration of wealth intensification of poverty has endured over every decade in the U.S. since the end of World War II. When we first started teaching in the 1980s, the richest twenty percent held 78% of the wealth, after 2000, this had risen to 84% (REITZ, 2004; REITZ, SPARTAN, 2005; REITZ, SPARTAN, 2011; REITZ, SPARTAN, 2015). This intensifying pattern of unequal wealth distribution has enormous implications for the distribution of income. Those households with the greatest wealth also receive the greatest incomes, inasmuch as their incomes derive from their vast property holdings (i.e. from rents, interest, dividends and profits) rather than through wages or salaries. Most of the wealth in high-wealth families is inherited property and most of the income is unearned.

The profoundly negative impacts of this vastly unequal wealth distribution on life chances must be addressed. “Life chances” is the technical term used to indicate the relative access a household has to the society’s economic resources: decent housing, health care, education, employment, etc. The greater the wealth in one’s household, the greater one’s life chances. Less wealth in one’s household means fewer life chances.

The question of where wealth comes from was classically posed by early modern social philosophers, John Locke and Adam Smith, though this is seldom discussed with students. Precursors to Marx, they theorized that a person’s labor

is the real source of all property that one might have the right to call one's own. Marx and Marcuse encompassed the theories of Locke and Smith within a larger philosophy of labor. Where Locke and Smith saw individual labor as the source of private property, in an atomistic manner, Marx recognized that all humans are born into a social context. Humanity's earliest customs, i.e. communal production, shared ownership, and solidarity assured that the needs of all were met, by right not by charity, i.e. including those not directly involved in production like children, the disabled, and the elderly. This right to a commonwealth economy, humanity's earliest ethic of holding property in common, derives only secondarily from any individual's factual individual contributions to production; it is rooted primarily in our essentially cooperative and empathic nature as humans. Marx and Marcuse stressed that labor is a social process and its product rightfully belongs to the labor force as a body, not to individuals as such, i.e. grounding a theory of common ownership and justice, i.e., the rights of Commonwealth (REITZ, 2015).

Most conventional economists contend that labor is merely a cost of doing business and that profit accrues from entrepreneurial skill, technological innovation, and risk-taking. These factors may increase profit in the short run in a sub-division of any given industry, where fractions of capital compete, yet in the long run the innovative production processes and reduced costs and payrolls become the new social average. What has meaning for an individual entrepreneur does not explain the aggregate picture. National income accounts, on the other hand, reveal the structural fundamentals of the value production process. These national income accounts do not include the "cost" of labor among the input costs in the conception of the production process they utilize. Instead, they treat workforce compensation as do Locke, Smith, and Marx above—as an income flow stemming from the value production process itself. These accounts are insightful and useful in Marxist terms in that they presuppose that labor in each firm (and by extension each branch of production) is paid for through payroll outlays from the total value that is added through the firm's value production process.

To explain the mechanism generating fundamental economic and political inequalities a model is required that can depict and clarify income flows in terms

of differential returns to labor and capital as the two basic factors in the production process itself. We offer such a model in Figure 1. Usually concealed, the structure and dynamics of the value production process will be made visible here in their material form.

MODELING INCOME FLOWS AND THE CAPITAL/LABOR SPLIT

The model we have developed will illustrate the dynamics of wealth acquisition and accumulation and the generative mechanisms that are the origins of inequality (Figure 1). This will illustrate our thesis that inequality is not simply a matter of the gap between rich and poor, but of the structural relationships in the economic arena between propertied and non-propertied segments of populations (the capital-labor split). Our goal is to present in theoretical form the inner necessity of exploitative class relations within capitalism. This model may serve as a small but necessary contribution to the advancement of a more economically informed critical theory of society and indicate how and why property relations must be addressed in order to root out recurring crises of inequality.

Figure 1 outlines the structure and the dynamics of the value production process—in manufacturing—and depicts the essential working of the substantive economy. The value-added approach emphasizes the importance of production as the key factor in the generation of real growth in national wealth and in the assessment of national income in terms of material, value-added outputs. Central to the model is an understanding of the process of adding value to economic inputs by working them up by the end of the process into finished products. The amount of new wealth created through production is calculated by subtracting the dollar costs of the inputs (supplies, raw materials, tools, fuel, electricity, etc.) from the dollar value of the outputs. The difference equals the value added, and the value added is distributed as income to the two major factors in production, labor and capital. Every dollar of the value added is distributed into one of the two basic income categories: 1) returns to the workforce (in terms of the payroll—wages and salaries), or 2) returns to owners and investors (in terms of profit, rent,

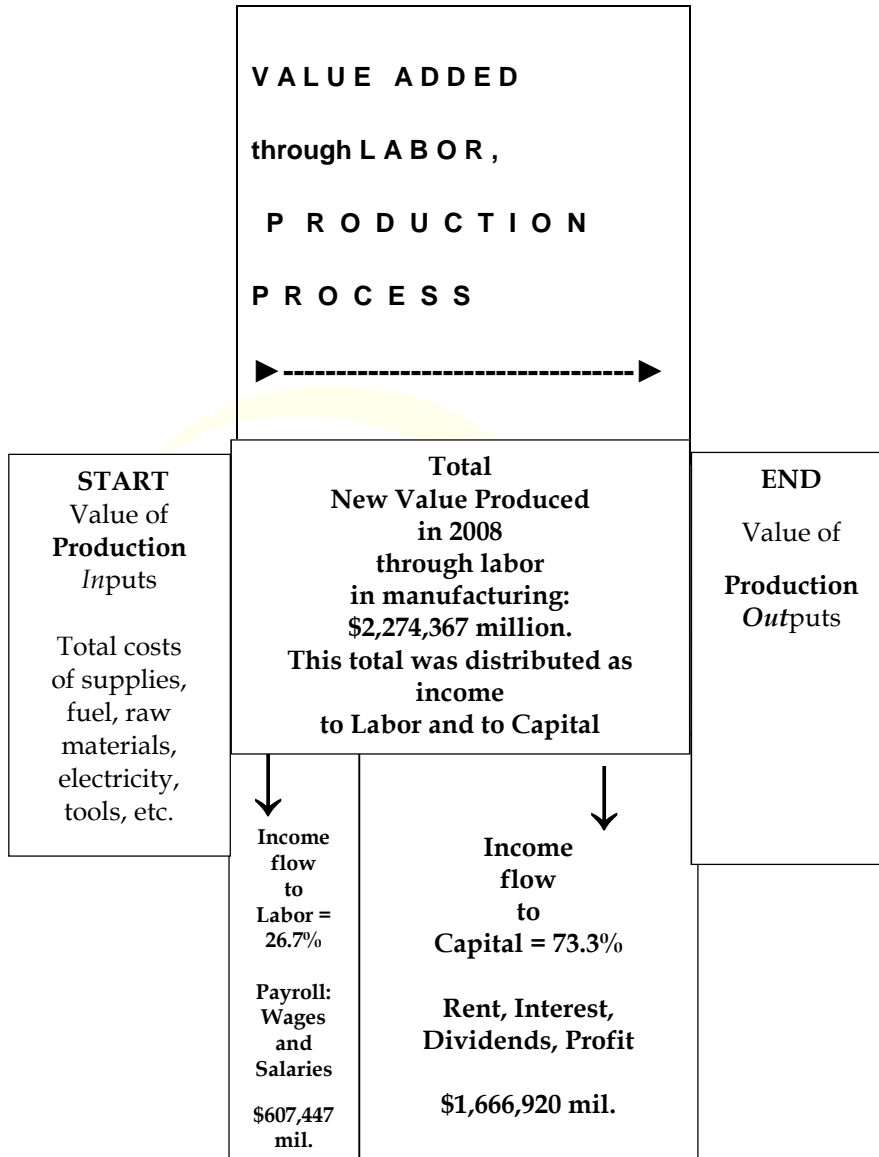
dividends, interest). Subtracting the payroll from the value added discloses the income flow returning to capital, which accumulates as wealth. The model discloses the fundamental distributive structures of the contemporary business economy: capital acquisition/accumulation and workforce compensation. The proportion of income distributed to capital (as interest, rent, profit, and dividends) as compared to that distributed to the workforce (as wages and salaries), is becoming increasingly unequal, though the general pattern of inequality has remained essentially unchanged over the last several decades. If labor fundamentally creates all wealth, as John Locke and Adam Smith maintained, then labor creates all the value that is distributed as income to the labor force (wages and salaries) and to capital (rent, interest, dividends, and profit). We emphasize that incomes returned to capital and labor are structurally determined, i.e. conditioned primarily by societal, rather than individual, factors. A major portion of the value employees add to the economy is seized by employers as a return to capital. This is the meaning of exploitation and wasted abundance.

Data from the national income accounts is supplied by annually by the U.S. Department of Commerce. Formerly, summaries were compiled in the Statistical Abstract of the United States (SAUS). The following discussion presents data from the 2011 SAUS (Table 1006 Manufactures—Summary by Selected Industry, 2008) indicating the measure of wealth created in every manufacturing sector of the economy. This table discloses that the total value added in U.S. manufacturing—for example \$2,274,367 million (in 2008 the most recent available figure as this study was initially undertaken)—was distributed into one of the two basic reproduction categories: 1) as income to the workforce —as payroll (wages and salaries)—\$607,447 million; and 2) as income to owners and investors—as profit, rent, dividends, and interest—\$1,666,920 million. In other words, unequal property relations structured a disproportionate division of the added value as follows: 73.3 percent flowing to capital / 26.7 percent flowing to labor. This general pattern of the capital/labor split has persisted over decades and continues unabated.

Today manufacturing data collected by the U.S. Census Bureau is much less accessible since the dubious discontinuation of its annual publication of the

Statistical Abstract of the United States in 2012. This thick handbook had been the convenient reference volume for working social scientists and social science teachers containing 1,400 tables of official government statistics on the social, political, and economic conditions in the United States. Now students, teachers, and social researchers must negotiate complex online sources in which comparable data from the U.S. Census Bureau and Department of Commerce can be needlessly difficult to find. Manufacturing data, specifically of the sort used in our research, is no longer labeled or reported in exactly the same way by the federal government. ProQuest, a privately held LLC, based in Ann Arbor, Michigan publishes a new annual version of the SAUS. Adjusting for changes in terminology, and different tables, we can see that the general pattern of unequal remuneration remains. According to the ProQuest SAUS for 2018, the manufacturing data percentages for 2015 show that a perceptible improvement for labor is evident over 2008 figures. Total value added (contribution to Gross Domestic Product) in 2015 manufacturing is reported as \$18,036,600 million (Table 1032). Total payroll is \$6,253,488 million (Table 1034). Return to capital is thus \$11,783,112 million. This discloses a capital/labor income split as follows: 65.3 percent flowing to capital/ 34.6 percent flowing to labor. Despite marginal improvement for labor in the manufacturing sector since the economic downturn of 2008, overall inequality in the distribution of wealth continues to escalate, as is further indicated in the Annual Review of Economics 2019, Global Wealth Inequality (Zucman 2019). Gabriel Zucman is an economist at the Ecole d'économie de Paris, at UC Berkeley, and currently visiting at Stanford. Utilizing methodologies distinct from our own, Zucman's conclusions are comparable, perhaps even more dramatic: "national accounts data show that the capital share of national income has grown, both within the corporate sector and in the entire economy" (Zucman 2019; 121, 122).

Figure 1. The Capital/Labor Split — Income Flows under Capitalism:



Private ownership of capital is clearly not socially necessary for value (i.e. wealth) production. The necessary component is labor. Labor provides the total value added in the production process. Profits, interest, dividends, and rents that flow to capital are a subtraction from the value produced. The workforce is the resource with programmatic power. It is the creative force in the economy. Everything depends on labor. A critical philosophical perspective demonstrates that labor has a reality and a capacity beyond its theoretical and practical confinement within its commodified form (i.e. as a wage or salary). An awareness of the actual power of labor challenges the presumption that capital produces value, the view that profit unilaterally accrues as a reward for the contribution of the investor/employer. Labor occurs in social relationships; it is a communal project of social beings to meet human needs and promote human flourishing. Because social labor is the source of social wealth, only the labor force, as a group, has a legitimate right to the ownership of this wealth.

A critical appreciation of work demonstrates that employees are paying their employers, and turns right side round the empiricist assertion that capitalist “job creators” are paying their employees. The theory that businesses can reduce inequality by “creating jobs” is politically deceptive and pathetic for labor, given that, as we have seen, each quantity q of income flowing through the aggregate manufacturing payroll in the form of wages, salaries, and benefits, is outdone by an accompanying compensation of anywhere from $2q$ to $3q$ to capital (i.e. to a relative handful of households) in the private manufacturing sector —as profit, rent, dividends, and interest.

In any society the labor force must produce a surplus of value/wealth to maintain infrastructure and provide for social goods such as health care, education, etc., over and above incomes to individuals. Marx’s point is that only the labor force as a social body has a legitimate right to manage this surplus. When it is managing this surplus, the first condition for a humanist commonwealth has been met.

ABOLITION OF WAGES SYSTEM: THE NECESSITY OF A NEW WORLD SYSTEM TODAY

No non-socialist theory of society or education has any profound quarrel with wage labor or the general system of commodity dependency. Peter McLaren (2015a) makes the critical alternative clear in *Revolutionary Critical Pedagogy for a Socialist Society: A Manifesto*:

As advocates of revolutionary critical pedagogy, we participate in an analysis of the objective social totality [...] we simultaneously struggle for a social universe outside the commodity form of labor. If we are to educate at all, we must educate for this! It is precisely the socialist partisanship of critical pedagogy—not to the point of dogmatism or inflexibility—that reveals its power of critique. We need to reclaim the power of critique as the sword arm of social justice and not relinquish it. For in doing so we reclaim our humanity and the world (MCLAREN, 2015a, p. 260).

Marcuse in 1972 made a similar striking statement. For him, “this opposition is directed against the totality of a well-functioning, prosperous society - a protest against its Form - the commodity form of men and things” (MARCUSE, 1972, p. 49-51). Likewise, Marx had admonished workers: “instead of the conservative motto ‘A fair day’s wage for a fair day’s work!’, they should inscribe on their banner the revolutionary watchword, ‘Abolition of the wages-system!’” (MARX, 1965 [1865]). Marx clarified capitalist society’s obsession with production for profit rather than human need: this is its structurally generated fetish or addiction to production for commodity exchange rather than for use-values. Production for use rather than exchange would optimize living conditions within the social formation as a whole. Capitalist productive relations are driving global labor to its knees. Only the abolition of wage labor and commodity fetishism in the economy can restore satisfaction and dignity to an uncommodified labor process.

Commodified existence is not natural; it is contrived. Significant portions of commodified social life need to be rethought and reconstructed. Realigning the social order to conform with the highest potentials of our economy, technology, and human nature requires the decommodification of certain economic

minimums: health care, childcare, education, food, transportation, housing—and work, through a guaranteed income. Also the decommodification of the electoral process and political leadership. Note Marcuse’s statement in the Paris lectures that “If it is impossible to become a candidate in the elections without disposing of a fortune of around a million dollars, this is in any case a strange form of democracy” (MARCUSE, 2015 [1974], p. 5). These are pre-revolutionary, transitional goals. Revolutionary goals envisage a more encompassing view of human flourishing: the passage from wages and salaries to voluntary public work in the public interest - voluntary public work for a commonwealth of freedom.

[W]e have to become aware of the real possibility of a revolution in the most advanced industrial countries taking place not on a basis of poverty and misery, but rather on the basis of wasted abundance. And if this paradoxical concept is correct, it would mean that we have to become aware of new motives for revolution - new motives for revolution and new goals of revolution that no longer focus on the possibility or necessity of revolution born of misery and material privation, but a revolution on the basis of increasing social wealth for increasing strata of the population (MARCUSE, 2015 [1974], p. 49).

Without a world economic system based on equality and democracy, there will be no peace and no survival. The alienation and exploitation of labor is the enabling material core that permits, if not to say requires, society to legitimate a variety of other forms of social oppression. We have learned from the movements against racism and sexism that class relations do not wholly demarcate structures of dominator power. Racism, patriarchy, antisemitism, homophobia, and other forms of discrimination, disrespect, and inequality sorely inhibit our powers of actualization. To theorize scientifically the cultural transformation of each of these negations and to be engaged politically and culturally with the labor force to end them must be the essential logic and manifesto of all future critical teaching. At the conclusion of Marcuse’s Paris Lectures, he calls for:

A new form of socialism, namely socialism as in any and every respect qualitatively different and a break with capitalism and it seems to me that only a decisive redirection of production itself would in this sense be a

revolutionary development. A total redirection of production, first of all, of course, towards the abolition of poverty and scarcity wherever it exists in the world today. Secondly, a total reconstruction of the environment and the creation of space and time for creative work; space and time for creative work instead of alienated labor as a full-time occupation (MARCUSE, 2015, p. 69).

Marcuse's emphasis on creative work leads him from the basic essential goals of socialism to the radical aesthetic ethos of ecosocialism—to the aesthetic form of authentically free human society living in dignity with the living and non-living entities on planet earth (MARCUSE, 2019 [1972]). Our practice of critical pedagogy must connect to this ecopolitics of genuine cultural revolution.

COMMONWEALTH PRODUCTIVITY AS PHILOSOPHICAL GROUND OF SOCIALISM

Herbert Marcuse early on addressed the deep roots of the capitalist system's functioning and its crisis: the commodification of labor. He developed a critical study of work and social alienation looking at economic activity within the total complexity of other human activities and human existence in general. His essay, "On the Philosophical Foundations of the Concept of Labor in Economics" (MARCUSE, 1973 [1933]) proposed, as did Marx, that we are the ensemble of our social relations and, seen from the inside, we are sensuous living labor.

Marcuse and Marx argued that labor is ontologically significant—it is the human mode of being in the world (MARCUSE, 1973 [1933]). Labor in this sense is not to be reduced to any form of class circumstance. Sensuous living labor is the substrate of our being as humans. It is the foundation of our affective and intellectual capacities (and vulnerabilities), bio-ecologically developed within history. As a species we have endured because of our sensuous appreciation of our emergent powers: the power to subsist cooperatively; to create, to communicate, and to care communally within that form of society that we call a commonwealth. In Marcuse's ecosocialist view, the radical transformation of the labor process itself - the liberation of laboring humanity from commodification and alienation - stands centermost.

We stress the need for a new communal mode of commonwork, and a communal mode of holding property. The liberation of labor from commodification is the ground of authentic dis-alienation and freedom “within the realm of necessity,” where satisfaction is restored to the processes of social labor and social wealth production, not in terms of greater, more efficient production, but in terms of an ethics of partnership, racial and gender equality, and gratification through work, earth admiration, and ecological responsibility. The convergence of the environmentalist and labor movements is essential in terms of a unified emancipatory praxis if the human species is not only to endure but to flourish. This would entail the decommodification of economic sectors, such as housing, health care, education, etc.

A philosophical and political recognition of the meaning of commonwealth labor is required as the fundamental legitimation of a socialist and its promise of abundance and leisure for all. This is not merely an abstract principle of justice revolving around equal rights or equal shares. It is concretely rooted in what we call an economy of commonwealth or ecology of commonwealth with commonwealth labor as key process undergirding socialist programs of production, distribution, and ownership.

Because social labor is the source of all humanly created wealth, the labor force, as a group, has the primary right to the collective ownership of essentially common wealth. This makes possible the foundation of a real association of free and equal human beings, grounded in the heritage of our common work.

We have here presented a supply side economic theory. In contrast to the conservative capitalist fable that economic growth is driven through corporate tax breaks and business deregulation, supply side here draws attention to the economic significance of the production of real output supplying society's of use values, not the paper wealth of asset price inflation. This is how real wealth develops and grows. A highly financialized economy, in which capital seeks valorization through bets on asset price inflation without employment, leads to the delusional (inflated, unreal) claims on wealth that are not sustainable. Commonwealth productivity indicates what social living labor accomplishes in

terms of real tangible value and what it can accomplish even more wisely in a future of freedom.

Humanity's earliest history is that of a commonwealth economy, politics, and culture residing in commonwork. Our earliest proverbs, fables, and riddles from the oldest African cultures teach the survival power of partnership and cooperation and the categorical ethical advantages of empathy, reciprocity, hospitality, and respect for the good in common. Humanity's first teachings on ethics are to be found in ancient African philosophy (REITZ, 2019, p. 100): "the cotton thread says that it is only as a team that you can carry a stone." "Many hands make light work." "It takes a whole village to raise a child." These constitute universalizable humanist, i.e. not narrowly tribal, teachings for the guidance of practical life, and can in no way to be confused with purely religious teachings. Not gods, but communally laboring humanity can be seen as the source of ethics here. Humanity's earliest proverbs, fables, and riddles teach the survival power of partnership and cooperation and the categorical ethical advantages of empathy, reciprocity, hospitality, and respect for the good in common, gravitating toward the humanism of a communally laboring commonwealth.

Humanism in ancient times (Plato and Aristotle) was not a philosophy of the natural and unmediated goodness of human beings, as in the Romanticism of a latter-day Rousseau. It was a philosophy of the humanizing influence of parents and teachers, customs, culture, and laws – as educational forces—within a societal context. Aristotle theorized that our highest happiness derived from the actualization of our essentially human capacities, powers, and potentials: speech/thought; worthy conduct, integrity, character, and moderation by way of the golden mean. Our task was to become intellectually and politically accomplished. To this end one's upbringing, parenting, education, and the social structure supportive of these nurturing forces, were the most crucial factors. Our very humanity is grounded in the legacy we have inherited from our earliest forms of partnership societies with their ecologies of caregiving and commonwealth.

THE EARTHCOMMONWEALTH ALTERNATIVE

EarthCommonWealth is our vision of an ecosocialist system-alternative calling for the elimination the capitalist economy's core fetish of exchange value. This is a prerequisite for the restoration of nature and human nature. EarthCommonWealth envisions the displacement and transcendence of capitalist oligarchy as such, not simply its most bestial and destructive components. It is a concept explored in preliminary form in *Ecology and Revolution* (REITZ, 2019).

Ours is a green economic alternative because its ecological vision sees all living things and their non-living earthly surroundings as a global community capable of a dignified, deliberate coexistence. Less well-known than Marcuse is the ecological work of Aldo Leopold (1942; 1949). Understanding Earth in global ecological terms he saw it is not merely soil and rock; it is a biotic pyramid, a fountain of energy flowing through a circuit of land, minerals, air, water, plants, and animals including the human species. He proposed a dialectical and materialist "land ethic" as a call to conservation and cooperation, in which the individual's rights to private property in land are contrasted unfavourably with historical patterns of communal ownership (LEOPOLD, 1949). The EarthCommonWealth Alternative seeks the restore nature's bounty and beauty by opposing the profitable misuse of limited natural resources, in large measure by negating planned obsolescence and its attendant wasted abundance, negating the capitalist fetish of exchange value, and by liberating commonwealth labor by eliminating its commodity or wage form.

Ours is a commonwealth alternative because (1) it opts for a new system of ecological production, egalitarian distribution, partnership/humanist values, shared ownership, liberated (i.e. non-alienated) labor, and democratized governance having its foundation in the ethics of partnership labor and partnership productivity, and (2) because of its ecosocialist and humanist commitment to living our lives on the planet consistent with the most honorable and aesthetic forms of human social and political fulfillment. The EarthCommonWealth Alternative entails the "expropriation of the expropriators." It eliminates rent-seeking and the for-profit financial industry, and eliminates universal commodity dependency through the decommodification /socialization

of the economy. It decouples income both from individual labor activity and from property ownership through an ecosocialist form of universal guaranteed incomes. Incomes are distributed without reference to individual productivity, according to need, and as equally as feasible. Hours of labor are substantially reduced. The well-rounded scientific and philosophical development of the young is made possible through a system of multicultural general education privileging no single culture, religion, or language. EarthCommonWealth is a social-political philosophy with the potential to fulfill humanity's species being. It represents a conscious openness and preference for human freedom: for racial equality, women's equality, the liberation of labor, the restoration of nature, leisure, abundance, and peace.

Our contention (building upon Marx and Marcuse) is that EarthCommonWealth, as an intercultural labor force humanism, is not only necessary but feasible: it is the instinctual and gravitational center holding social life together despite flare ups and explosions caused by the massive forces of careening corporate capitalism. The labor force can rely only upon itself and the world's commonwealth traditions to mobilize its fullest transformative power.

Our effort here offers a counteroffensive against the diseconomics of cultural polarization, the destruction of nature, and humanity's dread prospect of extinction. We have synthesized key features of the work of Herbert Marcuse and Marx with that of Aldo Leopold to elucidate the promise of revolutionary ecological liberation through an EarthCommonWealth Alternative.

The evidence of impending economic, governmental, and/or natural catastrophe is mounting. Without an adamant ideology like EarthCommonWealth, there is no sufficient negation, and there will be no sufficient transformation away from oligarchy, when conditions are ripe for revolution, toward the new world system we seek, respectful of the material conditions of life on our planet and commensurate with the essential caretaking capacities of the human species.

REVOLUTIONARY ECO-PEDAGOGY: MARCUSE AND MCLAREN

How can a critical theory of education impact the work many of us are doing K-12 and on a variety of U.S. campuses in terms of the effects on our subject-matter, our classroom dynamics, our obligations to community? To what degree can education be utilized to negate the negation represented by the dynamics of economic, racial, and gender oppression in the United States? What is it exactly that makes pedagogy critical?

Herbert Marcuse's initial cultural impact in the U.S. was connected closely to the intellectual and political, campus-based turmoil of the 1960s, and was related to his theoretical influence on the global radical student movement and to his addressing key educational issues involved. Marcuse's reputation in the U.S. and in Europe was that of a spokesperson for radical university reform and for the militant new left's analysis of (and resistance to) the foreign and domestic policies of the U.S. government. Marcuse examined, for example, the questions of science and research in service to the "logic of domination" embedded within advanced industrial society (MARCUSE, 1964, p. 144). He also addressed to the almost infinite facets of alienation and domination in everyday life, i.e., at school, on the job, and in recreational activities, where these were thought to be regulated by a "total administration" (MARCUSE, 1964, p. 7). He combatted institutional racism with his critique of pure tolerance (Reitz, 2009a) and stressed the emancipatory potential of a renascent sensuality under the guidance of the most rational and legitimate goals of art (MARCUSE, 1969). A new form of liberal arts education could act against one-dimensionality and cultural alienation, re-humanizing political life (REITZ, 2009b). At the same time, education needed to become activist. Students and teachers needed to "become partisan against oppression, militarization, brutalization" (MARCUSE, 2009a, p. 38). There needed to be a key unity in education of critical thought and radical action; the need for the movements of change must be made evident in systems of schooling "preparing the ground for a better, more humane society" (MARCUSE, 2009a, p. 37).

Critical educators and students needed to continue to take risks and struggle to infuse the curriculum with analysis of the "critical, radical movements

and theories in history, literature, philosophy” (MARCUSE, 2009a, p. 37). Because humanity is a multicultural species, the curriculum must afford a world-historical, international, and multicultural perspective that examines the pivotal social struggles that have led to the emergence of key standards of criticism in ethics, in logic, in the worlds of art, physical science, production and technology. These standards constitute the criteria of judgment which intelligence requires. Catalyst groups within the community colleges and other higher education institutions have quite remarkably moved educational theory and practice forward in recent decades, especially through the anti-racist and anti-sexist multicultural education reform movement.

Peter McLaren (1997; 2000; 2015a; 2015b) has strikingly called for a pedagogy of revolution and revolutionary multiculturalismo - that is, teaching the truth about ending class exploitation, racism, gender inequality, empire, and war. His *Pedagogy of Insurrection* (2015b) highlights a political economic focus in educational theory and practice early on. Its leading section, “Solving the Problem of Inequality: The Market Is Not a Sustainable or Livable Community,” begins with the foundational recognition that “Schools in the main reflect the inequality found in the structure of capitalist society” (MCLAREN, 2015b, p. 19). He makes clear: “the market is not a community. It is only possible to realize your humanity if you are educated in an authentic community. Critical educators assume the position that equality is both a precondition and outcome for establishing community, and a community is a precondition for deep democracy” (MCLAREN, 2015b, p. 21-23).

Revolutionary critical educators question capitalist concepts - such as wage labor and value production - alongside their students in order to consider alternative ways of subsisting and learning in the world so as to continually transform it along the arc of social and economic justice. As such, critical pedagogy calls for a movement that is anti-capitalist, anti-imperialist, anti-racist, anti-sexist, anti-heterosexual and pro-democratic (MCLAREN, 2015b, p. 35).

In this work McLaren also rethinks the formation of critical consciousness (i.e. theory formation) and its relationship to radical practice. In a fashion that I

take to be a Copernican revolution reversing conventional thinking on the matter, he writes:

Critical consciousness is not the root of commitment to revolutionary struggle but rather the product of such a commitment. An individual does not have to be critically self-conscious and well-versed in the theories of the Frankfurt School or the writings of liberation theologians in order to feel the obligation to help the poor and the dispossessed. In fact, it is in the very act of struggling alongside the oppressed that individuals become critically conscious and aware and motivated to help others. Praxis begins with practice (MCLAREN, 2015b, p. 29-30).

This educative power of struggle is illustrated in a recent high-profile showdown between students and administrators over institutional racism and related conflicts at “Mizzou,” the University of Missouri, Columbia. Here theoretical deficiencies on the part of the top administration, especially their lack of familiarity of features of the multicultural educational reform movement, led to swift disaster for the system President, Timothy Wolfe. After a semester of student protests - against cost-cutting measures (proposals to eliminate the University of Missouri Press and fighting the drastic cuts in health care and other benefits for graduate teaching assistants); against administrative decisions to eliminate the privileges of Planned Parenthood doctors at the university hospital; against administrative cultural insensitivity to issues arising from bigotry on campus; and against the university’s passivity regarding lethal racism in law enforcement at nearby Ferguson, Missouri, - system President Wolfe (one of the new corporate kind of university CEOs with no academic background) was cell-phone-videoed responding ineffectually when challenged directly by black students to define systematic oppression. When he said this was a matter of the perceptions of discrimination held by the black students, the protesters were aghast, and regarded his response as dismissive victim-blaming. When the video went viral, the struggle widened dramatically with black members of the university’s Division 1 football team announcing that they would strike until Wolfe resigned or was removed from office. A key economic pressure point had been found. The coach and concerned faculty supported the student strikers, and

system President Wolfe and campus chancellor, R. Bowen Loftin, resigned seemingly unassailable positions of power in a matter of days.

The social movements of our age have been its civilizing forces. BLM [Black Lives Matter], with whom the Mizzou students were allied, has effectively educated the nation about the real nature of undemocratic governance (in municipalities and higher education institutions), and the cavalier use of racist deadly force (on and off the campus). The organized social struggles against racism, sexism, poverty, war, and imperialism, have educated wide swaths of this country's population outside traditional classrooms about alienation and oppression, power and empowerment.

All of this is classic McLaren; still he is one of the rarest of critical theorists of education: he has engaged with pedagogical issues developed in the Global South. Pedagogy of Insurrection also takes a visionary turn breaking new ground with McLaren's new emphasis on evolutionary eco-pedagogy and the concept of planetary comunalidad. This resonates with our own perspective on EarthCommonWealth.

Critical educators, who have addressed for decades and with firm commitment topics of race, class, gender, sexuality, disability and other social justice issues are now casting their eyes to the antagonism between capitalism and nature to ask themselves how we can rationally regulate the human metabolic relation with nature. In our struggle for a 'transformed economy founded on the nonmonetary values of social justice and ecological balance' we don't follow a productivist socialism or capitalist market ecology. We emphasize use value, not exchange value and 'a liberation from the alienating economic 'laws' of the growth-oriented capitalist system'. [Vandana] Shiva's general principle of 'earth democracy' is congruent with the idea that the foundations of the means of production in land, seed, water and so on, need to be kept in perpetuity by an arranged social commons (MCLAREN, 2015b, p. 301-316).

McLaren contends "Comunalidad is a Oaxacan concept that serves as a type of cosmovision, and it deals with 'the complex intertwining of history, morality, spirituality, kinship and communal practices' [derived from] '[t]he concept of reciprocity . . . that requires the other or others to make . . . equivalent

response[s], and it is meant to be a permanent relation and inclusive of all members of the community” (MCLAREN, 2015b, p. 328).

Our own experience as community college teachers has led us to the conclusion that the instructor’s greatest obligation and challenge in this setting is to be able to communicate well with students at different stages of intellectual, social, and emotional development - encouraging those students who lack academic confidence, continually perking the interest of those who are more advanced, as well as empathizing with and standing in solidarity with both adult learners and more youthful students. We needed to develop innovative teaching strategies grounded in critical materialist analysis of society (and its potentials currently blocked by present circumstances) that can render productive the current tensions between individuals and society, the classroom and the community, critical theory and radical practice. For a description of some of the most salient of these see Reitz (2002).

Part of the teacher’s responsibility is to empower (and overcome fatalism) through dialogue directed toward real political possibilities embedded within the current social situation. Each instructor needs to be able to direct discussion toward these real possibilities and explain why they have an historical warrant for a future of freedom. A directed discussion of comparative and opposing viewpoints, class, race and gender factors, the dynamics of capital accumulation, etc., and the key structural position of labor in the economic process, must also occur, furnishing students with emancipatory prospects. The material grounds of reason in art must be investigated, every bit as much as the material grounds of injustice/justice and oppression. The teacher’s own analysis must be informed by critical materialist sociological insights. It is a mastery of this scholarship and knowledge that undergirds critical pedagogy.

Plato’s Republic asked (in the first sentence of the allegory of the cave) to what extent we are enlightened or unenlightened (educated or uneducated) about our being. Hegel’s Phenomenology asked (in its sections on the mind alienated from itself and mind assured of itself) how our own consciousness comes to know our own being. Critical reason appeared to him as an acquisition of mind, won through struggle against not only error, illusion, deception, and self-deception,

but also against oppressive social forces. We come into possession of ourselves only by struggling to learn in spite of, and outside of, institutions of domination. A proper education is not really possible under capitalism because the abolition of wage labor is impossible under capitalism. The theory of our alienation must analyze, as did Marx in the 1844 Manuscripts, the dynamics of capital accumulation involving the seizure of surplus value during the social production process that separates productive individuals from the product of their labor, from control of the labor process, from solidarity with other members of the work force, and from the political potential of the human species itself. The purpose of Marcuse's Marxist critical theorizing and critical pedagogy is to grasp intellectually and to grasp politically the fullness of the being that is to be ours though now blocked from being so by political-economic circumstances. Only the political expropriation of the expropriators, the democratic reallocation of control, the restoration of nature, the egalitarian reconstruction of community, and a cultivated sense of the common good as society's highest power, will permit us to attain education's most venerable goal: knowing who are to become if we would ourselves be free.

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